

LEE KONG CHIAN RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

The National Library of Singapore invites applications for the Lee Kong Chian Research Fellowship programme, a six-month residential fellowship to research valuable historical materials, dating from the 16th century, on Singapore and Southeast Asia in the collections of the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library and the National Archives of Singapore.

Besides historical materials from the Gibson-Hill Collection, Ya Yin Kwan (or Palm Shade Pavilion) Collection, Logan Collection, Rost Collection as well as the former Raffles Library Collection, the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library also holds significant and early works documenting the history of Singapore and the region, which include imprints from Singapore's earliest printing presses, early European accounts of Southeast Asia, early maps and charts of the region and archives of prominent Singapore authors. The National Archives of Singapore holds records of national or historical significance acquired from public agencies, private sources and overseas institutions and archives.

The Library welcomes applications from curators, historians, academics or independent researchers with established records of achievement in their chosen fields of research. Scholars pursuing doctoral, postdoctoral or advanced research are also encouraged to apply.

Recipients are expected to remain in residence at the library, located in the central district of Singapore, during the period of their fellowship and to focus their time on researching the collections in the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library. Besides a monthly stipend for six months, the residential fellowship for overseas recipients include a one-time relocation allowance, monthly accommodation allowance and reimbursement of a return economy class air ticket.

Aims of the Award

The LKC Research Fellowship aims to establish the National Library of Singapore (NLS) and the National Archives of Singapore (NAS) as preferred stops for Southeast Asian content scholarship by promoting scholarly research, and encouraging and facilitating the use of our collections. The LKC Research Fellowship will be offered to individuals interested in suggested fields of research identified by the Library and Archive.

Our Collections

Our rich cultural and heritage resources are housed at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library (levels 10-13 of the 16-storey National Library building at 100 Victoria Street). We have over 400,000 items in our Singapore and Southeast Asian Collections, which form the core of our Asia-centric collections dating as far back as the 16th century. These include special collections

such as the Raffles Library and Gibson-Hill Collections, various donated collections, the maps collection, digitised collection of Singapore/Malaya newspapers, and the Rare Books Collection.

Who Can Apply?

The LKC Research Fellowship is open to both local and foreign applicants who are able to undertake prescribed research topics that raise awareness of our collections. Successful applicants should have scholarly and research credentials or their equivalent. Applicants could be curators, historians, academics or independent researchers who should preferably have an established record of achievement in their chosen field of research and the potential to excel further.

Research Area

Preference will be given to the following fields of research for 2023:

- Critical inquiry on Singapore contemporary literature or theatre from the 1950s
- Comparative study of early Singapore and/or Malaya from western and Asian scholarship and perspectives
- Arts and culture in Singapore and Malaya from the early 20th century to independence – exploring the development of the visual, performing or literary arts amongst the general population, specific ethnic or under-represented communities
- Study of World War II materials through donor's materials such as Toshio Egawa's collection, Lim Shao Bin's collection.
- Social history of Singapore
- Study of Chinese community through clan association materials
- Natural history and Biodiversity
- Development of economic sectors, professions and trades in Singapore within the context of historical global developments
- Architectural history of Singapore

Terms of the Award

The award of the Fellowship is for a period of six months. Fellows may not hold a concurrent employment (sabbatical is allowed), fellowship or propose a research area which he has already completed for a masters or a doctoral thesis. Awarded Fellows must commence their Fellowship undertaking within 3 months of the award, unless otherwise agreed upon.

A stipend of S\$3,500 per month will be provided to help LKC Research Fellows meet their living expenses, local transportation and photocopying expenses. In addition to the stipend, overseas Fellows will be provided with the following on a case-by-case basis:

- a. One-time relocation package for Research Fellows to Singapore of S\$1,500
- b. One-time return economy airfare of up to \$1,500 on a reimbursement basis.
- c. Monthly accommodation allowance of up to a maximum of S\$3,500.

All Fellows will also be provided with the following:

- A research space at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library including a computer with internet access.
- Access to the library's rare book collections (accompanied by library staff) and closed stacks.
- Access to other library collections through interlibrary loans.
- Introduction to a Library staff who can recommend resources from the collections.

