Much food for thought at first-ever conference on Our Place In Time

More than 100 people ranging from senior citizens to students met for a long weekend in mid-September to discuss their places in time in a much-talked about conference on heritage and memories.

The response to the conference from both the media and the participants and the high standard of the papers presented has prompted the organisers to look into publication of the conference papers and the commentaries.

This comprehensive conference which attracted a wide spread of interest covered virtually every area of heritage from geographical to cultural. It was all thanks to the hard work of the organising committee made up of members of the Society and The Substation.

On the title of the conference, Dr Kwok Kian Woon said, “Here you get the idea that there is the juxtaposition between the notion of place and the notion of time. We decided to try to pose and answer fundamental questions such as ‘what is heritage?’ The speakers who came from various disciplines and professions dealt with ‘who we are, where do we come from?’ and ‘where do we go from here?’ The 29 speakers and commentators were a high-powered group, 12 of whom were members of the Society.

Following the opening speeches by Professor Tommy Koh, chairman of the National Arts Council, Artistic Director Kuo Pao Kun, and Society President William Lim, the opening paper made up of the thoughts of the organising committee (See pages 4/5) was presented by Dr Kwok on the opening evening of the conference on Friday 16 September. The conference was supported by the National Arts Council.

The conference, organised jointly by the Society with The Substation, was the highlight of The Substation’s Memories Season first started in 1992. It was held in the Guinness Theatre at The Substation in Armenian Street.

In his opening speech, Professor Tommy Koh, who is also patron of The Substation and Director of the Institute of Policy Studies spoke on Singapore’s moral tapestry and its happy blend of East and West as part of our heritage. He focused particularly on the moral values from East and West which helped to account for the success of Singapore.

He said he had inherited from his antecedents “a set of moral values which constitute my moral compass. These values included the importance of the family, the reverence for education, the virtues of saving, frugality, and hard work, the concern for others and the importance of team work.

“I am not saying that these values are uniquely Asian,” he said. “I concede that some of these values are probably of a universal character. I also recognise that until the recent past, many of these values were the dominant values of Western societies. This is however, no longer the case. This is why there is a growing movement in the West to return to their traditional values. I therefore do not understand why some Western critics have dismissed our Asian values as being “vapid”.

“Second, will our traditional values endure or will they be swept away by the...” See page 3

Donations are now tax-exempt

Donors to the Society and sponsors of its projects will now enjoy tax exemption on their donations. The tax-exempt status is via a Special Account for the Society with the National Arts Council.

The tax-exempt status is due to the good work of Price Waterhouse, the Society’s honorary auditors, The Society would like to thank the Ministry of Information and the Arts and the National Arts Council for their assistance and support.
President William Lim’s opening remarks

“O”ur world is changing at an ever-increasing pace. Contemporary society with its computer chips and media dependence generates an all-embracing international value-system and lifestyle. This is now particularly relevant in East and South-east Asia as these countries are experiencing unprecedented rates of economic growth and urbanisation.

This inevitable internationalisation process poses serious challenges to our values, cultures, work-leisure attitudes, family ties, inter-personal relationships etc. To counteract this, individuals and communities today must consciously sharpen the awareness and appreciation of their own cultural heritage.

Each individual selects, discovers, interprets and discards from his or her past images and memories, which are incredibly complex and intertwined with the layering in time and space as well as in beliefs, myths and rituals. The perception of the present must inevitably be influenced by and be viewed through the filtering mirror of yesteryear.

The overall theme of this conference is captured in the title Our Place in Time. The organisers hope to achieve a deeper understanding of and an intellectual reflection on the richness and complexity of our own heritage. The conference attempts to investigate some aspects of our collective memories. Will it ever arrive at an alternative interpretation of our past? This enrichment is necessary to fulfill the urgent need to establish, both individually and collectively, our evolving values and identity in order to meet the challenge of the contemporary world today.

