

Pesquisa na imprensa (2009-2013)

Realizada por Sherman Ong para a produção de *Motherland*



For elderly

A live-in companion

No contract, no marriage, no legal complications, the Chinese woman just moves in as part-time mistress and home minder. By Seah Chiang Nee
May 30, 2009

(Synopsis: A new happening arising from the rapid influx of Chinese women at a time when jobs are scarcer for them.)

"Big Brother Chen, can you help me find a boyfriend as soon as possible?"

This appeal was made to an old acquaintance of mine one recent night by a Chinese immigrant, who was working as a beer promoter.

For those unfamiliar with the latest social changes brought about by the influx of mainland Chinese here, the request might sound baffling, but not to my friend. He had heard it several times before.

What the middle-age lady wanted was to be introduced to a Singaporean man who was a widower or a divorcee of any age, who could do with a live-in companion.

For S\$300 a month, she would move in with him as a part-time mistress and home minder.

In return she would earn extra money to add to her salary selling beer, as well as free board and lodging that she would otherwise have to spend on herself.

It's mutually beneficial, since the man could have a companion-cum-domestic help at half the cost of a full-time maid (plus levy).

No contract, no marriage, no legal complications! It is temporary and no notice of termination is needed. "Just say goodbye and pack your bags" she said.

How widespread such arrangements are is anyone's guess, but it is believed to be on the rise, particularly in view of the severe downturn when jobs for the ladies are scarce.

According to agents importing Chinese workers, the practice has become popular among elderly Singaporeans who are living alone.

"These are lonely men whose wife has died or who are divorced, and their married children long gone, so the companionship is as important as the sex," said one agent.

It is useful to eliminate the risk of lonely, vulnerable men being cheated by a foreign spouse.

Such cheating cases have been on the rise where the Chinese "wife" disappeared after she had emptied the man's savings.

"Live-in" companionship is the latest practice to emerge from a society that is fast changing under the weight of an influx of foreign immigrants.

While it is deemed harmful to the institution of marriage and family, there is, however, a growing acceptance that it does meet a pressing need of lonely old men.

"Since no marriage is involved, it doesn't change Singapore's family unit because these men live alone," a retiree rationalised. "At least no one has to be cheated."

The conservatives, however, disagree. "It just panders to the lecherous demands of the men," said a housewife.

This issue of temporary mistresses and marriage scams in Singapore mostly involve Chinese mainlanders because of ethnic familiarity.

The tidal wave of arrivals in recent years – especially the women – has brought about tremendous social changes to this small island that are both good and bad.

It has added to a vibrancy never experienced before, but it has also created social friction among the locals, including family break-ups.

Their number is unknown. According to Tian Fu Club, a clan association formed by the mainlanders here, 300,000-400,000 Chinese have become citizens or permanent residents here.

Many are young women who have left families behind in rural China to come for that pot of gold after investing a small fortune in fees to agents to fix them a job or a "student" pass (there are 90,000 of the latter).

"These women are tough, determined and they believe that Singapore is rich," said my friend, who once witnessed an angry exchange between two mainland factory workers.

One was furious with her friend for dating a China mainland man. "You are silly. You remember why we left our village to come here; it's to earn money," she rebuked her.

"How can you waste time with a penny-less 'Ah Tong' (slang for Chinese man)?" she wanted to know. "Get a Singaporean."

The vast majority lives a decent, hard-working life and returns home when the time comes, but a minority falls prey to the temptation of easy money.

The best pickings can be found among lonely retirees who live alone on their Central Provident Fund retirement savings.

The CPF amount, however uninspiring to the locals – is a fortune in most parts of China. For that, a number of women will readily break hearts and families.

Worse still, the victim often gets no sympathy among fellow Singaporeans for his "lustful behaviour" chasing after young skirts.

One private investigator told the press that his company was getting more requests for help by wives here to investigate husbands who they suspect were keeping a China mistress.

On the average of 50 extramarital cases that his firm handled a month in the last two years, 20 would involve a "China student" as the third party.

In a recent reported case, one student-mistress lived off a stockbroker like a rich tai-tai for months, before leaving behind large credit card bills, a tearful wife and a broken marriage.

I can go on and on with such tales.


"They are giving a poor – I must say undeserved — image that Chinese women are home wreckers," said the agent.

"The vast majority works hard to earn an honest living."

