

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

EXHIBITION ON EARLY CHINESE MUTUAL AID ORGANISATIONS UNCOVERS THE ROOTS AND BONDS OF THE COMMUNITY

Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall's latest special exhibition highlights the role of clan associations and welfare organisations as important pillars of the Chinese community, from providing aid to Chinese migrants for survival, to their evolving role as custodians of Singapore Chinese heritage and culture.



**Carved sculpture from Chui Eng Free School
(19th century)**

Collection of Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall



**First mass wedding organised by Singapore
Hokkien Huay Kuan (1956)**

Reproduced with permission from the National
Archives of Singapore

(Left) In the 19th and 20th centuries, mutual aid organisations established schools to provide education for their members' children and even accepted students from non-members. This carved sculpture, a common ornamental feature of Hokkien architecture, was from Chui Eng Free School, which was founded in 1854 by local pioneer Tan Kim Seng.

(Right) Mutual aid organisations would also organise mass weddings. The wedding featured in the photograph was the first mass wedding organised by Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan (1956).

Singapore, 8 March 2023 – In its latest special exhibition, the Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall (SYSNMH) shines the spotlight on a cultural heritage marked by shared experiences and bonds of kinship that lasted a lifetime for many – early Chinese mutual aid organisations.

2 Titled *Connections Across Oceans: Early Chinese Mutual Aid Organisations*, the exhibition showcases the breadth and depth of Chinese clan associations and welfare organisations throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, how they have shaped the Chinese



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migrant community, and their contributions towards supporting the community and promoting Chinese heritage and culture even until today. From 10 March to 10 December 2023, visitors can get an enlightening look into the lesser-known and yet integral role of mutual aid organisations as strong pillars of the Chinese community, and how they have evolved over the years.

3 Mutual aid organisations sprung up during the 19th century when migration out of China to destinations around the world increased sizably, with most migrants settling in Southeast Asia or North America. As the early Chinese migrants could not depend on local governments to provide adequate support and welfare, they started their own organisations in order to survive in foreign lands. These mutual aid organisations would provide assistance, including political, economic, socio-cultural and religious support, for their members.

4 Presented in collaboration with the C.V. Starr East Asian Library, University of California, Berkeley, the exhibition also sheds light on the early Chinese mutual aid organisations in San Francisco. Like Singapore, San Francisco is also an important port city and a sought-after destination among Chinese migrants then due to its abundance of economic opportunities. Visitors to the exhibition will be able to see the similarities and differences in how mutual aid organisations had developed in both Singapore and San Francisco.

5 The exhibition features over 100 objects, comprising artefacts from Singapore's National Collection, the National Archives of Singapore, the C.V. Starr East Asian Library, and collections loaned from mutual aid organisations themselves, with some being displayed in public for the first time. These include a three-metre long imperial silk scroll believed to be bestowed on the local Hokkien community by Emperor Guangxu in 1907, notices written in codes that could only be deciphered by members of the societies, and an inscribed tablet of one of Singapore's first mutual aid organisations, Keng Teck Whay, which has been moved from its original site to be exhibited in public for the first time.

6 General Manager of SYSNMH Winston Lim said: "Mutual aid organisations have existed for centuries. Not only are they pillars of support for the Chinese community, but they are also important stewards of cultural heritage in Singapore. Through the exhibition, we hope



to tell the stories of these organisations, their strong communal spirit, and how they continue to support and strengthen the community.”

7 Mr Ronney Tan, President of Keng Teck Whay and a descendant of one of the association’s founders said: “Mutual aid organisations are built on the legacy of our forefathers. Keng Teck Whay was set up to help the members and their descendants. The organisation upholds important values that are passed down the generations. These include how one should behave and how one should treat others and the country. I am happy to see Keng Teck Whay's artefacts featured in this exhibition, as part of promoting a better understanding of mutual aid organisations in Singapore.”

