



the peranakan

ISSUE 2 • 2011

Emily

Never Over the Hill

The Motley Crew Behind

Chap Ji Ki

Healthier

Peranakan Cooking
- Yes, Possible!

Joo Chiat

Crowned First
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OUR *Sarong Kebaya* STORIES
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Cotton kebaya with appliqué decoration on display at Sarong Kebaya: Peranakan Fashion and its International Sources at the Peranakan Museum. Photograph courtesy of the Peranakan Museum.



THE
PERANAKAN
ASSOCIATION
SINGAPORE

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EDITORIAL

SARONG KEBAYA THROUGH THE AGES



Courtesy of Katong Antique Shop. Photography by Jason Ong.

Both being history buffs, my husband Colin and I went on a curator tour of the new *Sarong Kebaya* exhibition at the Peranakan Museum one April morning and discovered the kebaya had its roots way back in the 9th century! That was when Islamic rulers donned long jackets known as the *qaba*, the style of which travelled with Arab and Indian traders on their ships along the Maritime Silk Route to Southeast Asia and, lo and behold, fashion history was made in this part of the world.

From the 18th century, Dutch women residing in the colonies started embroidering kebayas with exquisite lace, and a century later with appliqué and netting. They even designed superb hand-drawn batiks in Javanese towns to complement their kebayas. Peranakan Chinese nyonyas adapted and developed a more colourful style of their own during the time of the British Straits Settlements in the early 19th century. Fascinating!

The sarong kebaya has such a rich history that we at *The Peranakan* magazine decided to devote this issue to the nyonya's fashion statement. As you thumb through the pages, notice how the kebaya has evolved to become ever more contemporary and yet instantly recognisable as part of Peranakan

culture. It is lovely to see younger nyonyas dressed in their sarong kebayas at weddings and special occasions; perhaps more of the menfolk would take it up from here and popularise the *baju lokchuan*.

Imagine too, if *Chap Ji Ki* is brought back from its illegal past! The game's colourful notorious history is revisited once again to reveal the creativity of gamblers in those days in finding ingenious ways to make their bets. Into the future, we are happy to report that the Joo Chiat area has been named Singapore's first Heritage Town. *Chakap Chakap* features an exclusive interview with the new director of the Asian Civilisations Museum and *Dalam Dapor* brings a healthy twist to some traditional Peranakan dishes. Read on for more interesting developments in the Peranakan community including theatre, entertainment and our grand Peranakan Ball coming up in July.

It has been a positively eventful 2011 to date and we are thankful to our writers from Singapore and so many other parts of the world for making *The Peranakan* such a worthwhile read on our culture. Our thanks too, to our advertisers for your strong support of the Peranakan brand. Godbless.

LINDA CHEE, *Editor*

LETTER

I was catching up on very old issues and read Peter Lee's article about Peranakan fascination with Royalty ("The Queen's Chinese," *The Peranakan*, Oct-Dec 2008). He even included a photo of his genealogical chart of the Royals! I felt like I had found a soulmate! I do those charts too and am a proud subscriber of *Majesty* magazine until now.

- Sharon Wee, New York

WEBSITE

www.peranakan.org.sg

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- Watch video footage of recent events.
- Learn more about the Peranakans in the *Culture* section.
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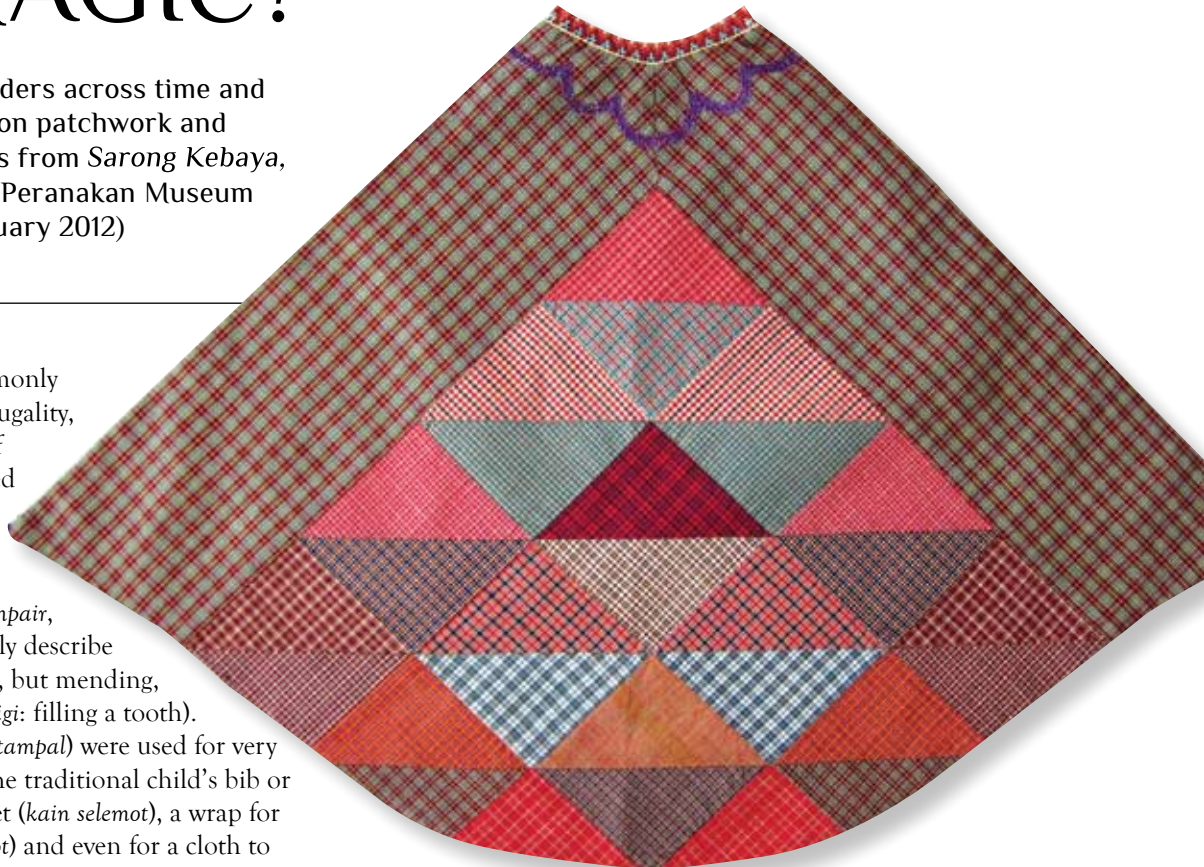
FRUGALITY, OPULENCE OR MAGIC?

Baba Peter Lee wanders across time and continents to muse on patchwork and appliqué in artefacts from *Sarong Kebaya*, an exhibition at the Peranakan Museum (1 April 2011 to February 2012)

Patchwork is commonly associated with frugality, the assemblage of remnant fabrics, stitched together for something practical or utilitarian. For Peranakans, this was called *tampal* or *tampair*, and was used to not only describe patching cloth together, but mending, even of teeth (*tampair gigi*: filling a tooth). Patchwork cloths (*kain tampal*) were used for very specific purposes: for the traditional child's bib or stomacher (*o to*), blanket (*kain selemot*), a wrap for shoes (*kain bungkus kasot*) and even for a cloth to dry the hands (*kain lap tangan*).

Yet can patchwork really be an expression of frugality? The meticulous and time-consuming craft of cutting various types of cloth, planning a coherent pattern or arrangement out of the varieties, and carefully stitching them altogether, should be regarded as a rather elaborate art form. In many Peranakan households, the fragments used for patchwork were not salvaged rags, but remnants of expensive cloth. A darned hole in a shirt or jacket would be a more fitting expression of frugality. In the case of protective leather elbow patches on tweed jackets, which were originally worn in Scotland for hunting, they have evolved to become a fashion statement.

The same can be said of the Buddhist monk's *kasaya*, or patchwork robe. It may have had its origins in the idea of frugality, but clearly by the Tang dynasty, high-ranking monks wore patchwork *kasayas* made from very expensive silk brocades. One example in the British Museum found in China's Dunhuang caves and dating to the 8th or 9th century even has patches of



purple silk, a colour that could only be worn with imperial sanction.¹ The Chinese transliteration of the Sanskrit term *kasaya* is *jiasha*, and interestingly another variant meaning of this word is 'muslin', which must have come from the old Indian trade word for gauzes, which is still used in Baba Malay in the term *kasa gelair* (organdie).

But this was hardly the earliest example of patchwork. In the collection of Cairo's Egyptian Museum is a royal patchwork funerary canopy (much like the Peranakan *kuanta*) made of multi-coloured gazelle hide dating to 960 BC, and is said to belong to Queen Istemkheb of the Twenty First Dynasty. As for Christendom, it has been suggested that Joseph's multi-coloured coat may have been made of patchwork. In Protestant England, Catholic priests in the 17th and 18th centuries apparently avoided detection by disguising their chasubles as patchwork quilts. An excellent example of a patchwork chasuble is preserved in the Chapel of All Saints, Wardour Castle in Wiltshire.²

Patchwork o to (child's bib) made of machine-woven kain chaylay (plaid cloth), early 20th century, collection of Ms Robyn Rae, New York.

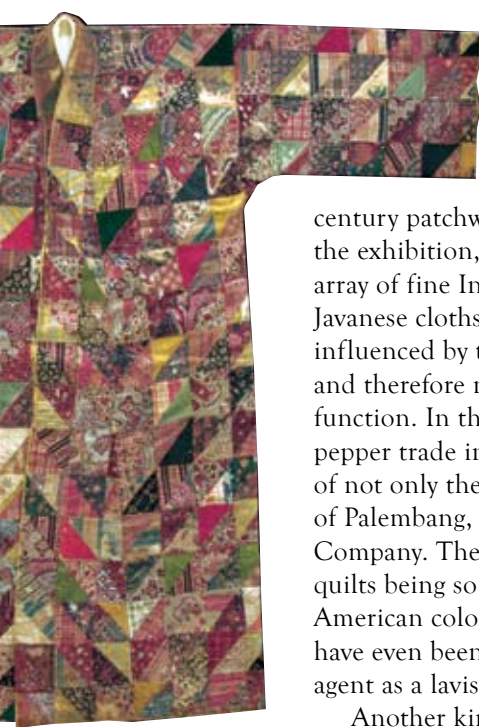
All other photographs courtesy of the Peranakan Museum. Kebayas: collection of the Peranakan Museum and Asian Civilisations Museum, gifts of Mr & Mrs Lee Kip Lee. Ceremonial cloths and batiks: collection of Mr & Mrs Lee Kip Lee.

An 18th century ceremonial cloth, made in India for the Indonesian market, with a drawn patchwork pattern.



Right: Detail of a late 19th century batik sarong from the workshop of Lien Metzelaar, Pekalongan, with a patchwork or tambalan design.

Below: An 18th century patchwork kebaya from Sumatra, made with cottons, silks and wools from India, China, Indonesia and Europe.



Umar (c. 586-644), the second Caliph in Islam, lived an ascetic life and possessed only a patchwork shirt and mantle. Islamic rulers in Java, such as the sultans of Jogjakarta, also wore patchwork jackets in the 19th century, although this had more to do with their talismanic qualities, and with the similar kind of jackets worn by traditional shamans in remote areas such as Tengger in east Java. Indian textiles and specific patterns even, were considered to possess magical qualities.