The Singapore Heritage Society is therefore delighted and proud to co-organise this important conference with The Substation. The organisers have deliberately introduced many younger speakers. We are aware that we have only just begun to seriously discuss this important issue. It is therefore conceivable that more questions may be raised than answers found.

On behalf of the Society, I would like to thank all members of the organising committee, the chairperson Kwok Kian Woon and the efficient co-ordinator Daniel Wong of The Substation and to wish all of you a very enjoyable and intellectually stimulating meeting.”

Much food for thought at conference

* Continued from page 1

tide of development and democratisation? Some scholars contend that as a society progresses, its citizens become better educated and more affluent, as women become more liberated from their inferior status in society, the traditional values will inevitably lose their sway. They argue that as Asia becomes more developed and affluent, Asian societies will suffer the same loss of moral values as the West.”

Citing the case of Japan, he disagreed with this prognosis. Despite affluence and development, Japan had managed to maintain many of the core Asian values. “The Japanese,” he said, “have not lost the Asian virtues of saving, frugality and hard work. They continue to revere education. The Japanese family has not suffered the same erosion as in the West. To use only one indicator, whereas only two per cent of children are born out of wedlock in Japan, the percentage in the UK and the USA is about 33 per cent. The model of Japan therefore gives me hope that it may be possible for the rest of Asia to become as developed, modern and affluent as Japan and yet succeed in retaining many of our traditional moral values.”

Professor Koh pointed out that when East Asians express pride in their cultural heritage, they were not explicitly or implicitly saying that Asian values are good and Western values bad. “I readily admit that there are good Asian values and bad Asian values just as there are good Western values and bad Western values.”

Memories 3: Shaping and Reshapings

This year’s Memories Season began with a look at memories in art with an exhibition, “Back to the Dream Age” and a seminar, Prof. Chan Heng Chee, Director of the Singapore International Foundation who opened the Season, said of memories, “Memories link us to a past and remind us of our history and our place in time. The use of the past provides standards and yardsticks to measure what exists and unfolds at present. We cannot as human beings ignore the need to understand the past —what is around us, what is happening to us, to understand, categorize, to label and to judge. The present can be understood with the help of the past. Memories give us age, a sense of passing on, of evolution, a meaning to and knowledge of life.”

The seminar, Past Into Art: How To Make Archival Material Relevant To Your Art Today was chaired by Kwa Chong Guan, head of the Department of Strategic Studies. Dr Daniel Chew, Assistant Director of the Oral History Department spoke on the Department’s work. Pitt Kuan Wah, Assistant Director (Technical Services) of the National Archives then spoke on the Archives collection.

The Substation Artistic Director Kuo Pao Kun then illustrated the use he made of such archival and oral history materials in his acclaimed play Lao Jiu.

A second item in Memories 3’s programme was Memories of Senses a public performance with Very Special Arts. The third was Remembering Singapore, a look at Singapore’s pop music, jointly organised with Big-O, a music magazine.
The Substation Artistic Director Kuo Pao Kun on the Memories Season

"Memories Season is one of those Substation programmes which took a long time to find a niche. Partly because memory is a minority concern, partly because we didn't quite know how to handle it.

The improvement this year is due largely to having co-organisers like the Singapore Heritage Society, Oral History, National Archives, Very Special Arts and Big O magazine. This conference for instance, is organised by Willie, Chong Guan, Beng Luan, Brenda, Lily, Kian Woon, Daniel and me, and it was Kian Woon who conceptualised the structure.

To all the speakers and commentators who have come to enrich this open meeting of minds — all free of charge — Thank you! This mixed company of scholars and professionals from diverse disciplines, and public and private institutions, is the greatest asset of the conference.

The Substation started this annual Memories Season in 1992 because of a deep-seated concern for the larger cultural problems accompanying the phenomenal changes which brought Singapore into affluence and prosperity.

For in recent years, we have noticed a trend taking shape in Singapore: that more and more artists and writers have engaged themselves in the act of remembering — anxiously finding ways to re-connect to the past. National leaders are also emphasising with increasing urgency the importance of preserving traditions.

