

Peranakans Of Singapore

Group 2-31

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I. Statement of Research Paper:

This study seeks to build awareness of the Peranakan Culture in Singapore. With the recent focus on diversity in Singapore, the Peranakan culture clearly embodies the beauty of integration of differences in society.

II. Literature Review:

A Survey of the Literature on Chinese Peranakans and the Case for a Regional Resource Centre:

This has allowed us to have a better understanding of the Peranakan culture and its history through its documentation of Chinese Peranakans in Malaysia and Singapore in various national and local institutions. Due to the lack of an information centre focus on the Peranakans, it resulted in the push for an establishment of a resource centre to save the region to preserve and collect valuable information about the unique Peranakan heritage.

Emily of Emerald Hill:

The play gave us an insight into the Peranakan culture. While parts of it was fictional, such as the age of the main character when she got married, majority of the play had revolved around real Peranakan life as quoted by Stella Kon, "The story of Emily is not the true story of my grandmother's life – and yet it is in a way the story of every woman of her generation, who could only find power and fulfilment in the role of wife and mother." The play also gave particular insights into the household workings of a Peranakan household such as the manners of addressing family members.

A nyonya mosaic : memories of a peranakan childhood :

This book further elaborated the life and cultures of the Peranakans during the 1910 period and we learn t about the problems faced by the Peranakans in this time period and about the strict culture norms that the main character had grown up with in great detail. This had also brought great insight into the lives of Peranakan children for our group.

Poem Analysis:

The Bottle Collector

Two baskets upon the bottle collector's shoulders bear
 Go and signal to him to come and see our wares
 Assorted bottles are all grouped together
 Stacked up with cans and tins are they gathered.
 All items miscellaneous the bottle collector counts
 As both sides profit from these small business rounds.

Similar to pedlar, is a "leang gani"
 Ricg & Bone man

Refer to previous poem analysis.
 Same reason as to why poem is in Hokkien.

Can be used to explain the Haraya poem.

Poem showcases the process of collecting bottles to sell.

A Tapestry of Baba Poetry

4. The Botei Collector

Botei ah cheik tna nah kuei,
 Et ch'iu kiou ee lai k'nua huei.
 Butut, botoi k'iouk chit tui,
 Tin-tin, k'ong-k'ong kui tua tui.
 K'ik-k'ik k'ok-k'ok pai hoh snui,
 Chou siou seing lee pneh t'an lui.

ORIGINAL

3. Bei Long Koh

Ling long, ling long bei long koh,
 Kui ch'ia inau hui hoh lang poh.
 Bei ei lang ch'ia lu iu keh loh.
 Tui ch'iu lai lang hong pien tua pang choh.
 Ah nya, chee mua, lau ee, lang ei boh,
 Bei tik-tik tek-tek, poket tua oh.
 Guleing 'au, guleing kuan, oh toh,
 Handbag, empi, ginna ei lou koh.
 P'ong hun, p'ang hun, bedak suju,
 Hair band, hair pin, keh ei chin chu.
 Keh ei kerosang, lentei, ch'iu chee.
 Koh tua, chiam smua, iu wa, ien chee.
 Saset, reibin, kosmetik, p'ang chun,
 Tua bei, tua iong, tua chng sui-sui.
 Pou keh boy friend, lau ang chin mua ee,
 K'mua liau jip sim, ham bin, kiau mia jee.



Pedlars are usually the jobs of lower income people, such as older males.
 Like "leang gani"
 Ricg & Bone man

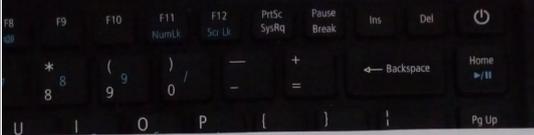
The Travelling Pedlar

'Ling-long, ling-long' the travelling pedlar's here
 His cartload of household items now appear
 The pedlar plies his trade around the streets
 Goods of all kinds that most housewives need
 Lasses, sisters, aunts, housewives there
 Emptying their pockets to buy his wares
 Pacifiers, milk bottles, child's inner vests to sell
 Handbags, pencils and children's drums as well
 Face powder, talcum powder, rice-made powder, too
 Hair bands, hair pins, imitation pearls for you
 Kehayis brooches, necklaces and not forgetting rings
 Belts, threads and needles, buttons, lipstick so he brings
 Combs, ribbons, cosmetics, and perfume galore
 Buy and use a lot, and you'd become pretty more
 So as to please the boyfriends and husbands all!
 So charmed are they, in dreams their names they'd call.

Usually Chinese, and are Hokkien or Cantonese.
 Therefore original poem is written in Hokkien.

Purpose is that it is meant to be liked so the main idea of the poem, which is pedlars.