In the Javanese royal courts the patchwork pattern was called *antakusuma* and the jackets were known as *kyahi antakusuma* ('the venerable many-flowered').³ An 18th century patchwork coat from Lampung in the exhibition, made from a breathtaking array of fine Indian, European, Chinese and Javanese cloths for a local chief may have been influenced by the Javanese court of Banten, and therefore may have had a talismanic function. In the 18th century, control of the pepper trade in the area was a prime concern of not only the kingdom of Banten, but also of Palembang, as well as the Dutch East India Company. Then again, with patchwork and quilts being so popular in Holland and its American colonies at that time as well, it may have even been commissioned by a Dutch agent as a lavish gift for a Lampung chief.

Another kind of patchwork technique

— appliqué — was also used on lace *kebaya*s worn by European women. *Kebaya*s with lace borders were worn by women in the Dutch colonies at least since the early 18th century.⁴ By the late 19th century, it had become a standard feature. The exhibition displays *kebaya*s from this period made of cottons, linen and silk, and decorated with motifs using a wide array of intricate needlework techniques, including fine appliqué floral patterns. In this technique, a piece of cloth is cut into a decorative shape and sewn onto or under another cloth to create a pattern. In contrast, the *kebaya* today is only made of voile and ornamented solely with sewing machine embroidery.



Patchwork designs, known in Java as *tambalan*, were potent symbols (curiously, shamans in the Philippine Islands are also known as *tambalan*). Drawn and painted imitations of patchwork patterns were made in India in the 18th century for the Malay archipelago. This pattern survived in batiks made a century later, and *tambalan* became part of the classical Javanese repertoire of court patterns,



Appliqué, a technique related to patchwork, was used to create decorative patterns on kebayas in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This example, made for a Peranakan Chinese Nyonya in Java in the 1920s, is paired with a floral sarong made in the same period, from the atelier of Nyonya Tan Sin Ing of Sidoarjo.

FEATURE

Right: Detail of a 1910-1920s kebaya with appliqué decoration for a Peranakan lady in Java.

Below: A late 19th century ensemble typical for a European or Eurasian woman in colonial Indonesia. The silk and lace kebaya is paired with a batik sarong by Lien Metzelaar of Pekalongan, decorated with a patchwork or *tambalan* design.



and was also a motif favoured by European, Eurasian and Chinese entrepreneurs in Pekalongan on Java's north coast in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Each drawn *tambalan* pattern is different: the arrangements of an array of intricate and finely executed patterns create designs that are dynamic and complex.

Against this historical backdrop, can Peranakan patchwork be nothing more than just frugality turned to craft? The child's bib or *o to* (which in Malay is known as a *barut*), comes from a Chinese prototype that is usually embroidered.

Children who were not toilet-trained were often naked except for their *o to*. The patchwork variant was worn throughout Java, and even by European children in Batavia in the 18th century, and by Peranakan children up to the early 20th century. Even the 18th century

Christian missionary Jan Brandes dressed his young son in a patchwork *o to*, and was happy that the boy was usually 'walking around naked'.⁵ Could this design also have been inspired by a Javanese belief in the talismanic and protective powers of patchwork cloth? Children were so vulnerable to fatal illnesses that it is somehow impossible to believe that Peranakans made their precious offspring wear just meaningless scraps of cloth. Accordingly, could a patchwork *kain lap tangan* or handcloth therefore be some way to



buang suay - to discard or wipe away bad luck? A patchwork *selemot* or blanket would have equally protective powers.

Underlying even the most mundane or utilitarian artefact from the past could be a universe of imagination, belief and history. However, centuries from now, what would historians think of our present-day *bajus*, blankets and bibs? *

1 http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/asia/p/patchwork_of_silk_probably_a.aspx

2 <http://www.flickr.com/photos/3366383@N00/4714793655/in/photostream>

3 Alit Veldhuisen-Djajasoebrata, *Bloemen van het Heelal*, Rotterdam, 1984, p.76-78.

4 Cornelis de Bruijn, *Reizen over Moskovie, door Persie en Indie*, Amsterdam, 1711, p. 356.

5 Max de Bruijn & Remco Raben, *The World of Jan Brandes, 1743-1808*, Amsterdam, 2004, p. 153-161.

Sarong Kebaya- Peranakan Fashion and its International Sources

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FEATURE

NYONYA PATCHWORK UNPICKED

Baba Norman Cho muses on his hand-stitched heirlooms

Along with several precious artifacts that I inherited from my paternal great grandmother are a number of patchwork items. I did not regard them with much interest until recently. They include a shield-shaped patchwork piece with an attached fabric string and a pair of square patchwork pieces with similarly attached strings.

Great-grandmother used the square ones to wrap her wedding slippers. Miraculously, they did their job and have kept her slippers in pristine condition for about a hundred years and counting! The smaller shield-shaped piece was used to wrap her jewellery.

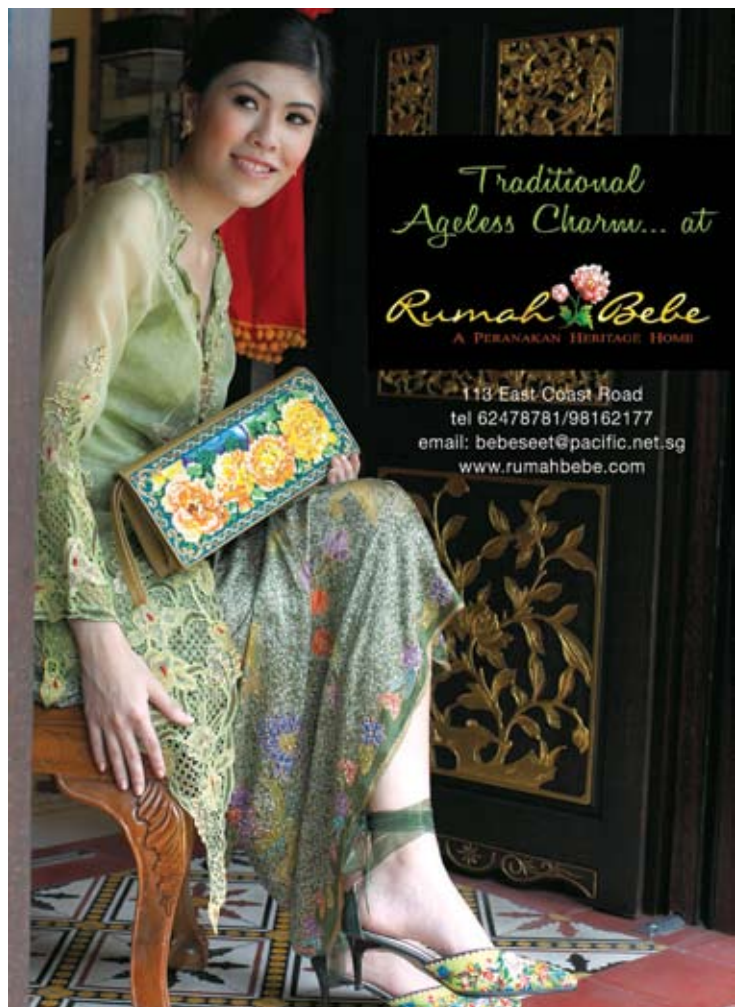
These souvenirs hark back to a leisurely era when women had time to stitch and sew for the household. Remnant fabric found a new lease of life by way of being patched together to form useful articles. These testify to the frugality of the early nyonias who wasted not. Long before our “throw-away society” started learning the importance of being green and environmentally-friendly, the early nyonias were already practicing the virtues of “reduce, reuse, recycle”.

Examining the patchwork pieces closely, I discerned that they had been neatly and uniformly hand-stitched. Each square or triangle patch had been sewn to precisely the same size throughout. Sometimes, lace-trimmings were added. Such touches attest to the meticulous nature of the early nyonias. The patches include silk, satin, voile, georgette and cotton. Most of the fabric appears to be remnants from tailoring *baju* (blouses). Indeed, I found a patch of blue voile from my great-grandmother’s shoe-wrapping to be identical to one of her *baju-panjang*. But batik was conspicuously absent, an indication that sarongs and *kain lepas* (skirt cloths) in the family were never cut.

These little swatches of cloth are a veritable album of samples that reveal what the early nyonias wore. *



Patchwork swatches are a veritable album of what early nyonias wore.





FEATURE



Nyonyas in Vogue

Nasib baik nyonya zaman sekarang!

(The nyonyas of today are so fortunate!) From evening glamour to vintage and casual, Nyonya Linda Chee checks out some of the many styles of kebaya outfits to choose from the shops, available in this four-page spread.

Photography by Jason Ong

Ngonyas in Vogue

*L*uxury in *sulam* and silk: Elaborately embroidered organza silk kebaya-inspired tops matched with creamy silk sarongs for elegant evenings. Available with spaghetti-strap tops to complete the ensemble. Embroidered in Indonesia, they were designed by **Bebe Seet** of **Rumah Bebe** for comfort and easy use, without the hassle of pinning on heavy *kerosangs*. The sarongs are easy to wrap and knot; learn from Bebe the many styles possible with this simple strip of material! Left and on this page: The tops range from S\$450 – S\$1,200. The sarongs are priced at S\$250.



Elaborate ensembles in organza and silk.



Nyonyas in Vogue

Collectible vintage kebayas with embroidery motifs that range from the elegant to the whimsical. Many kebayas of old were designed and skilfully sewn by the nyonyas themselves on their trusty Singer sewing machines at home. Others were custom-made by shops in Singapore, Malacca and Penang, mostly long gone now. **Peter Wee** from **Katong Antique Shop** has stocked piles of antique kebayas and vividly patterned sarongs from years of collecting from bibiks all over Joo Chiat, Katong and elsewhere. As Peter says, every piece has a story behind it.

Above and below: Vintage kebayas matched with vividly coloured sarongs.



Ngonyas in Vogue



Pert and pretty kebaya outfits.

Modern kebayas can be as versatile as the creativity goes. For the younger set, **Raymond Wong** from **Rumah Kim Choo** has designed a variety of options using pretty Japanese cotton prints or lace fabric to fashion these kebaya tops. He combines them with frilly hemmed skirts in casual denim or in brocade to different effects. The wardrobe combinations extend to wraparound batik pantaloons and easy zip-up sarongs (not shown). Prices range from S\$220-280 for the kebayas and S\$58-68 for the skirts.



PERANAKAN MUSEUM: THE STARTING POINT FOR UNDERSTANDING ASIA

Baba Colin Chee catches up with Dr Alan Chong on his plans for the Peranakan Museum

In September 2010, the National Heritage Board of Singapore welcomed Dr Alan Chong (right) as the new Director of the Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM), one of five national museums in Singapore. In this position, Alan also heads up the Peranakan Museum. He succeeded Dr Kenson Kwok who retired as ACM Director in 2009. The Hawaii-raised Alan was the curator at the well-known Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, USA. He has a doctorate in art history from the University of New York's Institute of Fine Arts, and an undergraduate degree from Yale University.

*Dr Alan Chong,
Director of
the Asian
Civilisations
Museum.*

*Photograph
courtesy of the
Peranakan
Museum.*

You have been with ACM for close to a year now. What would you say are its greatest strengths and greatest weaknesses?

I have only been here for 8 months and I still have a lot to learn about the ACM. Its greatest strengths are its staff and its collection, and the wonderful historic buildings that we occupy, at both Empress Place and Armenian Street.

One never stops learning about how a museum fits into a community. This is an ongoing process for arts institutions the world over: as audiences change, museums need to respond without giving up what they stand for. The ACM has accomplished a great deal in creating interactive displays but technology and audience interest change very quickly, and we have to adjust.

In what direction do you plan to take it?