8 *Connections Across Oceans* will be the memorial hall’s last special exhibition before it closes for restoration works in 2024 and re-opens in 2025. The exhibition will be open from 10am to 5pm from Tuesdays to Sundays. For more information on ***Connections Across Oceans: Early Chinese Mutual Aid Organisations***, please visit: www.sysnmh.org.sg, and refer to:

- **Annex A** – Exhibition sections and highlights
- **Annex B** – Programmes held in conjunction with the special exhibition, and exhibition blurb

- END -

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About the National Heritage Board

The National Heritage Board (NHB) was formed on 1 August 1993, and turns 30 this year. As the custodian of Singapore’s heritage, NHB is responsible for telling the Singapore story, sharing the Singaporean experience and imparting our Singapore spirit.



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NHB's mission is to preserve and celebrate the shared heritage of our diverse communities, for the purpose of education, nation-building and cultural understanding. It manages the national museums and heritage institutions, and sets policies relating to heritage sites, monuments and the National Collection. Through the National Collection, NHB curates heritage programmes and presents exhibitions to connect the past, present and future generations of Singaporeans. NHB is a statutory board under the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth. Please visit www.nhb.gov.sg for more information.

About the Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall

Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall (SYSNMH), a heritage institution owned by Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce & Industry and managed by the National Heritage Board, traces Dr Sun's revolutionary activities in the Southeast Asian region and highlights the impact of the 1911 Chinese Revolution on Singapore as well as Singapore's contributions to the Revolution.

The SYSNMH was re-opened to the public on 9 October 2011. The revamped Memorial Hall features a new storyline that introduces key community leaders in the early 20th century; highlights Nanyang as a base for Revolution; and explores the impact and influences of the 1911 Chinese Revolution on the Singapore Chinese community. It will also continue to promote the understanding of our history through research and publication; work with the community in outreach and education programmes as well as organise Chinese cultural events for all Singaporeans and visitors.

Please visit www.sysnmh.org.sg for more information.



ANNEX A

EXHIBITION SECTIONS AND HIGHLIGHTS

The exhibition will be presented across four main sections – ***Bonds Beyond Borders***, which traces the formation of mutual aid organisations in Singapore and San Francisco during the early to mid-19th century when there was an influx of Chinese migrants to foreign lands to seek a better life; ***Hongmen Overseas***, which introduces a type of mutual aid organisation known as *Hongmen* that was also regarded as a secret society with strong anti-government leanings, especially towards the Qing government; ***Community Connections***, which covers organisations that thrived during the turn of the 20th century and continued to serve the Chinese community through mutual aid and protection; and ***New Roles for a New Era***, which touches on the evolving role of mutual aid organisations today.

- ***Section 1: Bonds Beyond Borders***

The Chinese community and mutual aid organisations in Singapore and San Francisco

Mutual aid organisations were formed in Singapore to provide for the day-to-day needs of migrants as the colonial government did not do so for migrant communities then. The earliest Chinese migrants to Singapore organised themselves based on the dialect they spoke, creating separate *bang* (幫, “dialect groups”), and each *bang* took care of the needs of their fellow clansmen. The Hokkiens, Teochews, Cantonese, Hakka and Hainanese *bangs* became the five major Chinese dialect groups in Singapore and each *bang* established their own temples, which played a central role in the socio-religious lives of Chinese migrants.

On the other hand, many mutual aid organisations formed by Chinese migrants in San Francisco were locality-based rather than dialect-based as most of the Chinese population in San Francisco spoke the same language (Cantonese) even though they came from different hometowns. The discovery of gold in San Francisco in 1848 set off a significant migration movement known as the “California Gold Rush”, where more than 300,000 Chinese migrated to America between 1852 and 1882.