This could be read as an admission of amnesia, a loss of memory, that Singaporeans are feeling very uncomfortable with the state of cultural limbo which we have unwittingly got ourselves into.

In my usual unscholarly, muddled reflection, some uneasy thoughts started to float in my mind. For example, I ventured to think that if our forefathers' departure from the motherlands to come to this island was Singapore's first cultural dislocation, then our more recent push for modernisation including the urban renewal may have turned out to be Singapore's second cultural dislocation.

While in the first dislocation we lost a physical home, in the second dislocation, we lost a spiritual homeland. And if our forefathers had become physical orphans, we have become cultural orphans.

But the most revealing and disturbing comparison between these two orphaned generations is in the way each had chosen to reshape their respective cultural realities. In the case of our forefathers, they knew they were dislocated from their motherlands, so they compensated by building temples and schools in an attempt to preserve their heritage. In our case, we treated our heritage as baggage. And, to lighten ourselves, we gave up our mother tongues as first languages, staked our future in imported cultures, and then turned much of what remained of our physical heritage into theme park-like exotic commercial spaces. I am referring to the packaging of Chinatown, Malay Village, Clarke Quay, Boat Quay, and soon, Little India. The planners definitely have a different perspective.

But these disturbing thoughts do jell into a nagging question: What has happened to us on our way to affluence and prosperity? And so the realisation that maybe memory has become a major concern, one deserving serious, extended public exposure. Hence the Memories Season.

In Singapore economics and politics get daily attention, and are the only reasons for national celebration, while culture is left to its own device, as if somehow material wealth would beget a way to lead us out of this cultural limbo. But we're not so sure now.

Some say prolonged cultural disorientation has made us a less questioning and therefore a more productive labour force, but this is seriously doubted as the limbo condition has sent us drifting rootlessly in spirit. While we are thankful for the material gains, we are quite convinced now that some essential human elements have been lost on the way. And this humanistic dislocation is eating into our very confidence as a people.

Confronted by such a crisis, we have naturally turned to excavating our deeper memories, hoping to evolve a new vision, one that could more fully express our human potential, one which may get us out of this limbo, leading us into a larger, richer, multi-dimensional cultural grid for the future.

The massiveness of the project is beyond The Substation. So it's great that national institutions and influential NGOs and scholars and professionals have come in. Most significantly, Professor Tommy Koh and Professor Chan Heng Chee, respective heads of the Institute of Policy Studies and the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, have taken an active interest.

We are just throwing in the bricks, in order to bait out the jades (投砖引玉). We know that, finally, it would have to be your committed and prolonged search, your wisdom, and energy, that would give substance to the Memories Season, a small part of the people's collective exercise aimed at reshaping itself."

The Organising Committee of the Conference

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<tr>
<th>Chairmen</th>
<th>Kuok Kian Woon</th>
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<td>Dr</td>
<td>Honorary Treasurer, Heritage Society</td>
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<td>Daniel Wong</td>
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<td>Programme Co-ordinator, The Substation</td>
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<td>Kuo Pao Kun</td>
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<td>William Lim</td>
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<td>Kwa Chong Guan</td>
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<td>Dr Brenda Yeo</td>
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<td>Dr Lily Kong</td>
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Who are the 'we' and the 'us' implied in the title *Our Place in Time*? Let's not shy away from the term 'Singaporeans' to refer to our people — who have settled here and have made this place their home, not as transients but as people who belong to this place and its times. But the term 'Singaporeans' is of very recent origins in our shared history — so recent that we still continually pause and ask 'What does it mean to be a Singaporean?'

In reality, we emerged from many histories and we carry with us many memories. And, in time, these histories and memories have become more and more fragmented. Yet out of the fragments — out of this fragmentation — we imagine what our forebears did not and could not imagine: that not only do we have a shared past but we also have a shared future.

Could it be said that, in a sense, there were Singaporeans in the making long before the independent nation-state was suddenly created in 1965, people whose individual biographies and group histories have intersected in the forging of a collective existence?