I cannot determine the museum's direction on my own, and I would be foolish to try. A museum must listen to its curators and educators, and to its collectors and donors, the government which supports us, and most of all our audiences that visit. I can suggest ideas and options, but the museum is a partnership of many people.

Let's come to the Peranakan Museum. What are your thoughts about the museum and the Peranakan community and culture?

The very founding of the Peranakan Museum is a huge creative step. We are at an interesting moment of defining what Peranakan culture actually means and how it relates to other cultures



in the region. The Peranakan Museum is a terrific introduction to Peranakan culture, especially its visual arts. It is so important that it represent many parts of the community.

I like to see the fusion cultures of the Peranakans, and related communities, as symbolising the best of Singapore. It can provide a way of looking at the rest of Asian culture. So while the Peranakan Museum is the newest museum, its ideas are really the starting point for understanding Asia as a whole. The ideas of trade, immigration, intermarriage, export wares, hybrid art forms, even fusion cuisine ~ are all here.

I am from Hawaii and I see so many interesting points of comparison with the Chinese community and the mixed Hawaiian-Chinese.

What do you think is lacking in the museum?

The collection needs to grow and expand into new areas ~ we have always known that. We need to collect and document photography and documents, and make these resources available. There are similar communities throughout Southeast Asia that we should represent, and we should have more export Chinese and Indian art to compare with Peranakan forms.

I also hope that we can launch major new initiatives in research: to support scholars of Peranakan history, publish books with new approaches, put documents online, record oral histories. We would also like to present contemporary art in the Peranakan Museum. But all this requires extra funding.

Can the collection sustain an ongoing interest in the culture in general and the museum per se?

Audiences will continue to visit the Peranakan Museum if we present interesting new exhibitions, as we do once a year, and show new things in the galleries. Luckily, we can highlight new things, whether gifts or loans, so there is always something fresh. And we are planning changes to the installations.

What has the response been like to our exhibition in Paris? Do you think the museum's collection is good and unique enough to excite an international audience elsewhere? If so, where? Are there plans?

The *Baba Bling* exhibition was hugely successful in Paris. There is a huge choice of exhibitions and museums at any one time in Paris, and the French might be the most sophisticated art audience in the world. Therefore, the strong interest in the exhibition and its programmes is real proof that Peranakan art can be a strong attraction. The Peranakan Association played a big role in making the show come alive, and we are grateful for all the help.

We are thinking carefully about another international exhibition, and several museums are interested in showing a version of *Baba Bling*. This is probably the best way of informing the world about Peranakan culture.

What are the museum's strengths that you can leverage on? Are there plans to synergise Peranakan collections found elsewhere in Southeast Asia – such as in Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and perhaps even Myanmar and Vietnam?


We are in constant discussion with scholars and curators in other countries. We plan to support research in other countries and want to acquire material from these regions. Sharing museum collections is actually very difficult as our collections are limited, and insurance and supervision present their own challenges. I feel that as the premier Peranakan museum, we should have major examples of Peranakan art from all regions, as well as related objects that highlight what is special.

“The ideas of trade, immigration, intermarriage, export wares, hybrid art forms, even fusion cuisine - are all here.”

- Dr Alan Chong, *Director, Asian Civilisations Museum*


How aggressively are we building up the museum's collection, given that so many of the major exhibits in the museum are on loan from private collectors to the museum?

The Peranakan Museum is a community museum. We are proud that local collectors have so generously lent us works. And we are reaching out to other collectors as well. But at the end of the day, we want the best things for visitors to enjoy forever, so our hope is that lenders will think about giving objects to us, as they have in the past. This benefits generations of Singaporeans in the future, but we must also remember it is a way of preserving Peranakan culture so that it can be appreciated by people around the world. ✱



Timeless Peranakan Legacy
A pictorial celebration

The antique sarong kebaya collection of Peter Wee

 208 East Coast Road Singapore 428907
Tel: 63458544 Fax: 63451220

COOKING OUR WAY TO HEALTH

Chef Baba Philip Chia shows how Peranakan cooking can also be healthy eating

A heart attack in February 2007 converted me into an advocate for healthier cooking, which is ironic considering that up to then, I had specialised in rich Peranakan food! Prior to the cardiac arrest, I had only conducted healthier cooking-themed classes for those with diabetes and other health ailments that necessitated a restricted diet. Interestingly, I found that many ingredients could stay the same. However, I substitute sugar with Xylitol and it is also important to select the appropriate cooking oil.

I started cooking at six when I was forced to help out in the kitchen. I was raised by a nanny who was a Peranakan and an accomplished cook. At that tender age, I didn't understand much, but I really missed her food when she passed away in 1974. After her death, I continued to learn Peranakan cooking from my paternal aunts. I wrote their recipes down in a small blue exercise book (it is still with me and rather worn out) and practised my cooking every weekend. In 1977, I took part in a national cooking

competition and was ranked eighth from the top in the finals. The judge was the late Mrs Lee Chin Koon (Minister Mentor's mother). I still remember that she exclaimed, "Wah, lama tak makan ini lauk!" with a big smile and commended me, "100% for taste. Improve your presentation skills." It was my first time and I was quite nervous!

Nowadays, I cook for various private and corporate clients and for weddings as well. One of my recent events was at the British High Commission for 120 people (including diplomats, ministers and CEOs). I also provide for private dinners at my home in Clementi.

Of the four recipes I am sharing with *The Peranakan*, *Zucchini Goreng Chilli Garam* was specially created for some students of mine who are cancer patients. I dedicate this dish to them. The recipe for *Ayam Goreng Kunyit Halia* has been included as it is one of the main courses for The Peranakan Ball coming up in July. Try cooking the chicken in a healthier way as outlined in the recipe. ✱

Photography by
Jason Ong.



Zucchini Goreng Chilli Garam

INGREDIENTS:

- 10 Fresh red chillies (ground)
- 2 tsp Sea salt
- 6 Calamansi limes
- 3 tbsp Sugar
- 4-5 Pieces of kaffir lime leaves
- 1 Large onion (sliced)
- 1-2 Green zucchinis (cut to desired size and steamed for 5 minutes)
- 3 tbsp Cooking oil

PREPARATION:

Heat a pan with oil and sauté the ground fresh red chillies and kaffir lime leaves with salt. Fry till chilli paste is caramelised, then add the calamansi lime juice and sugar till dissolved. Finally add the sliced large onion and stir fry for just a minute. Serve hot with steamed rice.

Note: Diabetic patients may replace sugar with Xylitol, which can be purchased from any health and organic stores. For cooking oil, I recommend the Sunflower & Extra Virgin Olive Oil Blend from NTUC. It is affordable and great for frying vegetables and doing a light sauté.



Five-colour Salad with Kerabu Dressing

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 Large carrot (sliced thinly, lengthwise)
- 1 Cucumber (de-seeded, sliced thinly, lengthwise)
- ¼ Red cabbage (thinly sliced)
- 2 Yellow capsicum
- 1 Large onion (thinly sliced)
- 1 cup Pink grapefruit / pomelo (either or both can be used)

DRESSING:

- 8 tbsp Extra virgin oil
- 4 tbsp Balsamic vinegar
- 60g Shallots (thinly sliced)
- 6 Calamansi limes (to extract juice only)
- 1-2 tbsp Sugar (can be substituted with 2 tsp Stevia or 2 tbsp Xylitol for diabetics)
- ½ cup Chopped cilantro
- ½ cup Chopped mixed herbs (turmeric leaves, kaffir lime leaves, lemongrass, rojak flower)

- 2 cloves Finely chopped garlic
- 1 Pinch of sea salt

GARNISH:

- 3 tbsp Sunflower seeds (lightly toasted)
- 3 tbsp Pine nuts (lightly toasted)

PREPARATION:

Mix all the cut vegetables in a mixing bowl. Set aside and chill for a while. Using another mixing bowl or a salad dressing mixer, mix all the dressing ingredients and shake. Add salt, lime and sugar to taste.

To serve, mix the dressing in, place atop the salad and put it in a side dish so that the diners can regulate the preferred amount.

Note: Toasted grated coconut can also be used as a garnish.



Ayam Goreng Kunyit Halia

INGREDIENTS:

1kg	Chicken wings / drumlets
300g	Ginger
2 inch	Turmeric
1 tbsp	Sesame oil
3 tbsp	Light soya sauce
1 tbsp	Brandy (optional)

PREPARATION:

Marinate the chicken with the ground ginger and turmeric, together with the other seasonings for about 30 minutes. For brandy, it is best if left overnight. Then deep fry the chicken till golden brown and drain it on a paper towel. To serve, simply arrange on a large platter. This dish is ideal for parties.

HEALTHIER OPTION: Substitute the chicken wings with skinned drumsticks and roast in the oven 180 deg C for 15-20 minutes.

Nyonya Egg & Prawn Salad

INGREDIENTS:

2-3	Hard-boiled eggs
2 sprigs	Local lettuce
1	Cucumber
100g	Sweetened peanut candy (<i>kong tng</i>). If not available, replace with plain roasted peanut
100g	Cocktail prawns or fresh small prawns
4-5	Calamansi limes
1-2 tbsp	Sugar
3-4	Fresh red chillies

Note: There are two types of peanut candy. You may add more sugar as preferred. For a healthier choice, use 4 tbsp of Tahini Sesame Paste in place of the peanut candy. This paste is high in calcium.

PREPARATION:

Place the sweetened peanut candy or roasted peanuts into a blender and quickly blend to a slightly rough-chopped consistency. Transfer into a bowl and set aside. Slice chilli into small pieces and put them into the blender. Blend to a paste. Extract the juice from the



calamansi limes. Mix the chilli, sugar and calamansi juice in a bowl. Add the chopped sweetened candy, mix well and set aside. Slice the cucumber. Slice the eggs with an egg cutter. Cut the lettuce to palm-size portions.

To serve, use the cut lettuce as a bed. Place the sliced cucumber on the lettuce bed. Arrange the sliced hard-boiled eggs and top with prawns. Pour on the chilli and peanut sauce mixture and serve.

FOUR ON FOUR: FINE BEE HOON

Baba Emeric Lau spends a tasty evening with a foursome

This is the last in a series of four reports on a food-tasting session organised by *The Peranakan*. We gathered four noted gourmets – Mr Anthony Heng and Nyonyas Bebe Seet, Elizabeth Lee and Helen Lim – and also trawled the supermarket aisles for various food items commonly used in Peranakan cooking

The aim was to sample these condiments in as objective a fashion as possible to uncover their merits. The products were tasted blind; our tasters then graded each one according to a set of criteria, and were also asked to include additional comments as they fancied. The tasters were not privy to one another's evaluations until after the tasting session. In between each sampling, white bread, water and ground coffee were used to cleanse the palate and nasal passages.

Four products were selected: dark soya sauce (*tauyu*), soya bean sauce (*tauchio*), sweet sauce (*tichio*) and rice vermicelli (*bee hoon*). In this last instalment, we disclose the results of the rice vermicelli (*bee hoon*) tasting.

Four types of vermicelli were sampled and graded by colour, crunchiness, elasticity, fineness, starchiness and overall taste.



1 CHILLI BRAND

Our tasters ranked Chilli brand as largely above average; Bebe Seet and Elizabeth Lee noted that crunchiness and elasticity were its best qualities. Both Elizabeth Lee and Helen Lim stated that it was ideal to serve in soup. Lee also said it would work well if fried.