“波靖南溟”御赐黄绢（1907年）

在天福宫修复期间（1998年至2000年），人们在横置于“波靖南溟”匾额上的圆筒内发现了一卷黄绢，上面同样有“波靖南溟”四个字和清朝光绪皇帝的印章。这卷黄绢被认为是光绪皇帝在1907年赐予福建社群（创建新加坡福建会馆）的。这件文物体现了海外华人对中国清政府的重要性。

新加坡福建会馆捐赠，新加坡国家博物馆馆藏

“Calm Seas in the South Seas” imperial silk scroll (1907)

Found during Thian Hock Keng’s restoration works (1998 – 2000) behind a wooden plaque of the same words, this silk scroll features the words bo jing nan ming (波靖南溟, “Calm Seas in the South Seas”) and Qing dynasty Emperor Guangxu’s seal. The scroll was believed to be bestowed to the Hokkien community (who formed the Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan today) by Emperor Guangxu in 1907 as a gesture of goodwill. This scroll showed the significance of the overseas Chinese community to the Qing government in China.

Gift of Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan, collection of National Museum of Singapore



庆德会牌匾（年份不详）

庆德会于1831年由36名从马六甲到新加坡经商的福建土生华人共同创立，其会员资格仅限于这批创会会员的后代。

新加坡道教协会——新加坡玉皇宫（前庆德会会所）馆藏

Inscribed tablet of Keng Teck Whay (date unknown)

Established in 1831, Keng Teck Whay was started by a group of 36 Hokkien Peranakan merchants from Malacca, and membership is exclusive to descendants from the original 36 founding members. On display is an inscribed tablet of Keng Teck Whay, which has been moved from its original site to be exhibited in public for the first time

	<p><i>Collection of Taoist Mission (Singapore) - Singapore Yu Huang Gong (Former Keng Teck Whay Building)</i></p>
	<p>三邑总会馆会员证（1932年）</p> <p>三邑总会馆的会员由广东南海、番禺和顺德的华人移民组成。</p> <p>资料来源：柏克莱加州大学族裔研究图书馆</p> <p>Sam Yip Association membership certificate (1932)</p> <p>Sam Yip Association takes in members from the Nanhai, Panyu and Shunde counties in the Guangdong province.</p> <p><i>Reproduced from the Ethnic Studies Library, University of California, Berkeley</i></p>

● **Section 2: Hongmen Overseas**

In both Singapore and San Francisco, another form of mutual aid organisation known as the *Hongmen* (洪門) flourished. The *Hongmen* was a secret society with strong anti-government leanings, especially towards the Qing government, and often used the phrase *fan qing fu ming* (反清复明, “overthrow the Qing dynasty and restore the Ming dynasty”) to rally their members. As most of the Chinese who migrated to Singapore and San Francisco were from South China, many migrants were already affiliated with the organisation (also known through other names such as *Tiandihui* (天地会, “Heaven and Earth Society”) and *Hong Shun Tang* (洪顺堂, “Hall of Obedience to the Hong”) and thus, set up their own *Hongmen* societies in Singapore and San Francisco.

Hongmen in San Francisco: Chee Kung Tong

Chee Kung Tong was established in 1848 as *Hong Shun Tang*. It was the first *Hongmen* organisation in North America and became one of the largest *Hongmen* societies in the continent, with its headquarters in San Francisco. As a society under the *Hongmen* umbrella, Chee Kung Tong was naturally a major supporter of Dr. Sun Yat Sen’s anti-Qing revolutionary activities. Although different Chee Kung Tong branches operated individually, the San Francisco headquarters took the lead to raise funds across different branches for Dr. Sun’s revolutionary movement.

Hongmen in Singapore

In Singapore, *Hongmen* were regarded as secret societies. Although this term is commonly synonymous with vice, violence and crime, it was also used by the British colonial government to refer to any society whose rites and practices were concealed from non-members. Despite these negative connotations, secret societies actually also served as mutual aid organisations which provided protection and welfare to their members, even though violent altercations did occasionally happen, in the name of protection and welfare.



洪门为互助组织

洪门介绍图（20世纪初）

洪门严禁对外公开帮会仪式，因为他们被清廷视为政治异己分子。为掩人耳目，洪门使用只有会员才看得懂的宗教图像和合成词。

新加坡国家博物馆馆藏

Hongmen as a Mutual Aid Organisation

Illustrative interpretation of Hongmen lodge (early 20th century)

Hongmen societies placed emphasis on concealing their rites and rituals from non-members as they were regarded as political dissidents by the Qing government. To mask their activities, the *Hongmen* used religious imagery and compound words that only members could understand.

