MV
MUZINGS

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Foreword

It is my pleasure to be invited to write a foreword for this inaugural issue of Muzings, a magazine published by the Museum Volunteers (MV). The Department of Museums Malaysia has published two books produced by our volunteers within the last 5 years – *A Malaysian Tapestry, Rich Heritage at the National Museum* and *The Chitties of Melaka*. These two books have been well received by both local and expatriate readers; we even had a second print for Malaysian Tapestry in 2017, less than two years after the first edition.

Therefore, I was pleased when I received another proposal for a publication, this time for a magazine. Pulling articles from their blog – museumvolunteersjmm.com – the project team has put together a diverse combination of write-ups ranging from artefacts in our national museum to visits to other museums, personalities from the past, as well as other areas of interest in Malaysia.

Muzings is another creditable effort by this group in widening our knowledge on many facets of Malaysia, not just artefacts and history. The Department of Museums Malaysia fully supports the Museum Volunteers and we will continue to work with them in their future publications.

The MV comprises of members from many walks of life and countries. They have devoted their time to help the museum in guiding visitors. In doing so, they have helped to explain the various artefacts and aspects of Malaysian history to make the visitors' visit a meaningful experience.

My congratulations to the Museum Volunteers.

Datuk Kamarul Baharin A. Kasim
Director General
Department of Museums Malaysia

Preface

Dear MVs,

I am very proud and happy to launch the first issue of an annual magazine, entitled Muzings, which will contain research articles contributed by museum volunteers. This inaugural issue pulls together articles previously published on the Museum Volunteers' blog *(www.museumvolunteersjmm.com)*. There are so many good articles on the blog that choosing between them was difficult. Our final selection covers a broad range of topics, providing something for everyone. In the interest of space, some articles have been shortened; the full article can be found on the blog together with additional photos and bibliography.

I wish to thank Magan and Rose for the many hours spent in proofreading, editing and putting this publication together. I would also like to thank Mariana for her creative cover design and Jega for vetting the magazine.

I would especially like to thank our Director General, Datuk Kamarul Baharin, for his guidance and support over the years. Much appreciation also goes out to the Corporate Communications Department under Puan Lela, for her continual assistance and to Jamil, for all his help and unfailing confidence in our MV team.

I hope that this digest will encourage more MVs to contribute both to our blog and to future issues of Muzings. Please enjoy reading the magazine.

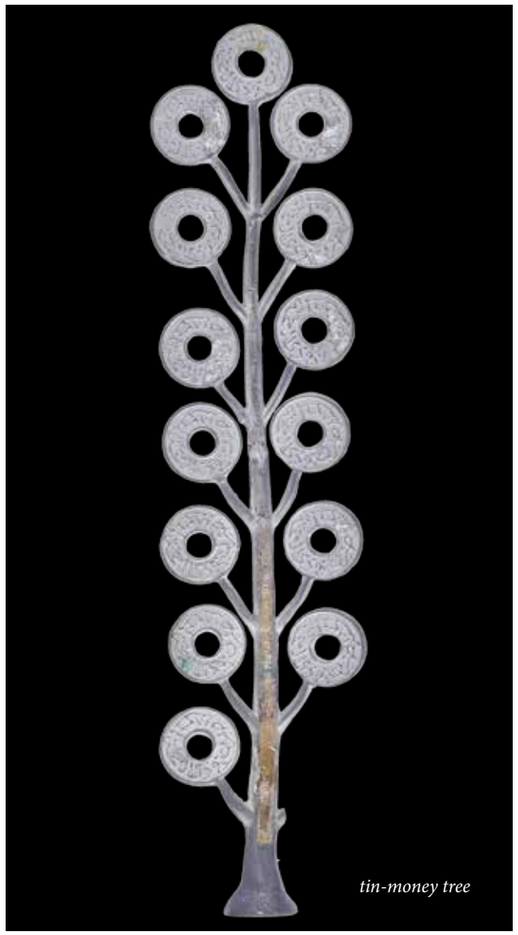
Thank you and best wishes,

Karen Loh
President
Museum Volunteers JMM
Department of Museums Malaysia

The Soul of Tin

Adib Faiz

To the average modern person, tin is merely a metal – dead matter fit for industrial purposes. However, Francis Loh Kok-Wah notes in the *Encyclopedia of Malaysia: Early Modern History [1800-1940]* that the Malays, traditionally believed that tin possesses a soul. The 'soul of tin' took the shape of a water buffalo, an animal used to plough the rice fields that were a major source of provision. Whatever our personal beliefs may be, there can be little doubt that tin would plough its way through 19th and early 20th century Malaya, becoming a source of wealth for those involved in its production. The important economic role of tin in this period would have a long-lasting effect on the social, political, and infrastructural landscape of Malaya.



tin-money tree

Tin mining had existed amongst the Malays as early as the 15th century, with tin currency going back to at least the time of Sultan Muzaffar Shah (1445-9) of Melaka. Other than the simple method of panning for tin with a *dulang*, Malays used a combination of pits, dams, sluice boxes, and other components to extract tin ore. This system could produce sufficient amounts for local usage and for export. However, the Malay rulers often lacked funds to open these mines and began to rely on Chinese merchants for capital in the early 19th century. The Malay chiefs then used Chinese labour to work the mines, with the Chinese having been involved in tin mining as early as the late 18th century.

While the initial numbers were small, the rise of the tin canning industry after 1830 and the discovery of rich tin deposits in Selangor and Perak in the 1840s led to a massive influx of Chinese immigrants, swelling the population of the mining towns. It seems likely that the sudden increase in demand would have influenced the decision of Chinese mine owners to switch to new forms of technology such as opencast or *lombong* mining. For instance, Chinese mine-owners began to use the *chin-chia*, a chain pump that drained water from the mines more quickly than traditional methods.

In spite of the technological changes and diaspora population, tin-mine opening ceremonies remained a Malay concern. A *pawang* (shaman), often a Malay and occasionally an indigenous person, was often called upon to use a combination of spells and talismans for protection and an auspicious start. This contrast between the old and the new embodies the nature of tin mining in this period: a modern industry in the midst of a traditional world.

The involvement of Chinese merchants and the large influx of Chinese labour had a number of social consequences. While immigrants may have initially intended to be temporary, direct settlement eventually arose, with family structures emerging in the early 20th century in places such as Ipoh. The accounts of an Englishwoman living in Ipoh in 1914 bear witness to the role of female miners, who played central economic and social roles in the town. Waking up before dawn, these women would prepare the day's meals, chop wood, and fetch water from a common

source. Breakfast with their husbands was followed by bathing, dressing and getting their numerous children ready for the day. They would then see to the grandfather and grandmother, tasked with looking after the children as the women work on the tin mines alongside their husbands. This last piece of information clearly indicates the presence of extended families, showing that large social structures existed in mining towns. The ability to raise families was made even more remarkable by the sheer difficulty of the work in question; these people laboured for hours in cold, stagnant water up to their ankles, with the female dulang washers having to bend over to obtain tin ore.

However, there was a less admirable side to this history of immigration, namely the exploitation connected with the *kongsi* organizations, the colonial authorities, and the system in general. Though often referred to as 'secret societies', the kongsi had a public political and social role in nineteenth century tin-mining areas. They were cooperative associations, democratic organizations designed to share profits between members and thus enable the immigrants to earn a decent living and support their families back home in China. As Tan Pek Leng notes in the *Encyclopedia of Malaysia: Early Modern History [1800-1940]*, the lack of 'effective formal governance' caused these societies to act as arbitrators in the midst of disputes, while the 'bonds of brotherhood' in a kongsi provided a formidable force against the colonial authorities.

The ideal form of the kongsi was rarely realized in Malaya, with these powerful organizations exploiting others for personal economic gain. The various kongsi often controlled labourers before they had even left China, with recruiters placing labourers' names on kongsi membership rolls without informing them. Once in Malaya, the labourers were totally dependent on the 'advancers' for everything from food to opium, all of which had to be bought at the advancer's price. The colonial authorities were complicit in the exploitation. Though the British had some admirable officials who introduced some regulations, British law courts recognized the fines imposed by advancers. Colonial contradictions could be jarring; although the Perak Government insisted on a 'discharge ticket' so labourers could look for alternative employment upon contract completion, they subjected labourers who absconded to a whipping or imprisonment, and had their wages forfeited. This last detail meant that such workers would have to start from scratch, locking them into their contract for an even longer time. It is difficult to disagree with Ho Tak Ming's conclusion in *Ipoh: When Tin Was King* that this 'was no better than a modified form of slavery'.

Power leads to conflict, and rival kongsi often came into armed conflict with each other. In a world mostly centred on kongsi control, these confrontations were effectively civil wars, engulfing whole towns in chaos. The most famous of these were the Larut wars in Perak (1861-74), where the Ghee Hin and Hai San societies engaged in bloody battles over tin mines. With the Malay rulers lacking control of the situation – the Mentri Larut sided with the group in control of the mines at the time – the British eventually stepped in to settle the disputes. The result was the signing of the Pangkor Treaty in 1874, which forced the rival factions to maintain peace at the expense of a $50,000 penalty and demanded that the Sultan follow the 'advice' of a British officer called a 'Resident' in all matters except Malay customs and religion. The treaty also gave

Tanjung Tualang Dredge No.5 (TT5), located south of Batu Gajah

powers to the British Resident over revenue collection and general administration. This began a pattern of indirect rule that would spread to other states in Malaya.

It was with the introduction of the dredge ship that European power would gain a firm foothold in Malaya's tin mining industry. In the years after 1915, the earlier sources of tin were gradually depleted. With fewer surface deposits, it became necessary to dig deeper into areas that could not be reached through existing methods. Around this time, European companies began introducing new forms of technology that could reach deeper and access tin deposits previously inaccessible. An example of such technology was the dredge or *kapal korek*; one such referred to in the National Museum was capable of digging 31.5 metres deep. Moreover, the dredge could do the same work with a far smaller labour force, shifting the tin mines away from labour-intensive methods to capital-intensive methods. Coupled with the increase of British administrative control over Malaya, the dredge and other machines gradually weakened the Chinese hold over the industry.

Although they did not have the same societal effect as the Chinese, European economic domination would have a developmental – and environmental – effect. In an attempt to link the economic centres of Malaya together, a system of transportation was eventually devised with trunk roads and railways connecting tin mining areas on the West coast. Yet while Malay transportation systems had been developed in harmony with nature, the new modes of transportation were built with little concern for environmental effects. While seas and rivers had previously served as natural highways, railways were an artificial imposition that altered the landscape. While elephants had previously been used to transport goods, wild elephants were now injured by oncoming trains. Though hardly matching the environmental catastrophe that exists in Malaysia today, these early developments may be seen as beginning a venomous trend, namely the love of progress with no regard for the earth and its creatures.

The soul of tin turned the soil of Malaya into a dramatic history, with a cast of immigrants, mothers, bullies, and machines. What traces remain of that drama today? The tin mines of Malaya are now mere pools of water, and Malaysia's economy is a whole other beast. The soul of tin has clearly moved on, perhaps to plough other fields or else to rest in a faraway swamp. Yet in its wake, it has left a furrow filled with the experiences and emotions of an era. Out of that furrow, new crops have grown, surrounding us as a part of our Malaysian experience. ◆

Mystery of the Missing Bunga Mas

Jean-Marie Metzger

Everybody will probably be familiar with the B*unga Mas*, a reproduction of which is on display in Gallery C of the National Museum. The correct name of this artefact is actually *Bunga Mas dan Perak*, which, rather than 'Golden Flower' means 'Gold and Silver Flower'. Indeed, it is very likely that such an imposing artefact, weighing several pounds, with a height of about 1.5 metres, would be very fragile had it been made of solid gold. But as the actual name seems to indicate, it was probably made of gold-plated silver.

The gifts of the Bunga Mas were sent to the King of Siam every three years, by the Sultans of the Northern Malay States (Kedah, Terengganu, Kelantan, Patani,…) accompanied with other gifts, such as shields and spears.

These gifts from the Sultans to the King, were probably laden with deep political misunderstanding: while the King of Siam would consider them as a recognition of suzerainty over the Malay Sultanates, the Sultans would simply regard them as a token of friendship. The relationship between the northern Sultanates and the Kingdom of Siam had never been an easy one, as can be seen by the various appeals for 'protection' to the different occupying powers, be it the Dutch or later the British. There could occasionally even be exchanges of concealed insults. According to a note found in the Cambridge University Library (Archives of the British Association of Malaysia and Singapore), the author mentions that he had seen a letter which was sent to the Sultan of Terengganu by the King of Siam in which the latter reversed the traditional courteous formula: 'sending a gift from the Head of the Sultan to the feet of the King', into the insulting reply: 'from beneath the King's feet to the crown of the Sultan's head'.

The last Bunga Mas from Kedah to the King of Siam was sent in 1906. Three years later, another Bunga Mas was ready to be sent. In March 1909, however, before it could be send to Siam, Britain and Siam signed a treaty in which the sovereignty over the northern sultanates of Malaya (with the exception of Patani and Setul) was to be transferred to Britain.

According to the above-mentioned note, the Sultan of Kedah sent this Bunga Mas to King Edward VII instead. In the first report of the British advisor to Kedah, Mr. Maxwell, he noted that during the meeting of the State Council on August 23rd 1909, the question arose whether sending the Bunga Mas to Edward VII was to be regarded as 'the last of a series relating to a remote past'. The offer was indeed accepted, and Tunku Muhammad Jiwa, who had conveyed the previous Bunga Mas to Bangkok, set off to Singapore. Two Bunga Mas, together with forty-two spears and twenty-four shields, as well as a Bunga Mas from Perlis, and 'other offerings from Terengganu', were sent to the Colonial Office, and were personally presented to the King by the Secretary of States to the Colonies.

This is where the mystery begins. Although the Archives of Windsor Castle mention that the gift had been received by King Edward, all of the artefacts have subsequently disappeared. There is no mention of them whatsoever in the Royal Collections. A few months ago, the curator for the Royal Gifts, when questioned by me about these artefacts, told me that they had never been heard of. They are certainly not registered in the current inventory.

Furthermore, it seems that another final gift of Bunga Mas was sent in 1911 to King George V by the Sultan of Kedah on the occasion of the King's coronation. This too seems to have disappeared! ◆

A Visit to Kuala Kubu Bharu

Eric Lim

Yesterday, as I was writing this article, the Air Pollutant Index reading in four stations had recorded very unhealthy levels. Johan Setia in Klang, Selangor was the highest with a reading of 229.

The API was hovering around the 100 level a week earlier when I brought a couple from Hong Kong to a half-day tour of Kuala Kubu Bharu. I had met Rochas and Alexis Tse during my call of duty at the National Museum on 2 September 2019. At the end of the tour, they had enquired about other museums in the city and we communicated using social media. When I mentioned about visiting Kuala Kubu Bharu, they immediately said 'yes'. So off we went on an early Wednesday morning, leaving Kuala Lumpur city centre at 7.00 am.

Kuala Kubu Bharu or affectionately known as KKB, is 60 kilometres north of the city using the trunk road known as Federal Route One. The journey is now made easier and faster with the use of the Rawang Bypass, which was opened to traffic on 28 November 2017. In less than an hour, we had reached our destination.