Obligations of the Fellowship

All Fellows are required to sign a Fellowship agreement abiding to the following:

- Stay in Singapore and spend at least 75% of their work time during their Fellowship at the Library.
- Give at least one public presentation to staff, and another to members of the public based on their fellowship research.
- Complete a resource guide based on their research findings. A resource guide is an annotated bibliography on the subject to inform users the resources to a research topic. It should highlight important sources and explain why they are so; and the key readings for each aspect (e.g. key theoretical approaches, seminal titles, etc.) of the research topic. For more information about NLB Resource Guides, please visit <https://reference.nlb.gov.sg/guides/>
- Complete a 3,000-word and a 6,000-word paper based on their research findings within three months of the end of their fellowship. Submissions should include 6 to 8 images with minimum footnotes and a list of references.
- Give the National Library Board the right to publish the results of their research, where appropriate, including repackaging of content in different formats. All papers submitted for publishing will be subjected to editorial changes where necessary.
- Send the National Library Board a written analysis of the Fellowship experience within one month of the end of the Fellowship period.
- Research Fellows will also serve as mentors to staff of the National Library Board and provide advice on collection gaps to help build research competency within the National Library.

- Present the Library with a copy of any published work that was researched for during the course of the fellowship. The published work must acknowledge the support of the National Library of Singapore.

Failure to fulfil any of the obligations will result in the recipient having to forfeit the monthly stipend as well as other expenses incurred in the course of the Fellowship. The final instalment of the monthly stipend will be paid on completion of the obligation.

Publishing rights

- The National Library Board will have publishing rights to all research conducted under the LKC Fellowship. LKC fellows must agree to assign such rights that will allow the National Library Board to publish the research both in digital and physical format as well as to repackage the materials.
- The National Library Board will reserve the right to publish a research report series resulting from the LKC Fellowship.
- The research report series will have its own unique branding as determined by the National Library Board.

Selection Criteria

Fellowship applicants will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- Research should be original.
- Research uses the library and archives' collections.
- Research can be conducted within 6 months.
- Applicant possesses high level of competency as indicated by referees, transcripts, research experience and other academic achievements.
- Application should show a good understanding of proposed research topic in the proposal.

Instructions to Applicants

Each application must include:

1. A completed application form. In providing information about education, exams and previous experience, photocopies of testimonies and documents are acceptable and must be

attached at the time of application. But if you are selected for the award, the original or certified copy bearing the university/company seal must be presented for verification.

2. A Curriculum Vitae that includes the following information:

- *Details of research awards previously and concurrently held.*
- *Details of professional seminars/conference papers/public lectures presented.*
- *A list of major publications.*

3. A detailed research proposal that clearly:

- *Provides a comprehensive outline of the proposed topic of research, including details about NLS and/or NAS collections and resources that would be researched and sufficient detail to show that the NL and/or NAS collections are the core sources of materials being researched.*
- *Indicates the anticipated outcomes and significance of the proposed research.*
- *Indicates audiences for the intended research.*
- *Indicates how the proposed research will promote NLS and NAS' collections.*
- *Indicates the estimated time needed to complete the research.*

4. Research proposals must be submitted in English but research can be undertaken in other languages.

5. References from two academic referees that should address the following selection criteria:

- *The applicant's qualifications, ability and experience.*
- *The quality of the applicant's previous research and publications.*
- *The applicant's demonstrated capacity to complete research projects within a reasonable time frame.*
- *The applicant's awareness of relevant available sources in NLS and/or NAS and an assessment of whether these sources are likely to support the research proposed.*
- *The feasibility of the project in terms of available resources and time or other constraints.*
- *Whether the project will make a substantial contribution to knowledge in the field.*
- *How the project will promote NLS and/or NAS and its special collections.*
- *Contact details (telephone, fax number and email address).*