	<p><i>Collection of National Museum of Singapore</i></p>
 <p>天字第 12305 號</p>	<p><u>旧金山洪门组织：致公堂</u></p> <p>致公堂会员簿（年份不详）</p> <p>致公堂原称洪顺堂，成立于1848年，为旧金山的华人移民提供福利和支援，以及调解与其他国家移民的冲突。更重要的是，致公堂是华人社群与当地政府沟通的重要桥梁。</p> <p><i>柏克莱加州大学东亚图书馆馆藏</i></p> <p><u>Hongmen in San Francisco: Chee Kung Tong</u></p> <p>Chee Kung Tong membership booklet (date unknown)</p> <p>Chee Kung Tong was a <i>Hongmen</i> organisation providing welfare and support to Chinese migrants in San Francisco, mediating conflicts with migrants from other countries and more importantly, bridging the gap between the Chinese community and the local government.</p> <p>Chee Kung Tong was also receptive to Dr. Sun Yat Sen's requests for funds and started fundraising drives to support Dr. Sun's revolutionary activities. In exchange, Dr. Sun promised to return the money and recognise the contributions of Chee Kung Tong in the founding of modern China.</p> <p><i>Collection of the C.V. Starr East Asian Library, University of California, Berkeley.</i></p>

	<p>新加坡洪门组织</p> <p>义兴公司会员证书（20世纪初）</p> <p>会员证书是用来确认会员身份的重要文件。会员通常把证书留家里妥善保管，并随身携带证书的节略本。这张证书上方写着“义兴公司”。</p> <p>义兴公司是新加坡在19世纪和20世纪初最大的洪门社团。这张会员证书是颁给威廉·斯特林的，他在1921年至1931年间担任新加坡华民护卫司副司长。他的会员资格很可能只是荣誉性质的。</p> <p><i>新加坡国家博物馆馆藏</i></p> <p><u>Hongmen in Singapore</u></p> <p>Ghee Hin Kongseng grand membership certificate (early 20th century)</p> <p>Grand membership certificates were important documents used to verify the identities of members. These certificates were usually left at home for safekeeping as members preferred to bring abridged versions of these certificates around with them. The Chinese characters at the top of this certificate spells out yi xing gong si (义兴公司, Ghee Hin Kongseng or “rising righteous company”). Ghee Hin Kongseng was the largest <i>Hongmen</i> society in Singapore during the 19th and early 20th centuries.</p> <p>This grand membership certificate belongs to William Stirling, the Assistant Protector of Chinese in Singapore from 1921 to 1931, although his membership was most likely honorary in nature.</p> <p><i>Collection of National Museum of Singapore</i></p>
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- **Section 3: Community Connections**

Hongmen's influence waned during the turn of the 20th century due to the implementation of the Peace Preservation Act of 1867 and Dangerous Societies Suppression Ordinance of 1869 as well as the establishment of Chinese Protectorate by the British colonial

government in Singapore during that period. These initiatives outlawed *Hongmen* societies which were not registered with the government authorities. On the other hand, mutual aid organisations which were registered thrived and continued to serve the Chinese community in employment, education, healthcare and personal protection.



互助与庇护

洪门社团的武器（20世纪初）

当互助组织的会员受到威胁时，其他会员就会群起保护。他们往往会携带武器以占上风，最终演变成暴力冲突。

新加坡警察部队捐赠，新加坡国家博物馆馆藏



Mutual Aid and Protection

Weapons used by Hongmen members (early 20th century)

When a member (or members) of a mutual aid organisation was threatened, other members would often come to his (or their) defence. These actions often resulted in violence as members would use weapons to gain an upper hand during clashes while protecting their members.

