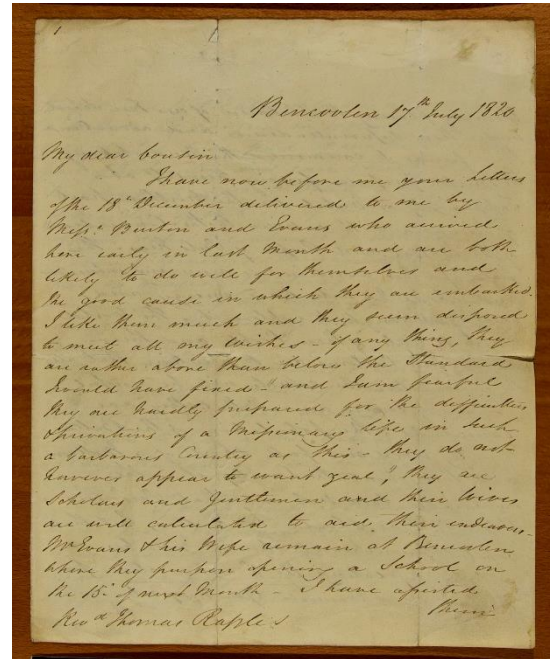
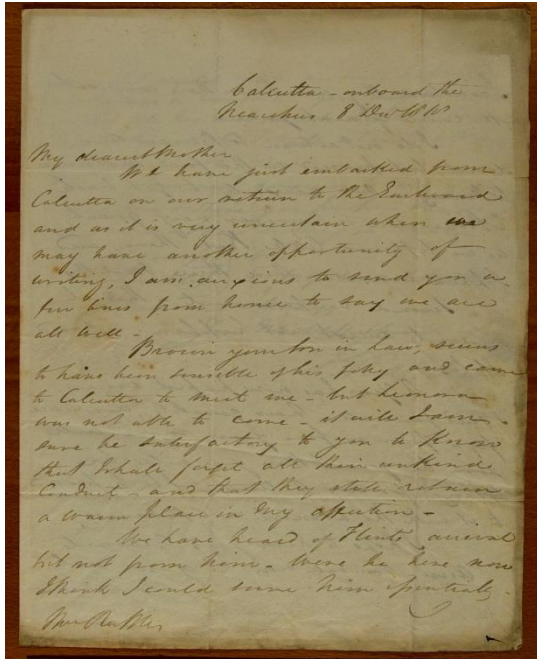


Tang Holdings Private Limited donates private collection to the National Museum of Singapore

The Tang Holdings Collection comprises the largest collection of holograph letters, books and Raffles memorabilia in private hands



(L-R) Letter to Mother, Ann Raffles, Calcutta 8 December 1818; Letter to cousin, Revd Thomas Raffles, Bencoolen 17 July 1820
Photos courtesy of Tang Holdings Pte Ltd

Singapore, 14 May 2019 – Tang Holdings has donated the Tang Holdings Collection of letters, memorabilia and books of Sir Stamford Raffles and Lady Raffles to the National Museum of Singapore — a timely gift in commemoration of Singapore’s bicentennial this year.

Highlights from the esteemed collection include 46 letters from Raffles to his Cousin Rev. Thomas Raffles, 16 letters from Raffles to his mother Anne, 58 letters from Lady Raffles to the Rev. Thomas Raffles, Raffles’ own copy of *The History of Java*, coins issued during Raffles’ term in Java and even a lock of Raffles’ hair taken after his death.

Selected artefacts from the collection will be featured in the museum’s upcoming bicentennial exhibition, *An Old New World: From the East Indies to the Founding of Singapore, 1600 – 1819*, opening this September. Other artefacts will be selected for display in the Singapore History Gallery in subsequent gallery refreshes.

The country’s bicentennial marks a timely and significant occasion for this donation. Through the display of the Tang Holdings Collection of artefacts at the National Museum of Singapore,

we invite our visitors to reflect upon the country's rich history, which is inextricably tied to the invaluable contributions and values of Singapore's early settlers.