2 TAI SUN RICE BEE HOON

Tai Sun proved to be a favourite amongst our tasters. Anthony Heng commended it for crunchiness and said it would be good in making *putumayam*. It ranked highly for overall taste. Elizabeth Lee opined that it would be great in gravy-based dishes like *mee siam*. Agreeing with her, Helen Lim added that it would also work well as *sin chew bee hoon* and *beehoon goreng*.



3 A1 BIHUN BERAS

Our panel was divided over the merits of A1. Anthony Heng rated it average in most categories and commented that it was both soft and fine and thus would work for soup-based dishes. Bebe Seet did not find it appealing, and rated it below average in all categories except for colour, which received an average rating. In contrast, it was favoured by Elizabeth Lee, who ranked it above average for overall taste, and excellent for fineness and starchiness. Lee also remarked that it would be good for frying. Helen Lim found it generally average and said it would be good for dry stirring.

4 TAIWAN HSIN CHU

It was concluded that Hsin Chu should more rightly

be classified as *tang hoon* rather than *bee hoon*. It was transparent and extremely fine. Anthony Heng stated that its fineness meant that it should only be used for soup-based dishes and not fried as it would break up easily.

In sum, it was found that the different qualities of the beehoon would greatly affect their suitability for fried or soup-based dishes. *



The food tasting panel (from left): Helen Lim of Rumah Kim Choo, Anthony Heng of Katong Catering, gourmand and passionate cook Elizabeth Lee and Bebe Seet of Rumah Bebe.

OF PUNNING PUNTERS, BANKERS AND RUNNERS

Baba Tan Kuning shares his recollections of a time long before the integrated resorts, inspired by Baba William Gwee Thian Hock's feature on *Chap Ji Ki*

The game of *Chap Ji Ki* was played in two ways. The first was betting once a day through runners or bookies, simply called *Tikam Chap Ji Ki*, from 12 numbers. Bets could be as little as 10 cents a number. Dividends were 10 times for one digit betting, 100 times for double digit and 1,000 times for three digits. The most popular was double-digit betting. The second way was *Chap Ji Ki Panjang*, a continuous betting session over a whole afternoon in someone's home.

Chap Ji Ki began in the early 20th century when a Chinese operator was granted a license by the Sultan to open a gambling den in Johor Baru. Dubbed *Chap Ji Ki Johor*, the craze spread to Singapore overnight. Daily draws enticed punters who submitted betting slips (paper about half-inch by two inches in size) to bookies or their runners found all over Singapore. By 10.30 am each day, all slips were picked up (*pungot surat*) by the bookies who would travel by train (Keretapi Malaya or KTM) from Tanjong Pagar Station to Johor Baru. At noon, the sound of a cannon could be heard all over in Singapore. For the punters, it was the moment that the bookies would place their bets at the gambling den. The banker (*Pok Kua*) drew three numbers a day.

The Johor operation lasted only about a year. It was rumoured that the Sultan of Johor curtailed the license because of a rise in crime and suicide rates in Johor and Singapore and also due to disapproval from Singapore's colonial government.

In the 1930s, daily *Chap Ji Ki* betting became rampant in Singapore though done in a clandestine manner. *Chap Ji Ki Panjang* also emerged. Punters who wished to remain incognito turned to private runners to place double-digit bets for them instead of going themselves to *naik tio* (visiting the gambling den). The first two numbers drawn at the start of the session were considered the draw for the day. The session then continued uninterrupted for the whole afternoon, usually in a bungalow or terrace house in the suburbs. Moving from house to house was the modus operandi of the *Pok Kua* to evade police raids. Not more than two sessions a week would be held in the same house. Rarely was there a raid unless a rival group made a tip off. No gangsters were involved.

In the 1930s, there was a male *Pok Kua* called Ah Bah. In the late 1940s and 1950s a woman, Mui Soh, took over. In my neighbourhood, one of the bungalows was occasionally the gambling den. Each betting

session, small scale, was limited to 15 to 20 punters a day. The *Pok Kua* was assisted by a woman, a Teochew nyonya in *baju panjang* and *sanggol nyonya*, known as Bibik Lao Ya, whose task was to recruit punters (mostly housewives) and inform them of the location, date and time of the session. Another helper called Ah Seng was stationed at the house entrance to look out for police and sound the alarm. Ah Seng was also a runner. The *Pok Kua* paid Bibik Lao Ya, Ah Seng and the house owner \$10 each for a session. It was said that the host loved betting and would lose more than \$10 anyway.

BETTING SESSION

The *Pok Kua* would sit on a mat surrounded by punters in a circle, or chair at a long 12-seater dining table (*tok panjang*) for a session. Both his hands were hidden in a cloth bag containing 12 *Susek* (from the Hokkien word *sisek* or four colours) cards. He would pick a card and tuck it in a matchbox in front of him, for the punters to place bets. The punter would put a card or more with the numbers facing downwards in front of him, and the cash on top. When all bets were placed the *Pok Kua*'s assistant would knock his knuckles on the floor or table, giving the game its other name of *Tok Tok*. As the *Pok Kua* revealed his card, the punters would match with any winning cards and collect their dividends.

SUSEK CARDS

The 12 cards, their implied numbers and meaning of characters are as follows:

Hokkien name	Colour	Number	Meaning of Chinese character
O Kun	White	1	Black general
O Su	White	2	Black scholar
O Chio ⁿ	White	3	Black minister
Ang Ki	Red	4	Red chariot
Ang Beh	Red	5	Red horse
Ang Pau	Red	6	Red cannon
O Ki	White	7	Black chariot
O Beh	White	8	Black horse
O Pau	White	9	Black cannon
Ang Chio ⁿ	Red	10	Red minister
Ang Su	Red	11	Red scholar
Ang Kun	Red	12	Red general

In Hokkien, ang means red and o is black.

SUSEK CARDS

The 12 cards with 12 numbers comprise the red and white cards from a *Susek* pack which has four colours - red, white, yellow and green. Each *Susek* card is about two-thirds the size of a *Cherki* card. A *Susek* card has one side pink and the other with coloured Chinese characters similar to Chinese chess. The cards and numbers come in pairs and complement each other. They are O Kun, Ang Kun (1 and 12), O Su, Ang Su (2 and 11), O Chioⁿ, Ang Chioⁿ (3 and 10), Ang Ki, O Ki (4 and 7), Ang Beh, O Beh (5 and 8) and Ang Pau, O Pau (6 and 9). One is called the spirit (*semangat*) or *kan* in Hokkien of the other number. At the gambling session, the numbers drawn are called by their names, for example, O Kun, Ang Kun and O Chioⁿ mean 1, 12 and 3.

CHAI METHODS

Punters, whether in the old days or now, are always looking for lucky numbers to bet on. One method is to guess or *chai surat* a number that a lucky object represents. Things seen in a dream, unexpected gifts and live animals that appear to behave strangely are considered auspicious signs that could be interpreted as lucky numbers. Older Peranakans would *chai surat* using resources like *Susek* cards, *Cherki* cards, the 12 animals of the Zodiac or play on the pun in Chinese words.

As each of the 12 *Susek* cards has a given number, the Chinese characters for a king represent 1 and 12 while horse is 5 and 8, and chariot is 7. To dream of a non-Chinese king (O Kun) riding a brown horse (Ang Beh) is to bet on 1 and 5.

Using *Susek* cards, O Chioⁿ which sounds like elephant is 3 while Ang Chioⁿ which has the same sound as rob is 10. To dream of an elephant is to bet on 3 and a thief or robber is 10. Ki is Hokkien for flag. Ang Ki (4) and O Ki (7) represent the red and white/black flags respectively. In Hokkien, persimmon is Ang Ki, a red packet is Ang Pau and a white bun, Pek Pau. These three objects sound similar to the numbers 4, 6 and 9.

Other similar sounding words are also counted. For example, *ji* (2) sounds like the Hokkien word for letter; *sa*ⁿ (3) sounds similar to *sa*ⁿ, or clothing; *si* (4) sounds similar to death (*si*); *goh* (5) is goose (*go*); and *kao* (9) is for monkey and dog. A dream of a monkey putting on a coat implies the numbers 9 and 3. *Cherki* cards pronounced in Peranakan patois came in just as useful. For example, *yeo*, which represents 1, has six different forms:

1. *Yeo Kay Tua* (Leader, derived from the Malay word *ketua*) depicts a Buddhist monk.
2. *Yeo Kuching* (Cat), from the appearance of whiskers, meaning unknown to the *Cherki* players
3. *Yeo Kasot* (Shoe) shows six eyelets in two rows.

Susek cards that represent 12 numbers of Chap Ji Ki:



In the game of *Cherki* these six cards represent the number 1. For *Chap Ji Ki* punters a *Yeo Nyonya* and *Yeo Lau Chian* represent the numbers 11 and 12 respectively.



4. *Yeo Burong* (Bird) looks like a crane with its long neck, big eyes and beak.
5. *Yeo Nyonya* (Lady) is a woman in red with a large headpiece.
6. *Yeo Lau Chian* (Clown) is a red Chinese character meaning joker.

Yeo Nyonya and *Yeo Lau Chian* represent 11 and 12. A woman is 11 and a man, 12. Number 1 may represent a Buddhist monk, cat, shoe or bird. A dream of a woman with footwear is a tip to bet on 11 and 1.

RESPONSES

ZODIAC SYMBOLS

The 12 animals of the zodiac as they appear consecutively in the Chinese calendar are also numbered. Rat is 1, ox 2, tiger 3, rabbit 4, dragon 5, snake 6, horse 7, goat 8, monkey 9, rooster 10, dog 11 and pig 12. A dream of three rats scuttling across a room can be interpreted as 3 and 1.

MEDIUMS & SPIRITS

Goyang Surat (shaking for lucky numbers) is when punters look to the spirits (*datok*). Temples dedicated to *Tua Pek Kong*, the god of wealth, road side shrines or big trees, graveyards and domestic ancestral tablets are opportune places to find lucky numbers. The worshipper holds any container, be it a porcelain cup, milk can or cigarette tin with 12 pieces of paper folded or crumpled into balls, numbered from 1 to 12. He shakes it in front of the deity or divine object until a numbered paper drops out. That will be the number to bet.

I recall that punters also invited the spirits to the home through mediums. One was a Malay spirit called *Si Wang Ge* or *Datok Nenek*, which involved a young girl as the medium. Covering her head with a

yellow shawl, she would chant a mantra. The spirit would have “arrived” when she started to shake her head slowly or yawn. That was the signal to ask her for lucky numbers.

Another spirit was *Datok Bakol*. A *bakol sia*^a (ceremonial gift basket) with a pencil attached was held by two women who would chant a mantra to summon the *Datok*. The basket would shake vigorously upon the *Datok*’s arrival and mysteriously guide the pencil to list the two lucky numbers in Chinese characters.

Other spirit calls included “Quick Come” and “Spirit Come”. In “Quick Come”, three adults (three men and three women or a mix) would sit around a three-legged table. Each one rested their index finger lightly on a saucer. The numbers 1 to 12 and the 26 letters of the alphabet were written clockwise in a circle around the table rim. All three would loudly repeat “quick come” until the saucer started moving by some unknown force. When asked, the saucer would stop at two lucky numbers.

To test the power of the spirit, one of the three people would ask the spirit for the birthday and Chinese name of a bystander. The saucer would move to several numbers and alphabets to reveal the answers. I witnessed this myself when I was about 10 years old.

My mother’s neighbour said her cousin played the game alone with an inverted drinking glass placed in the centre of a table on which were written numbers and alphabets. It started as a game to get *Chap Ji Ki* numbers. Later, the man would invite the spirit to ask about lost things or which day a family member would return from travel. It was said that one day the spirit revealed herself to be the man’s late mother. He stopped playing the game.

