

Singapore Collection 2020

BY THE INTERNATIONAL DELEGATION IN SINGAPORE
LES JEUNES DE L'IHEDN



LES JEUNES
IHEDN

Preface

Les Jeunes IHEDN are committed citizens who foster a dynamic and fresh reflection around defence matters. Our association, which was **created in 1996** and attached to **the Institut des Hautes Etudes de Défense Nationale (IHEDN, the Institute of Advanced Studies in National Defence) community**, aims to **increase awareness about the importance of defence and security amongst young people** and brings together military forces, diplomats, economic players, civilians and culture professionals.

At a global scale, the **International Division** of Les Jeunes IHEDN supports **20 Delegations** spread around the world. They gather members in their hosting countries to organise projects and events related to defence, security and geopolitics. They are also in charge of developing strong ties with local partners, such as **French diplomatic representations, french-speaking networks or youth organisations**.

Singapore Collection's Project

Singapore Collection 2020 was made possible thanks to the contribution of the members of the International Delegation in Singapore who wanted to share a **comprehensive picture of the city-state** they live in. By focusing on specific subjects from a wide range of topics like politics and food culture, our Delegation aims to best **capture the essence of Singapore and what makes this country so unique**.

We hope you enjoy the reading as much as we are pleased to share the result of our collective work. We wish you a great National Day. **Happy 55th Birthday Singapore !**

Elizabeth ROGALSKI, International Delegate in Singapore



These texts are the sole responsibility of their authors. Ideas or opinions expressed cannot be considered as the expression of an official position.

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Sir Stamford Raffles

by Victor BAFRET



Raffles Place, Raffles City, Raffles hotel, Raffles hospital, etc. Sir Stamford Raffles is such an iconic figure of Singapore that many places were named after him.

In the early nineteenth century, South East Asia was mostly controlled by the Dutch. Their territories included many ports, such as Malacca and Jakarta (the Dutch regional capital).

As the rivalry between the British and the Dutch empires reached its peak, Stamford Raffles was sent to the region. The ambitious **Raffles - working for the British East India Company - had the objective to grow the lucrative trades of tea, porcelain, spices, and opium**, particularly with China.

Raffles quickly became Lieutenant Governor of Bencoolen (Sumatra). However, the place was unprofitable due to too little maritime freight. Therefore, Raffles decided to look for other options. **Singapore had several advantages:** a strategic location at the end of the Malacca strait (to bypass Malacca), a large harbour that made it easy to repair ships and, above all, the island was free from the Dutch. Therefore **Raffles established a British trading post in Singapore on the 29th of January 1819.**

In June, he returned to Bencoolen and left the ruling of Singapore to his assistant **Major William Farquhar**. After the settlement of the free port, **the city quickly grew as a booming trade hub, attracting migrants from China, India, the Malay Archipelago and beyond.**

Even though Sir Stamford Raffles only spent a few months in Singapore, the decision of **establishing a free port "set this island on a trajectory leading to where we are today"** as Prime minister Lee Hsien Loong said.

The Singapore Independence Act

by Paul AGARD

Following the election of the leader of the People's Action Party, Lee Kuan Yew, and the establishment of a Constitution in 1959, Singapore requested integration into the Federation of Malaysia, which took place on September 16, 1963.

