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Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society

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**JOURNAL OF THE MALAYSIAN BRANCH
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The Cover

The cover of each issue of the *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* highlights a building, location or object integral to the historical heritage of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei. For this edition, we have chosen a photograph related to a theme discussed in the issue.

The current cover features a photograph showing *Ling Nam*, the largest and last ocean-going vessel acquired by Ho Hong Steamship Company Ltd in 1928 and renamed *Hong Kheng*. Manufactured in 1903 for Deutsche Ost-Afrika Linie in Hamburg, the ship was originally named *Feldmarschall*.

Photo Courtesy of Birtwistle Local Studies Library, Armadale, Western Australia at https://birtwistlewiki.com.au/wiki/SS_Field_Marshall. Image upscaled and resized by Chan Mei Yi using Photoshop.

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Editor's Note

This issue features four research articles spanning from the second half of the 18th century to post-independence Malaysia. The first examines the protracted negotiations between Miss P.G. Lim—a prominent Malaysian lawyer turned top diplomat—and the Public Service Department over her administrative entitlements. A well-known advocate of gender equality, her experience seeking equal treatment provides valuable insights into the male-dominated dynamics of the elite bureaucratic corps in post-independence Malaysia. Coincidentally, this issue also contains a review of the book, *Convents of the Saint Maur Sisters*, which delves into the Infant Jesus Sisters' mission in Asia, making English education accessible to girls like Lim.

The next article explores the maritime trading interactions of a Terengganu-based Malay merchant, Saudagar Nasruddin Ali, with British traders and business associates. Through a close reading of the *Light Letters* (1768–1794), the study sheds light on how commercial transactions were organised on the ground and the role of local merchants in regional commerce during the second half of the 18th century. English translations of four related extracts from the *Light Letters* Collection are provided in the section Documents from Malaysian History.

The third article advances to the early 20th century, focusing on a maritime shipping business operated by Lim Peng Siang, a renowned Straits Chinese magnate based in Singapore. It analyses the factors contributing to the success of the Ho Hong Steamship Co Ltd, part of Lim's conglomerate, and how the firm crafted strategies to overcome multiple challenges posed by competitive and perilous international political-economic conditions. The cover photo of this issue features *Hong Kheng*, the last marine vessel acquired by Ho Hong Steamship in 1928 before the company was sold a few years later.

Lastly, the fourth article discusses the Malay activities of the Anglo-Chinese College and the Malacca Mission Station undertaken by the London Missionary Society during the first half of the 19th century. This research complements earlier studies on the Anglo-Chinese College and the London Missionary Society published in this Journal (see Vols. 57 pt. 2; 61 pt. 2; 91 pt. 1; and 92 pt. 1).

In conjunction with the launch of the Guar Kepah Archaeological Gallery in January this year and the repatriation by the Dutch government to Malaysia of some forty skeletal remains previously excavated on site, this issue also contains a research note on ongoing research on the archaeological artefacts unearthed in Guar Kepah, Penang—a significant prehistoric burial site in Malaysia.

Helen Ting
Hon. Editor, JMBRAS