This place, this history, this intersection of individual biographies and group histories; this is a coming together of both historical contingency and human choice. That is to say, as one may say in looking back at one's past: 'Things could have been otherwise, but...'. But things did not turn out otherwise because of a combination of accidental circumstances and personal wills, lived out in the struggles — social, economic, political and, yes, existential struggles — of real, flesh-and-blood individuals and communities.

How shall we narrate the relationship between our forebears and ourselves?

We are descendants of people who left their particular place in particular histories — uprooted themselves — in order to seek new opportunities and build new lives. To leave one place for another involves both remembering and forgetting, continuing and discontinuing aspects of a past in the encounter with the new. In time, our forebears, coming from different corners of the earth and from different walks of life, planted themselves here and made this place their own.

And having inherited this place, coming into our own, and encountering newer and unprecedented conditions, we ask: 'How shall we remember our forebears? Do we really need to — in what ways can we? — retrace the processes of uprooting and replanting? In what ways can we remember what they remembered — and what they forgot?'

They toiled for life to ensure that we would live in comfort and abundance, they made sure that were were lovingly protected from the harshness of life. They even avoided exposing us to the stories of their hardships. Could it be that our forebears have, with all good intentions, moulded us into a people with short and shallow memories? Or could it be that we have found it more convenient to be less burdened by the weight of the past?

In the face of uncertain conditions, their lives were graced — their labours supported by taken-for-granted spiritual worldviews which found expression in everyday rituals and customs, maxims and mannerisms. Yet we were taught to focus our energy on things which ensure our material well-being. We were spared all the embarrassments of family stories, all the complications of history, all the frustrations of art and literature and all the confusions of philosophy. Or perhaps we wanted to be spared all of these? And in the process, could it be that we gained a material foundation and lost a spiritual homeland?

We have inherited conducive conditions for material advancement but also disembodied fragments of past forms of cultural life. In effect, we became cultural orphans, isolated from the sources of knowledge from which ideals, visions and moralities develop. But as we approach adulthood as individuals, and as a nation, the thinness and shortness of our consciousness comes into question: we awaken to the many dimensions of life as human beings in the modern world. By nature, and by prompts from the more complex world around us, we have felt the inner yearnings for an awareness more in tune with that of a contemporary individual, a responsible people.

Hence we live out certain paradoxical tendencies in our contemporary social life. On the one hand, we have become more and more diversified and fragmented in our social and cultural world. On the other
condition

hand, we have become more and more homogenised and integrated into modern systems of administration and economic life. On the one hand, we lay claim to a rich and complex heritage drawn from the major civilisations. On the other, we easily lapse into a fragmentary and superficial understanding of culture and tradition. On the one hand, we pride ourselves with being adaptable and modern. On the other, we are uncomfortable with modern values. We invoke ‘traditional values’ as a defence mechanism, as if they constitute a fortress under siege, as if traditions have remained static and frozen throughout history.

On the one hand, we extol the principles of pragmatism and utilitarianism; we feel ourselves in control of the environment when, for example, we can come up with precise numbers in our forecast of growth rates. On the other hand, we sense a moral vacuum in our lives and speak of the need for ‘moral values’ in a morally ambiguous world. On the one hand, we continually find the energy for material improvement. On the other, we seem to be facing an exhaustion of social vision and idealism; we seem not to know how to think of our lives — how to think about the good life and the good society — beyond the calculus of costs and benefits in strict economic terms.

Could it be that we do not know how to talk about ourselves beyond the language of pragmatism and utilitarianism? Could it be that we do not know how to make deeper sense of our changing physical environment or how to relate to our precious natural heritage? Could it be that we are unable to articulate our deepest values and aspirations other than by reminding ourselves that ‘we are Asians’ and that we must ‘preserve traditional values’? Could it be that we can only build ourselves up as ‘Asians’ by putting down the ‘West’ even though in our colonial history and post-colonial development, we have made western traditions — in law and administration, in science and technology, even in scholarship and the arts — our own?