Gift of Singapore Police Force, collection of National Museum of Singapore





家庭支援与后代教育

萃英书院的雕塑（19世纪）

萃英书院于1854年由新加坡福建会馆的领袖陈金声创办。这个雕塑描绘了一个举起手臂的人像，他看起来像在支撑一根横梁。像这样的雕塑是福建建筑中常见的特色，主要做装饰之用。

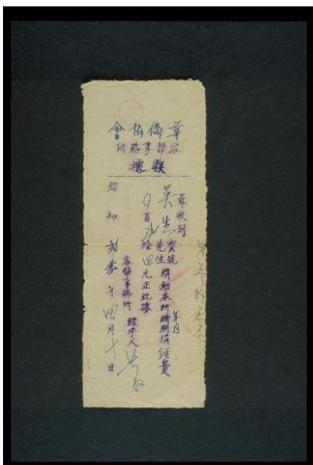
晚晴园—孙中山南洋纪念馆馆藏

Familial Support and Education

Carved sculpture from Chui Eng Free School (19th century)

Chui Eng Free School was founded in 1854 by Tan Kim Seng, a prominent member of Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan. This carved sculpture depicts a figure with a raised arm and was installed to look as if he was supporting a beam. Sculptures such as the one on display are a common feature of Hokkien architecture, and their primary purpose is to serve as ornamental decorations.

Collection of Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall



战争时期的援助与存亡

昭南岛华侨协会发出的收据 (1944年)

在第二次世界大战期间，许多互助组织被占领新加坡的日军强制暂停或终止活动。成立于1942年的昭南岛华侨协会，是日军允许活动的少数社团之一。昭南岛华侨协会的领袖与日军交涉，要求释放一些知名人士。战争结束后，互助组织恢复活动，筹集资金进行战后救济工作，并为饱受战争蹂躏的社群向日本政府索赔。

新加坡国家博物馆馆藏

Wartime Support and Survival

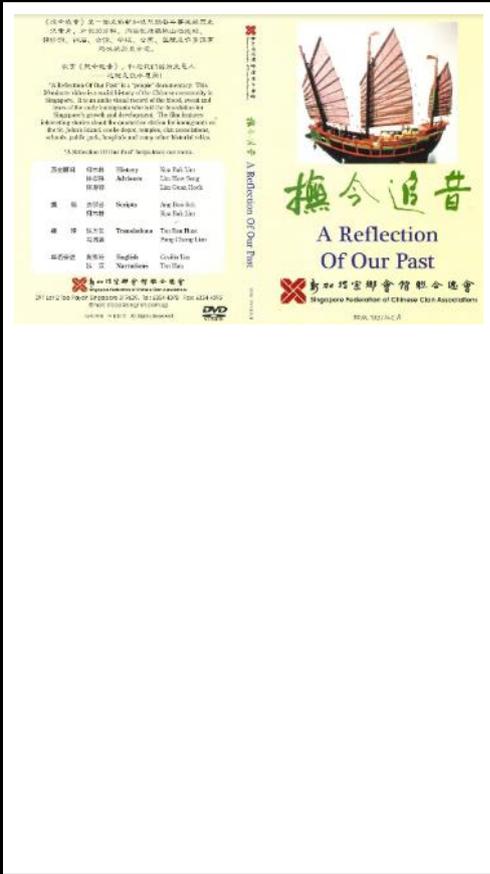
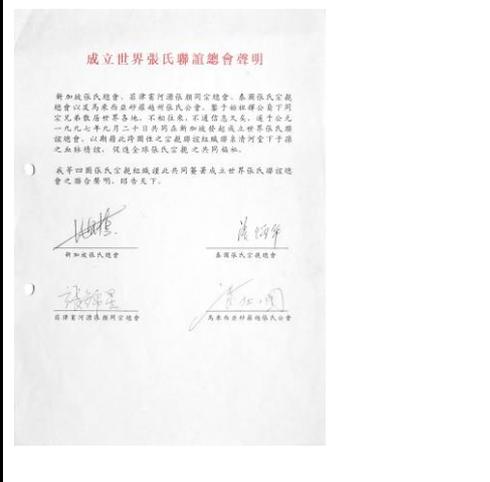
Receipt issued by the Overseas Chinese Association (1944)