FOUR DIGITS (4D) & TOTO

One evening my Indonesian maid shouted excitedly that my neighbour’s car was badly damaged. I saw that its right mudguard had caved in. The car number was SDX 108. The next morning I flipped through the newspaper and saw the first prize for the 4-D was 7108. On hindsight, I should have betted on that number because a car represents 7. I missed a jackpot!

Some addicted punters have the habit of repeatedly betting on the same numbers (*chiu surat*) day after day, believing that one day they would strike the jackpot. The psychological effect is obvious. There is always the fear that the number would appear on the day that a bet is not made. In the old days punters blamed the mischievous spirit called *Hantu Chap Ji Ki*, for tempting them to gamble and suffer heavy losses. My advice is never to *chiu surat*. Better still, never gamble. *

A TREASURE TROVE OF VINTAGE COLLECTIBLES

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ILLUSORY EMILY

Baba Emeric Lau is enraptured by a transcendent Ivan Heng

She is like an enigmatic elderly relative to the many who have seen her played and reprised by thespians both local and regional. I believe most readers of this magazine would already claim familiarity with *Emily of Emerald Hill*, the matriarch who rises from discarded girl-child to become high society's pre-eminent hostess-with-the-mostest, only to have tragedy heaped upon her, leaving her all alone in her dotage.

And so it was that the audience at Wild Rice's 10th Anniversary production of Stella Kon's seminal monologue streamed into the Esplanade Theatre. Not so much to watch and learn about Emily, but to see how Ivan Heng would interpret her, or for some, re-interpret her. Heng, having first stepped into Emily's *kasot manek* 10 years ago, has performed the part nearly 100 times.

Like the original 2001 production directed by the late Krishen Jit, an overt awareness that Heng is a man playing a woman permeates this production. Amongst the numerous pithy quotes in the show's programme book are the following gems:

"Because only a man knows how a woman is supposed to act." - David Henry Hwang, *M. Butterfly*

"One is not born a woman. One becomes one." - Simone de Beauvoir

There is a distinct difference between Emily the person and Emily the *woman*. Emily the person is courageous: "I never cried for myself." Emily the woman, however, recognises her vulnerable gendered social position: "Your life is meaningless, you have no value, except as a wife and mother." In Emily's world, a woman is the roles she plays: she is artifice itself. To that end, Heng deliberately made Emily "fake" - he drew from theatrical genres spanning Absurdism and Brecht to slapstick stand-up comedy in bringing his Emily to life onstage. This could also be read as a tribute to true Peranakan spirit, which is in itself a potpourri of diverse cultures.

With much deft switching of modes and codes, it became obvious that his deliberately exaggerated portrayal of Emily was not meant to be a "realistic" depiction of a character via any suspension of disbelief. This was also made clear by his strident

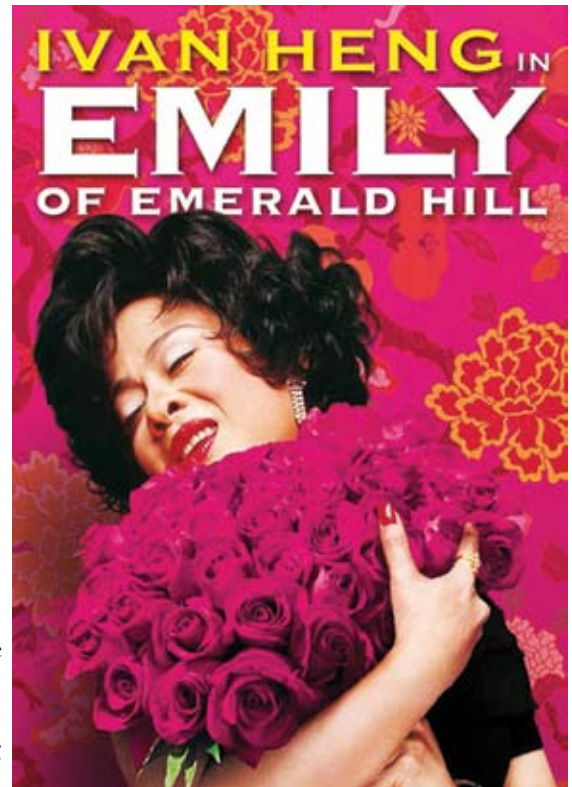
interactions with the audience, demolishing the stage's "fourth wall" convention. Latecomers were made to apologise to the rest of the audience for their tardiness, while those seated in the front row received lessons on sewing quilts and cooking *ayam buah keluak*.

Heng even appeared at the front-of-house during intermission, performing a scene where Emily shops for groceries at the wet market, with hapless audience members foisted into the roles of the stallholders she addresses.

Those fortunate enough to recall the Heng/Jit collaboration would find the above enactments familiar, and may relish that Heng has reproduced them in this reprisal with gleeful aplomb. As with Margaret Chan and other actors who profess to have a deep affinity with Emily and have revisited the role, it is always a delight to see how much actor and character have become fused.

At the performance I caught (Friday, 4 March), an awkward moment arose when Heng/Emily, getting visibly annoyed at not being able to don a ball gown in time for the next scene, exclaimed, "Sh*t!" The mic was on, and the expletive clearly heard by all. One wondered if it was a genuine slip-up, or if Heng actually meant his character to show most unlady-like frustration. And then again, it didn't matter - Heng/Emily have bonded just so. The dramatist and the matriarch. The *dramatriarch*.

In contrast and possible defiance of what is regarded as a sacred stage instruction towards the end of the second act, Heng's Emily did not "open her hand with a gesture of releasing, of setting free." This time, there was no moment of release and redemption. Instead, the older Emily is simply left alone in Emerald Hill, save for the occasional nannying of a grandchild or visits from her children.



Heng in a publicity photo from the production.



Many actors have played Emily.

Abandoned and lonely, she gradually withdraws into her own memories that become distorted and reconstituted until the audience grows painfully aware that the entire play and its non-linear structure may very well be interpreted as nothing more than the fevered and fragmented wanderings of a dying mind. The stark white set by Christopher Chua and multimedia artist Brian Gothong Tan's phantasmagoric projections further invoked a sense of the dreamy or nightmarish.

Fittingly, just as she entered, Emily exits, waltzing

gracefully away upstage and literally receding into the distance. Who was this girl, woman, wife and mother? In her blind passion to play each role to the best, she was ostensibly larger than life yet utterly human and vulnerable in her motivations. And through her actions and foibles, we did see Woman reflected and writ large, and overpoweringly so. Indeed, Heng's Emily embodies the qualities that men most love and fear – and thus project upon women; the purposefully non-naturalistic performance transcending itself to present a neatly distilled *meta-matriarch* persona.

A final stab of poignancy is delivered during the curtain call when Emily is plainly revealed as Heng in drag. We are left hankering after an abstract notion of the Complete Woman, a rather Platonic concept, we reluctantly acknowledge, that exists but only as illusion. *

SINGAPORE'S HOMEGROWN "CRAZY FOREIGN TALENT" RETURNS!

All hail Baba Dick Lee's reprisal of his Mad Chinaman persona

The Peranakan is happy to share that our very own Baba Dick Lee is mounting three 'live' concerts at the Esplanade from 24 to 26 May where he will return as the Mad Chinaman.

Based on his bestselling autobiography, *The Adventures of the Mad Chinaman*, this solo recital will be a revealing and often hilarious odyssey, including Singapore's best loved hits like *Rasa Sayang*, *Fried Rice Paradise* and *Home*, as well as his many other heartfelt and moving songs. One of the songs, in fact, is called *I am Baba*.

This evening performance at the Esplanade will be Dick's first concert since his last sold-out show at Kallang Theatre in 2004. "I haven't done a proper concert since 2004, and I thought it was a good idea to link it to the second edition of

Hallo, hallo, hallo!
I am performing
again... please come and
support me!

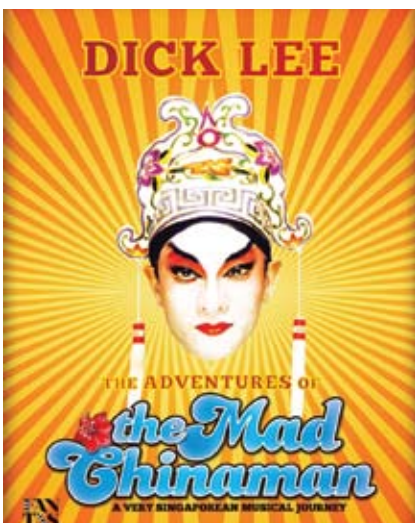


my book, so the theme of the show is how I came to record that album and what inspired me," Dick explained.

The more intimate set up will evoke a living room so audiences can expect to feel just like they dropping in on the singer-songwriter in his own home.

Speaking as a Baba, Dick said, "Our 'race' has always lived through a confusion of identity - OCBC - or *Orang Cina Bukan Cina* - and hopefully this concert will help explain my journey of self-discovery (albeit through music). Anyway, *orang sendiri mesti support lah!*" *

Details at www.sistic.com.sg or call the SISTIC hotline at 6348 555.



BOOKS

TASTEFUL ANECDOTES FROM YESTERDAY

Baba Colin Chee reviews Dr Ong Jin Teong's entertaining Penang cookbook

Interestingly, this cookbook on Penang's heritage food was authored by a retired professor in electrical and electronic engineering. Dr Ong Jin Teong's painstakingly researched and compiled publication had its genesis when his children, nephews and nieces studying abroad wrote home for recipes so they could replicate mummy's or mama's dishes.

Dr Ong's mother, Khoo Chiew Kin, was well known for her cooking demonstrations to members of Penang's YWCA and the MGS Old Girls' Association. A Penangite and Baba, Dr Ong notes in the Introduction:

"Over the years, many of these Penang heritage dishes have been modified so much that what is served today is just a pale image of the original... Many in today's generation have not taken the trouble to learn how to cook because their parents think they should concentrate on their studies."

Hence his decision to put things right by writing this book.

All 69 recipes come with detailed and entertaining anecdotes about the origin of each: how spices are to be treated; how some hawker stalls in the old days used certain spice mixes; how modern day conveniences are used to cook certain dishes; and most importantly, how Penang's heritage food has assimilated the different races and cultures that make the island what it is today – Chinese Hokkien and Hainanese, Malay, Indian, Thai, and, while not specifically mentioned, Eurasian. (Curry *kapitan* is grouped under *Hainanese Influence* in the book but my Eurasian friends would more than beg to differ, especially as my wife and I are faithful regulars at their Christmas lunches where curry *kapitan* is a featured main dish along with *feng* and other Eurasian delights!)

The recipes were put together by Dr Ong from his immediate and extended family – parents, wife, sisters, brothers, cousins and in-laws. Therefore one could say it is also a family cookbook.

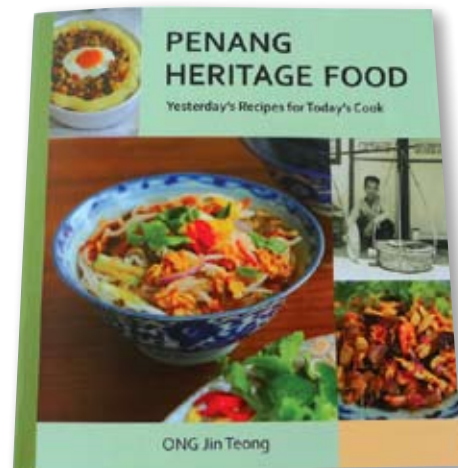
Family preferences aside, what I found truly appealing in Dr Ong's cookbook are his many personal observations about how food is served. Take for instance the ubiquitous island dish, Penang assam laksa:

"Most stalls in Georgetown, Ayer Itam and Balik Pulau serve only assam laksa. A few serve both assam laksa and laksa lemak. Generally, the stalls that serve both – like the one at Burma Lane opposite the Pulau Tikus police station – have a strong Thai or Burmese

influence. Traditionally, in our family, the assam and lemak versions are cooked and served together...Personally, I start with laksa lemak, then the assam laksa and then a mixture of both. The last approach may explain why the laksa from Johor, Kelantan, Melaka and Pahang are both lemak and sour."