In the face of these paradoxical tendencies, we ask ourselves some fundamental questions: Who are we? Where did we come from? What are we doing? Where are we going?

In our search for answers to these questions, we become aware of multiple layers and dimensions of human existence — or our lack of them.

Increasingly aware that our forebears have toiled a lifetime to give us what we have, we ask: What for? To what ends? Their morality was to be responsible for our well-being; their idea was to give us a secure comfortable life. Is our morality merely to live on the fruits of their hard labour? Is our ideal only to perpetuate our own security and comfort? Or do we entertain any ideal beyond furthering our own interests? In a place and an age where affluence is a fact of life, what do we actually mean when we say we want to become a cultivated people? Residing in the heartland of South-east Asia where major cultures meet, what is meant by our cultural development? On the eve of the 21st century, what understanding do we give to the word ‘civilisation’?

In any attempt to answer these questions, we must learn to use the vast reference library of Heritage, History and Memory.

The speakers and what they spoke on

HERITAGE, HISTORY AND MEMORY
Chairman: Dr Kwock Kian Woon
Kwa Chong Guan: Remembering Ourselves
(Commentator: Dr Hong Lysa)
Janadas Devan: My Country And My People
(Commentator: Rahman Daud)
Frances Low Pooi Fong: The Sorrows and Joys of Plural Culture - Confluence vs Preservation
(Commentator: A/Prof. Leo Suryadinata)

OUR SENSE OF TRADITIONS
Chairman: Dr Sharon Siddique
Dr Ananda Rajah and Vineeta Sinha: The Myth and Management of Tradition
(Commentator: Tan Hock Beng)
Dr Lee Cheuk Yin and Dr Yung Sai Shing: Chinese Tradition - Continuity and Transformation
(Commentator: T. Sasithiran)
Ong Keng Sen (read in absentia): A Theatre of Memory - Re-connection, Re-generation, Re-discovery Through Experimentation with Traditional Arts
(Commentator: Quah Sy Ren)

OUR SENSE OF PLACE
Chairman: Prof. Leo Tan
Dr Brenda Yeoh and Dr Lily Kong: The Notion of Place in the Construction of History, Nostalgia and Heritage
(Commentator: Bobby Wong)
Dr Ho Hua Chew: The Place of Nature in Singapore (Commentator: Tay Kheng Soon)
Malone-Lee Lai Choo: Heritage and Planning
(Commentator: Mok Wei Wei)

OUR PLACE IN TIME
Chairman: Kuo Pao Kun
Dr Lau Wai Har: Bridging the Gap Between the Two Worlds — the English Educated and the Chinese-Educated
(Commentator: Dr Chua Beng Huat)
Dr Ismail Talib: Tradition — Looking at the Other
(Commentator: Max Le Blond)
Arun Mahizinan: Re-creating Ourselves (I)
A/Prof. Koh Tai Ann: Re-creating Ourselves (II)
An exhibition of our memories

It was memories that were being exhibited rather than intrinsically valuable objects at an exhibition held in conjunction with the conference at The Substation. Through publicity in the papers and eventually sourcing through friends and contacts, a subteam of the conference organising committee put together an unusual collection of items ranging from plastic toys to library cards.

Singaporeans were asked to submit items treasured because of the emotional ties rather than their antiquarian status. Some 40 items were collected over two Sundays by The Substation. Each submission had to come with a note on the memory that the object evoked. The committee then added historical notes where required.

Most of the submissions came from older people. However, because the committee wanted a spread of memories from young and old, it resorted to sourcing through friends and contacts. This met with fairly good response, so that the exhibition was more well-rounded in the end.

During the 10-day exhibition, an empty notice board was put up near the exhibition title, inviting exhibition visitors to contribute their memories which may have been evoked by the objects. Many responded but the responses were more in the nature of praise for the exhibition rather than to give an account of a memory stirred. Nanyang Academy Fine Arts graduate Tan Yin Yin laid out the objects in an interesting manner and presented the eclectic collection of bits and pieces from looking like a junk store.