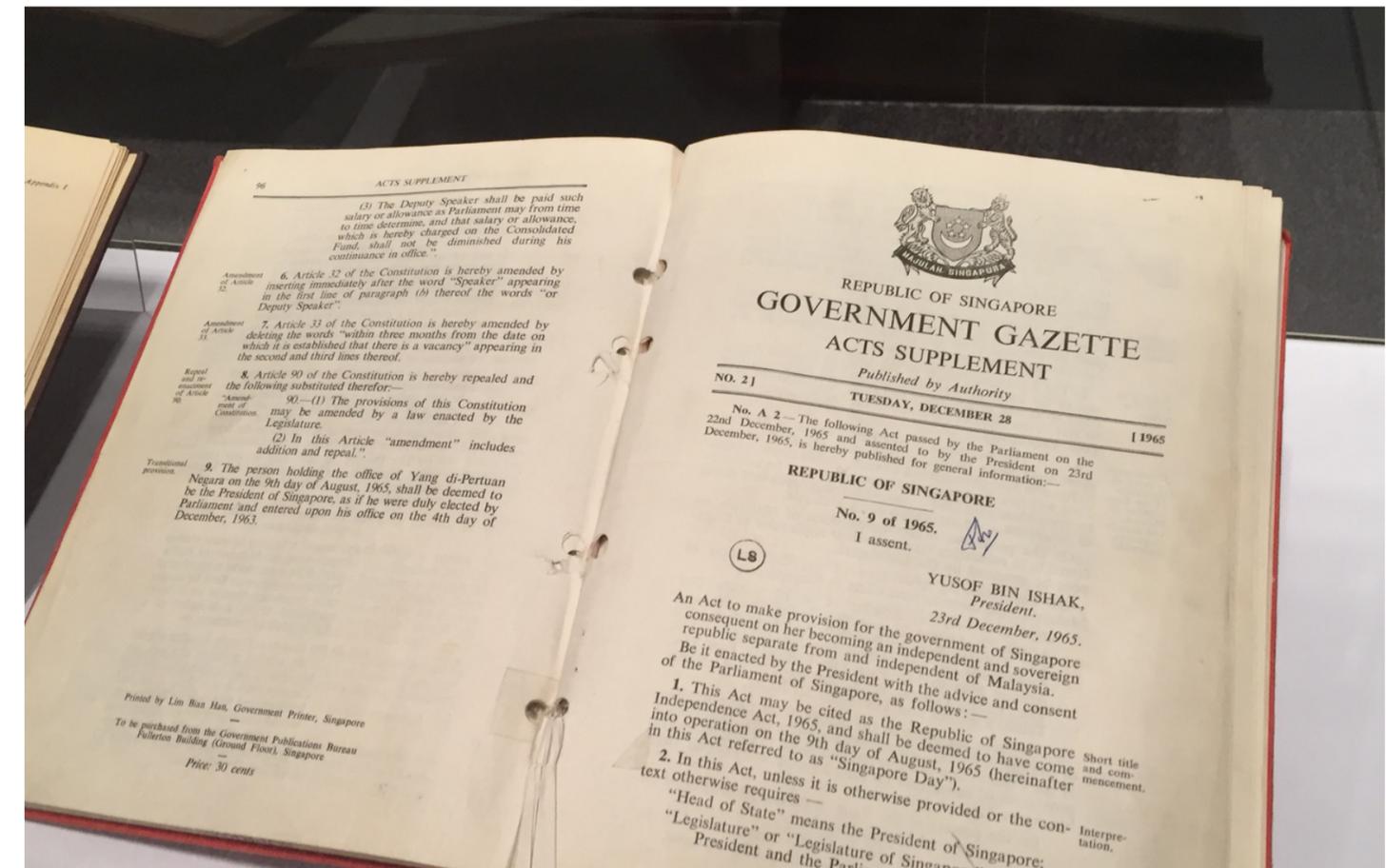
Composed by a Chinese majority, the island is also home to a significant Malay minority. It soon found itself in the grip of serious **racial violence**, with the parties in conflict accusing each other of fuelling **ethnic tensions**.

Following a meeting between the Malay and Singaporean Prime Ministers in August 1965, **the Parliament of Kuala Lumpur voted to exclude Singapore from the Federation and its independence was proclaimed on August 9, 1965.**

The Singapore Act of Independence is the founding legal act of Singapore since it **recognizes the city-state as a sovereign state**. This transfer of sovereignty was made through the transfer of jurisdiction from the Malaysian Government to the President of Singapore. According to the Act, the King of Malaysia shall cease to be the Supreme Head of Singapore. **His sovereignty, jurisdiction, power and authority, executive or otherwise, in respect of Singapore shall be relinquished and vest in the hands of the President of Singapore.**

From a legal point of view, **the Act establishes a transitional period during which the provisions of the Malaysian Constitution continue to apply** and are "subject to modifications, adaptations and qualifications and exceptions as may be necessary to bring them into conformity with the independent status of Singapore upon separation from Malaysia." (article 6 (1) of the Act).

Finally, it is interesting to note that **the Act sets out the official languages spoken in Singapore: "Malay, Mandarin, Tamil and English"** shall be the four official languages in Singapore." (article 7 (1) of the Act). This provision is the sign of the **cultural mosaic** of the country, where a mix of cultures and religions coexist.



Lew Kwan Yew

by Victor BAFRET

Lee Kwan Yew, nicknamed LKY, is an iconic figure of modern Singapore. Most of the city-state's economic success can be attributed to his vision and policies.

Indeed, LKY has governed Singapore as **Prime minister from 1959 to 1990**. He led Singapore to **independence from the British in 1963 and then from the Malaysian federation in 1965**. When he first came into power, Singapore faced many difficulties : high unemployment, a housing crisis, ethnic tensions and no natural resources.



As LKY said, his strategy was **"to develop Singapore's only available natural resource, its people"**.

LKY's policies aimed primarily to **attract foreign businesses and investments** to Singapore. Therefore, the main focuses were put on education, zero tolerance to criminal activities, low tax rates, and the construction of good infrastructures.

They proved to be very successful. LKY managed to build an **English-speaking highly skilled workforce**. Both **street crimes and corruption are almost unheard of**, and Singapore's economy grew dramatically (with an average GDP growth of around 7% during his ruling) to **become one of the highest GDP per capita country in the world today**.

LKY is perceived to be a **tough but respected leader with a long term vision** and tenacity. He was ruthless with its political opponents and trade unions, not hesitating to threaten them or to use legal actions.