6. Applicants must nominate a Subject Reviewer of their paper, and contact details of the Reviewer. Successful Fellows will send their articles to their Subject Reviewer for comments and make the necessary amendments before submitting their final reports. The following credentials of the Reviewer will apply:
 - *Reviewer is affiliated with a leading research institution/academia, and/or has published extensively in the applicant's proposed subject topic.*
7. Foreign applicants should apply for their visa/entry permit upon award, where applicable.
8. **Applications should be emailed to LKCRF@nlb.gov.sg or mailed to the following address by 16 Jun 2023.**

Attn: The Administrator

Lee Kong Chian Research Fellowship
National Library Headquarters
National Library Board
100 Victoria Street,
#14-01
Singapore 188064

Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted. Notification of acceptance or rejection will be made known within 3 months of the closing date.

For further information about the Fellowship, please contact:

The Administrator, Lee Kong Chian Research Fellowship
Email: LKCRF@nlb.gov.sg

About Lee Kong Chian

Lee Kong Chian (1893 – 1967) is most recognised as a philanthropist. He contributed millions of dollars to educational institutions both in Singapore and in China. These included Kuo Chuan Girls', Nan Chiau Girls' High, Chinese High, Methodist Girls', St Margaret's, Singapore Chinese Girls', University of Malaya and Nanyang University in Singapore, and the Amoy University and Chip Bee School in China. It was also through Lee's generosity that the National Library of Singapore was established as a free institution for all communities in 1960.

Lee was born in Fu Yong (Furong) village in Nan Ann district, Southern Fujian, China. He came to Singapore with his father Lee Kuo Chuan when he was 10 years old to establish their future here. Lee was first educated at Anglo-Tamil (Anglo-Indian) School where he learnt English. At the same time, he also took classes at the Yung Cheng Chinese (Chongzheng) School to learn Mandarin. At secondary level, he took day classes to study English at St Joseph's School and night classes to master Chinese at Tao Nan (Daonan), giving him the foundations for fluent bilingualism that would later open doors in his career.

In 1908 when Lee was 15 years old, he gained a Manchu scholarship for outstanding overseas Chinese students and continued his higher education in China at Chi Nan High School. He then proceeded to Ching Huan College in Beijing before transferring to Tang Shan's Railway and Mining College. However, the 1911 revolution in China resulted in him having to return to Singapore. Lee continued his civil engineering degree through an American correspondence course whilst juggling three jobs – working as a municipal surveyor, translating English news for Lat Pau, a Chinese newspaper and teaching at Tao Nan and Chung Cheng High School.

Lee then joined the Tan Kah Kee Rubber Company. He impressed the tycoon with his hardworking attitude and soon married the latter's daughter, Tan Ai Lay in 1920. Lee established his first company, a rubber smoke house in Muar in 1927. He expanded his business during the depth of the Great Depression and later diversified into pineapple canning, sawmill, biscuits and other subsidiary industries. He soon gained fame as the "Rubber King" and "Pineapple King".

Lee also established companies in Indonesia and Thailand and wisely invested in companies that became household brands in Singapore such as Sime Darby, Great Eastern Life and Cold Storage. More importantly, he coaxed competing Chinese banks on the brink of collapse due to the Depression to merge and form the Overseas Chinese Banking Corporation. He became the Chairman in 1937 and retained this post until his death. Lee's business suffered severely during World War II. It was only through sheer grit and determination that he managed to rebuild his wealth. The 1950 Korean War and the subsequent rise in demand for rubber fuelled the growth of his business.

Lee's last public appearance was in November 1965 when he laid the foundation stone for the institute of Medical Specialities. In 1967, Lee succumbed to liver cancer at the age of 74.

Today, Lee's legacy of generosity remains because of his great foresight. He established the Lee Foundation in 1952 with seed money of \$3.5 million with the hope of generating future funds so

charities can continue to thrive during difficult times. Half of his fortune was willed to the Lee Foundation. This same Foundation continues to support his charities and educational groups, including the \$60 million donation towards building the new National Library.

Sources:

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(1994, March). *Reliving Lee Kong Chian*. The Alumnus. Call no.: RSING 378.5957 A

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