Examples of some of the wares the pedlar sells.
 Can be used in similar fashion in our poems (Listing)



The Peranakan

The Babas and the Nyonyas
 They came from Malacca, we all know
 The Babas and the Nyonyas
 Penang, Phuket and Singapore also.
 As well as the Peranakan
 from east coast West Malaysia
Myanmar, Indonesia
 And various parts of Southeast Asia.
 The Peranakan culture is unique in its splendour
 Showcasing a blend of local and Chinese
 grandeur.
 As loyal citizens they live together
 With other races like birds of the same feather
 So friendly, warm-hearted and courteous
 The descendants of the Babas and the Nyonyas.

Mentions the countries the peranakans are from (Malacca, Penang, Phuket, Singapore, West Malaysia, Myanmar, Indonesia)

(Common Language is Malay, therefore poem is written in Malay)

all have similar culture

III. Methodology & Research Design

We had visited museums and sent members to visit some Peranakan exhibition. A few members went to the National Library of Singapore to read up on the Peranakan culture in Singapore and accessed their online resources to understand more about the Peranakan culture. We went online to find out more through the online resource Wikipedia to act as the springboard of our project and came across books, television dramas and plays about the Peranakan culture in Singapore such as "A nyonya mosaic: Memoirs of a Peranakan childhood", the "Little Nyonya" on Channel 8 as well as the play "Emily of Emerald Hill" and communicated with the Peranakan Association.

IV. Data Analysis & Findings

IV. i) Identity in History of Singapore

Modern Colony Gallery/ Exhibition :

The exhibition showcased various clothes , utensils and cultural items of the different ethnic groups in Singapore during the month of February. We took note of the various information shown about the Peranakan cultural items and common information about the people themselves. The snapshots provided at the section "Life in Singapore: The Past 100 Years" showed us the everyday life for the Peranakans throughout the different eras in Singapore's history as well as the "Goh Seng Choo Gallery: Magic & Menace" to learn about the supernatural beliefs that the Peranakans had through the drawings showcased. The "Singapore History Gallery" also narrated how the Peranakans had helped in the development of Singapore through Singapore's 700 years of history where we could obtain valuable information.

National Library Board Singapore Infopedia

Peranakan (Straits Chinese) Community:

They provided a description of the background, cultures, jobs, food and notable personals of the Peranakan community, and goes into great detail about the historical background and cultural practices about the Peranakan community. The infopedia had also showed that the Peranakans have indeed played major roles throughout Singapore's history through important personalities that are part of the Peranakan community such as Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, while its culture had left its mark in Singapore's culture such as Singapore's food such as Nyonya Kueh which as its name implies was part of the Peranakan culture.

IV. ii) Identity and portrayal in Media

The media's portrayal of the Peranakans, example, "Little Nyonya" are said to be quite accurate. Manager Tan Lay Hong, "As with all cultural serials, the research for all things past poses a major challenge. That said, it is gratifying that we have managed to present the culture as best as we could". This allowed us to understand that the media has attempted to make the portrayal of the Peranakans to be as accurate as possible.

Gateway To Peranakan Culture:

This book uses comics, cartoons to showcase the various cultural practices that the Peranakan people have, even showing some locations of Peranakan addresses in both Singapore and Malaysia. This allowed us to gain knowledge about the Peranakan heritage in an interesting and entertaining method. However, this book does not show all of the Peranakan cultural practices, only the major parts of the culture.

The Little Nyonya:

It showcased a lot of Peranakan food, cultural practices and the problems faced by the Peranakans in the 1930s. This allowed us to gain some understanding about the attitudes that people had towards the Peranakan culture during that period. The drama portrayed the main characters across 3 generations and through the different eras: From before World War 1 all the way to 2009, when the drama's storyline ended.

V. Discussion

After the research, it does indeed show that with the recent focus on diversity in Singapore that the Peranakans do embody the integration of differences in society. This research, however, does however show that there is still a lack of awareness of the Peranakan Culture in Singapore, with very little focus on the Peranakans, at most to the level of "The Little Nyonya", a Chinese television drama. Otherwise, the awareness of Peranakan Culture is not that high.

VI. Conclusion, Implications, Recommendations

Thus, our project aims to build awareness of the Peranakan culture by the spreading of awareness about the Peranakan culture through social media, and we attempted to create unique poems about the Peranakan culture.

Although none of the team is a Peranakan, we have tried to make our poems in the version of the Peranakan language as authentic as possible.

Thus, our recommendations on how to further this project would be that further interviews with a Peranakan familiar in the literary circle would help in ensuring our works can be even better. Listening to or even create oral histories made by the Singaporean Peranakans themselves, would help to prevent inaccuracies in portrayal of the Peranakan

cultures in our Singaporean society and help to showcase the evolution of the identities of Singaporean Peranakans.

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