He also gained **international respect as his policies inspired Deng Xiaoping when in 1979** he decided to open up China and built special economic zones. LKY left so much of his mark on Singapore that it is not surprising to see that **1.7 millions Singaporean (about 1 in 3) paid tribute to him** at the Parliament House when he died in 2015.

The Port of Singapore

by Paul AGARD

Since its independence in 1965, the Republic of Singapore has enjoyed an unparalleled economic growth and prosperity.

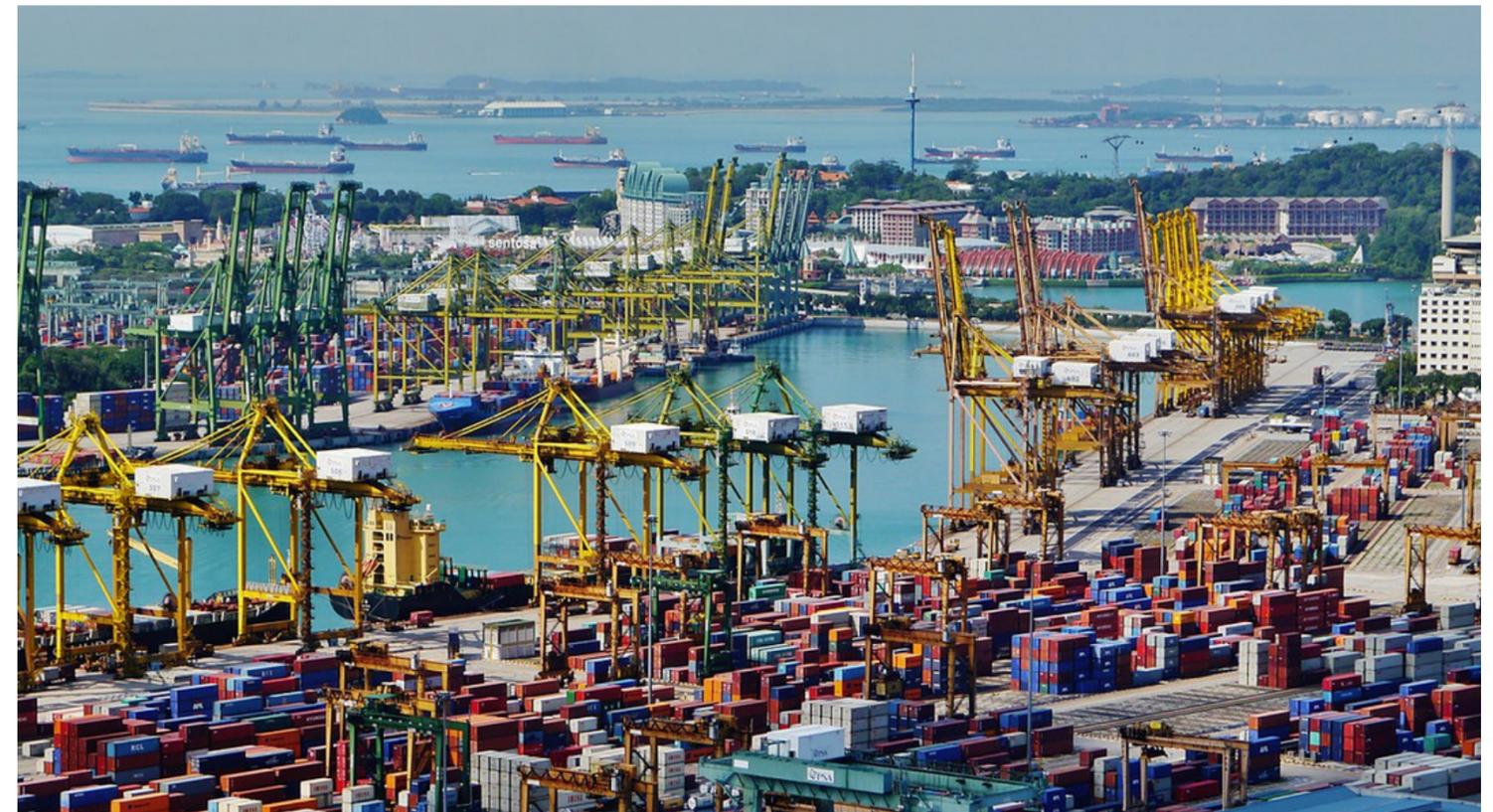
The leaders of the modern state benefited from the **already well-established port function** of what was for a century and a half a colonial trading post. At the same time, they **encouraged the training of workers, the opening up to foreign investment and the diversification of industrial and financial activities**. Because of its role as a global interface and privileged tool for world trade, the Port of Singapore is the most telling illustration of the unbridled development of the city-state.