This Baba certainly knows his dishes. He bemoans the fact that the Penang nyonya tradition of finely cutting ingredients is fast disappearing. "The vegetables are so *chor* (coarse, in Hokkien), compared to the very fine cutting" of years gone by. I hear the same all the time from my wife and in-laws! *

Penang Heritage Food – Yesterday's Recipes for Today's Cooks by Ong Jin Teong is published by Landmark Books and is available at leading bookstores.



Photography by Colin Chee.


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MADE EASY

BOOKS

ENTRANCING INTRICACIES

Baba Colin Chee reviews Nyonya Christine Ong's practical guide on wearing the sarong kebaya

You wouldn't be faulted if halfway through Christine Ong's book, *Nyonya Kebaya*, you sense that it is her personal photo album on view! There are simply so many pictures of her.

Nonetheless, Ong's 208-pager is an interesting, even sumptuous, visual collection of sarong kebayas — see the infinite variety and sheer colour of the numerous ensembles and learn how to wear and care for them.

If you are after a scholarly exposition on the sarong kebaya, this is not the book for you. The author makes no such pretensions either. As Singapore poet, Robert Yeo, remarks in his foreword to the book:

"...(This is) a book that combines the passionate and the practical."

In terms of content, it is a simple book about the sarong kebaya. Most importantly, it is about how sarong kebayas can be worn and cared for on an everyday basis. I like especially that there is a chapter on how our young nyonias can wear it any way they feel it can be worn — based on their creative preferences. There could be more visual examples of this though.

There are also useful chapters on *Wearing and*

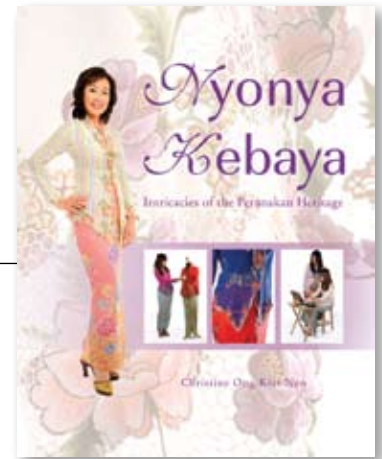
Matching, which includes sections on the art of wearing the kebaya and sarong,

knowing your body type and about colours; some discussion on the vintage and contemporary; and a chapter on caring for your kebayas. However, I thought the section on how to traditionally wear a sarong could have been clearer in illustration.

What I enjoyed most about the book was the intricate embroidery on the kebayas and sarong art. Much of this has been unashamedly featured in generous photo-spreads. There's some visual repetition of kebayas in different angles, but then you get to see the different aspects of a good piece.

If you are looking for a nice, practical how-to book, this may be the one for you. *

Nyonya Kebaya – Intricacies of the Peranakan Heritage by Christine Ong Kiat Neo is available at all leading bookstores and Select Bookshop.



Photography by Colin Chee.

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MALACCA IN NARRATIVE

Baba Colin Chee reviews Malacca boy Joe Conceicao's new novels

You cannot approach Joe Conceicao's two recently released books on Malacca from a historian's or literature teacher's perspective.

You are not going to find, to your satisfaction, a faithful historical account of the development of Malacca from the small fishing village that it was 600 years ago to the end of the Portuguese era in 1641. Nor will you find yourself wrestling with character development and thick, exhilarating plots.

As Joe said during the launch of his two books in March, "I have many stories to tell." And this is exactly what you will get – easy reading, sometimes even predictable, but nevertheless very engaging, straightforward storytelling.

The first book, *The Travels and Adventures of Sang Dol*, is about the exploits of a largely imaginary fisherman's son called Dollah in the nascent years of Malacca as a Sultanate. Dollah entered the court of Malacca's founder, the Buddhist Sumatran prince named Parameswara, who later adopted the name Sultan Iskandar Shah, and rose to become Iskandar's most trusted general and advisor.

Joe has managed to weave into his first book threads of history that you would find familiar. Malacca's early years, its growth and challenges from other kingdoms in Pahang and Siam (now Thailand); its early and beneficial alliances with the Achenese, Bugis and the Chinese, who were sea-faring traders; then later with the Johor kingdom and the *orang laut*, who made a living as dreaded pirates.

There are of course the episodes of the Chinese Muslim Admiral Cheng Ho and his massive fleet, along with Ming Princess Hang Li Po and her female companions. The Chinese Peranakans first sprang from intermarriages between Cheng Ho's men to local ladies and that between the Chinese court ladies and Malay nobles.

Certainly not to be missed are the author's references to Indonesian *dukuns* or medicine men or *bomohs* as we would call them here and their mastery of the black arts. One is led to suspect that Conceicao, a very devout Catholic, may have acquired a very fascinating appreciation of the black arts during his time as Singapore's ambassador to Indonesia to be able to write quite extensively on the subject.

The second book, *Love and War in Old Malacca*, is best read as a sequel to the first. I found the storytelling here a lot more convincing. It covers the years of Portuguese rule in Malacca. This is probably because Conceicao is himself of Malacca-Portuguese



descent or a *Kristang*, who traces his cultural roots all the way back to this period of Portuguese supremacy in Malacca.

Conceicao writes in the preface:

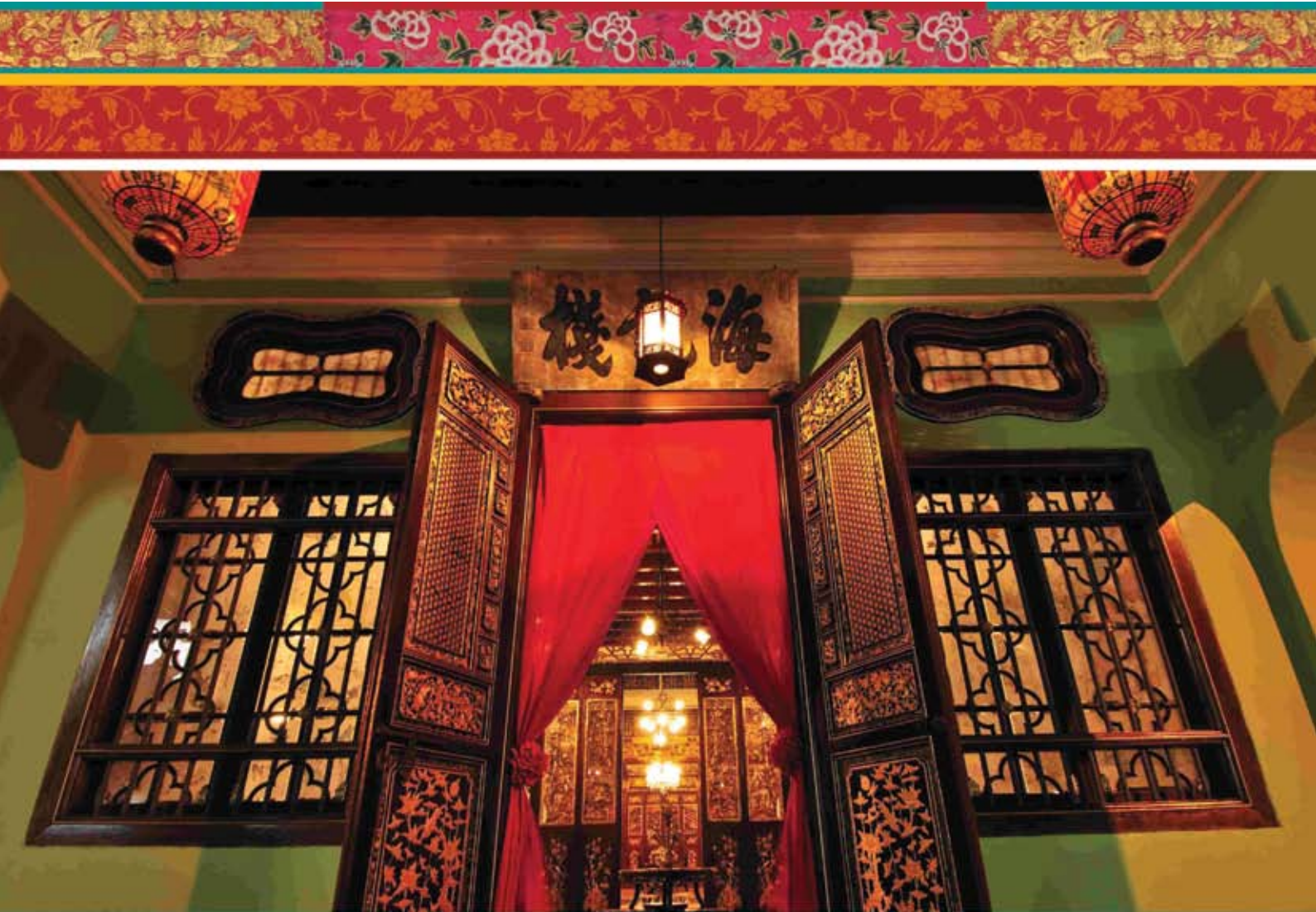
"Malacca for me even today shapes shadows of its past... The *Kristang* people of Portuguese descent, the *Chitty* Malacca, the Chinese Peranakan, were some icons of the day... It is this nostalgia that led me to write this novel."

This book is centred on the fictional character of Gaspar Pereira, a young officer who sailed into Malacca with Alfonso D'Albuquerque. It traces Gaspar's rise to being a very senior official of the newly-founded Portuguese colony of Malacca, his compassionate leadership, marriage to the beautiful daughter of an Indian trader, and his eventual assassination by unhappy natives.

The two books were launched on 3 March, 2011 by the President of Singapore, S.R. Nathan, and supported by both The Peranakan Association Singapore and The Eurasian Association. Joe, who is now in his eighties, is a Katong boy who taught at St. Patrick's School and later became the Member of Parliament for Katong. He served as Singapore's Ambassador to the former USSR and Indonesia, and also as Singapore High Commissioner in Australia. *

Joe Conceicao's two books, *The Travels and Adventures of Sang Dol* and *Love and War in Old Malacca* are now available at leading bookstores. They are published by JN Cooray Publishing House Sdn Bhd.

Photography by
Colin Chee.



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THE PINANG PERANAKAN MANSION TAKES YOU BACK TO THE TIME OF THE BABAS AND NYONYAS, SET IN THE HOME OF ONE OF PENANG'S HISTORICAL PERSONALITIES, KAPITAN CINA CHUNG KENG KWEE.

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local history's famous personalities, the 'Hai Kee Chan' or Sea Remembrance Store had once served as the residence and office of Kapitan Cina Chung Keng Kwee.

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LOCATION MAP



HERITAGE HITS TOWN

Baba Edmond Wong shares the birthing process of Joo Chiat as Singapore's first Heritage Town

It was about five years ago when I began campaigning for Singaporeans to acknowledge that we do share a common culture. Such a campaign needed to have an achievable aim. Consequently, a plan was hatched to create a Peranakan Street in Singapore, since our culture has unifying elements shared by all Singaporeans.