Kuala Kubu

KKB and its surrounding area, collectively known as Ulu Selangor, were inhabited since the Neolithic Age 4000 years ago (discovery of slab stone burials in the Bernam Valley in the North of Ulu Selangor) and through the Metal Age 3000 – 2500 years ago, with the discovery of iron artefacts and bronze celts in nearby Rasa and Kerling. Moving forward, the 18th century CE saw the arrival of people from Sumatra, the Rawa and Mandailing, who came in search of new land and for tin. Sungai Selangor was the main river that transported goods including tin, to Kuala Selangor, which was then the royal capital of Selangor. It became an important route and it even prompted the Dutch to set up a post to collect taxes from the Malays when they managed to capture Kuala Selangor towards the later part of the 18th century CE.

The Malays in Ulu Selangor were involved in the Selangor Civil War (1867-1874) and it was during this turbulent period that the town got its name. The conflict separated the Malays into two factions, one side was led by Raja Abdullah, Raja Ismail and, later, Tengku Kudin. The opposing faction comprised Raja Mahadi, Raja Mahmud and Syed Mashhor. Chinese rival groups also joined the fight with Hai San, led by Yap Ah Loy, throwing their support for Tengku Kudin while Ghee Hin, led by Chong Chong, offered support to Raja Mahadi. The Malays

Mail service using motor vehicle in 1910. It is passing through Jalan Kuala Kubu on the way to Kuala Lipis.

Kuala Kubu railway station circa 1900

in Ulu Selangor supported Raja Mahadi. As a defence against his rivals, Raja Mahadi had built an earthen fort near the mouth of a river and that was how the town got its name – Kuala Kubu ('fort at the mouth of the river'). Raja Mahadi managed to capture Kuala Lumpur in March 1872 but a year later, Tengku Kudin together with Hai San and reinforcements from Pahang, came charging back to retake Kuala Lumpur. Raja Mahadi fled to Singapore while Syed Mashhor retreated to Perak. Years later, both men were pardoned by Sultan Abdul Samad but Raja Mahadi died in Singapore while Syed Mashor returned to Kerling as a *Penghulu* (chieftain). He developed the place by opening up land for tin mining and he died in 1917.

Selangor became a British Protectorate at the conclusion of the Selangor Civil War. At that time, tin mining activities in Kuala Kubu were second only to Kuala Lumpur and this prompted Frank Swettenham as the First Assistant Resident of Selangor to visit Kuala Kubu in 1875. He commented that the huge dam constructed by the Malays with the help of the Orang Asli in the 1700s was gigantic in size. Tin mining was carried out just below the dam.

In July 1883, Cecil Ranking, a young man of 26, started work as the Tax Collector and Magistrate and he immediately got down to serious work wanting to show his capabilities to impress the Resident. However, his work was cut short because three months later, on the fateful evening of 29 October 1883, the huge dam broke and flooded the town. It was recorded that floodwaters rose as high as 10 feet; 38 houses were destroyed and 50 people perished, including Cecil Ranking. Local legend has it that Cecil Ranking had on that day shot a sacred white crocodile believed to be the guardian of the dam. As a result, the dam broke. However, there were other factors more likely to have caused the tragedy.

1. The dam was more than 100 years old and the wood was already rotting away.

2. Cecil Ranking was seen dropping three sticks of dynamite on the dam ten days before the tragedy for the purpose of killing fish and this action could have shaken the foundations of the dam.

3. It had been raining non-stop a few days before the flood.

4. It may be linked to the Krakatoa volcanic eruption on 26 and 27 August 1883 in Indonesia. The tremor was felt in Kuala Kubu. It was to be one of the deadliest and destructive volcanic events in recorded history.

The new township was built nearer to the left bank of Selangor River and the British were by now leading the development. In a short span of four years, the population grew to 7580 making Kuala Kubu the third largest town in Selangor. Tin mining continued to be the main activity of the town and more lands were opened up for mining including Peretak, which is on the Main Range. By 1887, tin output for the year had doubled that of 1885. Also in 1888, British announced the 'greatest undertakings in road-making ever essayed in the Malay States' with the start of the construction of a bridle track from Kuala Kubu to Raub, a gold-mining centre in Pahang. It was to be the earliest federal road ever constructed in Pahang. With this massive undertaking, Kuala Kubu became known as the Gateway to Pahang. It was on this very road that another historical event took place – the assassination of Sir Henry Gurney, British High Commissioner to Malaya on 6 October 1951 by the Malayan Communist Party. Gurney was travelling in a convoy to Fraser's Hill at the time. Today, this road is known as Federal Route 55.

Hotel at Kuala Kubu, circa 1910

Train service arrived in 1894 when the final section of the railway track was completed linking Kuala Kubu to Serendah, Rawang and Kuala Lumpur. In 1906, bus service from Kuala Kubu train station to Kuala Lipis was made available.

Also available in Kuala Kubu was a hill station on Treacher's Hill (a.k.a Bukit Kutu), which was named after Willam Hood Treacher who ventured into the place in 1893. W.H. Treacher was the British Resident of Selangor from 1892 to 1896. Two bungalows on the peak of the hill served as a sanatorium until its closure on 31 December 1932 due to soil movements that rendered the resort unsafe. There was also an army training camp set up in 1915 to recruit volunteers for World War I in Europe.

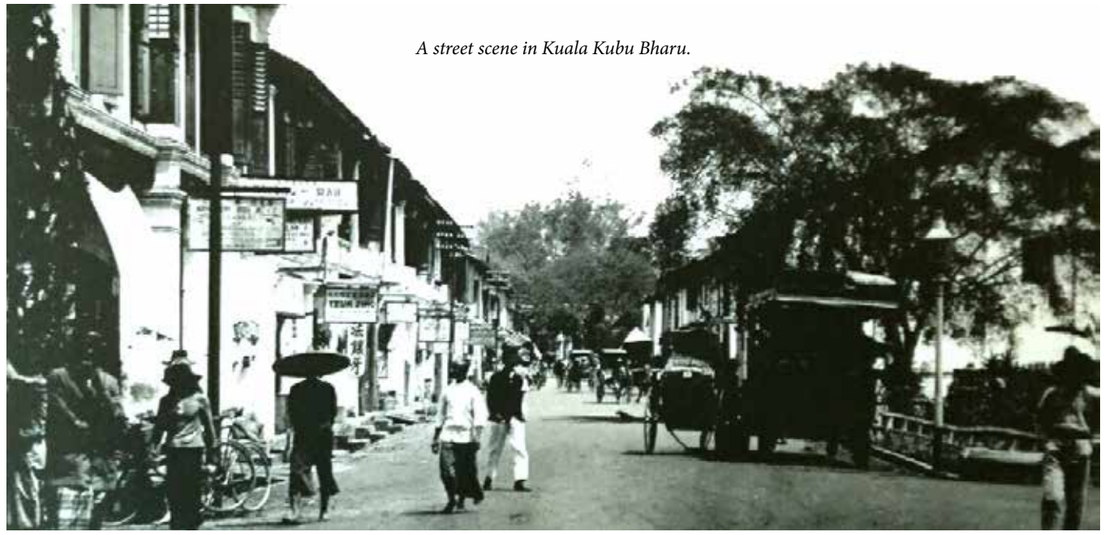
However, the improvements done to Kuala Kubu did not last long as the township was constantly ravaged by floodwaters. Major floods occurred in 1885, 1913, and 1917. In 1921, the District Officer of Ulu Selangor announced the abandonment of Kuala Kubu and he shifted its district headquarters to Rasa. Between 1923 and 1926, Kuala Kubu was flooded a number of times and finally, upon the advice of the Public Works Department at the end of 1926, the Government decided to move the town to a new site up river and to higher land.

Kuala Kubu Bharu (KKB)

Charles Crompton Reade, a town planner from New Zealand, who was employed by FMS, was given the task to plan the new town – Kuala Kubu Bharu. Reade planned the town along the garden city concept, such as distinctive use of zoning, angular visual entry to the town centre, and a compact town centre to allow space for the parkland separating the residential areas and hospital. Today, KKB is recognized as the first garden township in Asia.

One of the earliest shophouses built in the commercial sector of the town has the year 1930 embossed on its top front façade, which marks the birth of KKB. Other significant structures built in the 1930s include the former Land Office (1931), old fire station (1931), and the clock tower commemorating the coronation of King George VI (1937).

Besides these structures and buildings, it was recorded that an airfield was set up on the outskirts of the town in 1931 as a means of transport for high-ranking officials as well as for goods. The airfield was used during the Malayan Emergency (1948-1960) for the landing of Taylorcraft Auster light aircraft.



A street scene in Kuala Kubu Bharu.

The book *'Tarikh Kuala Kubu 1780-1931'*, published by Persatuan Sejarah Kuala Kubu, includes a letter written by the District Officer of Ulu Selangor to the Resident about the naming of streets in KKB. The British wanted to rename some roads to commemorate individuals and due to the unavailability of a 'well known Asiatic gentlemen connected with Kuala Kubu', the following European names were proposed:

1. Ranking (as in Cecil Ranking, the first Tax Collector and Magistrate stationed at Kuala Kubu)
2. C. D. Bowen (long serving District Officer of Ulu Selangor)
3. Davidson (who made Kuala Kubu his home for about the last 25 years of his life)
4. Oswald F. G. Stonor (who was the District Officer, then the Secretary to the Resident and finally the British Resident of Selangor)
5. Maxwell (possibly William George Maxwell who was Resident of Perak and after whom Maxwell Hill (Bukit Larut) was named, or his father, William Edward Maxwell, who was the Resident of Selangor).

The four main streets in KKB were named after Bowen, Davidson, Stonor and Maxwell; Ranking was not selected. Today, all names have been changed to local ones – Jalan Dato Tabal, Jalan Dato Balai, Jalan Mat Kilau and Jalan Dato Muda Jaafar respectively.

Today, KKB remains the main administrative town of Hulu Selangor district. ◆

View of the dam at Kuala Kubu Bharu, 2013

The Bellarmine Jar in Gallery C

Rose Gan

Amongst the detritus of the great explosion that destroyed the Dutch ship *Nassau* at the battle of *Tanjong Tuan* in 1606, is one small curious flagon, usually referred to as a *Bellarmine Jar*, that survived the disaster almost unscathed. These jugs are made of brown earthenware with a bulbous body tapering to a long, narrow neck decorated with the face of a rather fierce bearded man. They often also bear a coat-of-arms, as the one featured in the museum, or a floral decoration.

Bellarmine Jars were traditionally produced in Germany, particularly in Frechen outside Cologne. This jar is said to date to the early years of the 17th century, although their production in Germany goes back at least to the 14th century, possibly earlier.

In Germany, these jars were first called *'Bartmann Krug'* (Bearded Man Jugs). The face is reminiscent of the 'Wild Man of the Woods' spirit common across Europe that originated in ancient times and was still worshipped in rural areas even in the staunchly Christian Middle Ages. In Britain, this image was known as 'The Green Man', still a popular name for inns and pubs. Similar faces were often carved or etched onto trees, stone structures or wooden panels as a protection against evil spirits. They can even be found adorning the borders of Christian manuscripts and tapestries.

But in 1606, the nickname Bellarmine was newly coined and, in fact, may not have been in general use until later in the century. St. Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621), an influential Roman Catholic theologian and Counter-Reformation cardinal, was very unpopular in the Protestant countries, particularly Germany and Holland. It was Robert Bellarmine who was behind the original accusations against Galileo and who led the Papal attempt to declare Copernicus's theories heretical. As you can imagine, this rigid and reactionary cardinal also held many other strict views – particularly against the consumption of alcohol. These jars seem to have been named for him in an attempt to humiliate the Cardinal by portraying him as a grotesque bearded old man who frowned on fun and enjoyment. There was also the extra insult that these small flagons would often be used to carry alcohol, something Bellarmine was particularly against. Imagine drinkers wishing each other 'Cheers', whilst raising the Cardinal's face in mock tribute!

Carrying gin and brandy was not their only function. Research from the *Nassau* and various other Dutch shipwrecks shows that the jars were often used on long voyages to transport mercury, an important component of various medical treatments. Another more sinister use of Bellarmine jars, which must have further insulted the famous cardinal, was as Witches' Jars used to store hair clippings, nails – or even human urine – for use in spells and charms. The jars were then buried in secret places to work their magic.

Our little jar spans a thousand years of history and tells of pagan rites, Christian conflicts, magic spells, pharmacological remedies – and an irreverent bottle of gin! ◆

The Magic Square Bowl in Gallery B

Marianne Khor

Amidst a number of examples of the Islamic influence on metal and ceramic wares in a showcase in Gallery B, a small bowl can be found with the intriguing description 'Magic Square Bowl'. It looks like a small Chinese rice bowl but is decorated with Islamic script. On the inside of the bowl is a square consisting of sixteen smaller squares, also containing Islamic writing. Was it used to perform magic, or was it magical in itself?

During the Tang Dynasty (618-907) Chinese ceramics with Islamic script were already produced in China and transported along the maritime trade routes by Arab and Persian traders. After the Tang Dynasty, ceramics with Islamic inscriptions were no longer produced. Only in the early 16th Century did they appear again. The Magic Square Bowl in Gallery B is from the 18th Century Qing Dynasty.

The Magic Square, or *Buduh* tradition, predates Islam. The early Magic Square is thought to be of Chinese origin and consisted of a 3x3 square with 9 smaller squares. The numbers 1-9, with the number 5 in the centre, add up to 15 in each row, column and the two diagonals. An early version of Sudoku? A Magic Square was used to find love, prevent fears, attacks and poisoning. It helped during childbirth and also in finding lost objects. In short, it could be quite helpful for many occasions. Later, there were Magic Squares of 4x4, 6x6, 7x7, and 10x10, and even 100x100 squares with an arrangement of letters and numerals.

Islamic mathematicians in the Arab world already knew about the Magic Square as early as the 7th Century. This knowledge may have come from India through the study of Indian astronomy and mathematics, or from China. The earliest Magic Squares were written in *'abjad'* letter-numerals. The four corners of the square were marked with the letters ba', dal, waw (or u) and ha. Therefore, this particular square was known as the 'Buduh' square.

The name 'Buduh' itself was so powerful that it was regarded as a most effective talisman, and so was the letter B with its numerical equivalents 2,4,6,8. This arrangement of letters and its corresponding numbers is believed to protect travellers, babies, postal letters and packages. Even today in some Islamic countries, one can find packages marked with the numbers 2,4,6 or 8 in the corners, or just the letter B added under the address to ensure that the items arrive safely. This might be something worth trying out!

Magic Squares were used by Muslims as religious mandalas, meditation devices, talisman, and amulets. They were drawn on a variety of objects, even on skin.

The Arabic letters and numerals in the Magic Square can also be read as one of the ninety-nine names or attributes of God. The numerical value with a certain specific meaning can be obtained by adding the corresponding letters of any of the columns of the Magic Square in a horizontal, vertical or diagonal way.

One wonders what the inscriptions in the Magic Square Bowl in Gallery B represent…

Do they have a religious meaning? Or are they just meant to bring good luck in any situation? ◆

Petaling Street Heritage House

Shirley Abdullah

The Museum Volunteers visited the Petaling Street Heritage House on 19 July 2018. Our guide during the visit was the affable Chong Keat Aun who is the founder and curator of this gallery. He is a writer and filmmaker and was a radio presenter for Radio Television Malaysia's green channel, which is a Chinese language service.

Chong spearheads a project that began in 2005 to conserve the history of Kuala Lumpur's Chinatown quarter. The project gained momentum when Kuala Lumpur's Mass Rapid Transit project affected the Chinatown quarter, and forced some of the residents to sell their shophouses to make way for the new MRT train station. This quarter is often referred to as Petaling Street, which is a generic reference to the popular shopping street. However, the quarter comprises several other streets such as Jalan Sultan, Leboh Pasar Besar, Jalan Yap Ah Loy and Jalan Tun HS Lee. The Petaling Street Heritage House is located at 196 Jalan Tun HS Lee. Other prominent landmarks along this street include the Sri Mahamariamman Temple and the Guan Di Temple.