In 1964, the Port of Singapore Authority (P.S.A.) was established with a mandate to **diversify the port's activities and create five specialized terminals**. This strategy proved to be a winning strategy as in 2006 nearly 130,000 ships and 448 million tons of cargo were handled, **making it the world's second port in terms of tonnage and the first in size**.

The Port of Singapore has five major terminals located on the main island, where barely half of the tonnage transits. The rest of the **traffic is generated by the oil industry, for which Singapore is the leader in South-East Asia**. It is mainly handled in Jurong (a planning area located in the West Region of Singapore), on **small islands which were developed for this purpose**. These facilities are easily accessible for large tankers and are located far enough **offshore from the city to significantly reduce pollution impacts**.

The new Port of Tuas, in the western part of the island, aims to reinvent the maritime industry. It uses intelligent data-driven operations management systems, smart engineering and power management platforms. **By 2040, the Port of Tuas will be the largest fully automated terminal worldwide.**

In times of pandemic, the relevance of such pharaonic projects is questionable when the world economy is going to be completely remodeled, and when states may prefer to give priority to short supply circuits.



The Merlion

by Anna BARRAQUE

The Merlion is one of the most iconic symbol of Singapore and getting a picture with this statue is a must-do when visiting the city-state. But while posting the picture on social media a question might rise: what is this strange creature?



The Merlion, national mascot of Singapore, has **a lion's head and the body of a fish**. The Lion comes from Singapore's legend, when the Malay prince Utama sailed across the sea and landed on this island where he encountered a majestic lion. **It told him to call the island Singapura, "the Lion City" in Sanskrit, giving the current name to the city-state.**

The fish tail recalls the humble origins of today's innovative and modern island, when it used to be a village of fishers called Temasek, sea town in Javanese.

The Merlion was assembled and created for the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) by a member of the Souvenir Committee. The symbol was very successful and built into one and successively six statues. The original statue was first built at the mouth of the Singapore River and then relocated in front of **Marina Bay**. Even after being hit by a lightning halving the statue into its two animal parts, the symbol remains.

As to complete part of Singapore's identity, the Merlion has also been adopted in Singlish to mean vomiting, referring to the water coming out of its mouth.

All set to write the picture's caption now !

Land Reclamation

by Mathilde DELFOSSE-LEGAT

Singapore has been using land reclamation since 1822 to expand its territory. However, the main extensions started in the 1960s. Since then, the city-State's land territory has grown by 25%, expanding from 581 km² in 1960 to 724 km² in 2018.

Some of the most iconic areas of the city, such as **Marina Bay and the Central Business District, are actually built on land which did not exist 50 years ago** and was only completed in 1992.

To achieve such construction projects, substantial quantities of sand were needed and imported from neighbouring countries (60.3 million tonnes in 2018). **To extract construction sand, countries usually drag the bottom of their rivers and oceans.** This process generates erosion, small islands sinking, groundwater pollution and destruction of marine flora and fauna; leading to disruptions in the fishing industry.

Several countries supplying sand to Singapore observed these bad environmental and economical consequences on their territory. As such, **Indonesia was the first country to completely ban sand exportation, in 2007**, soon followed by Viet Nam and Thailand. Despite official bans, it seems that sand was still being imported from Cambodia and Malaysia to the city-State until at least 2018.

In 2016, Singapore started to switch to the construction of polders, islands lower than sea-level but protected by several meters-high dikes. New technology should help the country overcome its issues.

By processing **recycled materials** such as fly-ash and glass debris in 3D-printing, Singapore should reach the **target-size of 766km² in 2030**, (partially) free from its dependance to its neighbours' sand resources.



The Haze

by Bastien LENGLOIS

Wednesday, 9th September 2020. It was a foggy day in the city, and the fog was heavy and dark. The animate crowd, with surgical masks and irritated lungs, was blinking, wheezing, and choking.”

This is not some description taken from a newly discovered anticipation novel of Charles Dickens, describing a street in London during the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, but rather **how Singapore streets look like when a haze episode occurs.**



The haze, an airborne mixture of pollutants which includes soot particles, carbon dioxide, and other toxic gases, originates from forest fires in **Sumatra and Borneo**. These fires are mainly triggered by Indonesian farmers using the common **slash-and-burn tactic** for the planting of commercial crops such as oil palm. Combined with extremely dry conditions due to the **El-Niño phenomenon** between June and September, fires spiral out of control and create smoke clouds which travel across the Malay peninsula and turn Singapore streets into sooty spectres.

Severe haze episodes in 1997 or 2006 proved to have a major impact on citizen's health and the region's economy (e.g. Malaysia GDP dropped by 0.30% due to the haze in 1997). As a direct response, several agreements (Regional Haze Action Plan -1997, Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution-2002) were settled between ASEAN countries in an attempt to work on the roots of this phenomenon.

