

SINGAPORE HERITAGE SOCIETY  
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is proud to present:

## TAGORE IN SINGAPORE

a talk by Angela Faye Oon

Rabindranath Tagore's visit to Singapore and the Malay peninsula in 1927 is little-known even amongst Tagore scholars. Why did this extraordinary Bengali polymath – the first Asian to win the Nobel Prize for Literature – decide to embark on a journey through Singapore and Malaya for an entire month? Where were the places he went to, and what did he do when he was here? How was he received by the various local communities and how did he in turn present himself to different audiences? This talk will make use of contemporaneous news and magazine articles, photographs and letters to trace Tagore's route through Singapore and the Federated Malay States.

More than simply nugget trivia about Tagore, however, his visit also provides important insights into the social and political milieu of interwar colonial Singapore and Malaya. The talk will explore the different reactions his visit engendered among the Indian, Chinese and European communities, all illuminating the nascent notions of nationalism of the period. In particular, it will investigate an important controversy that Tagore unexpectedly found himself mired in during his trip, arising out of anti-colonial comments that he supposedly made to a Shanghainese newspaper earlier. The incident aroused

venue	The Pod Level 16, National Library 100 Victoria Street
date   time	Saturday, 30 Oct 2010   3.00pm
admission	Free and open to the public
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the ire of many editors of the English press in Singapore, but was covered quite differently in the pages of Chinese-language newspapers



Tagore's welcome at Tanjong Pagar wharf on 20 July 1927



**Angela Faye Oon** is a research associate in the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. Her lecture describes part of the Centre's current project investigating the Asian travels of Rabindranath Tagore. It makes use of materials from the National Library Board's newspaper archives, including the Malaya Tribune, Malay Mail, Singapore Free Press, Straits Times, Malacca Observer, Penang Gazette, Nanyang Siang Pao, Le Bao, and Union Times.