Some of the contributors

Lim Chi Wei, undergraduate: Star Wars toys

“Every collectible bought by my father would be greatly loved and treasured which explains why they are still around after almost a decade.”

Chen Kai Xian, student: Soft toy bunny

“The bunny is perhaps 20 plus years old. It was always sitting there in the glass cabinet at my parents’ bed. My sister and I used to wonder whose toy it was. The two of us used to play with it and a few others on my parents’ huge bed. Only when we were much older did we find out that the bunny, together with the rest belonged to my eldest brother who passed away when he was three. It’s sometimes painful to remind myself of a brother I never met but would love to when I see the bunny.”

Vernice Ho, administrative assistant: Sculpture

“I used to play in the drain with my brother when I was young. It was a plain, simple, old drain, but nevertheless, it was paradise for the both of us. We caught guppies and played hide and seek. There were times when we plucked kangkong and made our mother cook it for us. In 1987 the drain made way for the construction of the pavement. In memory of this little paradise of mine, I used the mud, dug up from the drain, to make a sculpture.”

Pang Wait Hong, retired Beijing opera actress: Script

“In 1957 I went to Indonesia to perform Limao Huan Tai Zi, I played three major roles in this show. That was the peak of my career. Not long after we came back from that tour, my troupe Yong Chuan Beijing Opera Troupe was dissolved. That was the end of my career as a professional Beijing Opera actress.”

Ho Seng Choon, owner of Lian Wah Hang, chicken farmer: Farming Monthly 1964, Vol. 4

“I published this magazine in 1961 and it lasted for 10 years. It was the only magazine on farming in Singapore history. I am very proud to be able to contribute to the development of Singapore agriculture in the 1960s. Many chicken farmers benefited from this magazine because it gave them a lot of information on modern chicken farming techniques.”

Philip Cheah, editor/festival programmer: Sunday Monitor newspaper

“The very last issue of The Sunday Monitor and this was how The Sunday Monitor closed down. Next year will be the 10th anniversary of the Monitor’s closure and remembering the people who worked there, it’s a memory of how young many of us were and the idealism we had, the kind so rare now.”

Tan Lai Huat, 50 years old: Little Blackboard

“I remember as a student we used to carry a little blackboard. When our Chinese teacher wrote a character on the big blackboard, we would follow every stroke on our little blackboard. The little blackboard also came in useful when we played tic-tac-toe.”
50 years after Japanese surrender

Society in committee to remember the events after

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Japanese surrender and the end of the Japanese Occupation, the Ministry of Information and the Arts has put together a committee comprising the different heritage departments. The Society has been invited to join this committee. President William Lim is the Society's representative.

The Society has been given the task of publishing a book on the post-war period of Singapore's history. The Society has set up a committee to look into this publication and the members are William Lim, Kwa Chong Guan, Goh Eek Kheng, and Director of the National Archives Lily Tan. Lee Gook Boi has been selected as the writer of this book which is scheduled to be published by mid-August to coincide with the commemorative events. The Society is looking into doing the book in English and Chinese.

The heritage departments are looking into an exhibition which is scheduled for August as is the publication of the book.

Although Japan surrendered following the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, the formal surrender of the Imperial Army in Singapore did not take place until 12 September 1945. On that day General Itagaki Seishi put the Japanese Imperial Army’s seal on the surrender documents in front of Lord Louis Mountbatten and a crowd gathered at the Padang before the steps of City Hall. The Japanese Occupation began on 15 February 1942.

Another night at Aziza’s

Although this year’s Hari Raya celebrations at Aziza’s Restaurant in Emerald Hill Road met with a lukewarm response from members, those who did turn up with friends and family enjoyed themselves. Dinner naturally consisted of festive Malay dishes which some members ate with their hand in the traditional manner. The cultural item that evening was the Malay wedding ceremony of the bersanding when the bridal couple sit on a highly decorated platform to receive the greetings and best wishes of relatives and friends.