The results are yet to come, as is apparent from the recent and disastrous **2015 haze crisis**, during which the Pollutant Standard Index (PSI) reached 471, its highest level ever recorded (haze '101' class: PSI is deemed unhealthy above a value of 101). This led to Singapore suing several Indonesian companies, on the basis of an extraterritorial law on haze enacted in 2014.

The "Garden City" Project

by Elizabeth ROGALSKI

In 1965, the newly independent Singapore was suffering from crowding, congestion, run-down housing, poverty and pollution. In the tropical city-state, litter lying around and open sewers increased the spread of diseases.

To transform Singapore into a green and clean city, the founding Prime Minister, **Lee Kwan Yew**, launched the **Garden City project in 1967**. It would soon reveal as a key competitive factor to attract tourism and foreign investments, as well as to improve public health and well-being.

The first step consisted in a **massive tree-planting initiative**. At the end of 1970, more than 55,000 new trees had been planted. In the mid-70's, the project started focusing on green spaces. Since the **Parks and Trees Act of 1975**, public and private agencies have **reserve spaces for trees and vegetation in their urban development projects**. Thanks to this policy, 317 new green areas were created, increasing the green recreational spaces from 879 ha in 1975 to 9,707 by 2014.

The latest and most innovative initiatives of the Garden City project are attributed to **Cheong-Chua Koon Hean**, CEO of the Urban Redevelopment Authority from 2004 to 2010. Among her contributions are the **law of 2008 requiring buildings to include plants in their design** (known as "green buildings"), or the **network of pedestrian park connectors offering several hundred kilometers of trails throughout the city-state**.

Although these lush parks and green areas provide **lungs for the densely populated city**, they are **under constant control and require very high maintenance**. However, as maintenance is considered non-essential, the "city in a garden" has become a **tropical wild city** since the Covid-19 outbreak. The fauna and flora is developing faster, mushrooms and flowers are growing nearby the roads, birds and butterflies are flying around. **Is it just a lucky break ?**



The National Service

by Mathilde DELFOSSE-LEGAT

Singapore gained its independence in 1965 and became one of the smallest countries in the world. However, British troops remained in the country for six years due to the nascent tensions between the city-state and its giant neighbours, Indonesia and Malaysia.

At that time, Singapore needed a strong army to prevent future attacks, like the 1942-45 Japanese invasion. However, **its army only relied on 1,000 personnel protecting the city-state's growing population of 1.9 million.**

Thus, **starting in 1967 with the support of Great Britain, and later helped by Israel**, Singapore acquired the ability to protect itself by building a **citizens' army**, more suited for small States.

Nowadays, the **National Service is also considered as a way to bring harmony between Chinese, Malay, and Indian communities.** All Singaporean male second-generation permanent residents and citizens have to enlist when they reach 16.5 years.

They are generally required to serve a **2 year-long compulsory service when turning 18.** Exemptions are very rare : failing to enlist can lead to up to 3 years of prison and a \$10,000 fine.

Academics and physical tests decide what position and army unit one will serve. Some conscripts serve the navy or the air force, but **the vast majority joins the National Armed Forces, the Police, or the Civil Defence Forces.**

Women, like first-generation permanent residents and new citizens, **can (but do not have to) join the Volunteer Corps.**

As of today, Singapore's military forces consist of 72,500 personnel (including 42,600 conscripts), and 300,000 reservists.



Singlish

by Anna BARRAQUE

- Eh! Uncle, Iced Tea bottle.

- Cannot, only cans.

- Can can, can also can.

Welcome to Singlish (Singaporean English) lah!

Singaporeans love to double the words they use. Can Can means ok. The verb can is probably the most used in Singlish, either it is "can" or "cannot". They use it so often that they also use the equivalent word in Malay: boleh.

Singlish reflects the effectiveness of Singaporean culture by deleting every word you already understand from the context. When the customer answers, he means "ok, a can (of iced tea) can also be," or in short "is also fine".

The customer will address the seller as "uncle" or "auntie" and get their attention by saying eh!. He will either tapao (take away) or already have choped a table: reserved a table with traditionally a packet of tissue but really with anything you have on hand.

"The chicken rice is delicious, Shiok!" It is so good you must try it: "Die die must try!"

"Look!" Their best friends are having lunch together. "How come they bojio us? (didn't invite us?)"

"Alamak! (Oh my god!/Oh man!) how Sean dresses, so atas! (so posh)".

Finally, Singlish is all the small words you put at the end of sentences - but only real Singaporeans know how to properly use them. *Lah* is for emphasis, *leh* when you are not so sure, *lor* when there is nothing you can do for it. The illustration gives more examples.

If you talk *liddat* (like that) you won't be qualified as *ang mo* (foreigner) anymore. *Can bo? Can or not?* (Can you do it or not?)

Can ah ?

Can you ?

Can meh ?

Are you sure?

Can bo ?

Can you or not?

