



MVM VOICES



Museum Volunteers Malaysia, hosted by Muzium Negara, 50566 Kuala Lumpur
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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- + Next MVM weekday training to start on **Tues 15th September**
- + Next MVM weekend training to start on **Sat 26th September**
- + Farewell lunch for guides who are leaving over the summer on **Thursday 25 June**
- + "Empire Moghol" talk in French by Diane Banz-Derez **11 June**
- + Example tour of Gallery A on **Sat 13 June** by Kon Cze Yan
- + Example tour of Gallery B on **Sat 11 July** by Lee Choo Sim
- + Trip to Melaka **5-7 June**
- + Visit to Kuala Selangor Museum **Sunday 28 June**
- + Talk on Bok House by Nancy Chua **Saturday 22 August**



MVMers watch a demonstration of rubber tapping at the Rubber Research and Development Board in Sungai Buloh

Dear MVM Members,

Since beginning of the year, the priority of the MVM executive council has been to create a better organizational structure that will allow the MVM to function more effectively and consistently while lessening volunteer burnout.

We are now at an important place of that journey. Huge improvements have been made, including the reorganization of the MVM room and running of education programmes and enhancing communication between members through the newsletter, MVM blog and hopefully soon our very own website.

We have so many ideas that we want to implement such as introducing artifact carts in the museum and offering public lectures, and we do hope you are sticking with us and enjoying work with the MVM. During the last executive committee meeting, we discussed the issue of guiding extensively – how to recruit more volunteer guides, how to implement a more effective scheduling system and how to make the training programme more effective. **Guiding is the backbone of our volunteer group and as such must be our top priority. It is the responsibility of every volunteer to guide either in the museum or in the education programme.**

While Renate and Hazlini are doing a tremendous job in organizing the monthly guiding schedule, we can help make their job easier if we communicate regularly the number of hours we can commit to guiding each month. If for some reason we are unable to guide on the day assigned to us, we must find a replacement as soon as possible. You will also have seen from our Yahoo! Messages that we are now being asked to do many one-off tailored tours for big groups. Please volunteer for these when you can.

Remember that for the public going to a museum is a choice – and when people make that choice to visit Muzium Negara, it is important that we not only meet their expectations but exceed them.

As usual we appreciate any feedback on how to improve MVM and have no fear no opinion is too controversial or whacky for Chrissy or me!

Zahara Shahrman, MVM Vice President



Bak Chang talk

On May 23, Evon Yong (batch 3) gave a demonstration on bak chang, or zongzi, which are traditionally eaten during the Dragon Boat Festival. They are dumplings made of sticky rice stuffed with different fillings and wrapped in bamboo leaves. We all tried to "wrap" a bak chang. It brought back fond memories of my childhood when I helped my mother make bak chang. Evon showed us many new flavours for this old delicacy, like nasi lemak, kimchi, and jelly bak chang!

Kon Cze Yan

VISIT TO MALAYSIAN RUBBER RESEARCH BOARD

Several MVMers visited the Malaysian Rubber Research and Development Board (MRB) located to the north of Kuala Lumpur at Sungai Buloh on 16 April 2009.

The MRB's representative gave a brief history on the arrival of rubber to Malaya. The rubber tree (*Hevea Brasiliensis*) is not native to Malaysia, only South America.

Some 70,000 rubber seeds were secreted out of Brazil by Sir Henry Wickham in 1876 and planted at Kew Gardens, London. The seedlings were transported to Sri Lanka and then forwarded to Henry Ridley in Singapore. Rubber arrived for the first time in Malaya in 1882 when nine trees were planted by Hugh Low, the British Resident in Perak, in the grounds of his residence in Kuala Kangsar. One of these trees survives to this very day, and its seedlings helped propel Malaya to the world's number one producer of natural rubber. Even today, Malaysia remains the third largest producer of natural rubber in the world.

An interesting demonstration on bud grafting followed. We were shown how seedlings from ordinary rubber trees could be transformed into high yielding rubber trees when high yielding rubber trees were grafted onto the seedlings.

A demonstration on rubber tapping was also given. We viewed samples of rubber seeds and latex and were briefed on the latest technology and methods of tapping.

We next visited MRB's Germplasm. Hundreds of rubber trees had been planted some 20 plus years ago from seeds collected from the Amazon rainforest. These specimen trees provide the MRB's researchers with a fantastic gene pool to experiment with and improve yields.