Guests may anoint the hands of the bridal couple with inal, a herbal paste that leaves a dark red stain for many days, and tells everyone that the woman or man is newly married. In more modern times and with the proliferation of cameras, the bersanding is also a time when the couple will pose for photographs with every single one of the guests who have come to wish them well at the bersanding.

Living Legacy wins book award

The author of the Society’s latest publication, Living Legacy, has won the National Book Development Council of Singapore’s top award for English non-fiction writing. The award to Associate Professor Robert Powell carries a cash prize of $2,000. The award was among other book awards presented by Professor Tommy Koh, Director of the Institute of Policy Studies and Chairman, National Arts Council, on Saturday 19 November at a ceremony in Raffles Hotel. Professor Powell is with the School of Architecture of the National University of Singapore.

Meanwhile, the book is selling well in the bookshops. Members are entitled to a 20 per cent discount if they buy their copies from the appointed distributors Select Books in Tanglin Shopping Centre. Please produce your membership card to get the discount.

Oops, wrong man

The picture (left) which appeared in the No. 7 May 1994 issue of Roots was run with the wrong identification. The gentleman shown here with Master Tan and identified as Marc Thalmann is in fact Professor Ross Hawker from Queensland University who was the guest of member Lam Yeen-Lan. The editor apologises for the error.
Society joins conservation network

The Society has become a corporate member of the Asia and Pacific Network for Urban Conservation. The Network is a non-governmental organisation which groups member-countries with the purpose of exchanging cultural information and technical expertise in the area of urban conservation. Member-countries include Malaysia, Japan, India, Australia, and Singapore. It is the only cultural organisation that links East Asia, South-east Asia and Australasia in the field of heritage conservation.

The Network was formed in 1991 at a seminar on Urban Conservation and Public Participation supported by the United Nations Centre for Regional Development. The first symposium was hosted by the Kung Heritage Trust, the second was in Adelaide in 1993, and the third is the November symposium in Hanoi.

This week-long Hanoi symposium is on the theme Ancient Cities in Transition: The Challenges for Conservation. Committee member Geraldene Lowe and member Bocu Yuet Mei who is also with the Cultural Society were scheduled to attend the symposium if they could get visas from the Vietnamese Embassy. Also likely to participate in the Hanoi symposium will be the delegates from other nations. The aim of the symposium is to conserve the Ancient Quarter of Hanoi before the rush of modern development flattens everything that gives Hanoi its character. After the Hanoi Symposium, the next one will be in Nara, Japan, hosted by the Nara Machizukuri Centre, in 1995. The Network held a meeting in April to discuss the Hanoi symposium. This was attended by committee members William Lim, Geraldene Lowe, William Sim and Y.P. Chee.

World heritage sites in Asia

Four sites in Asia have been listed in the World Heritage List at the 17th session of the World Heritage Committee held in 1993, according to the newsletter of the Asia and Pacific Network for Urban Conservation. They are:

- **Himeji-Do Castle in Japan**
  - a 16th century wooden castle symbolic of the feudal period of Japanese history.

- **Buddhist Monuments in the Horyu-Ji Area, Japan**
  - 8th century wooden buildings, the earliest Buddhist monuments in the country, showing the adaptation of Chinese Buddhist architecture and temple layout to Japanese architecture.

- **Baroque Churches in the Philippines**
  - the earliest churches in this Catholic country representing the fusion of European church design and construction with local materials and decorative motifs leading to new church-building tradition.

- **Hue Monuments Complex in Vietnam**
  - early 19th century buildings representing the once-powerful Vietnamese Hue empire at its height.

Booklets on those walks

A plan to document the heritage walks conducted by heritage guide Geraldene Lowe in the form of several booklets has run into a snag. The older parts of the city through which Geraldene conducts her walks are still changing, and have not stabilised sufficiently to make such booklets possible.

Until such time as the urban landscape stabilises, these booklets of the different heritage walks will have to be put on hold.