The Heritage House is in a two-storey pre-war shophouse that has been completely refurbished. At street level, it stands out with its bright yellow façade. On the ground floor is a restaurant that serves dishes from the seven Chinese dialect groups. It operates the restaurant as a means of raising funds in order to be self-sustaining as it does not receive any government support. The upper floor houses the current exhibition detailing the theatre development in Petaling Street.

Chong explained that in Malaysia, there are seven Chinese dialects – Cantonese, Teochew, Hainanese, Foochow, Hokkien, Puxian and Hakka. However, in Petaling Street, Cantonese was the dominant *lingua franca* as most of the residents are descendants of migrants from Guangdong province in China. Chong derived much information from oral accounts of residents of Petaling Street, who had sold their shophouses or halted their business activities in the area when the MRT project began in 2010. Most of the artefacts on display were donated by these old folks from their personal collections. Some were even salvaged from backstreets when the residents discarded them when they moved out, oblivious to their intrinsic historical and cultural value!

The focus of the Petaling Street Heritage House is the preservation of Chinese dialect songs and its musical heritage. A famous record store called Yan Kee was located on Petaling Street. When the owner passed away in 2010, her son donated 2000 Chinese opera LPs (long-playing records), circa 1950 to 1960, to the Petaling Street Heritage House project. This collection is being digitalized into MP3 format and preserved. Students from New Era College are conducting research utilizing the collection and the Heritage House intends to establish an aural history archive.

Yan Kee was also involved with providing radio scripts on operas to Radio Malaya and to Rediffusion, which was a subscription-based Chinese language radio service that was extremely popular in the

1960s to 1980s. The radio presenters would use the radio scripts to help listeners learn more about the characters and understand the plots of the operas.

An opera stage complete with its intricate hand-painted backdrop, a seating area and even a backstage dressing table used by the opera's leading actress are on display, together with stage costumes and interesting stage props and even a dressing case used by travelling opera singers. The Cantonese opera singers of that time were mega stars and fan magazines prominently featuring them are also included in the collection.

The booming tin-mining and rubber industries and the affluent Chinese business community fuelled the growth of Cantonese opera in Malaya. The Yan Keng Benevolent Dramatic Association was formed in 1917 and its Cantonese Opera Group arm actively promoted Cantonese opera in the country. They would bring in famous stage performers from China and Hong Kong. Teahouses such as Yen Lok and Seng Kee flourished in the early 1920s. Patrons would enjoy listening to famous Cantonese ballads while sipping their tea. During major festivals like the Mooncake festival, some of the leading opera singers would perform at these teahouses.

Song lyric books of Cantonese opera known as *Muyu Shu* (which means Wooden Fish Book) are also on display. The reference to wooden fish comes from China where blind people traditionally sang these songs and used wooden blocks carved into fish shapes as percussion instruments. These books were preserved by Kai Chee Book Store in Petaling Street and were printed between 1920 and 1935. This was introduced by earlier migrants to South East Asia to express their feelings of homesickness. The lower income groups could not afford the luxury of spending time listening to music in a teahouse. To cater to the man in the street, some impoverished scholars copied and printed popular opera lyrics and songs for sale and this evolved into a variation of karaoke as a popular pastime for ordinary folks who would sing these songs themselves.

Opera watching and listening no longer remained the domain of the upper class following the emergence of Pu Changchun Opera Troupe and Madras Theatre at Petaling Street. The Madras Theatre was known as Chung Hwa Cinema Hall in Chinese.

The unique feature of the Heritage House is its preservation of aural history. During out visit, Chong played the recordings from 1946 of an opening opera piece originating from the Chin Dynasty commonly referred to as 'Welcoming the Generals' (and officially as 'The Inauguration of the Six States Prime Minister') which was always performed during the opening night of the Opera, as an auspicious gesture to bestow luck. Chong also played recordings of the narration by Dr Too Chee Cheong of his life's recollections about his grandfather, his father and himself. Apart from being a medical doctor, Dr Too was a renowned composer and a poet, who has also translated classic Chinese poems into English. Dr Too's grandfather, Too Nam, is well known among older Chinese in Malaysia as a follower and supporter of Dr Sun Yat Sen. Dr Too believed that his grandfather, Too Nam, who was a Chinese tutor to Dr Sun Yat Sen in Hawaii, strongly influenced the young Sun, who, later in life, became the Chinese revolutionary credited with establishing the Republic of China. Dr Too Chee Cheong passed away in 2017 at the ripe old age of 93 years. ◆

Top: mockup of an opera stage
Opposite page: (left) the restaurant on the ground floor; (right) Chong holding an LP

The Chinese History Museum in Kuching

Kon Cze Yan

This charming little museum is located on the Kuching Waterfront. It was built in 1912 as a court by Chinese traders to enact their laws and customs. Thereafter it was taken over by the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and in 1993, it became the Chinese History Museum.

James Brooke, the first White Rajah of Sarawak, disliked the Chinese, but regarded them as a necessary evil. The Rajah detested people who had anything to do with money. 'The Chinaman', wrote Ludwig Verner Helms, the managing director of the Borneo Company, 'must have his tea, tobacco, opium and samsu, and when he has ready money he must gamble. He is, therefore, an excellent subject to tax, and from the opium, arrack and gambling farms the Sarawak Treasury was largely replenished'.

And so the Chinese in Sarawak occupied a special place during the period of the White Rajahs. They formed a state within a state. They had their own temples and their own code of laws.

The Chinese now make up about a quarter of the population of Sarawak and are Sarawak's second largest ethnic group after the Ibans. The museum describes the three waves of migration of Chinese into Sarawak. The origin, destination and occupation of each major dialect group are detailed. It also highlights the early prominent pioneers and the current leaders of the community.

The first wave of immigration took place in the early 19th century. These were mainly Hakka gold and antimony miners from Kalimantan. The second wave of Chinese immigrants arrived by sea and consisted mainly of Hokkien, Teochew and Cantonese. These traders arrived before the first Rajah, James Brooke. The third and biggest wave of immigrants arrived mainly at the invitation of Rajah Charles Brooke to open up land for cultivation and provide labour for the mines.

An information panel on each of the Chinese immigrant groups who helped build Sarawak – Hakka, Cantonese, Hokkien, Teochew, Chao Ann, Henghua, Hainanese, Foochow, Luichew and Sankiang – forms the bulk of the displays in this little museum.

Two large sections of the museum are devoted to prominent Chinese leaders both past and present. Sadly there is no mention of the 'Uncrowned King of Sarawak', Wee Kheng Chiang. So influential and wealthy was he that Lady Sylvia Brooke, wife of Rajah Vyner Brooke, bestowed that title on him. When she often told him he was a rascal and rogue, it delighted him so much he would send for a bottle of champagne and drink to it! ◆

Skeletons

Maganjeet Kaur

Rhipidistia, ancestor to all vertebrate life on land.

The first multicellular life forms appeared in the oceans around 600 million years ago (mya). These were initially soft-bodied animals, but around 550 mya, animals with skeletons and shells started to evolve, possibly due to increased levels of calcium and magnesium in the oceans. The move to land occurred around 370 mya when the rhipidistians, a carnivorous fish that lived both in salt and fresh waters, evolved into amphibians. Then, around 300 million years ago, reptiles evolved from amphibians. Reptiles were the first fully terrestrial animals and they gave rise to both birds and mammals.

An exhibition in 2016 titled 'Skeletons' held at the Natural History Museum in Putrajaya (now closed) provided an insight into how the skeletons of various animals evolved and adapted to their different functions. The snake evolved a long cylindrical body in order to adapt to a life underground. The elephant's skull is large to support its massive trunk and heavy dentition. However, air spaces and sinuses in the skull make it lighter and also allow the elephant to communicate using a low frequency sound, known as infrasound, that carries for miles. Uniquely, some amphibians such as frogs have four digits on their front limbs and five on their back; the digits are webbed to allow the frogs to swim.

Wings are required for flight and these developed through exaptation, a process whereby the structure that performs one function is modified to perform a different function. Thus, insect wings were modified from gills while the wings for birds and bats (the only mammal that can fly) are modified front limbs. Flight requires a lightweight but strong structure. In birds, this necessitated some bones to be eliminated while the remaining ones were hollowed out. In addition, a strong chest bone developed to hold the flight muscles. The development of feathers that help birds to fly was another exaptation – their original purpose could have been to regulate heat.

To live in trees, arboreal creatures (e.g. primates and koalas) developed strong chest and hipbones while a prehensile tail provided stability to navigate the canopy. The opposable thumb evolved allowing primates to grasp tree branches; this same feature would later give flexibility to hominids to fashion tools and weapons from stone and other materials.

Bipedalism, the ability to walk upright, is made possible because the spine and leg bones in hominids are in a straight line. In other four-legged mammals, the spine and leg bones are at right angles, making an upright position difficult to achieve. In the chimpanzee, the spine and leg bones are angled, allowing the chimpanzee to walk in a semi-upright position. ◆

Chimpanzee (Pan troglodytes). Its spine and leg bones are not at right angles, allowing it to walk in a semi-upright position.

Sumatran serow (Capricornis sumatraensis). This species of goat has a relatively short body and long legs. Similar with other four legged mammals, its spine and leg bones are at right angles to each other.

Gene Ang and his Hawaiian Crackers

Karen Loh

One night in the early '70s. It is past midnight. The stage is set. The crowd waits in anticipation. *Gene Ang and his Hawaiian Crackers* are playing popular Hawaiian music of the day, performing for one night only at the Chinese New Village in Taiping for the legendary striptease artiste, Rose Chan. Suddenly she appears from behind the curtains. The band works hard to keep their music in tempo to Rose's moves as she gyrates and teases her audience. Unbeknownst to the audience, Rose is wearing three pairs of undergarments. Excitement builds as Rose takes off the first of three of her brassieres and swings it to the audience. She then takes off her second brassiere and again throws it to the crowd. And just as Rose is removing her third brassiere, Gene snaps a string of his lap steel guitar. It was all too much for him.

1958: What do a postman, surveyor, storekeeper, optical shop assistant and bank teller have in common? Nothing much, except that they all were all once members of the same band! *Gene Ang and his Hawaiian Crackers* was the only performing band in Taiping from the late '50s up to 1976. The band comprised of Gene's neighbour, Zain, who was a postman; Poh Kee who worked in Chartered Bank (now known as Standard Chartered Bank after the 1969 merger with Standard Bank); Singgam, an Army storekeeper; 'T.A.' who worked in an optician's; and Gene whose day job was with the Government Survey Department.

Hawaiian songs and the hits of Elvis Presley were very popular back then so the band concentrated on playing these songs. Most of the music was learnt by ear after listening to vinyl records. They did not have the luxury of music sheets. As the only band around, *Gene Ang and his Hawaiian Crackers* was in high demand performing at weddings, private evening functions and birthday parties. And during the weekends, they sometimes performed for doctors' private functions, the police inspectors' mess, nurses' dances, and in private clubs. The band even played at the cinema before showings of Elvis Presley movies. One of Gene's fondest memories is performing in the band which was chosen to play during the opening of Parliament in 1962. Gene's instrument of choice was the lap steel guitar (a.k.a. Hawaiian guitar), but he could play almost all stringed instruments including the guitar, ukulele, double bass, mandolin, and violin, as well as the *gendang* (double-headed drum). How and when did Gene develop this passion for playing and performing?

Here is his story…

1929: Ang Leong Tooi was born in Ipoh to a Baba family from Medan. He would later adopt the name Gene after Gene Autry, the Singing Cowboy who was popular in the 1940s. Gene's father worked as a Chief Customs Officer while his mother tended to their six children. Even from the early age of five, Gene was drawn to music. His first instrument was the violin, which he learnt to play from a *Ronggeng* (Javanese dance) troupe. His family moved to Teluk Intan when he was 7 years old where he was introduced to a friend of his father who played for a Chinese Opera troupe in Taiwan. From him, Gene learned to play the big drum and also observed how to lead a band.

Life took a different turn in 1942 during the Japanese Occupation when most of the schools and shops were closed, a period where Gene also stopped playing music. In 1943, his family moved to Taiping. After the war, Gene resumed his studies at the King Edward School there (now SMK King Edward VII), starting Standard 4 at the age of 17 years old. He would later complete his education at the age of 20 years in Penang in 1949. Sadly, Gene's father fell ill in December the same year and passed away at the beginning of 1952. With no means of supporting himself through further education, Gene

Gene Ang (2nd from the right) and his Hawaiian Crackers in the late '50s.

Photograph taken at Town Hall in Taiping during a party for the Survey Sports Club. It was popular then to hire girls from Kampung Pinang as dance partners for joget and ronggeng. The dancers were paid $15 per person and the band would get RM200. Gene is playing the lap steel guitar in this photograph.

A photograph taken in 1965 at the Town Hall in Taiping for the Perak Amateur Athletic Association (AAA). Gene (2nd from the right) is playing the double bass, Sultan Idris' brother is on guitar, and Nicholas is playing the lap steel guitar.

joined the Government Survey Department in Taiping and worked his way up to be a land surveyor.

As luck would have it, soon after the war, while Gene was still at school in Taiping, he met Emile Nicholas who later became a Major (then Colonel) in the army. The duo played guitar at weekly Saturday campfires and sing-a-long. It was also during these weekly campfires that Gene met his future wife, Judy Foo, who was only 15 years old when they met. She was his sister's classmate. They dated for 7 years before getting married in 1954.

The author with Gene Ang in 2018

In the early '50s, Gene was invited to play for the British at the Military Club, the Australian and New Zealand clubs in Kamunting, the Customs Recreational Club, and the New Club near Lake Gardens in Taiping. When Nicholas was transferred to Ipoh, he invited Gene to play the double bass in his band at St. John's Red Cross Hall and at *joget* (traditional Malay dance) dances in Perak. After his experiences in Nicholas' band, Gene finally formed his own troupe in 1958, calling themselves The Hawaiian Crackers with Gene Ang as the band leader. The band performed together until 1976 when Gene had to move to Pahang as the land surveyor for a Federal Land Development Authority (Felda) scheme.

Gene still remains sprightly and full of energy to this day. He does his daily exercises by walking every morning and evening. After he stopped playing music, his passion turned to cooking and baking. ◆

Puja Pantai at Pulau Carey

Marie-Andree Abt

On the first day of February (2017), Jean-Marie, my husband and I went to a Puja Pantai at Pulau Carey, which is about one hour's drive from Kuala Lumpur. The Puja Pantai is a *Hari Moyang* (ancestor spirit day) ritual conducted by the Mah Meri fishing villagers to appease the spirits of the sea.

Jean-Marie joined us early at our home so we could be at Kampong Bumbun at 9am, as instructed by the young lady in charge. This gave us plenty of time to visit the museum in this charming cultural village. Now we know plenty about the Mah Meri culture and wood carvings!

Finally we were invited to wear a nice origami headdress and instructed to keep it on our heads throughout the ceremony so that the spirits could recognise us as guests.

We joined the procession coming from Kampung Judah, another Mah Meri village. Jean-Marie and I followed the procession while my husband had to follow by car as he could not leave the car by the side of the road. We walked with the crowd, while trying to take photographs of the shaman, the musicians, and the navy soldiers who were there to carry the *busot jantan* (a mound made of bamboo frame and plaited palms leaves).

After about 2 kilometres, we turned left and, there, the shaman and his helper sanctified the cross road to show the way to the spirits.