Can leh

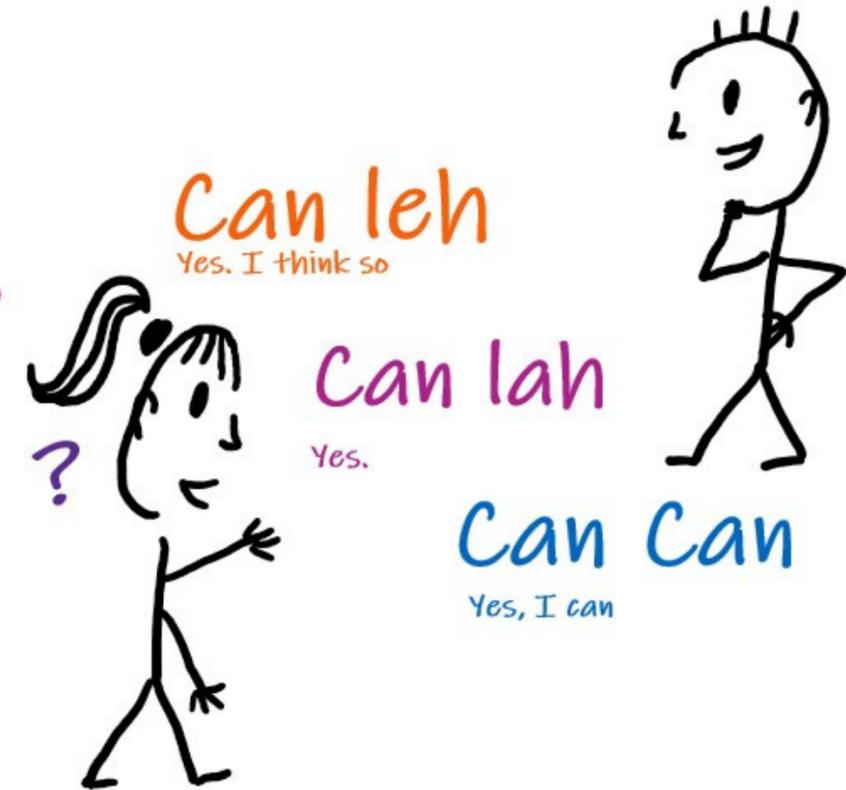
Yes. I think so

Can lah

Yes.