	<p>During World War Two, many mutual aid organisations were forced to suspend or cease their activities by the Japanese military who occupied Singapore. The Overseas Chinese Association was one of the few organisations that was allowed by the Japanese military authorities to conduct their activities. Established in 1942, leaders of Overseas Chinese Association negotiated with the Japanese military for the release of prominent individuals captured by the military.</p> <p><i>Collection of National Museum of Singapore</i></p>
	<p>医疗援助与后事安排</p> <p>广惠肇留医院的感谢状（1982年）</p> <p>广惠肇留医院成立于1910年，由一群广东商人创建，主要是为广东移民提供免费医疗服务。后来，医院也为其他方言社群和种族提供服务。如今，广惠肇留医院是新加坡历史最悠久的慈善医疗机构之一。</p> <p><i>新加坡国家博物馆馆藏</i></p> <p><u>Medical Aid and Afterlife Arrangements</u></p> <p>Certificate of appreciation from Kwong Wai Shiu Hospital (1982)</p> <p>Established in 1910, Kwong Wai Shiu Hospital was started by a group of Cantonese merchants to provide free medical services to Cantonese migrants. Over time, the hospital extended its services to the other dialect groups and races. Today, it is one of the oldest charitable healthcare institutions in Singapore.</p> <p><i>Collection of National Museum of Singapore</i></p>

- **Section 4: New Roles for a New Era**

Today, mutual aid organisations continue to maintain their relevance by adapting to the changing needs of society and collaborating with one other. They have now moved beyond

providing basic social assistance for new migrants, to promoting local Chinese arts, culture and heritage. Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations was one such initiative. Collaborations have also taken place across organisations of different countries which share the same dialect and kinship ties, through the establishment of International Clansmen Conventions for business networking and the exchange of social ties.

	<p>第一部新加坡华人历史纪录片的部分片段，由新加坡宗乡会馆联合总会制作（1987年）</p> <p>新加坡宗乡会馆联合总会成立于1986年，致力于通过教育、文化和社区活动，保留与推广华族文化、语言和价值观。</p> <p>新加坡宗乡会馆联合总会馆藏</p> <p>First documentary on history of Singapore Chinese produced by Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations (SFCCA) (1987)</p> <p><i>A Reflection Of Our Past</i> is the first documentary made on Singapore Chinese by Singapore Chinese. Established in 1986, Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations (SFCCA) has been upholding and promoting Chinese culture, language and values through educational, cultural and community activities.</p> <p><i>Collection of Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations</i></p>
	<p>成立世界张氏联谊总会声明（1997年）</p> <p>这份声明由新加坡张氏总会、泰国张氏宗亲总会、马来西亚砂拉越张氏公会和菲律宾河源张颜同宗总会主席签名，共同成立世界张氏联谊总会。</p> <p>新加坡张氏总会馆藏</p> <p>Declaration for the formation of The World Zhang Clan Association (1997)</p> <p>This declaration comprises the signatures of chairpersons from Singapore Zhang Clan Association,</p>



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	<p>Thailand Zhang Clan Association, Malaysia Sarawak Zhang Clan Association and Philippine Tiu Gan Family Association.</p> <p><i>Collection of Chang Clan General Association</i></p>
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ANNEX B

**PROGRAMMES HELD IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SPECIAL EXHIBITION, AND
EXHIBITION BLURB**

A) Public Talks (Free)

1. Development and Transition of Teochew Community and Teochew Associations in Singapore

Date: 11 March 2023

Time: 2pm – 3.30pm

Admission: Free

The talk will be conducted in Mandarin.

The Teochew community is one of the five major dialect groups in Singapore. Teochew organisations were established as Chinese migrated to Singapore. They play a crucial role in helping Teochew migrants survive and lay down their roots in a foreign land. These organisations in Singapore have been steadily developing and constantly evolving with the changing times.

This public talk will introduce the development of Singapore Teochew organisations and explore their relationships with the Teochew community. It will also examine how these organisations facilitate integration of migrants into their host countries while maintaining strong networks with their hometowns in China. This talk explores how these organisations played an important role in facilitating the localisation of the Teochew community into Singapore, while forging broader regional networks with other Teochew communities around the world.