We finally arrived at the beach where we waited about two hours while the shaman chewed betel, smoked, and eventually entered a trance state. Then, to please the spirits, there was a Jo-oh dance. Several young ladies began to dance around the busot jantan. A male mask dancer joined them and finally the shaman entered the dance.

By this time, the tide had subsided and the procession moved to the grand altar at the beach. The main feast to the ancestors is offered at this altar. ◆

Male mask dancer

The shaman

Pepper and Gambier in Malaya

Elizabeth Khoo

When European colonists reached the part of the Malay Archipelago consisting of the Malay Peninsula and the island of Singapore, they found that only two of the spices that they sought would grow well in this region. These were pepper and gambier, which were then cultivated and became lucrative crops.

BLACK PEPPER

Pepper, the 'King of Spices', is one of the oldest and most popular spices in the world. Indigenous to Malabar, West Coast of India, it was already traded during the Roman and Greek periods. It was the search for pepper that led early European sailors eastward, thus influencing the history of South East Asia.

The name pepper comes from the Sanskrit word *pippali*, meaning berry; it is called *lada* in Bahasa Malaysia. Pepper is used to cure meats, as a preservative and to flavour food. It has medicinal uses in Chinese, Indian and certain other communities. In medieval Europe, pepper was worth its weight in gold and often used as currency for rent, dowry and taxes.

Pepper vines grow best near the equator in moist, hot climates with evenly distributed rainfall of about 100 inches. It requires fertile, flat or gently sloping land, rich in humus with good drainage and light shade. The pepper plant is a perennial woody vine growing up to about four metres in height on support poles, trees or trellises. The pepper plant is propagated by cuttings. It starts fruiting at between 3 to 5 years and will continue to do so every third year for up to 40 years. Its fruits look like long slim clusters of berries and harvesting is done by hand.

Pepper fruits known as peppercorns are processed to be available in various forms. The three most popular being Black Pepper, White Pepper and Green Pepper.

- Black pepper *(Lada Hitam)* is produced from green, unripe drupes (fruit with stone), which are scaled to release its enzymes. The drupes are dried on mats and raked several times a day for a week, until they are wrinkled and black.

- White pepper *(Lada Puteh)* is processed from ripe peppercorns. The red and orange berries are packed in sacks and soaked for a week under slow running water. This rots the outer husks which is then removed by rubbing. The dried husked berries are white peppercorn.

- Green pepper *(Lada Hijau)* is occasionally available fresh, still on its long stem. Green peppercorns are pickled in brine or vinegar, or freeze dried.

Today, Malaysia is one of the largest producers of pepper in the world along with Vietnam, Indonesia, India and Brazil. Sarawak accounts for 95% of the total production in Malaysia. Other pepper producing states are Johor and Sabah.

GAMBIER

Gambier is native to the Malay Archipelago and it was traded in the 17th century. Interestingly, both pepper and gambier share a symbiotic relationship; they are often grown together and are seen entwined. Gambier-leaf compost acts as fertiliser for the pepper plants and offers protection for its roots.

Gambier is also known *Catechu* (India), *Er Cha* or *Gou Teng* (China) or Cat's Claw. It is from the Rubiaceae family and the native variety is the *Uncaria gambir*. Gambier shrubs are climbers of slender woody vines. They grow as bushes up to about 2.5 metres. Gambier is prepared by boiling the young leaves and pressing them to extract its juice. The concentrated juice is dried into a semi solid paste and moulded into cubes, which are then dried in the sun.

In medicine, Gambier has anti-inflammatory and sedative properties. It dilates blood vessels and lowers blood pressure. In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), gambier is used to treat hypertension, dizziness, and anxiety. It is also effective to calm wind, relieve convulsions, calm the liver, and remove (or clear away) heat. Excess consumption can cause diarrhoea, kidney damage, swollen feet and nausea. It is not recommended for long term use.

Gambier is most commonly used today as a condiment in betel nut chewing, tanning of hides, and in dyeing where it yields the colour 'khaki'.

Gambier was first grown in Johor in the late 1840s and exported to China and Europe. The plantations were highly profitable and successful, providing employment to many locals and immigrants. However, with the advent of the automobile industry, rubber replaced gambier as the most important cash crop by the turn of the 20th century. ◆

Four watercolour drawings of plants from Melaka commissioned by William Farquhar. Clockwise from top left: Gambier (Uncaria gambir), Black Pepper (Piper nigrum), Durian (Durio zibethinus), and Wild nutmeg (Gymnacranthera farquhariana or Myristica farquhariana). This last plant is named after William Farquhar.

A Charcoal Factory at Kuala Sepetang

V. Jegatheesan

Charcoal is a controversial fuel these days due to climate change and atmospheric pollution fears. Nevertheless, this fuel was a standard feature in the kitchens of most Malaysian houses. It is still being used, although on a much reduced scale. Making charcoal is not a matter of just heating wood until it is burnt. It is more involved than that, requiring the right type of wood and the right method. However, it is still a very basic process with no high tech blast furnaces or machinery. A recent visit to the Khay Hor Holdings Sd. Bhd. Charcoal Factory provided me with good insight on how charcoal is made.

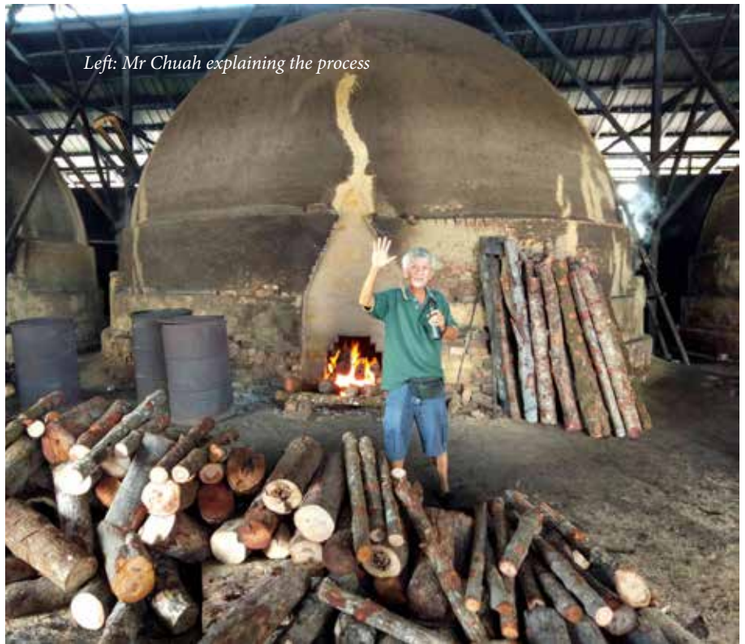
The factory is located in Kuala Sepetang, formerly and better known as Port Weld. Kuala Sepetang is within the Matang mangrove forest reserve, which at 40 000 hectares is the largest and best-managed mangrove forest in Malaysia. The west coast of the peninsula has many other mangrove forests, Kuala Selangor for example, but they do not replant the chopped trees, thus depleting the forest. Matang, however, is recognised as a good model of sustainable mangrove forestry and conservation.

There are a few factories in the area; the one we visited was the only factory that gave a tour. Mr. K. Y. Chuah, a member of the owning family, who, dressed in his work clothes (sports shirt, shorts and sandals), gave us a spirited and engaging tour of the factory and its operations.

Among the mangrove, the two species most commonly used are *Rhizophora apiculata* and *Rhizophora mucronata*. Mangrove trees are locally referred to as *bakau*. Any wood can be made into charcoal. However, these species can withstand high heat. The charcoal-making process involves high heat to remove the water content in the wood. This is smoked out rather than burnt out. It also gives a shine to the charcoal.

The wood from these trees is initially very heavy, as we found out when carrying one of the logs, because of high water content. In fact, this wood will sink in water and not float like other woods, because there is no air space due to water saturation. It is after all a mangrove swamp tree.

The kiln is igloo-shaped and there are six of these located in a large shed. The bricks used are the same type as those used in housing. The structure is plastered with very fine clay and sand to completely seal the kiln. It does take an expert to do this perfectly. The kilns are all 7m in height by 6.7m in width. These sizes are specified by the Forestry Department to make it easy to calculate duty to be paid.



Left: Mr Chuah explaining the process

Wood is stacked to fill up the kiln. It will weigh some 50 tons inside. This is high because of the water content of the wood and when the process is completed, it will weigh some 10 tons only. The fire is not inside as the wood is not burnt. The fire is on the outside and it is the heat that slowly goes in to warm up the wood and remove the water content. There are six flues or vents around the kiln to allow the vapour to escape. Simply put, heat goes inside and raises the temperature of the wood to release its water content.

This is just the first stage with the fire burning for 14 days. Workers in three shifts have to check every 3 to 4 hours to top up the wood and keep the fire consistently going. If not topped up and the fire lowers, oxygen leaks inside and the fire follows inside and burns the wood.

The vapour comes out of the vents. It is in fact steam, which is very hot and has a strong pungent odour. Expertly smelling and observing the colour, as well as using a thermometer to be sure, the workers will know when it is ready to reduce the fire to a smaller one. Through experience, the workers know how to control the slow fire. It is still hot inside but the vapour is reduced and, thus, not as hot as before. This process will continue for another 11 days after which there is no longer any vapour. The workers then shut down the fire and seal the kiln completely. It will take another 7 days to cool it down completely.

Finally, the kiln opening will be hacked, the bricks removed and the charcoal taken out. The six kilns in this factory are used in turn to continuously produce charcoal. The condensed vapour is referred to as vinegar; it is liquid oil, which is collected. Mr. Chuah extolled the virtues of this and of other products, which can be used as mosquito repellents and soaps with no chemicals added.

The factory is in a swamp area and the stench takes some getting used to. The canal by the side is used to bring in the wood from the forest. It is a tidal canal and therefore used on certain days only. Contract workers are paid to cut and transport the wood, and they are paid after delivery. As the forest is harvested, the cutters have to go in deeper and so it takes longer to bring the wood in.

Top: transporting the logs
Bottom: mangrove conservation

The Forestry Department annually allots the specific lots for harvesting and they have to use their allotment. Otherwise, the following year's allotment will be reduced, or the licence cancelled. The replanting is also managed by the Forestry Department but tendered to contractors.

Mr. Chuah explained that Japan buys 70% of the production and they insist on these species. According to him, the Japanese, despite being very high tech, still believe in charcoal. They use it as barbecue fuel as more people prefer traditional methods. For those who can afford it, houses are built with a layer of charcoal beneath to keeps the houses warm in winter; it also absorbs odour. In addition, among its many other uses, charcoal is also used as an absorbent.

All in all, it was a very interesting tour and appreciation of charcoal. Questions were in our minds as to whether charcoal is environmentally friendly to use. It is not fossil fuel and it is touted as being green. However, how much of the carbon released is recaptured by reforestation? ◆

The Minangkabau of Negeri Sembilan

Rose Gan

Negeri Sembilan lies south of Kuala Lumpur International Airport. Its original founders were ethnic Minangkabau émigrés from Sumatra who probably arrived during the heydays of the Melaka sultanate, which attracted Muslims from around the region. Negeri Sembilan possibly refers to the people of nine townships of West Sumatra that settled the area. The present sultan and his family are all of Minang ancestry, their culture is matrilineal, and their palace is a grand version of the distinctive bull-horned Minangkabau *Rumah Gadang* house.

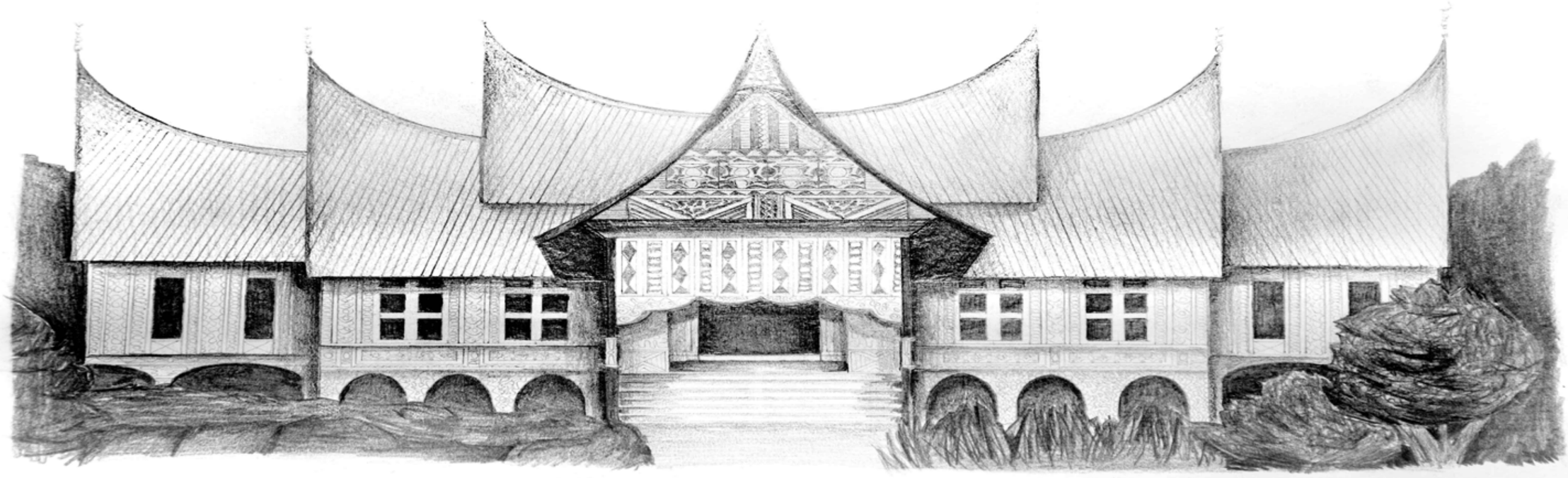
The Minangkabau ethnic group occupies the province of West Sumatra, famed for its beautiful landscapes of lakes, tropical rainforests, and the Bukit Barisan mountain range. They speak *Bahasa Minangkabau*, which shares many common features with Malay. Most Minang are farmers; those living in the coastal areas work as fishermen. They are known for their handicrafts such as cane work, silverware, embroidery and most of all, woven traditional textiles, particularly songket cloth.

The Minangkabau embraced Islam early on; they were one of the first conversions in the archipelago, following Aceh. Islam is central to their culture, distinguishing their *adat* from that of other animist ethnic groups. However, following Islamic law, representations of human forms are not allowed and animals feature only in stylised form. Unlike other ancient cultures of Sumatra, the Minangkabau have been in contact with outside influences for centuries, widely assimilating from cultures with which they came into contact. Arabic, Indian and Chinese influences can be observed in their textiles and arts, particularly those of the coastal areas.

West Sumatra is divided into *nagari* (negeri or autonomous townships). Their culture is matrilineal, unusual especially within an Islamic community. Kinship and inheritance are passed down through the female line, giving the women of the Minangkabau a unique importance and great respect. The Minangkabau people are also distinguished by their arts and philosophy which are both expressive and dynamic, yet hold closely to their prevailing traditional values and the belief of *'alam takambang jadi guru'* (nature is mankind's best teacher), meaning that the natural world should guide their lives.