Before an actual proposal could be formally drawn up, it was necessary to first educate and gain sufficient awareness for the cause. In early September 2008, an online petition to create a Peranakan street was placed on social networking site Facebook. Fortuitously, a few months later, Mediacorp broadcast their *Little Nyonya* hit drama series and the online petition was inundated with supporters. Gaining much traction, the original vision for a single street quickly evolved into one for a full-fledged Peranakan Town.

In late 2009, I was introduced to The Peranakan Association Singapore (TPAS) and was invited to assist with The Peranakan Festival. I realised that TPAS, with its dedicated members who all share a passion for Peranakan culture, would be the ideal driving force in making the vision for a Peranakan Town in Singapore a reality. I have found great support in TPAS for this aim, and after more than a year's work together, am ecstatic to say that our dream has achieved fruition.

The perfect opportunity presented itself on 23 October, 2010 when the National Heritage Board (NHB) announced their keen interest to look for a historical location within Singapore to promote a greater sense of community bonding and belonging through active participation and ownership of our culture and heritage as Singaporeans. A proposal was eagerly submitted through the Joo Chiat Community Club as the area has long been associated with Peranakans, many of who have lived in the district for three or more generations. After much anticipation, we received a reply on 19 February 2011 confirming that our proposed venue had been selected as Singapore's first Heritage Town!

Moving forward, TPAS will play a significant role in public outreach and education projects via close collaborative efforts with the authorities and grassroots organisations. With Joo Chiat as a base, we aim to revitalise the spirit of our culture and heritage amongst youth. TPAS will use popular communication channels including online initiatives and direct collaborations with institutions of learning, to inculcate our youth with a sense of culture. A

calendar of events that will cover aspects of material culture, culinary excursions and arts performances should further

enhance Singapore's image as a global city with history and soul amongst the general public. *

Join us today and play a significant role in promoting culture and heritage! We welcome all youths to participate in our activities. Your support will ensure that Peranakan culture stays relevant and contemporary. Membership is for a lifetime and requires an affordable one-time only payment – see www.peranakan.org.sg for more details.



Peranakan terrace houses along Koon Seng Road, part of Joo Chiat Heritage Town.


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 Email: JanTChan@singnet.com.sg

EVENTS

TAILS AND TALES IN KUALA LUMPUR

Dr Lee Su Kim reports on the promotion of Peranakan culture up north

Vintage kebayas on parade at the Textile Museum in Kuala Lumpur.

The National Textiles Museum was a most appropriate venue for a parade of vintage kebayas on 8 January 2011, as part of the year's first event for the Persatuan Peranakan Baba Nyonya Kuala Lumpur & Selangor (PPBNKLS). The event was organised to launch my book of short stories,

Kebaya Tales, which is already into its second print run! It was also a timely opportunity to introduce the KL Youth Chapter and Baba Nyonya singing group.

Many of the gorgeous kebayas and sarong were between 80 to 100 years old, and sourced from private collections from KL, Penang and Malacca. Baba Cedric Tan coordinated the display which continued at the Museum for a month.

The event was titled *Kebaya Tails and Tales*, the word 'tails' as a play on the embroidered pointed hems of the kebaya front panels. Our Youth Chapter, coordinated by Nyonya Jenny Kho, sang and performed for an enthusiastic audience. Nyonya Annie Lim led the Baba Nyonya KL singing group, entertaining the crowd with three popular numbers.

The programme culminated in a tea dance with many babas and nyonyas joining in to *joget*. It was a great way to spend a Saturday afternoon with friends and Peranakan enthusiasts, complete with literature, history, culture, food, music and dance.*

Dr Lee Su Kim is also the President of the PPBNKLS.





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MUSING ON MASTERPIECES

Nyonya Linda Chee spends an evening resplendent with sarong kebayas at the Peranakan Museum

Over 360 guests packed the atrium of the Peranakan Museum on 31 March 2011 to witness the launch of a breathtaking collection of vintage sarong kebayas in a special exhibition called *Sarong Kebaya: Peranakan Fashion and its International Sources*. The array of female guests dressed in their finery did not escape the attention of Dr Alan Chong, Director of the Asian Civilisations Museum. Welcoming the guests, he remarked with delight that he had never seen so many nice sarong kebayas and *kasot manek*, and jokingly urged the ladies to leave their *kasot-kasot* at the door for the Museum's next exhibition.

On a more serious note, Mr Chong said the exhibition "breaks new ground by carefully considering the historical sources of the sarong kebaya. Like Peranakan culture generally, its costume is a complex fusion of several cultures, with sources in India, the Islamic world, China, Southeast Asia, and Europe."



custodian of the collection, our family is assured that the collection will be held in pristine

condition and well-preserved for the enjoyment of future generations." He warmed the crowd with light-hearted comments about Mr and Mrs Lee, his parents: "All good things in life are free and my parents are free," to laughter and applause in the house.

On display presently are 131 objects, including 58 outfits. Highlights include batik masterpieces from three museums in the Netherlands: the Gemeentemuseum in

The Hague, the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam, and the Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden.

Half of the exhibited objects will be replaced in October 2011 to allow more objects to be shown to the public, and also to avoid prolonged exposure of the more fragile pieces to light. A catalogue containing new scholarly work on the sarong kebaya will be published later in the year. *

Mr and Mrs Lee Kip Lee generously donated over 400 kebayas to the Museum. Uncle Kip Lee is also Life President of The Peranakan Association Singapore.

Guests musing over the display of beautiful sarongs and delicate kebayas, some dating back to the 16th century.



Guest of Honour Lee Suet Fern, the Chairman of the Peranakan Museum Board, lauded the donation of over 400 kebayas by Mr and Mrs Lee Kip Lee. She said the superb collection was an invaluable addition to the Museum.

Baba Peter Lee, who co-curated the exhibition with Jackie Yoong, noted that the sarong kebaya had transcended borders by not being indigenous to a specific country but across borders to a whole region. It had become an icon of Peranakan culture and "its appeal is timeless. Our family takes great pleasure in sharing the beauty of the collection and its interesting history with all visitors to the museum. With the Peranakan Museum now as

Sarong Kebaya: Peranakan Fashion and its International Sources will run until 26 February 2012 at the Peranakan Museum. A full range of family programmes and events will complement the exhibition.

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WELCOME

EVENTS

OF MICE & MAIN WAYANG

Baba Richard Tan and his troupe find their calendar filled with corporate engagements



Back in 2005, way before Channel 8's *The Little Nyonya* blockbuster drama serial triggered a massive revival for all things Peranakan, The Main Wayang Company had begun developing a *Peranakan Cultural Immersion Interactive Programme* for the corporate market. With blessings from the Singapore Tourism Board, encouragement from convention organisers, some offshore banks and international organisations, a 'show & tell' heritage entertainment package for non-Singaporeans came into being. Over the years, it gradually evolved and expanded to include various educational and entertaining aspects of our Baba culture.

Events have included the launch of a giant oil rig in Tuas, Canon Peranakan Night, the Tax-Free Incentive Convention and the APEC Convention, where an entire *berlarak* wedding procession was staged for many high-powered, international delegates. Of late, Main Wayang has seen an increase in requests to render our cultural services in the growing MICE (Meetings, Incentive, Conventions & Exhibitions) industry. As the organisers usually indicate their preference for a grand, multi-sensory experience that their delegates and guests will find memorable - a true slice of Singapore - the potential of what we could offer soon became clear. We now have ready programmes ranging from grand opening and welcome ceremonies to Peranakan-themed *tok panjang* dinners and interactive Peranakan handicraft demonstrations.

In mid-March 2011, Main Wayang enthralled delegates from the McDonald's Asia Pacific Women Leadership Conference at Marina Bay Sands with a *Malam Peranakan*, welcoming them with

showers of *bunga rampay*, an interactive display and demonstration of delicate handicraft. Delegates were given a total nyonya make-over complete with a photography session. Come mid-April, we will hold a *Night of Peranakan Splendour* for the ASEAN Paediatric Congress at The Singapore Flyer. We have many more bookings already lined up for the coming months. What a wonderful way to promote Singapore as a multi-cultural destination, and our Peranakan culture to the world. ✱

Left to right:
Gaining momentum
- performing at
corporate functions for
Canon, McDonald's
and even launching
an oil rig at Tuas!

NEW STYLE NEWSTALGIA!

2011 marks the launch of Main Wayang's fourth music CD. In this latest repertoire, the colourful and vibrant lifestyle that Peranakans of today enjoy is celebrated in song. Music Director Baba Alvin Oon has composed two light-hearted numbers about learning our language in *Chakap Baba Patois* and *Gua Suka, Lu Suka!* There's a *keronchong*-inspired romantic ditty, *Bulan Jelita*, and also a fun song about Peranakan *makan* and desserts called *Sedap S'kali!* You will also hear parts of familiar folk melodies like *Lenggang Kangkong*, *Suriram* and *Di-Tanjong Katong* weaved in with the new songs. As we have combined the new and old, we decided to title this CD *Baba Nyonya, New-stalgia!*

For more details, refer to the advertisement on the facing page or visit www.mainwayang.com.

EVENTS

A COLLECTORS' COLLECTIVE

Shireen Lim reports on an initiative to bring lovers of Peranakan material culture together

Over coffee with fellow collector Alvin Yapp one day, I suggested it would be fun to have a gathering of Peranakan antique collectors. Alvin agreed and so *The Collectors' Sale* came into being. The goal was simple – to create a network of collectors and fans where knowledge and experience could be exchanged.

Right: Some of the myriad antiques offered for sale.

Below: Visitors were able to examine the items at leisure in an intimate setting.

The two-day event, held over one weekend at Alvin's home proved a sweet success. In all, over 100 Peranakan antiques were offered for sale from various collectors. These included kebayas, batik, jewellery and porcelain amongst others.

The collectors themselves were on hand to share their experiences. Visitors were able to learn about the antiques and many were inspired to start collecting. They were delighted at being able to learn the stories behind each item, and appreciate each piece up close.*



"It was my first time experiencing such a unique event and a really good idea. I was amazed at the beautiful antiques on display, many of which are extremely valuable. This event should prove especially appealing for new collectors who wish to learn more."

- Kevin Aeria, collector

"It was an eye-opening experience to meet other collectors and swap stories. I hope to be able to participate in more such events soon!"

- Asher K.H. Mak, collector

A PERANAKAN AFFAIR

Nyonya Gina Sim reports on a night of country club fun

The Serangoon Garden Country Club's *Peranakan Affair* on 18 March turned out to be an evening comprising great music, a sumptuous Peranakan buffet spread and a sell-out crowd of 400 who were all raring for a fabulously fun time from the get-go.

Baba Chan Eng Thai emceed the event and after

a brief welcome speech by the Club's President, Mr Leong Keng Thai, the party went into full swing with The Locomotions luring guests onto the dance floor.

Doyen G.T. Lye entertained the guests with a short skit followed by The Peranakan Voices (TPV) who sang *Nyonya Manis*, *The Moon Represents My Heart*, *Singapura Medley* and *Teh Sama Kopi* winning much applause from the very appreciative crowd.

Some ladies were picked to compete in the Best-Dressed Kebaya segment and gamely sashayed across the dancefloor in their resplendent kebayas. *



The Peranakan Voices welcomes members who would like to join them! Please email pv@peranakan.org.sg for more information. Would you like The Peranakan Voices to perform at your event or function? Please email alvin@busads.com.sg.

EVENTS

TRIPLE THE FUN DOWN UNDER!

