

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **MUSEUM UNVEILS LARGEST EXHIBITION OF SINGAPORE POSTCARDS**

*Singapore Philatelic Museum showcases postcard collection - its first major philatelic donation by a collector*

(30 January 2007) Singapore Philatelic Museum is proud to present “Yesterday Once More: A Postcard Exhibition”, a showcase of 550 early picture postcards of Singapore, dating from 1897 to 1941, which were donated to the Museum by renowned philatelist and Museum Board Member Professor Cheah Jin Seng. The exhibition, the first philatelic donation by a private collector to the museum, will be officially opened by Dr Balaji Sadasivan, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts on 30 January 2007, and will run until 1 July 2007.

The collection is one of the most comprehensive and valuable collections of early postcards of Singapore and contains several philatelic “rarities”. Professor Cheah Jin Seng, a medical practitioner, painstakingly amassed the collection, over a period of more than 30 years.

Although postcards were introduced as part of the postal system about 150 years ago in 1861, they are still popular especially with tourists and stamp-collectors today. The postcard started off as an economical and quick means of communication of simple messages, such as to send birthday and season greetings, and to convey good or bad news to relatives and friends. The picture on the postcard, which depicts the landscape, street scene and cultural activity of a country, made the postcard popular among travellers.

The picture postcards on display feature the buildings and streets, social events and lifestyles in Singapore from 1897 to 1941, which may no longer exist or have changed over time. For example, nutmeg plantations at Orchard Road; early commercial buildings in Commercial Square; early modes of transportation such as bullock cart, rickshaw, trolley bus and automobile. The postcards are historical references to the heritage of Singapore at that time. Visitors can find out more about Singapore's past, and enhance their knowledge of our nation's heritage through the postcards.

Highlights of the exhibition include:

- A rare 19th century four-fold (56 cm long) panoramic postcard, showing a breathtaking view of Singapore from the top of Fort Canning Hill;
- A postcard sent from Singapore to Austria on 15 September 1897, which was among the first postcards of Singapore;
- A postcard sent from Singapore to England in 1917, which has an uncommon cancellation of Sea View Hotel, and with an additional datestamp of Singapore with the same date;
- An 1890s postcard that depicts the street scene at Orchard Road, which was then dotted with nutmeg trees;
- A 1934 postcard that depicts different modes of transportation back then: bullock-cart, rickshaw, trolley bus and the automobile, at the junction of North Bridge Road and Stamford Road;
- An 1898 multiview postcard (showing multiple vignettes) of 13 views showing Malays, Chinese and Indians in Singapore, which was printed by G.R. Lambert, a German who owned a photographic studio in Singapore and a prominent publisher of postcards of old Singapore.

Professor Cheah Jin Seng acquired the postcards as part of his stamp-collecting hobby. He is particularly well-versed in the postal history of Singapore and Malaya. Professor Cheah's postcard collection was recently featured in a book titled "Singapore 500 Early Postcards" that he has authored and published in July 2006.

### **“Send A Postcard Competition”**

In conjunction with the official launch of “Yesterday Once More: A Postcard Exhibition”, Professor Cheah also presented prizes to the winning entries of “Send A Postcard Competition”. The competition, which was open to all primary and secondary schools from November to December 2006, aimed at encouraging the use of postcards and stamps as a convenient and economical way of sending messages. The competition attracted 400 entries from 38 primary and secondary schools. The students penned their thoughts of their holiday experiences onto postcards that showed local and overseas attractions and then mailed the postcards to the Museum. The postcards from the students will be on display at the Museum’s atrium until 1 July 2007.

Ms Tresnawati Prihadi, General Manager of Singapore Philatelic Museum said, “We are most touched by Professor Cheah’s donation, which has certainly been one of his labours of love which took almost three decades to complete. We are most grateful for his generous donation as it is now possible for us to share this wonderful collection with all Singaporeans, collectors and non-collectors alike. We hope more Singaporeans will follow in the foot-steps of Professor Cheah.”

### **ABOUT SINGAPORE PHILATELIC MUSEUM**

Singapore Philatelic Museum showcases Singapore’s philatelic heritage and postal artefacts since the Straits Settlements era. Throughout the year, the museum organises changing exhibitions that feature rare collections of world-class philatelists, and contemporary collections that explore heritage and cultures of Singapore and beyond. The museum also hosts a range of educational activities including guided tours, camps, talks and workshops.

The mission of the Singapore Philatelic Museum is to stimulate interest in philately. The museum is a fully-owned subsidiary of National Heritage Board.