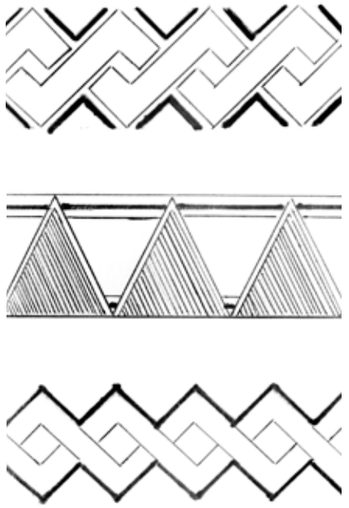
In a Minangkabau extended family, children belong to the maternal line. It is the responsibility of the mother's brother to raise them. Throughout his married life, a husband maintains close contact with his own mother's family, often leaving his work tools and other possessions at her home and helping out his own family in agricultural tasks. After marriage, he gradually moves his belongings to his wife's home and increases the time spent there only when the marriage seems secure, i.e. after daughters are born. Divorce is common, usually instigated by the woman if her husband fails to provide her with a daughter, without which the kinship line would be broken. Men tend to hold little property themselves because of complications arising in inheritance matters, especially after a divorce, when they can lose everything to their wife.

The *Rumah Gadang*, or Big House, is a communal home shared by the extended matrilineal Minangkabau family. This type of house is often lyrically referred to as *gajah menyusu anak* ('elephant suckling her offspring'), referring to the juxtaposition of the large house with its soaring upswept roof and the miniature rice barn nestled in its shade. The unusual roof shape is often compared to a mountain, perhaps reflecting the towering peaks of the surrounding Bukit Barisan range. The ornate wall panels are adorned with richly coloured stylised plant and animal

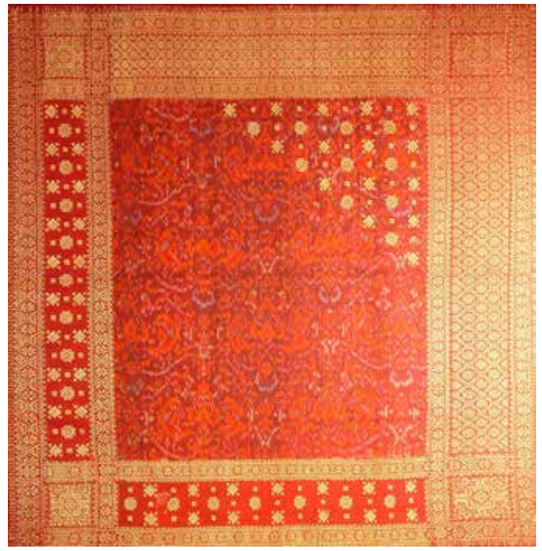


Illustrated by Daniel Gan

A Minangkabau dance



Songket patterns: (top to bottom) Itiak Pulang, Pucuak Rebuang, Saluak Berantai. Sketched by Daniel Gan



Woven silk songket limar cloth used as headgear.

motifs symbolising such qualities as bravery (buffalo), co-operation (duck), alertness (cat), good luck *(cicak)* taken from the domestic animals that feature in their daily lives, typical of the homespun folklore of the Minang people.

The buffalo horn *gonjong* decorative feature on the roof is a distinctive element of Minangkabau design, referencing the legend of their origin as well as demonstrating the importance of daughters. The gonjong is associated with women: the traditional female Minang headdress, the *tengkuluk tanduk* has a similar shape. This is particularly unusual because in most cultures the bullhorn has male connotations. The number of bullhorns on the roof of a Rumah Gadang indicates the number of married daughters belonging to the house.

West Sumatra is regarded as one of the most notable regions for the production of songket cloth; historically Koto Gadang, Payakumbuh and Bukittinggi in the highlands were at the centre of manufacture. The songket from Koto Gadang is considered to be the best quality in terms of technical skills, materials, and the various and distinctive motifs that make them difficult to copy.

The uniqueness of songket lies in the supplementary weave of gold and silver thread and the complexity of its designs, rich in motifs of an affirmative and natural theme. Songket weaving is commonly done by women. Motifs on Minangkabau songket conform both to their philosophy of the natural world, and their folklore, steeped in traditional wisdom. The common sense of women is noticeable in the symbolism of their songket designs and in the wearing of the cloth. The male *sisamping* (Malay: *samping*), the short sarong, must be tied with a large hanging fold at the front, shaped like a tongue. This is a warning to men to guard what they say in public. One can almost hear the admonitory voice of a wife! Many Minangkabau songket motifs retain delightful meanings that have probably been lost elsewhere.

The *teluk berantai* linked chain motif, known to the Minang as *saluak berantai*, signifies the strength of a community when its members cooperate and work together. *Itiak pulang patang* 'ducks returning home at dusk' reminds that wherever one travels in life, one always returns to one's home or traditional values. The ubiquitous triangular *pucuak rabuang*, or young bamboo shoot, represents the usefulness of bamboo in all its stages just as members of the community should be 'useful in youth and beneficial in old age'.

The Minang people have a great respect for learning, demonstrating an openness to external ideas and influences that is rare in traditional cultures. One interesting practice is the tradition of *merantau*, where young men are encouraged to leave their home villages and travel either to other islands, or even further afield. In modern times this has even extended to young women. This temporary exile exposed the young to fresh ideas and new skills, which on their return would benefit the community at large. The Minang are a dynamic culture, and although their population is small, they have made an exponentially large contribution to the archipelago. In Indonesia and Malaysia, many professionals, politicians and intellectuals were traditionally of Minang origin, particularly women of note. Minangkabau communities are to be found all over the archipelago, set up by those who travelled and settled elsewhere, hence the prevalence of Padang food (*nasi padang*, a speciality of the region) on many other islands. The famous dish beef rendang is arguably of West Sumatran origin, although many Malaysians might disagree!

The Minangkabau people of Negeri Sembilan maintain a matrilineal customary system unique amongst Malay, called the *adat perpatih*. Although in Islamic law the husband of the matriarch would be the ultimate authority, amongst the Minangkabau he is considered *orang semanda* (an outsider). The authority of the family stays firmly with the maternal side, although the husband would support and assist in decision-making. This might appear to be an unworkable arrangement, but amongst Minangkabaus it becomes a courteous social collaboration that encourages cooperation and discussion between the two families.

In Negeri Sembilan and other parts of Malaysia, one can still see examples of the *gonjong,* or bullhorn finials, on upswept roofs in the Minang house style, both on private houses and public buildings. A stylised version, known as *'silang gunting'* or crossed scissors, is more common as can be seen on the gable ends of Sri Menanti, the old palace of the sultans of Negeri Sembilan.

Although songket of fine quality is produced in Malaysia, it is still customary for Malays of Minangkabau descent to source their cloth from the Bukittinggi region, especially for weddings. The Chinese-inspired Minangkabau wedding headdress, *bunga suntiang* has also become popular for brides.

The matrilineal Minangkabau have made a distinctive mark on Peninsular Malaysia, not least in the example of female empowerment within a Muslim community. Their dynamic influence has enriched Malay culture until today it has become an integral part of Malaysian identity. ◆

Bunga Suntiang

Eunos Abdullah – An Early Malay Nationalist

Hani Kamal

Mohammad Eunos Abdullah (1876-1933) was a campaigner for the Malay cause in Singapore. He was also known as the father of modern Malay journalism. Eunos fought hard for Malay rights, especially in education. He was a journalist, a politician and founder of the Singapura Malay Union (Kesatuan Melayu Singapura, KMS). His passion in championing Malay rights in Singapore went on to inspire future Malay nationalists in Malaya.

Eunos was born in Singapore to a successful Minangkabau trader from Sumatera, Indonesia. He had his early education in a Malay school in Kampong Glam and he was among the very few Malays who studied at Raffles Institution. Upon graduation, he joined the government service. His early career in Singapore was that of an attendant at the Harbour Master's office; he was later promoted as Harbour Master in Muar, Johor.

In the early 19th century, Munshi Abdullah, the father of modern Malay literature, was also a renowned Islamic scholar with his modernistic interpretation of Islam in the region. Eunos was inspired by his writings. At the age of 31, Eunos was offered a job as an Editor for the *Utusan Melayu*, a Malay language version of the English newspaper in Singapore. Thus, was the beginning of his opinionated voice on racial nationalism of *bumiputra* (son of the soil) issues. He also spoke up against the Muslim Arab descendants who were monopolizing the social and economic environment in Singapore. From literary work, he instantly became a political activist representing the Malay voice during the colonial era.

In 1922, he was appointed as Justice of the Peace and subsequently appointed as a member to the municipal commission. He was the first Malay given this position in Singapore. Following the British administration's policy to increase local representation in the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlement, Eunos was made a Legislative Councillor in 1924. He was the first Malay councillor. In his first public appearance, Eunos stood up to condemn the government's education policy that sidelined the Malay youth. Eunos concluded:

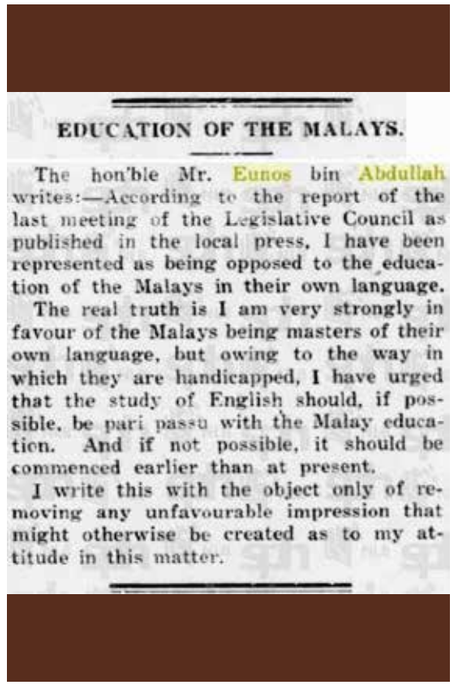
> *Being unable to swim, he sinks and is lost in the swelling sea of unemployment. Surely, Sir, this is not a thing to be desired among the original son of the soil? I am confident, Sir, ways and means can be found which will enhance the prospects of boys of the soil and remove forever the penalization which oust them from their own markets simply because they happen to be the imperfect products of an imperfect system of education.*

The minutes of this Legislative Council's proceedings recorded that there was an immediate applause from his friends and Asian councillors in the audience.

In 1926, Eunos and his associates formed the Kesatuan Melayu Singapura (KMS) or the Singapore Malay Union; he was made its President. KMS was the first political organisation set up to champion Malay rights, such as increasing Malay representation in the government service, upholding Malay interests, and promoting higher education for the Malays.

He wanted a strong sense of Malay nationalism and called for the preservation of its culture or roots to be known and recognised. Eunos pushed to increase the education budget so that Malays could enter into the medical college and attend Malay vernacular or trade schools. He also advocated for better living conditions and sanitation for the Malay community. He proposed to build a settlement to uphold Malay values. A 240-hectare piece of land was granted in 1927 for the Malay settlement and it was later named Kampong Melayu or Kampung Eunos. In 1981, the settlement made way for the construction of the Pan Island Expressway and development of housing estates. To commemorate Eunos's legacy, one of the local residential districts near Kampung Eunos was named EUNOS.

Eunos retired in early 1933 and passed away in December 1933 at the age of 57. He was laid to rest in the Bidadari Cemetery, Singapore. ◆



EDUCATION OF THE MALAYS.

The hon'ble Mr. Eunos bin Abdullah writes:—According to the report of the last meeting of the Legislative Council as published in the local press, I have been represented as being opposed to the education of the Malays in their own language.

The real truth is I am very strongly in favour of the Malays being masters of their own language, but owing to the way in which they are handicapped, I have urged that the study of English should, if possible, be pari passu with the Malay education. And if not possible, it should be commenced earlier than at present.

I write this with the object only of removing any unfavourable impression that might otherwise be created as to my attitude in this matter.

Right: An extract from a letter from Eunos Abdullah to The Straits Times, published in The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser, 7 November 1924, Page 6.

Bottom: a procession at Jalan Eunos in the 1930s. This road, running through Kampong Melayu, was built in 1930 and named in his honour.

How European politics influenced colonialism in the Malay World

Jean-Marie Metzger

Spices were at the centre of European interest in the East, especially in the Malay World. Indeed, it is a recurring theme in our tours. However, it was local political events in Europe that shaped the patterns of European colonial ventures.

Why the Portuguese?

The fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453 made the Asian land route for spices more costly and difficult, prompting Portugal to seek out the source of these spices. Before this, Portugal had been exploring new territories in the West coast of Africa for about 40 years and had developed maritime skills and ships especially designed for exploration purposes. Venice, the traditional distributor of spices in Europe, was a maritime power but its sphere of influence was predominantly within the Mediterranean Sea. Its ships, known as *galere*, though skilfully built and very efficient at war, were of an antique Roman type and could not carry heavy cargo. The Portuguese technological leap was the result of the passion of a young prince, Henry, later nicknamed the Navigator. Though he did not navigate much himself, he inspired and financed exploration ventures along the western coasts of Africa and sponsored navigational schools and shipbuilding research. This led, 20 years before the fall of Constantinople, to a new design of ship, the *caravelle* (*Flor de la Mar* is one example), which would sail the seas for more than 150 years. Therefore, when the need arose to find the source of spices, the Portuguese were, among the Europeans, the best equipped to search for them.

Why the Dutch?

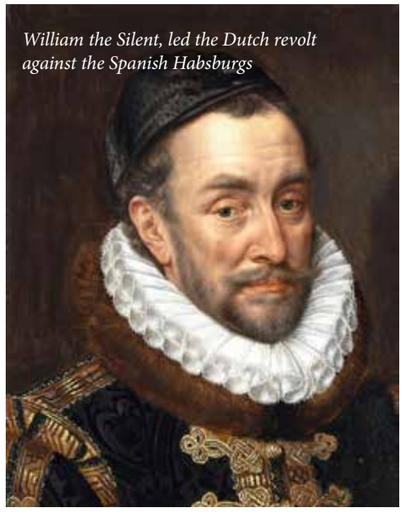
At the beginning of the 16th century, when the Portuguese conquered Melaka, Charles V of Habsburg was one of the most powerful sovereigns in Europe, reigning from the Netherlands and Flanders to Spain, Naples, Burgundy, and later, the Holy Roman Empire. But in the last years of the 16th century, the Dutch decided to breakaway from the Spanish rule of Philip II, heir of Charles V (freedom of religion was the main cause of the secession from an ultra-Catholic king). Around the same time, a succession crisis arose in Portugal; the King of Spain claimed the throne and, after defeating the Portuguese army, established himself as King of Portugal. The Dutch used to get spices from Lisbon for trading purposes in Northern Europe. When Spain took over Portugal, it banned Dutch ships from Portuguese ports in retaliation to the secession of Dutch provinces. So the Dutch became enemies of Spain, and Portugal, having become a friend (or part) of Spain, naturally became an enemy of the Dutch. Deprived of spices, the Dutch decided to seek and buy them at their source in the Malay world (Sulawesi, Java and Sumatra first, then Melaka), and break the Portuguese monopoly in the process.

Why the British?

Despite an attempt to establish themselves in Aceh and Ambon in the early years of the 17th century, the British had a weak presence in Asia and concentrated their efforts on the exploitation of India (and a 'factory' in Bengkulu, Sumatra, which provided pepper). Valued spices from Sulawesi were either traded from the Malay Archipelago or seized from Dutch ships by officers of the East India Company (EIC), who acted more as buccaneers than traders. The rise of British power in the 18th century, together with its presence in all Asian seas, was heralded by the introduction of a new fashionable and highly profitable commodity: tea from China (and opium used to pay for tea in place of silver bullion).