Babas Joseph Then and Nelson Koh report on three jolly events in Melbourne

Peranakans on Parade

26 January marked a special day for the Peranakan Association of Australia Inc. (PAA). For the first time, a Malaysian contingent participated in the annual *Australia Day Parade* down Swanston Street. It stretched for about 3km to the Botanical Gardens with an estimated 100,000 people lining the route.

The Peranakans were especially outstanding in their sarong kebayas and batik shirts, attracting compliments all round. The mood was very *lau jiat*, with scores of societies, associations and organisations marching and some dancing to the loud beat of drums, gongs and other musical instruments. When the group passed the grand-stand, the contingent was given a rousing announcement for participating in their first-ever march. It was a great occasion and wonderful exposure for the Peranakans.

Welcoming the Year of the Rabbit

The Year of the Rabbit was ushered in by the PAA on Saturday, 12 February at the Boxhill Arts Community Centre. All 108 attendees were treated to a sumptuous menu of home-cooked Peranakan cuisine, complemented by traditional nyonya *kueh* and home-styled sweets.

Prizes were awarded to the best dressed Nyonya

and Baba. The PAA choir provided entertainment for the evening with songs and a short dance item. One of the highlights was a presentation from members who attended the Phuket Peranakan Convention last year. It was truly an occasion to remember – kudos to the hardworking members of the sub-committee whose efforts ensured that everyone enjoyed themselves.

At the Knox Festival

On Saturday, 5 March, the PAA choir was invited to participate in a Multicultural Festival held by the Knox City Council for the benefit and enjoyment of residents in the outer eastern suburbs of Melbourne. The choir performed a selection of Peranakan songs and a dance item with fans (*kipas*) to the tune of *Nyonya Pakay Bunga*. The presentation ended with a medley of Australian songs that was very well received by the largely multicultural Australian audience. *



The choir with their fans and flowers sang *Nyonya Pakay Bunga* at the Knox Festival.

AFTERNOON AT THE MUSEUM

Baba Emeric Lau joins fellow members for The Peranakan Association Singapore's (TPAS) AGM.

It was a typically humid Saturday, but all was cool inside the Ixora Room at The Peranakan Museum, the venue of TPAS' 111th Annual General Meeting (AGM). Calling the meeting to order at 3:30pm, President Baba Peter Wee addressed the 50 or so members gathered. He delivered a summary of TPAS' activities and achievements over the past year.

He thanked various organisations including the National Heritage Board, Singapore Tourism Board, National University of Singapore and Joo Chiat Community Club; our sister associations including Gunong Sayang, the Chetti Melaka and Eurasian Associations, as well as members for their support. Baba Peter also expressed his gratitude to Baba Lee Kip Lee (Uncle Kip), our Honorary Life President, for much guidance and encouragement throughout his first year as Association President.

After the minutes of the last AGM, along with TPAS' financial statements were circulated and confirmed, the floor was handed over to Barbara Fras and Jackie Yoong of the Peranakan Museum. They gave



a presentation on the museum's activities and initiatives to promote the culture, and ended with a slide show featuring pictures of the Quai Branly Museum's *Baba Bling* exhibition.

With no further business at hand, the AGM was declared ended and everyone adjourned to the lobby area to enjoy a simple tea with *nyonya kueh* and sandwiches. *

TPAS Main Committee pose for a photo in the museum's lobby.

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MEMBERS, UPDATE US!

Please help us keep our database up to date. If any of your details listed below have changed since joining The Peranakan Association Singapore (TPAS), please send an email or fax with the updates to Ms Lim Geok Huay. Members who have new details e.g. email addresses, are strongly encouraged to update us as well. Rest assured that all your details are kept strictly confidential.

- Name (Essential as we use this to recall your original records)
- Mailing address
- Mobile
- Email

Members who do not possess or who wish to receive new TPAS membership cards may submit hard copies of full-colour, passport sized photos to Ms Lim Geok Huay. An administrative fee of S\$3 per card will help us cover production and postage costs. Please send your photos to: 1 Goldhill Plaza Podium Block, #01-45 (opposite United Square taxi stand) during office hours. Thank you!

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State Chinese (Penang) Association / Persatuan Peranakan Cina Pulau Pinang
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WELCOME

A big welcome to our new members:

Ms Ang Ai Leng	Ms Charmaine Oei
Miss Pauline Chan Hock Neo	Mrs Teresa Lim-Seaward
Mrs Selina Chan	Mdm Charmaine Oei
Ms Maria Chen	Mr Shee Ping Fatt
Mr Clement Ee Kwong Rong	Mrs Madeline Soo
Ms Mildred Goh	Mdm Soon Puay Keow
Mrs Julie Koh Eng Neo	Mr Sony Subrata
Miss Angeline Koh Mei Hwa	Ms Caroline Tan
Ms Lee Kim Kee	Mdm Olive Tan Keng Hua
Ms Shermay Lee	Mrs Elsie Tan- Marshall
Mr Elroy Laurent Leow	Hock Neo
Choon Kiat	Mrs Chrissy Teng-
Mdm Lev Yock Mee	Hampden-Smith
Mdm Theresa Lye Lee Lee	Mr Marcellus Wong Lu Meng
Miss Miriam Rosie Ng Mei Yee	Miss Regina Yeo Hong Choo

OBITUARY

Our deepest sympathies to the families of our members who have passed on:

Mr Stephen Phuah Swee Guan	Mr Eric Choa
Miss Sim Mui Ling Margaret	Mr Fred Tan Tiang Thong
Mrs Helen Thio	Mrs Maureen Teo-Lin

THE PERANAKAN BALL 2011

The Peranakan Association Singapore presents

THE WEDDING BANQUET

Saturday 9th July, from 7:30pm

The Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel

Continuing our goals to promote and preserve the rich and wonderful Peranakan culture, we have organised a spectacular event in this year's ball. We hope to raise sufficient funds to cover the Association's yearly expenses. As a non-profit organisation, The Peranakan Association relies on the generous contributions, donations and sponsorships from members, friends and organisations.

This year, our theme is the Baba Wedding, with the evening's highlight being a truly exquisite Peranakan wedding procession and ceremony, with 'live' music, entertainment and a delectable dinner prepared by chef David Toh of the Copthorne and Baba Philip Chia. The event promises to be a colourful and boisterous celebration in the true spirit of the Peranakans.

We wish that you could join us for this wonderful evening. Please contact Ms. Lim Geok Huay at 6255 0704 or email: geok@peranakan.org.sg to book your seats today!

THE PERANAKAN GUIDE • SINGAPORE

MUSEUMS

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examines the centres of Peranakan culture in Malacca, Penang and Singapore, and traces its links to as far as Indonesia, Myanmar and Thailand.

Peranakan Museum, 39 Armenian Street, Singapore 179941.

website: www.peranakanmuseum.sg

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Sarong Kebaya: Peranakan Fashion and its International Sources

Now on till 26 February 2012.

Prevailing admission rates apply.



National Museum of Singapore. The museum's Singapore History Gallery pays tribute to the contributions of the pioneering Peranakans. On view are some outstanding artefacts, including the oil portrait of Lim Boon Keng, old photographs, jewellery and sireh sets, as well as the magnificent carved wood hearse of Tan Jiak Kim, which is considered one of the 11 Treasures of the National Museum. National Museum of Singapore, 93 Stamford Road, Tel: 63323659, Opening Hours: 10am to 6pm Daily (Singapore History Gallery), 10am to 9pm Daily (Singapore Living Galleries), Admission \$10 (adults), \$5 (senior citizens above 60), \$5 (students, Nsmen), Free admission to the Singapore Living Galleries from 6pm to 9pm. <http://nationalmuseum.sg>.



Baba House.

This heritage house at 157 Neil Road opened on 4 September 2008. Go back in time to 1928 and experience what a grand Peranakan terraced house would have been like. Owned by the Wee family (whose ancestor Wee Bin was a

mid-19th century shipping magnate) since 1910, the house was sold in 2005 to the National University of Singapore and is now run by NUS Museum. Funds for the purchase and restoration were donated by Agnes Tan, in memory of her father Tun Tan Cheng Lock. Baba House 157 Neil Road, Singapore.

Tel: 62275731. Visits are by guided tours. Please call the house for details. <http://www.nus.edu.sg/museum/baba/index.html>

Asian Civilisations Museum. The first museum in the region to display a wide range of artefacts from across Asia, the ACM not surprisingly has some important Peranakan treasures. The Mary and Philbert Chin Gallery has some lavish examples of gold jewellery, sireh boxes and other paraphernalia, some encrusted with diamonds, and fine batik textiles from the north coast of Java, all made for the Peranakan market.

1 Empress Place, Singapore 179555, Tel: 6332 2982, Opening Hours: 9am to 7pm (Tuesdays to Saturdays), 1pm to 7pm (Mondays), Admission \$8 (adults), \$4 (senior citizens and students). <http://www.acm.org.sg>

LANDMARKS

Blair Plain. A typical Peranakan residential area around Spottiswoode Park, Blair Road and Neil Road which



is worth a stroll. Visit Guan Antiques nearby at Kampong Bahru Road, a treasure trove of Peranakan heirlooms. http://www.arch.nus.edu.sg/SOA/design_studio/dds2b/blair/study/Blair.html.

Emerald Hill Road. Another interesting residential district showcasing the best of eclectic Peranakan residential architecture, just off Orchard Road.

Katong and Joo Chiat. Once the nerve centre of Peranakan life in Singapore. In its heyday it was the site of nearby grand seaside villas and elaborate Peranakan terraced houses. The latter can still be seen in a walk along Koon Seng Road. Also visit Peranakan shops such as Katong Antique House (208 East Coast Road) and Rumah Bebe (113 East Coast Road)

as well as the great variety of Peranakan restaurants in the neighbourhood. http://www.visitsingapore.com/publish/stbportal/en/home/what_to_see/suburban_living/katong.html. <http://www.myjoochiat.com>.

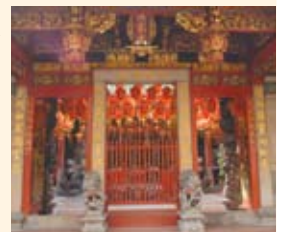
Amoy Street and Telok Ayer Street.

One of the first Peranakan enclaves, now occupied by restaurants and offices. Many Peranakans from Malacca moved to this area as soon as the East India Company began to lease out land for sale.



Thian Hock Keng. The oldest Hokkien temple in Singapore was founded in 1821 although the present structure, built without nails, was completed only in 1841. The temple is dedicated to Mazu, the Daoist goddess of the sea and protector of all seamen. Many of the temple's patrons were Peranakan pioneers, such as Tan Tock Seng, who donated \$30,000 for renovations. He also founded the hospital named after him. The Hokkien Huay Kuan, a community organisation for Hokkien people in Singapore was housed at the temple and also helmed by Peranakan pioneers. Thian Hock Keng, 158 Telok Ayer Street, Tel: 6423 4616.

Tan Si Chong Su. Built in 1878, Tan Si Chong Su is the ancestral temple of the Tan clan, and was founded by prominent Baba philanthropists Tan Kim Ching, son of Tan Tock Seng, and Tan Beng Swee, the son of Tan Kim Seng. The first president of the temple, Tan Kim Tian, was a well-known Baba shipping tycoon. The temple consists of shrines for the ancestral tablets of Tan clansmen, as well as altars to the clan deities. The elaborate stone and wood carvings as well as the swooping ceramic roof finials makes this one of the most elaborate Chinese temples in Singapore, quaintly located amid the gleaming towers of the financial district. Tan Si Chong Su, 15 Magazine Road.





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