About the Speaker

Dr Zhang is the Assistant Director (Research) and Research Fellow of Chinese Heritage Centre, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. She received her PhD from National University of Singapore. Her research interests include Overseas Chinese history, history of Teochew community, remittance letters and Overseas Chinese



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publications. She has published several academic articles in journals and books on the topics of her research interests. Currently, she is the executive editor of *The International Journal of Diasporic Chinese Studies*.

2. Secret Societies in Colonial and Postcolonial Singapore

Date: 12 March 2023

Time: 2pm – 3.30pm

Admission: Free

The talk will be conducted in English.

In Singapore, gangs are traditionally called secret societies, with their origins in the underground Chinese triads typically known for being embroiled in illegal and dangerous activities. In truth, these groups also provided social support and some welfare services for Chinese men arriving in colonial Singapore mostly as low-skilled workers and were prominent in resisting Japanese occupation in World War II. They started to recruit members aggressively from other ethnic groups after Singapore's independence. This talk will discuss the evolution of secret societies and some of the multiracial aspects of the secret society landscape.

About the Speaker

Kamaludeen Mohamed Nasir is an Associate Professor of Sociology and the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies at Nanyang Technological University Singapore. He is the 2016 Western Sydney University International Alumni of the Year and won the Nanyang Research Award in 2017 for being one of the three best young professors, university wide. He has authored seven books and published articles on cultural sociology, globalization, the sociology of youth, and popular culture. Some of these works include "Protected Sites: Reconceptualising Secret Societies in Colonial and Postcolonial Singapore," "Antipodal Tattooing: Muslim Youth in Chinese Gangs," and "The Malay Gangster". He has been a visiting scholar at New York University, The Graduate Center (City University of New York), the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, the Australian Catholic University, and the University of California Los Angeles.



B) Other Activities (Free)

3. Discover the Secret Letter – Children’s Activity Booklet

Date: 10 March – 10 December 2023

Time: 10am – 5pm (Closed on Mondays)

Fee: Free

Xiao Qing found a letter left behind by her great grandfather. What is this letter about? Inspired by the *Connections Across Oceans: Early Chinese Mutual Aid Organisations* special exhibition, join Xiao Qing to find out the secrets behind the letter! Kits are available for collection at the Memorial Hall’s Visitor Services counter.

4. Special Exhibition Guided Tour

Date: 14 April – 9 December 2023

Time: every Friday 10.30am (English), every Saturday 10.30am (Mandarin) and 1.30pm (English)

Admission: Free; limited spaces available

Hear from our docents and find out how the early Chinese mutual aid organisations played an important role to the early Chinese migrant community through a guided tour of the special exhibition *Connections Across Oceans: Early Chinese Mutual Aid Organisations*.

C) Special Exhibition Listing Blurb

Connections Across Oceans: Early Chinese Mutual Aid Organisations

Date: 10 March – 10 December 2023

Opening Hours: 10am – 5pm (Closed on Mondays)

Venue: Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall

Admission: Free admission for all Singaporeans & Permanent Residents (PRs)

Migration out of China increased substantially during the 19th century to destinations all over the world, with most migrants arriving in Southeast Asia or in North America. As local governments did not provide adequate support and welfare, Chinese migrants started their



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own organisations in order to survive in foreign lands. These organisations, known as mutual aid organisations, were important pillars of the Chinese migrant community, providing political, economic, socio-cultural and religious support for their members. Members of these mutual aid organisations usually share a common surname, hometown, language, or regarded each other as sworn brothers.

A collaboration with the C.V. Starr Library of University of Berkeley, California, this exhibition showcases the early Chinese mutual aid organisations in Singapore and San Francisco, and traces the ebb and flow of these organisations throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

For information about the special exhibition and programmes, please visit Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall's website (<https://www.sysnmh.org.sg/en>) and Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/sysnmh>) throughout the exhibition period.