Far away, European politics were again about to influence Asia: the American War of Independence (which started with a customs dispute on tea) saw the Dutch and French aligning with the American insurgents and becoming enemies with Britain (something politically new for the Dutch but not the French). They started to annoy the British by attacking their trading ships, wherever they could, mostly in the Bay of Bengal (the French from Mauritius and the Dutch from Batavia and Melaka). After the loss of their American colonies, the British increased their colonial interest in Asia. The need to protect their China trade route to India (and Europe) and their will to economically challenge the Dutch, pushed the British to establish a presence at the northern mouth of the Straits of Melaka (the VOC went bankrupt in 1799, while the EIC, though not in much better condition, was bailed out by the British government in 1788 and was able to continue its operations for seventy more years).

Prince Henry the Navigator



William the Silent, led the Dutch revolt against the Spanish Habsburgs

And what about the French (and the Germans)?

While the Portuguese, Dutch and British were active in the Malay Archipelago, the French were notably absent: their only colonial venture was concentrated in India during the late 17th century, but their presence was drastically limited by British military and diplomatic action. The French had no direct impact but many of their political choices had an indirect impact on colonial policies in Malaya.

First, the French conquered the Netherlands, making them a *République batave*, and Napoleon made them a kingdom for his younger Brother, Louis. The British, as usual, were enemies of the French while the Dutch, defeated by the French, found themselves allied with the British again. The Dutch *Stadthouder*, exiled in London, asked the British government (the Kew Letters in 1795) to look after the Dutch colonies and this gave the British, through Melaka, a second (though temporary at the time) foothold in the Malay Peninsula. The Kew Treaty was in effect between 1795 and 1816.

In the 19th century, while Britain was present in Burma and in the Straits Settlements (established by the EIC, and later under the control of the British Colonial office), the British policy of non-intervention in Malay affairs was prompted by the willingness to preserve Siam as a buffer state, thereby restraining potential French colonial expansion which started in Indochina in 1858. Even after the establishment of the Federated Malay States in 1896, the policy of non-intervention continued, for the same reason, with the northern states (later to become the Unfederated Malay States).

But all this changed when, after nine centuries spent annoying (and fighting) one another, France and the United Kingdom declared a new friendship – *Entente Cordiale*.

Faced with the German Empire threatening the stability of Europe, a series of treaties and protocols were signed in 1904: South-East Asia was affected through the Third Protocol, which while safeguarding the independence of Siam, split the country into two 'spheres of influence', east of the Chao Phraya river for France, west for Britain.

Five years later, Germany showed renewed interest in Siam and planned to build a canal at the Isthmus of Kra. Britain could not accept what would have been a direct threat to its shipping activities in the Straits of Melaka and Singapore. This could also have been the start of a colonial move challenging British presence in Malaya. Under the guise of formally recognising the independence of Siam, the kingdom was prompted into signing a treaty abandoning the northern Malay States still under its influence (in November 1909, Edward VII received the *Bunga Mas* from the former Siamese vassals, which became known as the Unfederated Malay States). The British put money (a £4 million loan to build a railroad to the south) on the table to help the medicine go down, and some sultanates, such as Pattani or Setul, were left to Siam. For the second time in less than a century (after the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824) the British had divided the Malay world. In addition, and probably more importantly in the British eyes, an exchange of letters specified that 'the Siamese government shall not cede or lease, directly or indirectly, to any foreign government any territory situated in the Malay peninsula south of the Monthon of Rajaburi or in any island adjacent to the said territory'. Now being directly present in Burma and Malaya and being a controlling foreign presence in Southern Siam, the British had a hold on the whole of the Malay peninsula. ◆

The Melaka Tree

Anne Deguerry Viala

We are all familiar with the legend of Prince Parameswara fleeing from Srivijaya to Temasek and then to a place named after the tree he sat under. Much less is known about the tree itself: the Melaka tree. *Phyllanthus emblica*, known as *Āmalaka or Amla* from the Sanskrit *Āmelaki*, is very common in India, Nepal and South-East Asia and has given its name to Melaka city and the Straits. Its common name in English is *Emblic myrobalan* (*Myrobolan emblique* in French) and it produces a fruit called the Indian or Nepalese Gooseberry. The importance of the Melaka tree is both symbolic and economic.

In Buddhist statuary art and sculpture, the Medicine Buddha is depicted delicately holding the myrobalan plant between his thumb and middle finger. This symbolic gesture stems from the healing properties of the myrobalan. It entered the Persian pharmacopeia from early times: myrobalan is mentioned in the medical handbook of Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā) in the early 11th century. It was also used in Europe. No later than during the Middle Age, it was a valued ingredient which apothecaries prescribed almost as a universal remedy. It should be noted that, apart from its use in traditional and Ayurvedic medicine, amla has recently aroused a growing interest from modern medicine where it is used in diabetic treatments and to prevent cancer, among other properties.

All parts of the Melaka tree are full of tannins, which make myrobalan a very useful ingredient. In the natural dyeing process, myrobalan can be used either as a mordant (a substance which helps fix the pigments into the fibres) or as a dye itself, rendering blackish colours. In addition to dyeing, myrobalan has many other applications. It is used both for tanning leather and also in the manufacture of Damascus steel.

It is clear that Prince Parameswara was wise to choose this place and this beneficial tree to establish his new realm! ◆

Left: Medicine Buddha, he holds the amla fruit in his left hand
Bottom: Melaka tree, on the bank of Melaka River

Konfrontasi

Goh Yoke Tong

The Indonesian-Malaysian or Borneo confrontation was an undeclared war, from 1962 to 1966, that stemmed from Indonesia's opposition to the formation of Malaysia. The term 'Confrontation' was coined by Indonesia's Foreign Minister, Dr Subandrio, in January 1963, and has come to refer to Indonesia's efforts to destabilise the new federation, with a view to breaking it up. The conflict resulted from Indonesia's President Sukarno's belief that Malaysia, which became official on 16 September 1963, represented a British attempt to maintain colonial rule behind the cloak of independence granted to its former colonial possessions in the South East Asian region.

In the late 1950s, the British Government had begun to re-evaluate its force commitment in the Far East. As part of its withdrawal from its South East Asian colonies, Britain moved to combine its colonies in Borneo with the Federation of Malaya (which had become independent from Britain in 1957) and Singapore (which had become self-governing in 1959). In May 1961, the British and Malayan governments proposed a larger federation called Malaysia, encompassing the states of Malaya, Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei and Singapore.

By the close of 1962, Indonesia had achieved a considerable diplomatic victory, which possibly emboldened its self-perception as a notable regional power and thus its ability to extend its dominance over its weaker neighbours in the region. It was in the context of Indonesia's success in the Netherlands' West New Guinea dispute that Indonesia cast its attention to the British proposal for the formation Malaysia. Opposition to Malaysia also favoured Sukarno politically by distracting the minds of the Indonesian public from the appalling realities at home as brought about by gross mismanagement, nationalistic policies that alienated foreign investors, and rife corruption. Everyone in Indonesia felt the hardships of high inflation and food shortage. Sukarno also dreamed of an Indonesia that was like the glorious ancient Srivijaya and Majapahit empires.

Sukarno argued that Malaysia was a British puppet state, a neo-colonial experiment contrary to that of revolutionary Indonesia, and that the creation of Malaysia would perpetuate British control rather than ending its colonial domination over the region. He argued that this had serious implications for Indonesia's national security as a sovereign nation, especially in light of the fact that Britain would continue to have military bases in Malaya, Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei and Singapore, which are a stone's throw away from Indonesia's backyard.

Similarly, Philippines made a claim to North Borneo or Sabah, arguing that they had been historically linked through the Sulu Sultanate. Manila maintained that the area was once owned by the Sultan of Sulu, and because Sulu is now part of modern Philippines, that area should therefore belong to Philippines through the principle of extension. While Philippines, under President Macapagal, did not


Sabah Times

INDONESIA PROTESTS TO MALAYA

JAKARTA, Sept. 3 — Indonesia has sent a "strong protest" to Malaya against its decision to proclaim Malaysia on Sept. 16, it was announced here today.

We Have Not Repudiated The London Accord—Donald Stephens

PIX WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

S'pore Claim To Power Has No Legal Validity, Says Federal Govt.

UN Team Stays On Until Friday

8 MORE INDON BANDITS BAGGED IN PAST 24hrs.

No Change Of Date—Tunku

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ANTI-MALAYSIA RALLY AT BAU

engage in armed hostilities with Malaysia unlike Indonesia, diplomatic relations were severed after the former deferred in recognising the latter as the successor nation to Malaya.

As for Brunei, Sultan Omar was undecided on whether he would support joining Malaysia because of the implied reduction of his influence as the head of state and significant amounts of Brunei's oil revenue being diverted to the federal government in Kuala Lumpur to be shared among the proposed states of Malaysia. Brunei was to be the tenth state of Malaysia, whose sultan would be eligible to be the king of the country on a rotational basis for a five-year tenure, and the sultans of Malaya had made it clear that he would have to wait his turn. This did not go down well with him as he could not foresee the prestige of being a king in his lifetime due to his place in line. Furthermore, A.M. Azahari, a Brunei politician and veteran of Indonesia's independence movement who was against colonial rule, also opposed joining Malaysia on similar grounds as Indonesia.

In December 1962, Brunei faced a revolt by the North Kalimantan National Army (NKNA), which was backed by Indonesia and was pushing for Brunei's independence instead of it joining Malaysia. In response to the revolt, the British and other Commonwealth troops were sent from Singapore to Brunei, where they crushed the revolt within days by securing Brunei's capital and ensured the Sultan's safety. The insurrection was an abject failure because the poorly trained and ill-equipped guerillas were unable to seize key objectives, such as capturing the Sultan of Brunei, seizing the Brunei oil fields or taking any British hostages.

Following NKNA's military setback in Brunei, small parties of armed insurgents began infiltrating Malaysian territory along the Indonesian border in Borneo on sabotage and propaganda missions. The first recorded incursion of Indonesian troops was in April 1963 when a police station in Tebedu, Sarawak was attacked. After the formation of Malaysia in September 1963, Indonesia declared the 'Crush Malaysia' campaign leading to the escalation of cross border raids into Sabah and Sarawak, which had then ceased to be British territories. Indonesia also began raids in the Malaysian Peninsula and Singapore in 1964. To repulse the infiltrators and prevent their incursions, the British and other Commonwealth troops remained at the request of Malaysia. Together with the Malaysian troops, they engaged in successful offensives against the Indonesian troops.

The intensity of the conflict began to subside following the events of the '30 September Movement' and General Suharto's rise to power in Indonesia. On the night of 30 September 1965, an attempted coup by the Indonesian Communist Party took place in Jakarta, which was successfully put down by Suharto. In the ensuing confusion, Sukarno agreed to allow Suharto to assume emergency command and control of Jakarta. The train of events that were set off by the failed coup led to power consolidation by Suharto and the marginalisation of Sukarno, who was placed under house arrest soon after the transfer of power was completed.

Peace negotiations were initiated during May 1966 before an agreement was ratified in August 1966, with Indonesia recognising Malaysia and officially ending the conflict. In March 1967, Suharto was able to form a new government in Indonesia that excluded Sukarno. ◆

Left: An anti-Indonesian demonstration by Malay women in 1965
Right: Konfrontasi memorial at Tawau, Sabah. Image: © CEphoto, Uwe Aranas

Royal Selangor Visit (16 May 2016)

Chen Poh Leng

As I approached the Royal Selangor Visitor Centre located in the light industrial suburb of Setapak, Kuala Lumpur, I thought to myself how nice it must be to work in a location with so much greenery all around. The building gave me a good first impression in that it had a pleasant look, had high ceilings, and was very airy and spacious. As I walked in, an elderly lady dressed elegantly in a bright red cheongsam wearing pretty beaded shoes caught my eye from a distance. Katherine, our event organiser, warmly greeted me and immediately introduced me to this lady, Datin Chen, who gave me the sweetest smile. It turns out that she is the director of the fine establishment and the granddaughter of the founder. She was to be our gracious host.

The roots of the business go way back to 1885 when a young man by the name of Yong Koon came all the way from Shantou, China to seek better fortunes. It was tin that attracted him here. He brought with him pewter-smith skills which he applied and improvised, making beautiful high quality handcrafted items admired by many. Over the years, these skills were taught and passed down to both family and employees. The variety of items also grew exponentially over the years. The history of the country impacted the growth of the business. British taste and preferences gave rise to new items. Over time, customer preferences changed and the business adapted accordingly, enabling it to thrive despite two world wars and four generations. As with many other family businesses, there were indeed family feuds but the strong and sensible ones pulled through and persevered to make it the fine establishment it is today. The colonial masters and foreign visitors were very impressed with the quality of the beautifully handcrafted items. Their purchases and good testimonials became a major factor in making it a global brand. It was precisely this that earned the business the right to use the word 'Royal' for its brand.

The true story has it that during a visit to Perth, Australia, the Sultan of Selangor then, the late father of the current Sultan of Selangor, was asked by a sales assistant from where he came. When he said Selangor, the sales assistant in turn asked 'Selangor' as in the brand 'Selangor Pewter'? Yes, the Sultan replied. Of course, the Sultan was impressed that the brand was able to bring fame to his state and, so, he decreed that the business should include word 'Royal' in its brand name. With that, the brand value moved up higher.

Royal Selangor is world famous now with retail outlets all over the world. It has built a very strong brand and has contributed much in making Malaysia known globally as well. Every single one of their products is handcrafted and one hundred percent made in Malaysia, and this brings us back to our visit.

Datin Chen started our tour by taking us up a 'walkalator' that led us up to the first floor of the building where a small museum is housed. She first showed a wall displaying hand imprints of all the staff that had worked there for at least 5 years. New imprints are added to the wall every five years. I thought what a pleasantly creative way to symbolize one's loyalty. We could see on the walls also, enlarged old photographs of the founder, his family including his descendants, and his employees going about their business in the earlier days. Viewing these photos conjured up nostalgic emotions in me. They reminded me of my own family's collection of old photos. Both my parents were born and bred in Kuala Lumpur. There were also photographs that showed famous visitors including that of American actor, William Holden and Bill Clinton. Other notable visitors included Martha Stewart, Christine Lagarde and of course, the late Sultan of Selangor.

Next, we were introduced to exhibits of the old tools used in the early days. We also got to view items that were made in the earlier days such as incense burners, joss sticks, and candle holders, plus other prayer items on Chinese altars, and everyday items such as teapots. There is also a model of the Petronas Twin Towers constructed entirely with pewter beer mugs about one fiftieth of the actual height of the twin towers.

We were privileged to enter into a glass enclosed area at the museum which is not open to the public; only special guests were allowed in. This area exhibits some of the finest silver sterling made under the brand Comyns. Royal Selangor acquired the London silver company Comyns in 1993. Along with this, came thousands of beautiful designs dating back to the 17th century. We were all awed by these lovely European designs.

Just before we entered the place where all the action was, i.e. the factory, we were served cold refreshing isotonic drinks in small pewter mugs. Datin Chen explained pewter properties did a good job keeping cold drinks cold. As for hot drinks, pewterware is very good at retaining the heat. Refreshed after the dricks, we then witnessed how some of the work was carried out in the factory. Processes in the factory included casting, filling, scotching, hammering, polishing, buffing, soldering, etc, most of which had to be done by hand. Each worker specialised in a specific process. Datin Chen explained that many of the senior workers had been working with the establishment from their teenage years right up to retirement, by which time many had become grandparents.

Following this was the most exciting part of our tour. We entered an enclosed area called the 'School of Hard Knocks' where we all got into action. We were each given an apron, a pewter disc (much like a CD), a hammer and a wooden block which is actually the mould for the pewter bowls which we were to make ourselves. All the noise from the hammering then started. It was fun and exciting making our own bowls engraved with our initials. What a lovely souvenir to bring home. We got to keep the aprons with the words 'School of Hard Knocks' too! There is no way I can forget this exceptional experience. As we left, we were informed that visitors could also make their own hand accessories at the Foundry for a fee.