Donation is a timely reminder of early contributions to the Singapore story

Mr Tang Wee Kit, Executive Chairman of Tang Holdings, acquired the collection in two sales in 2004 and 2005, as he felt it was deeply relevant to his life and his family's legacy.

Sir Stamford Raffles played a key role in setting Singapore up as a British trading port, which drew migrants to Singapore with the hopes of building a better future for themselves and their families — one of whom was the late Mr Tang Choon Keng, better known as Mr C.K. Tang.

The inspiring rags-to-riches rise of the late entrepreneur was made possible through his sheer grit and values, as he built a legacy founded on honesty and integrity – values which still ground his successors today.

Mr Tang, Executive Chairman, Tang Holdings, said, "When I first learnt of the collection being made available for acquisition back in 2004, I believed that it should belong to Singapore. It also resonated with me personally, since it was Sir Stamford Raffles' foresight and role in transforming Singapore into an 'Emporium and the pride of the East', as he himself called it, that brought people to Singapore to seek their fortune – one of whom was my father."

"As the country's oldest museum, the National Museum of Singapore has inspired generations with stories of Singapore and is a fitting home for this collection. I hope that through this donation, more Singaporeans will be able to appreciate the stories of those who came before us, and the shared legacy of our country in which we should take pride."

Selected artefacts from the collection to be on display in *An Old New World: From the East Indies to the Founding of Singapore, 1600 – 1819* and the Singapore History Gallery

One of the key artefacts from the collection is a letter Raffles wrote to his mother when he was in Calcutta, dated 8 December 1818. Marking the first leg of his historic voyage to Singapore, the letter was written on board the *Nearchus*, which would bring him to Penang, from which he subsequently set sail on the *Indiana* to Singapore. It will be featured in *An Old New World: From the East Indies to the Founding of Singapore, 1600 – 1819*.

Other key artefacts to be put on permanent display in the Singapore History Gallery include a letter from Raffles to his cousin Rev. Thomas Raffles dated 17 July 1820, and Raffles' own copy of the *History of Java* from 1817 that was presented to his cousin, which also features his personal inscriptions in ink. In the former, Raffles stressed the strategic importance of Singapore and talked about the bustling trade in Singapore, as well as the country's vast potential to become the centre of trade in Asia. The latter is the actual book placed by his side in a portrait of Raffles in the National Museum's collection.

“The artefacts present a compelling first-person perspective of early Singapore, as well as offer a unique look at Raffles’ personal reflections and relationships. We are confident that this collection will help strengthen our ongoing endeavour to provide visitors with a rich perspective of the country’s history,” said **Angelita Teo, Director, National Museum of Singapore**.

“We also hope that this would serve as an opportunity for museum-goers to reflect upon the invaluable contributions to Singapore in the early days by those that came before us, and the values on which our country was built. It is an honour for the National Museum of Singapore to be the custodian of the Tang Holdings Collection. We will ensure the collection remains protected and accessible,” she said.

An Old New World: From the East Indies to the Founding of Singapore, 1600 – 1819 will run from September 2019 to March 2020.

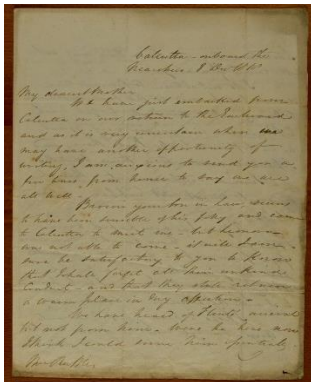
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APPENDIX

Captions for press images and further information

Download high-res press images:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1GIZKe7Tya9DGeZKy-b3d6iUZ4liTBzY6>