Can Can

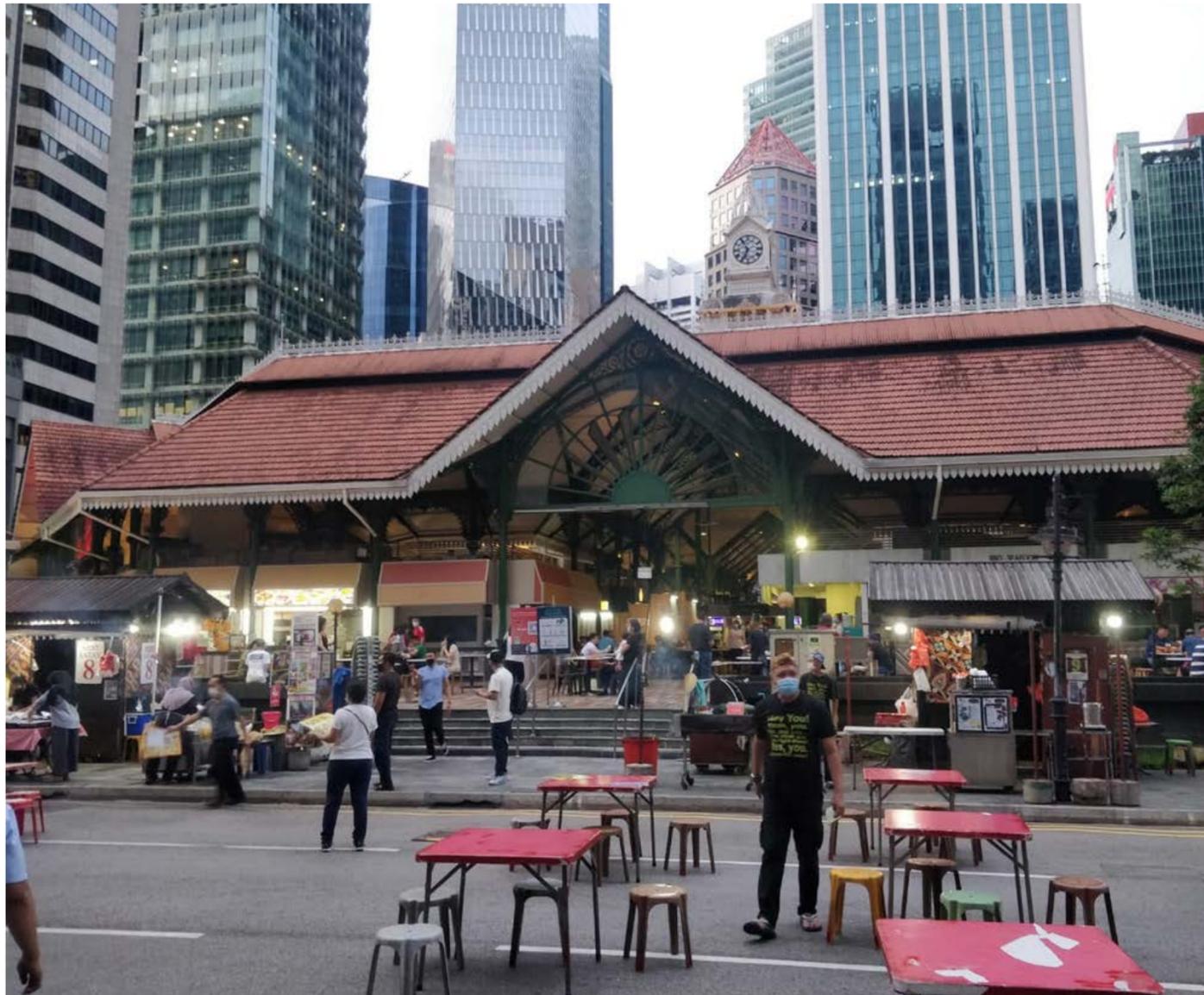
Yes, I can



Lau Pa Sat

by Mathilde DELFOSSE-LEGAT

Lau Pa Sat has become a famous part of Singapore. However, rambling around in the Central Business District, one might be surprised to encounter this one-level Victorian building, surrounded by skyscrapers and hosting the most iconic hawker centre of the city-state... Let's recap.



Hawker centres were first set in the 1950-60s' to improve street-food sanitation as Singapore was rapidly urbanizing. They are open-air one-level buildings in which one can find many **stalls of various Asian cuisines for very reasonable prices.**

Lau Pa Sat is one of the last Victorian buildings standing in Asia. As it used to host a fish market, its designer George Coleman gave it the **unusual shape of an octagon to enhance air-circulation.**

Later, in 1890, the market was moved to its current location on freshly reclaimed land. Considering it as an opportunity, James MacRitchie, the architect in charge of the reconstruction, made Lau Pa Sat building **one of the first and only cast-iron structures in Asia**, importing it straight from Scotland.

Because its unique history and architecture underline Singapore's past so well, the old-market's building was made a **National Monument of Singapore** in 1973.

The old fish market was then turned into a hawker centre in 1989. Located at the very heart of Singapore's business district, Lau Pa Sat is a great place to grab delicious satays after work and before jumping into Singapore's nightlife.

Peranakan Shophouses

by Elizabeth ROGALSKI

Straits-born Chinese Peranakans are descendants of early male immigrants from mainland China who left mostly from the southern regions between the 15th and 17th centuries.

In their appellation, the term ***Straits*** refers to the former colonial Straits Settlements of Singapore, Melaka and Penang. As for ***Peranakan***, it is the literal translation from Mandarin and Hokkien of « locally born ».

During the Straits Settlements period (1826-1942), Singapore became an important trading port and Peranakans were exposed to European culture. As they married local women - mainly of Malay origin - **they created a hybrid yet authentic identity with its own language, cuisine and culture.**

Peranakan shophouses are the result of this rich and unique mix. The first floor of these double-storey houses is traditionally dedicated to a small business, with the shopkeepers living on the second floor. Eye-popping colours, narrow frontage, and internal courtyard, are the main characteristics of the shophouses.

This eclectic architecture borrows from Chinese, Malay, and European architectures : Chinese porcelain and air vents, Malay timber fretwork for the panels and the bas-reliefs, French windows, Portuguese shutters, Corinthian pilasters or Majolica ceramic.

Today, most of them are located in Joo Chiat, Clarke Quay or Chinatown neighbourhoods.



Chili Crab

by Bastien LENGLOIS



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In a country where dining is considered a national pastime, and the chili crab a national treasure, asking Singaporeans about its recipe might be considered as spying.

This is why it is strongly discouraged to try to survey your neighborhood about this question (the few persons who dared still remember it). Instead, going directly to the source of the mystery might prove a better option.

However, one still needs to choose a side between **the variety of restaurants and hawker centres** offering chili crab and claiming ownership of the recipe. Would you favor the official history, tracing back the invention of the chili crab to **Mdm Cher** in the 50s? Her supporters usually rally every two or three weeks at her son's restaurant, hidden on top of a car park on the East Coast. It is not far from the former *kampong* where his mother is said to have turned tomato sauce and mud crab into the exquisite and luscious signature meal.

You can also try your luck in small hawker centre stalls, where they will more likely offer you a slightly different recipe, **incorporating some white egg to the tomato and sambal spicy sauce.**

Some argue they do so in order to thicken the gravy sauce. However, even a cautious look at the cooking process through the frying oil fumes could not substantiate this claim. In fact, it is still a major fault line between Singaporeans nowadays.