A mould in the factory

Having used much of our energy knocking hard, we were then brought to the in-house café where we were served delicious refreshments with hot coffee and tea. This café is clean and comfortable. It has a lovely ambience surrounded by lots of greenery. Datin Chen continued to entertain us with interesting stories relating to the business as we ate and drank. I noted that by the time we finished, the coffee and tea, which was served in pewter pots, was still very hot. This is proof of what Datin Chen claimed earlier about the heat retention of pewter.

With contented tummies, we were then led to our final stage of the visit – retail therapy. There was a huge variety of items on display, all of them of good quality and beautifully crafted. Apart from pewterware, there was silver sterling (under Comryns brand) plus fine jewellery (under Selberan brand). In 1972, Royal Selangor diversified into the manufacture of European jewellery when they started a joint venture with a Swiss jeweller Eberhard and an Austrian gem setter, Angelmahr. The diversification into fine jewellery and silver sterling, Datin Chen explained, was the reason why the word pewter was dropped, making it just Royal Selangor today. Personally, I think pewterware from here makes a perfect gift for visitors as it is not only 100 percent handcrafted in Malaysia, but of good quality as well.

We ended our visit with a group photo with Datin Chen taken with the biggest pewter tankard on earth just outside the visitor centre. Just before we left, we conveyed our deep gratitude to Datin Chen for her courteousness, warmth and generosity (her time, souvenirs from the School of Hard Knocks and the refreshments at the café). Now I know we have this gem in my very own backyard, a must visit for any foreign visitor. ◆

Trying our hands at hammering

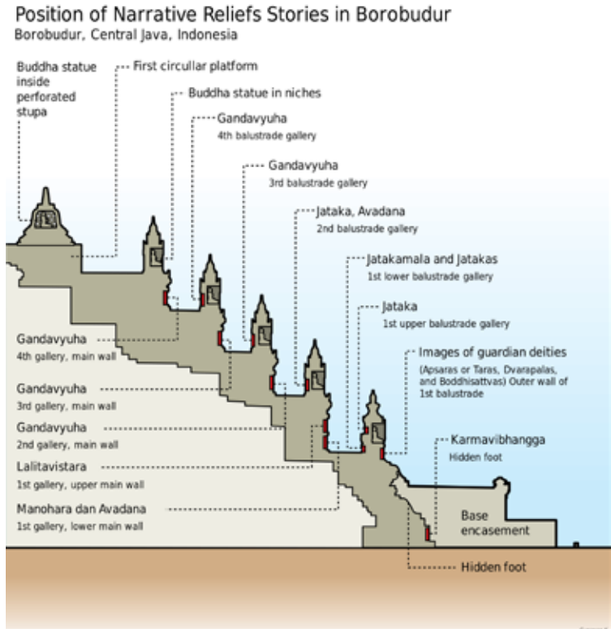
This article is in memory of Datin Paduka Chen Mun Kuen who passed away in July 2019 at age 76

Borobudur Panel

Maganjeet Kaur

The replica of a panel at Borobudur on display at Gallery B, Muzium Negara, depicts a scene from the *Lalitavistara Sutra*, a Mahayana Buddhist text. The panel shows Queen Maya and King Suddhodhana, parents of the future Buddha, at their palace in Kapilavastu. In this scene, the queen has approached the King and seated herself on his right. She requests permission to take a pledge of self-denial and occupy herself with good deeds, to which the King has consented.

Trees carved onto the panel indicate that they are seated in a garden pavilion. This differs from the *Lalitavistara*, which depicts the scene taking place in a music hall with the royal couple seated on a throne covered with jewelled latticework. The text mentions that the Queen came accompanied by 10 000 women but only five, shown behind the Queen, are represented in the carving.



Location of the various bas-relief stories on Borobudur's corridors

The *Lalitavistara*, translated loosely as *'The Play in Full'*, provides an account of Buddha's descent into this world and on how he attained his awakening. Borobudur has 1460 bas-reliefs depicting scenes from the *Lalitavistara*, *Jataka*, and other Buddhist texts. These bas-reliefs are found on the corridor walls of the first four floors; each floor has panels on both sides of its corridor. The first floor has four series of panels, two series on the inner wall of the corridor and two on the outer wall. The other three floors have two series of panels each, one on each side of the corridor. This totals to ten series of panels; in Buddhist cosmology the number '10' represents the ten stages of a bodhisattva's path to awakening.

The correct way to circumambulate Borobudur is to start from the east staircase, turn left on the first floor, and walk clockwise while viewing the top series of panels on the outer wall. The visitor would then do another three rounds on the first floor while viewing the remaining three series of panels. The visitor then moves to the second floor and goes around this floor twice to view the series of panels on both the inner and outer walls. Two rounds each are again made on both the third and fourth floors. In this way, the visitor would have walked ten rounds. The *Lalitavistara* panels are located on the inner wall (top series) of the first floor. ◆

The Batek People

Ong Li Ling

I recently attended a curatorial tour of Mahen Bala's *Ceb Bah Heb Elders of Our Forest* exhibition at the Taman Tugu Nursery Trail. This exhibition is part of a documentary looking at the life of Batek people. The documentary itself looks at the relationship between the forest and its people.

Below is an aerial photograph of Sungai Tembeling. At present, the left hand side of the river is still properly preserved. Unfortunately, the right side has been exploited. If you only live in the jungle, you will never see land this way. The Batek do not see land the way Google Maps, Waze and city folk see land. The Batek use trees and mountains as markers. The coloured structures in the photograph are Batek settlements.

Traditionally the Batek are nomadic and hence they had no proper settlements. Due to pressures from outside and their inability to continue living off the forest, they are changing their lifestyles. Our government is telling them to stay put in order to participate in the lucrative eco-tourism business. This is against their ancestral practice as they are used to travelling and foraging. The next photograph shows what the typical Batek person does all day. They are waiting for tourists to pop over so that the curious tourist can take photos with them. Reminds me of the 'long neck' women I saw in Myanmar. The tour guides will give them a token amount to 'add to the authenticity' of the jungle tour. This shows how hard it is for the Batek people to live off the forest today.

The Batek only take what they need from the forest. Whatever they hunt or forage will be brought back to the village to be shared. They have respect for the animals they kill. They believe bad luck will befall them if they break the taboos.

The photograph below shows a typical Batek family and the structures they build. This structure is called a

Hayak, *Lintus* or a lean-to. Once they decide where to spend the night, the whole family is involved in setting up their home. When they are ready to move, the shelter is returned to the forest and so their impact on the jungle is minimized. The Batek view the seasons differently than we do. During the fruiting season, they live entirely on fruits. During the flowering season, they survive by harvesting honey.

The children are involved with the running of the community from a young age. As soon as they are able, they learn survival skills such as how to use the *parang* and how to weave batik. This period is also an important time for bonding, as the elders will tell the children folk tales. The children are taught that every member of the family is important.

Below is a photograph of Mr Di. He is holding a blowpipe and he carries a canister of darts around his neck. The blowpipe is an important asset to the Batek and they keep their blowpipe from cradle to grave. It is the most important of their material possessions. Batek people are egalitarian in that they consider both genders as equals. Women can also hunt and forage food and men can take care of children. This equal partnership relationship is now changing as they are forced to stay in one place and men are forced to do work requiring hard labour. Hence, the women stay at home to look after their kids. We can see the damage that this has done to their community. Modern civilisation is forcing our ideas and our 'modern' ways of life on them and they have no other choice but to follow.

Next is a photograph of Mr Di's son. In general, the Orang Asli are depicted negatively in the media. We often see them when there is negative news e.g. protesting against deforestation. The way these articles are written are so negative towards the Orang Asli that many may think that 'they have not caught up with our modern world'. Mahen made sure that his photographs show the Batek as dignified and empowered. Some Orang Asli groups have traditional costumes and they wear these with pride. However, they have been directed to wear the costumes for the sake of tourism and that is not a good practice. Just in case you are wondering, the Batek do not have a traditional costume.

The next is an important photograph as it shows the burial site of a deceased Batek. They will choose the highest tree that they can climb and they will build a simple structure.

They will then start a fire to keep animals away. The Batek believe that the soul will fly to heaven. This location is kept a secret, as they do not want outside disturbance. It was reported in the news recently that the Kelantan government exhumed the body of a Batek, did a post mortem and then buried the body according to Islamic rites!

The Batek gather and share stories whilst hunting e.g., 'I saw a herd of elephants next to the river'. This allows them to form a shared mental map of the area. They have a ground view of the land and whenever people share stories, they can imagine what else is happening on their land. The Batek use trees that really stand out as waypoints to navigate the terrain.

The photograph below shows some Orang Asli children going to school. Most of them have trouble getting to school due to transportation. Some Orang Asli kids travel long distances every day to receive an education and so it takes amazing determination and grit. The cost is

another challenge, as their parents cannot afford shoes and uniforms. They are sometimes discriminated against by teachers and hence they do not find school enjoyable. After a while, they feel so discouraged they prefer to stay at home and help their parents. Mahen met many bright Batek kids. Some quit school before the age of 14 due to these challenges. The statistics show that out of 100 who attend primary school, only six are expected to finish Form 5.

The photograph below shows the Orang Asli children happily bathing in the river. Most of us would find it difficult to swim in these rivers due to the currents.

The final photograph depicts Mr Di against the backdrop of construction and development. It encourages us to reflect on the Batek way of life versus our way of life. We can still live as Malaysians and go back home and practise our traditional way of life. So why is it that we force Batek people to change and adapt to our way of life? According to the statistics, there are only 1500 Batek people left. It is only fair that we acknowledge their customary rights to their land. The Batek are well versed in the medicinal values of forest plants but if you are a researcher, it may not be in the Batek people's best interest to publish these secrets in journals. Some pharmaceutical companies may come and grab the knowledge and then patent this knowledge for their commercial benefit. When that happens, there is little else left for the Batek to survive on. ◆

Jar Burials

Marie-Andree Abt

Jar burials, the interment of secondary remains in locally-made terracotta urns, date back to the Metal Age, as can be seen from the discoveries made in the Gua Niah limestone caves in Sarawak by Tom Harrisson (former curator of the Sarawak Museum 1947-66) and his wife in the late 1950s. Other similar jars have been found in Sabah and Terengganu. In Sabah and Sarawak, secondary burials in jars with the bones of several people have been uncovered.

Until modern times in Borneo, amongst indigenous animist communities, it was the custom to keep the deceased within the house (usually in the upper area) so that family members could pray and meditate around the remains for a period of time, sometimes as long as a year or more. At a later date, when the body had completely decayed, the bones were gathered and put into a jar which was taken either to a high burial platform *(salong)* deep in the forest or interred in the ground. In some cases the body was originally buried until the family had enough money to carry out the proper rites, when the remains were dug up and transferred to a jar for traditional interment.

Martaban jar found by Tom Harrison at Budak Butal

Later burials made use of Chinese jars, often referred to as martabans or *tajau* (in the local language), which have been found widespread throughout South East Asia, and also in Korea and Japan. Jars like those featured in Gallery A, would have originated in China or mainland South East Asia. Some tribes from Sarawak left the jars in the forest near megaliths or encased them within *klirieng* totem poles. Amongst some indigenous groups of Borneo, these jars represent the maternal womb; the bones are the foetus waiting for reincarnation or rebirth.

The Kuching museum contains a fascinating example of one such jar that unusually contained an entire body originally placed in a primary burial. It was found by Harrisson in the 1960s in the Kelabit Highlands of Sarawak at a burial site known as Budak Butal, and has been dated to the 2nd century BCE. An entire corpse was interred in the jar, which had been carefully bisected around the middle to hold the complete body. It was then resealed probably with resin, or local rubber. After a period of time by which time the body would have decomposed completely, the jar was opened so that the ritual for secondary burial could take place. The remains were then re-interred in the burial ground, either in the same vessel, or in another intact jar or coffin. This elaborate- and expensive- practice would have been the preserve of high status members of the community. The rattan casing was added later, most likely for transportation/ display purposes or to protect the fragile vase.

Jar burials of this type do not seem to have occurred elsewhere. The tradition was probably discontinued at least by the 1940s; the Kelabit people have now mostly embraced Christianity. ◆

A big thank-you to Dr. Borbala Nyiri for details on the Budak Butal burial jar

Kendi

Karen Loh

A *kendi* is a drinking or pouring vessel with two distinctive openings and a handle-less form. The two openings are the wider mouth on top of the vessel, where liquid can be poured in, and a spout to pour out from. It may or may not have a neck or lid. Liquid cools very quickly in the kendi. To drink from a kendi, the neck of the vessel is held and the liquid is poured without touching the lips. The vessel's shape makes it easily transportable either on foot or by boat.

Whilst it is unknown when the kendi first appeared, etymological evidence suggests that such vessels were first used in Asia. This is evidenced from the various names used in Indonesia, such as *kandi* in Toba and *kondi* in Aceh, Sumatra, as well as *gendi* in Java and *gandi* in Makassar, Sulawesi. In South India, kendi was known as *gindi* and *kindi* in Kerala. Buddhist ceremonies in Sri Lanka utilized an earthen or metal *kendiya* or *kotala (kotayala)*. The Sanskrit name for the container is *kundi*, which means a pot without a spout, and this is probably where the vessel's name originated. It is also referred to as a *kundi-ka*; *ka* meaning small in Sanskrit. The smaller kundika usually serves as a sprinkler. In addition, it is called *kamandalu* in Hindi, which means water jug or container used by Buddhist monks and priests.

The kendi has been produced and traded widely in South East Asia since early times. Thailand, Indonesia,

the Philippines and Vietnam became major sources, although kendi were also produced in China from the Tang Dynasty (618-906 CE), primarily for export. The discovery of ceramic ware, such as celadon and brown-glazed ware, fine paste bottles and kendi was made from artefacts recovered from the Intan Wreck (930 CE), Cirebon Wreck (11th century), Java Sea Wreck (c. 1275 CE), and Bakau Wreck (15th century). Such discoveries underline the demand and use of the kendi. By the 17th century, kendi were made in Japan, the Netherlands and Germany, and Dutch blue-and-white delftware kendi depicted pictures of nature and everyday scenes.

The kendi is functional and utilitarian, being used for everyday storage, cooking as well as in spiritual ceremonies. Besides water, the kendi was also used to decant wine, administer medicine, and as alterware for rituals, such as pouring or sprinkling 'holy water' during religious ceremonies. The practice of sprinkling holy water from a kendi was widely used in Hindu and Buddhist ceremonies from the 7th to the 15th centuries. The kendi is one of the eighteen sacred items carried by Buddhist pilgrims, and Buddhist statues of Avalokitesvara and Maitreya (the future Buddha) are depicted holding such jugs. Similarly, Hindu statues and images of deities such as Brahma and Shiva are also depicted with kendi. The kendi is made of metal in Pakistan and is named *lota*; it is still used by Muslims for ablutions before praying. The pots were also used to ward off evil and given as wedding gifts. In traditional Indonesian and Philippine societies, kendi were offered as funerary items and used in ritual ceremonies for pouring libations of holy water collected from sacred rivers. Rulers in the archipelago cleansed themselves with holy water poured from a kendi as a symbol of purification during their installation ceremony. Europeans also used kendi and even manufactured them, which they referred to as a goglet, from the Portuguese word *gorgoleta*, (with *gorja* meaning throat).