The visit to the MRB ended at the MRB's International Rubber Products Exhibition Centre, which showcased the numerous products in our daily life and in industry which use natural rubber and rubber wood. Janet Tee, Senior Curator from the National Museum thanked the MRB's representative on behalf of the MVM.

Yon See Ting

Artifact of the month – Gallery B



Xuande Dishes

These dishes come from a vessel that sank between 1500 and 1540 off the east coast of Malaysia. This 'shipwreck' is unusual because there are no remains of the ship's structure, just ceramics found on the seabed. Items recovered from this site include 20 different designs of Chinese blue and white porcelain and white-glazed wares with the reign mark of the Emperor Xuande (AD 1426-1435).

Thai pieces recovered include Sitsatchanalai celadon and underglazed black decorated bowls, which suggest the vessel sank at a later date than that indicated by the reign marks on the Chinese pieces.

Zahara Shahrman



GUIDING & LIBRARY DUTIES

2 June 10am library: **Renate M.**
 2 June 11am tour: **Angela**
 4 June French duty: **M.Bouis & Alexandra Philippe**
 4 June 11am tour: **Sarah R.**
 6 June 11am tour: Lee Choo Sim, Mariana, Shikin, Chin Wee Ching
 9 June 10am library: **Etsuko**
 9 June 11am tour: **Angela**
 11 June 11am tour: **Karen**
 13 June 11am tour: Ong Aing Huat, Yong Siao Hui, Maharani, Soo Said Chyn
 16 June 10am library: **Etsuko**
 16 June 11am tour: **Fauziah**
 18 June French duty: **E.Bonnet**
 18 June 11am tour: **Gerlinde**
 20 June 10am Japanese tour
 20 June 11am tour: Kon Cze Yan, Wong Kam Chuen
 23 June 10am library: **Renate M**
 23 June 11am tour: **Lorien**
 25 June 11am tour: **Alison**
 27 June 11am tour: Luis Silva, Shirley Yee
 30 June 10am library: **Renata B.**
 30 June 11am tour: **Lorien**
 2 July 11am tour: **Diane Banz**
 4 July 11am tour: TBA
 7 July 10am library: **Renate M.**
 7 July 11am tour: **Valerie**
 9 July 11am tour: **Fauziah**
 11 July 11am tour: TBA
 14 July 10am library: **Kokkie**
 14 July 11am tour: **See Ting**
 16 July 11am tour: **Nisha**
 18 July 11am tour: TBA
 21 July 10 am library: **Renata B.**
 21 July 11am tour: **Fauziah**
 23 July 11am tour: **Karen**
 25 July 11am tour: TBA
 28 July 10am: library: **Etsuko**
 28 July 11am tour: **Sarah R.**
 30 July 11am tour: **Teiko Sato**

VISIT TO MUSEUM OF ASIAN ART

On 7 May 2009, MVM visited the Museum of Asian Art (MAA) which is located within the University of Malaya. We were warmly welcomed by Encik Aziz, a University Malaya lecturer. Encik Aziz informed us that the MAA's collection started in 1954 while University Malaya's campus was situated in Singapore. When Singapore split from Malaysia, the collection was divided between the two countries. The MAA's collection is now housed within three floors of exhibition space. It has almost 6,000 artifacts from Asia's major civilizations that span 4,000 years of Asian history.

The museum holds some rare artifacts. For example, three of the 20 or so "Sawankhalok Manhunt Elephant" remaining in the world are housed in the MAA. It has a wide array of Asian pottery including from Annam, Khmer, Thai, Indian and Chinese sources. There are also Indian stone sculptures and reliefs, Persian ceramics, Chinese ceramics and porcelains. The Temmuku ceramics from Japan and Martaban jars from the Borneo hinterlands were amongst the fascinating exhibits in this jewel of a museum.

The talented MAA staff played soothing traditional Malay children's songs on Gamelan instruments, which were a real treat to hear.

This was followed by a talk on the Malay kain songket (with the meanings of the different flowers woven into the songket explained as depicting the different stages of a man's life) and also the pua kumbu.

Unfortunately "bad spirits" imbued the slide projector which decided that it would not function. Encik Aziz could not proceed with the slide presentation on ceramics which he had prepared. MVM plans to visit the MAA on another occasion and/or invite Encik Aziz to give a lecture to the MVM.

The MAA holds temporary exhibitions from time to time. At the time of MVM's visit, it had housed Korean Professor Mi Jai Lee's very interesting solo digital textile art exhibition. The MAA plans as its next exhibit in August, "The Atomic Bomb in Nagasaki Exhibition".

Yon See Ting