

**The Malaysian Branch  
of the  
Royal Asiatic Society**  
Established 1877

**PATRONS**

Duli Yang Maha Mulia Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah ibni  
Almarhum Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Alhaj,  
Sultan Selangor

Duli Yang Teramat Mulia Paduka Seri Pengiran Perdana  
Wazir Sahibul Himmah Wal-Waqar Pengiran Muda  
Mohamed Bolkiah

Chan Sek Keong, Esq.

**COUNCIL for the Year 2025–2026**

**President**

YM Tengku Mohamed Fauzi bin Tengku Abdul Hamid

**Vice Presidents**

Datin Dr Kobkua Suwannathat-Pian

Dr Loh Wei Leng

Dr Paul H. Kratoska

Dr Chey Yun Khen

Pehin Dato' Seri Setia Lim Jock Seng

**Councillors**

YAM Tunku Zain Al-'Abidin Tuanku Muhriz

Ms Mary Elizabeth Cardosa

Mr Chua Siow Leng

Dr Helen Ting Mu Hung

Dr Sandra Khor Manickam

**Office Bearers**

Hon. Secretary

Hon. Treasurer

Hon. Editor (JMBRAS)

Hon. Editor (Monographs  
and Reprints)

Hon. Review Editor

Prof. Datuk Dr Danny Wong Tze-Ken

Dato' Henry Sackville Barlow

Dr Helen Ting Mu Hung

Dr Paul H. Kratoska

Dr Loh Wei Leng

**Journal  
of the  
Malaysian Branch of the  
Royal Asiatic Society**

## **Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society**

The *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (JMBRAS) is published from the society's Office and Repository at 18 Jalan 6/6, Seksyen 6, 46000 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia.

The journal is printed by Markono Print Media, 18 Pioneer Crescent, #06-00, Singapore 628567, and sold at the Society's Office and through the Society's Agents:

### **Malaysia**

APD Book Services Sdn Bhd  
No. 22, 24 & 26, Jalan SS 3/41  
47300 Petaling Jaya  
Selangor, Malaysia  
<http://www.apdsing.com/>  
Email: customersvc@apdkl.com

### **Singapore**

APD Singapore Pte. Ltd.  
52 Genting Lane #06-05  
Ruby Land Complex 1  
Singapore 349560  
<http://www.apdsing.com/>  
Email: orders@apdsing.com

### **Japan**

Hotaka Book Co., Ltd.  
1-15, Kanda Jinbo-cho  
Chiyoda-ku  
Tokyo 101-0051  
[www.hotakabooks.com](http://www.hotakabooks.com)

## JOURNAL OF THE MALAYSIAN BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

Editor : Helen Ting Mu Hung  
Associate Editor : Sandra Khor Manickam  
Review Editors : Loh Wei Leng  
Associate Review Editor : Liew Kai Khiun

The *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* is published both in physical and digital formats. Current issues are available in more than 1,750 academic libraries worldwide through the Premium Collection of Project MUSE, part of Johns Hopkins University Press, through which libraries can subscribe to the journal under its 'Single Title Journal Subscriptions' option. Back issues, starting with the inaugural number published in 1878 as the *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, have been digitised and are also available in academic libraries through JSTOR, which enables access for individuals without institutional affiliations (<https://about.jstor.org/get-jstor/>). The journal is SCOPUS-indexed.

Members of the Society receive the journal as part of their membership benefits. Information about joining MBRAS is available on the Society's webpage. For enquiries about institutional subscriptions, please contact the society's Administrative Officer at the following address:

Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society  
18 Jalan 6/6, Seksyen 6,  
46000 Petaling Jaya,  
Selangor, Malaysia  
**Tel:** +60 11 5410 2148  
**Email:** [admin@mbras.org.my](mailto:admin@mbras.org.my)  
**Website:** [mbras.org.my](http://mbras.org.my)

### **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](https://birtwistlewiki.com.au/wiki/SS_Field_Marshall). Image upscaled and resized by Chan Mei Yi using Photoshop.

# Contents

Volume 99 Part 1  
No. 330 June 2026

|                                                                                                                                                                            |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| EDITOR'S NOTE                                                                                                                                                              | vii |
| RESEARCH ARTICLES                                                                                                                                                          |     |
| P.G. Lim and the Struggle for Equality: Gender, Bureaucracy,<br>and Diplomacy in Post-Independence Malaysia<br><i>Yalan Ren and Danny Wong Tze Ken</i>                     | 1   |
| The Overlooked Merchant: Saudagar Nasruddin and the<br>Terengganu-Penang Trade Through the <i>Light Letters</i><br><i>Siti Noor Hafizah Mohamed Sharif and Mahani Musa</i> | 27  |
| Chinese Capital and Maritime Shipping in Malaya:<br>The Ho Hong Steamship Company Limited, 1911–1932<br><i>Chan Mei Yi and Ho Kee Chye</i>                                 | 53  |
| Reconsidering the Malay Activities of the Anglo-Chinese College<br>and the Malacca Mission Station<br><i>Ye Youyun</i>                                                     | 85  |
| DOCUMENTS FROM MALAYSIAN HISTORY                                                                                                                                           |     |
| Selected Letters from the <i>Light Letters</i> Collection (1770s–1790s)<br><i>Translated from Malay by Siti Noor Hafizah Mohamed Sharif<br/>and Mahani Musa</i>            | 111 |
| RESEARCH NOTE                                                                                                                                                              |     |
| The Guar Kepah Skeletons<br><i>Suresh Narayanan, Hisham Atan Edinur,<br/>&amp; Nasha Rodziadi Khaw</i>                                                                     | 119 |
| BOOK REVIEWS                                                                                                                                                               |     |
| Mareike Pampus. <i>Connected Heritages: The Inner Life of Penang<br/>in the Indian Ocean World</i><br>Reviewed by LAKSHMI SUBRAMANIAN                                      | 131 |

|                                                                                                                                                                          |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Valerie Mashman. <i>Border History from a Borneo Longhouse:<br/>The Search for a Life That Is Very Good</i><br>Reviewed by TERRY JUSTIN DIT                              | 133 |
| Tham Junean. <i>HMS Rinaldo &amp; The Selangor Incident:<br/>Gunboat Diplomacy in Malaya</i><br>Reviewed by VIVIAN LOUIS FORBES                                          | 135 |
| Chen Yen Ling. <i>Convents of the Saint Maur Sisters:<br/>A Nostalgic Road in the East</i><br>Reviewed by KOAY SU LYN                                                    | 137 |
| Marie-Sybille de Vienne. <i>The Chinese in Maritime Southeast Asia:<br/>Trade and Merchant Communities in 17th-century Insulindia</i><br>Reviewed by JAFAR SURYOMENGGOLO | 138 |
| Sultan Nazrin Shah, ed. <i>Chronicling Themes in the Economic and<br/>Social History of Malaysia</i><br>Reviewed by ONG WOOL LENG                                        | 142 |

# 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