Nevertheless, all the parties unite when the national dish is under the threat of foreign interference, as it was the case in 2009 when **Malaysia's Tourism Minister, Datuk Seri Dr. Ng Yen Yen, claimed that "Chili crab [was] Malaysian", reviving an ancient dispute over the alleged Malaysian heritage of Singapore culture.**

Chicken Rice

by Anna BARRAQUE

Chicken rice. The most delightful dish of Singaporean cuisine. Chicken? Rice? It is easy to understand what the meal consists of. But let's not underestimate the comfort food of most Singaporeans.

Hainanese chicken rice, or just "chicken rice" for short, comes from Hainan, the smallest and southernmost province of China. The Hainanese migrants had been settling in Singapore and serving the British since the end of the 19th century. During World War II, the Japanese expelled the British from Singapore, leaving the Hainanese servants to the British without any employer. Therefore, many of them opened restaurants in which they cooked their favourite meal : **Wenchang chicken**.

The secret to this preparation is to poach the chicken and then immerge it in iced water to keep its tenderness. In Singapore, you can either ask it boiled or roasted to spice up the options of this simple dish.

The delicate chicken seems to be what brings exceptionality to this bland-looking dish. However it would then just be called Hainanese Chicken. **Surprisingly, what Singaporeans like the most is its rice.** It is cooked with the chicken's stock, which gives it a smooth oiliness, flavoured with ginger and pandan leaves. The rice has its own unique flavour. The whole is served as a dome, the chicken finely cut and put on top of the rice, sided with some sliced cucumbers, also boiled in the chicken's stock, all drizzled with dark soy sauce and sesame oil, without forgetting the chili paste with garlic.

The presentation might be approximate but the queue to get it will always be persistent. This national dish is much more than just chicken and rice.



Singapore Sling

by Maxime BOUSSENOT

Who has not heard of it? The Singapore Sling cocktail is famous worldwide, but its story begins in Singapore in 1915. Its birthplace is located at the Long Bar of the Raffles' hotel.



This luxurious hotel is definitely a must see in Singapore with its colonial style. It was built in 1887 in honor of Stamford Raffles. The Singapore Sling was created by Ngiam Tong Boon, the Long Bar's bartender.

The cocktail is made of gin, curaçao, Benedictine liquor, cherry liqueur, grenadine, pineapple juice and lime juice. All this sweetness is deliberate. In fact, in the early 20th century, when Singapore was just a trading post of the British Empire, women were not allowed to drink alcohol in public.

Thus, the Singapore Sling's inventor decided to **create a cocktail which would look and smell like a fruit juice**. As you can see on the illustration, there are pineapple pieces on the top of the glass and the color is rosy. It led people to think it was a **socially acceptable drink for women** and thus became an instant hit.

Today, drinking a Singapore Sling at the Long Bar is part of the whole experience of time-travelling back to the colonial times. You also have the possibility to eat peanuts and to brush peanut shells on the floor. **This is the only place in Singapore where littering is encouraged!**

Given the success of this cocktail, other bars soon created their own version of the Singapore Sling. We can mention Maison Ikkoku, Jigger&Pony or 28 Hong Kong Street which invented new recipes and gave their own stories about it. All of them have reinvented their national cocktail to surprise both locals and tourists.

The Singapore Sling is part of the whole Singapore experience, so don't miss it and try it !

Mustafa Centre

by Elizabeth ROGALSKI

Shopping is a very popular pastime in Singapore and malls pop up continuously. As the former Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong said in his National Day address of 1996, “Life for Singaporeans is not complete without shopping!”.

However, Mustafa Centre is quite different from the usual shopping mall. Enough for an **American mom-blogger to spend over 30 shopping hours creating map of the department store.**

The father of Mustafa Centre, **Haji Mohamed Mustafa**, came from a farming family in India. He arrived in Singapore in 1962 and started selling foodstuffs with his brother. Soon, his son **Mustaq Ahmad** decided to sell handkerchiefs next to them as an independent business. His unexpected success convinced his father and uncle to give up food selling and switch to a retail business.

In 1971, only nine years after entering the city-state, the three of them opened a new shop all together. Mustaq Ahmad quickly broadened and expanded the family business, **offering as many references as possible, at the fairest price, and adapting to the customers’ needs and wants.**

The strategy was so successful that they continuously had to move to larger places. Today, this **unique four-storey retail labyrinth** is located in the cultural district of **Little India** and sells everything from electronics, clothes, luggages, medicines and food to flight tickets and money exchange services. The building’s size doubled since 1995, to reach **150,000 sq ft of retail space** (around 14 000 m²) open 24 hours a day, all year round, **selling more than 300,000 items to around 15,000 visitors every week-end.**

To wander from one floor to another, a lot of options are available: stairs, escalators, elevators... **but they won’t take the visitor to the same place. Hence the map. You’ve been warned !**





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