Letter to Mother, Ann Raffles, Calcutta 8 December 1818

Photo courtesy of Tang Holdings Pte Ltd

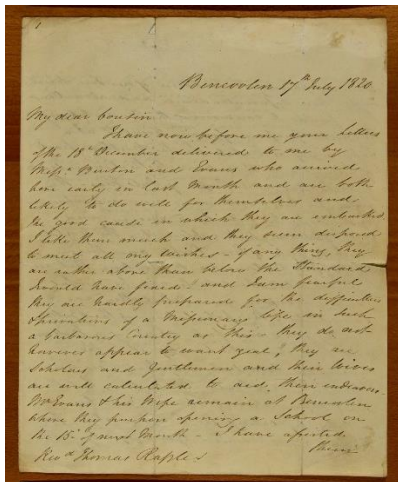
Raffles to his mother Ann Raffles, Calcutta – on board the Nearchus 8 Dec 1818:

“My dearest Mother,

We have just embarked from Calcutta on our return Eastward and as it is uncertain when we have another opportunity of writing, I am anxious to send you a few lines from hence to say we are all well”.

“I do not return to Bencoolen direct, but proceed in the first instance to Penang”

Context of the letter: Raffles wrote to update his mother just as he left Calcutta for Penang. He arrived Penang on 31 Dec 1818 where he left his wife Sophia at Penang as she was pregnant at that time, where he then proceeded on his historic mission to Singapore.



Letter to cousin, Revd Thomas Raffles, Bencoolen 17 July 1820
Photo courtesy of Tang Holdings Pte Ltd

Raffles to his cousin the Revd Thomas Raffles, Bencoolen 17 July 1820

“My Settlement of Singapore continues to thrive most wonderfully – it is all & every thing I could wish, and if no untimely fate awaits it, promises to become the Emporium & the pride of the East”

“Were the value of Singapore properly appreciated I am confident that all England would be in its favour – it positively takes nothing from Dutch and is to us every thing – it gives us the Command of China & Japan with Siam and Cambodia [and] Cochin China ...”

“At Singapore however every object may be obtained”

“Many of the Chinese Viceroy's are themselves engaged clandestinely in the external Trade, and Singapore may as a Free Port thus become the connecting link and grand Entrepot between Europe Asia & China – it is in fact fast becoming so – Vessels come from China to Singapore in five days”.

Context of the letter: Raffles shared with his cousin how well Singapore was thriving and the potential it had to become a major trading hub in Asia. Rather than conduct trade directly with China, he saw greater benefit in establishing Singapore as a free port.

For media queries, please contact:

Ellse Tan

Ogilvy Singapore

Manager

Tel: 6551 5673

Email: ellse.tan@ogilvy.com

Yashmi Narendran

Ogilvy Singapore

Associate

Tel: 6213 7674/9711 9514

Email: yashmi.narendran@ogilvy.com

About the National Museum of Singapore

With a history dating back to 1887, the National Museum of Singapore is the nation's oldest museum with a progressive mind. Its galleries adopt cutting-edge and multi-perspective ways

of presenting history and culture to redefine conventional museum experience. A cultural and architectural landmark in Singapore, the Museum hosts innovative festivals and events all year round—the dynamic Night Festival, visually arresting art installations, as well as amazing performances and film screenings—in addition to presenting thought-provoking exhibitions involving critically important collections of artefacts. The programming is supported by a wide range of facilities and services including F&B, retail and a Resource Centre. The National Museum of Singapore re-opened in December 2006 after a three-year redevelopment. It refreshed its permanent galleries and re-opened them in September 2015 for Singapore’s Golden Jubilee. In 2017, it celebrated its 130th anniversary. For more details, please visit www.nationalmuseum.sg.

About Tang Holdings Private Limited

Tang Holdings Private Limited is a private investment holding company with a diversified portfolio of investments. Such investments include Tang Plaza (comprising Marriott Tang Plaza Hotel, and C.K. Tang Limited which is 98.31% owned by Tang Holdings Private Limited) located at the crossroads of Orchard Road and Scotts Road, Gianurn Building along River Valley Road, some shop houses along Mohammed Sultan Road, residential properties at Siglap and Jalan Loyang Besar.