The kendi can be either plain or patterned. The form can be either male or female: a male form taking an angular shape with square shoulders, while the female form is round. There was no tradition that dictated which form should be used for any specific purpose, although in remote Sumatran agrarian villages, men drink from a female kendi while women drink from a male kendi, to symbolize the importance of procreation and fertility. Another type of kendi symbolising fertility is the *kendi susu* (milk kendi), which has a squat body and a spout in the form of a female breast.

Plain kendi usually have a flat base and take the shape of either a pumpkin or onion, having either a mammiform or an elongated body with a tall neck, while others have short straight necks. The kendi normally has a lipped mouth at the end of the neck and a spout on the shoulder. Bulbous kendi are the most common shape, usually made from unglazed fired clay or earthenware. Patterned kendi are often elaborately shaped, taking the form of a creature such as a dragon, crocodile, frog, elephant, or goose, and can be scored with floral patterns or geometrical strokes. Some kendi have stylized leaf, floral or botanic scrolls, still life motifs or Buddhist emblems. Such ornate pieces are usually made either of precious metals such as gold, silver or bronze, or of fine porcelain or celadon. The *kendi maling* or thieves' kendi is an interesting and unusual variety that originates from Indonesia. Also known as *valalu kotalaya* (secret jug) in Sri Lanka, this type has no upper aperture, and is filled by a funnel in the base when the inverted vessel is submerged. ◆

Top to bottom: Blue-and-white elephant-shaped kendi; 17th century Chinese blue-and-white kendi made for the European market; 16th century Vietnamese kendi

Opposite Page:
Top: A terracota kendi from Sumatra, Indonesia
Bottom: A 16th century stoneware, brown underglazed kendi from Sawankhalok, Thailand

On the Path of Prehistoric Migrations

Maganjeet Kaur

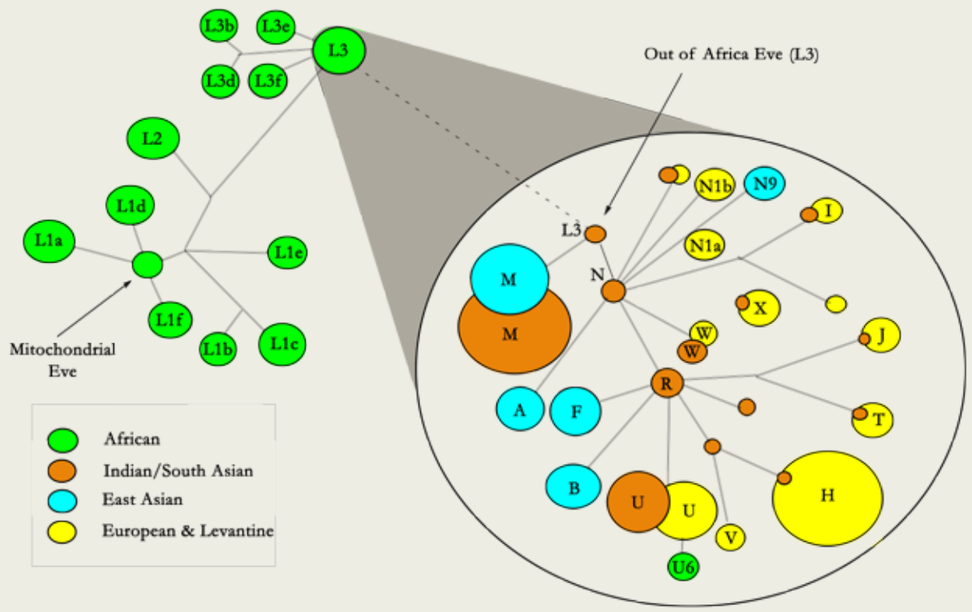
The ancestry of Island South East Asians (ISEA) has been the subject of intense debate. While a number of theories abound, two have taken centre stage. The **Out of Taiwan** model is based on archaeological and linguistic evidence – the antecedents of Austronesian languages spoken in ISEA can be traced to the aboriginal population of Taiwan. The Austronesian speaking population is said to have arrived in Taiwan from Southern China (their original homeland) around 6500 years ago (ya). From Taiwan, they moved into the Philippines around 5000 ya and reached southern Philippines by 4000 ya. From here, there was rapid dispersal to the rest of ISEA and Oceania with arrival in the Pacific by 3000 ya. The competing theory, **Out of Sunda**, proposes that the Austronesians originated from within ISEA itself with the sinking of the Sunda platform providing the impetus for dispersal.

Genetic evidence has been employed by scientists on both sides of the divide to support their views. A gene network is made up of two pieces of DNA: mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA), which is passed from mother to offspring, and Y-chromosome (NRY), which is passed down the male line. As these two pieces of DNA do not recombine during reproduction, they are transmitted unchanged through the generations allowing scientists to trace human migrations through random mutations occurring in the DNA strands.

A comprehensive study on the genetic phylogeography of ISEA, using a combination of mtDNA, NRY, and published genome-wide data, was published in 2016. Its results are surprising in that while they support the Out of Sunda theory, the study also detected two minor migrations – from mainland Southeast Asia and Southern China. The latter corresponds to the Out of Taiwan timeframe. However, the study noted that these migrations did not have much influence on the ISEA gene pool and that the impact would have been mainly cultural and linguistic.

The human migration story starts around 85 000 ya in East Africa when a group of Homo sapiens (modern humans) crossed the Gate of Grief (Bab al-Mandab Strait) and entered the Arabian Peninsula. They then travelled along its coastline into the Indian subcontinent. All humans outside Africa are descended from this single exit. These travellers were beachcombers and, continuing their journey, they traversed the Indian Ocean coastline, arriving at Sundaland by at least 74 000 ya. From here, they moved north into Indochina and Southern China. Travelling south, they reached Australia by around 65 000 ya. It should be noted that an earlier migration out of Africa arriving at the Levant around 125 000 ya failed to populate the world as the onset of an ice age either killed the migrants or forced them back into Africa.

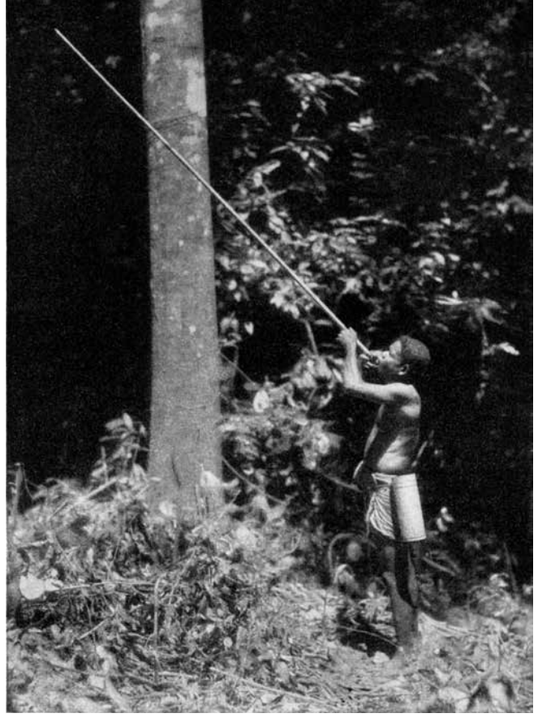
mtDNA network with the N haplotype expanded



The diagram (opposite page) shows clusters of gene types (mtDNA). The green circles represent gene types in Africa and the large circle on the right contains gene types outside Africa. The single exit out of Africa is represented by the haplogroup L3, whose daughters, M and N, went on to people the rest of the world. The M branch evolved in present day India and it is found in all humans outside Africa except Europeans and Levantines. The N branch evolved around the Persian Gulf (either Iran or Pakistan), and it is found in all humans outside Africa including Europeans and Levantines. The prolific R branch arose from N and it is heavily represented in Southeast Asia.

The M supergroup gave rise to M9, which evolved in SEA around 50 000 ya. M9, in turn, gave rise to the haplogroup E, which developed in ISEA (possibly around the Sulu Sea) around 23 000 ya. This haplotype is widely dispersed – 15% of all gene lines in ISEA and Taiwan belong to haplogroup E. A key reason behind the wide dispersal of haplogroup E was the sinking of the Sunda platform caused by three rapid rises in sea levels between 15 000 and 7000 ya. The effects of these sea level rises can be seen in the genetic record – genetic drift, equivalent to extinction, corresponds to the three distinct rises in sea levels. The extinctions were followed by a major expansion of haplogroup E, which expanded throughout ISEA, as far north as Taiwan and as far east as Guinea.

Focusing on the Malay Peninsula, the earliest groups here are the Semang, Senoi, and Aboriginal Malays. The Semang are directly descended from the first beachcombers that populated the world. They are an Australo-Melanesian aboriginal group living in the northern regions of Peninsular Malaysia. Living in the jungle, they have remained genetically isolated – their M line (M21a & b) is not shared with any other group and it goes back to at least 60 000 years ago. From the N haplotype, they have a unique R21 group.



A Semang shooting an arrow from his double blast pipe. The bamboo quiver beside him contains poisoned arrows

The Semang can count the famous 'Perak Man' as their ancestor. This 10 000 year old skeleton, discovered in a cave in Lenggong Valley (Perak), displays Australo-Melanesian characteristics and has similar skull morphology as the Semang. Perak Man was buried with pebble tools similar to those produced by the Palaeolithic-age stone-tool workshop uncovered at Kota Tampan, also in Lenggong Valley. This workshop has been dated to 74 000 years ago based on chemical tests on the ash that covered the workshop – ash generated from the volcanic eruption that created Lake Toba in Sumatra. The workshop is believed to be the handiwork of modern humans, making it the oldest known evidence of modern humans outside Africa. Thus, the Kota Tampan stone-age community would have been descendants of the first people out of Africa and they were the ancestors of Perak Man and the Semang.

The Senoi are an Austroasiatic group intermediate between the Semang and Austronesian. Although some of their maternal lineages (M21 and R21) indicates indigenous origins in the Peninsula, almost 50 percent originate in Indochina, consistent with archaeological evidence pointing to a Neolithic migration from mainland Southeast Asia. The intermarriage between these migrants with indigenous groups gave rise to the ancestors of modern-day Senoi. Similarly, the Aboriginal Malays have deep roots in the Peninsula. However, their R9b lineage indicates an origin in Indochina while their N21 and N22 lineages point to gene flow from ISEA. ◆

Tambun Heritage Trip

Julia Stanbrook

Bright and early on Saturday 18th June (2016), forty of us set off for a mini adventure in and around Ipoh. We began with a tour of Gua Tambun, looking at how Prehistoric man lived. We quickly found evidence of one of their meals, clearly there were no bins around at the time. Many small shells were just thrown onto the floor with the ends snapped off so they could suck the juicy morsel out from within. We explored caves on the lower levels of the limestone hill – the only evidence of ancient man was his food remains. But then they had lived here nearly 9000 years ago – what did we expect to find?

We tracked Neolithic man's movements and worked our way up the limestone hill. For unknown reasons, these prehistoric men moved up the hill and started living higher. We climbed the 130+ steps up to see the evidence left from 4000 years ago. Of course, we knew this would be cave art.

I, for one, eagerly looked around, hmm... some modern graffiti, some bird nests, some overhanging rocks. Where's the rock art?! It was only when we were split into teams and given a little treasure hunt, looking for the rock art, that we found our first piece of art – after that the wall came alive; shapes, swirls, arrows, dancing people (anthropomorphs), animals (zoomorphs), over 600 to be seen. Sadly, most of the teams only managed to identify about 10-15 of the 50 or so art pieces we'd been asked to find, although in our defence, some of the paintings had faded and it's not as easy as we made it look, standing there with one's head tilted right back!

These paintings were made in the most gorgeous reds and purples, from crushed up hematite mixed with resin, spit, urine or animal fat as a binder. These, we were told by our archaeologist and his student who is studying the paintings, are the only Neolithic red paintings to survive in modern Peninsula Malaysia.

They were first discovered and studied in 1959, when 80 forms of rock art were identified along with 49 stone tools; but in 1984 more rock art pieces were discovered along with some Neolithic pottery sherds. In 2009, using more sophisticated technology, over 600 rock art pieces were discovered on hitherto unknown panels.

To end our visit at the rock art, we all had the opportunity to create some rock art of our own using hematite and a modern form of binder (which was a relief, I didn't fancy using spit or urine!!) and a small disk of plaster that had also been prepared earlier. Most of us tried to re-create the cave art we could see, but one or two more adventurous painters painted rather beautiful landscapes! Pre-historic man would have been very impressed; I know I was! ◆

When we first came to Malaysia

Susan Haveman

I have to admit I didn't have the faintest image of Malaysia when my husband asked me whether I would consider moving our family there. Still, I like a new challenge and when the company my husband works for gave us a choice between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, my vote was for Kuala Lumpur – because it sounded more exotic, more foreign, more unknown. And it is. There's nothing here to remind you of Holland… or so I thought, until I came to Muzium Negara. On my very first guided tour through the museum, our guide brought us to Gallery C, to the Porta di Santiago – and surprised me with the VOC emblem. The VOC? In Malaysia? Why? And when? It might sound ridiculous, but I had never heard of the Dutch being in Malaysia. It is not something you learn about in school in Holland.

Batavia (Jakarta), of course, served as the VOC headquarters in Asia, I knew that much. I'd heard of Jan Pieterszoon Coen and about the Spice Trade. However, I did not know much about Melaka. I didn't know that the first plan to capture that strategically and commercially important port were made 13 years before Coen's founding of Batavia. I never knew that between 1606-1641 there were two large-scale and numerous smaller attacks on Melaka, before Captain Minne Willemszoon Kaartekoe finally managed to capture the town. Or that, after having conquered Melaka, the Dutch stayed in Malaysia longer than any of the other European powers. I just didn't know!

Now - and this might sound a bit strange from a Dutch volunteer guide in a Malaysian museum – I thought it was very embarrassing hearing new things about my country's history from the mouth of a non-Dutch person. So since then, I've tried to get my hands on as many books on the subject as I possibly could. In Dennis De Witt's *History of the Dutch in Malaysia*, I came across many names that sound familiar – but only because the local governments back home had decided to name streets after them: De Houtman, Van Riebeeck and Van Heemskerk, to name a few. Here in Malaysia I came to know the story behind the street signs, 10 000 kilometres away from the towns where they are erected. On our home trip, I dragged my husband and children with me to the National Maritime Museum in the old Naval Entrepôt in Amsterdam. The building, designed in 1655 by Daniel Stalpaert, shed a light on all aspects of Holland's maritime history. In the museum shop I found *'In pursuit of pepper and tea – The Story of the Dutch East India Company'* by Els M. Jacobs, a beautifully illustrated book on the VOC. We also visited the replica of the Amsterdam, one of the four first Dutch ships to set sail to South East Asia in order to break the Portuguese monopoly of the spice trade, and imagined travelling back to KL in that ship, taking 15 months to reach our destination instead of 13 hours.

My latest quest is to discover what exactly happened before 1824, when the British 'temporarily' took care of Dutch overseas possessions. That wasn't just a Dutch-British affair. It had to do with everything else that was going on in Europe at that time. This time the Internet brought me the solution: Yale University offers free online courses on a wide variety of subjects, history among them. So now I listen to Professor John Merriman, explaining *'European History from 1648 until 1945'.*

See what a Museum Volunteer training course can bring about? Well, at least I will have interesting tales to tell when (if ever) we go home – not just about *nasi lemak* and mani/pedis, but also about Parameswara and Cornelius Mattelief De Jonge, amongst others! Most of all, however, is the recognition that everything in the world is inter-connected with everything else – no matter how far apart we may seem. ◆

Ceramic plate with 'VOC' emblem

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