Like all capitalistic pursuits here, this practice also stems from balancing supply and demand, which means the men must share the blame.

Professor Fu Tan-ming, a social behavioural analyst who is based in Beijing, noted that Chinese women with a history of suffering are more resilient than the men.

"They have a stubborn streak in them that propels them forward," he said.



“They would not think twice about packing up their bags to begin life anew thousands of miles away from home. Why? It’s because they know they can survive.”

(This was published in The Star, Malaysia today).



China

'I want to be a concubine'

An eye-opener for Singaporeans. This translated tale of a peasant girl may partly explain the Geylang phenomenon.

June 5, 2009

Why My Life Is Miserable Because I Am Poor

(Excerpts of article translated by Shaohua on September 25, 2008)

I was born in a remote hamlet in the north of China. I have heard from someone, who never been to the genuine villages, that the countryside is very nice. But in fact, no public road was built and the nearest bus stop is 20 kilometres away, so we always had to walk on foot or ride a bicycle to get out of the village. The street in the village was made of soil and was not flat.

On a sunny day, wind with sound and soil blew you. On a rainy day, rain with the mud poured you. The mud on the road was added with shit from animals raised by villagers, because animals always shit on the road but not in their own country yard to keep it tidy and clean.

No fresh vegetables were supplied to the villagers in the whole year because only radishes and cabbage were planted there. It also had sweet potato, if that is a vegetable. So, as dishes, what they could have were only salted radishes and cabbage.

Some may ask, why did we not fry? The truth was that there was not much cooking oil for frying because of poverty, so fried dishes were always rare for them except in the case of Spring Festival or when some relatives come for dinner. I remember I had my first "you tiao" [a fried bread stick] in the dining hall at my university. And health care was not ensured either.

Take my grandpa for example, he couldn't help but wait for death once he fell sick. After he was sent to the hospital ran by the State, they refused to diagnose my grandpa even though we knelt down begging them to cure him. The reason was simply because we did not have 2 yuan for medicine. We could do nothing but see my grandpa die in the hospital. Some may say that the countryside is developing these days. But the truth is that there has been almost no change for my village since I was born. I really cannot say whether change will happen or not in my life.

I was born at the end of the 1970s. We had 5 children, including me, 3 sisters and 1 brother. Some people may wonder why my mother had so many children if my family was so poor? These people may not understand China clearly. These days, only really poor people or rich people can have more than one child, and we belonged to the poor group.

In the countryside, in my opinion, there are 2 reasons for having more children. First, no entertainment in the countryside. So after working in the daylight, sometimes having sex on the "kang" (bed made by soil and brick) at night may be the only amusing thing for them. Although they did not want more children, no one told them effective means of contraception. I saw with my own eyes that my mother wanted to abort using tied rope or eating tobacco ash for contraception.

The second reason was the traditional concept and environment of the countryside. There must be a man in every home because working in the countryside is so hard that only men can deal with them, so people in the countryside always held the concept that birthing a boy in every generation is necessary for the continuance of the family. If you could not give birth to a boy, you would be looked down upon. Before my brother was born, my mother was always looked down upon by my family members, I was always hit by other children and had the nickname of 'jue-hu-guo,' meaning "no boy no generation continuance."

The goodness of the farm is not what you think because of the poor and narrow opinions of countryside life. At that time, there were several children in every family, and every child struggled for subsistence without caring for others. I remembered that when I was 5 years old, my parents had gone to work farming, I took care of my sister at home, and one of my neighbours came to borrow a kitchen knife but also secretly stole a dinner pan. After my parents came back, they found the pan missing, so they went to that neighbour, but failed to get the pan back because my neighbour refused to acknowledge that he took the pan away. The result of this was that I was beat fiercely by my parents and we cooked without the pan for a long period.

And another time when I was 9 years old, I saw a sister-in-law in my village stealing the cotton from my uncle's field, then she was caught by my uncle and warned that he would show villagers what she did. In order to prevent this, she promised that she could have sex with my uncle if my uncle would set her free. Then my uncle had sex with her in the field. I did not know what they did when I was 9 years old, but after I realised the meaning of what happened, it made me feel sick every time I thought of it. But, in the end, what they did was discovered and spread in my village.

My uncle probably told some people, but that sister-in-law thought I had told my mother and that my mother spread it to the villagers, so she came to the gate of my home and scolded for several days. After that, I was beat by her on my way home and she hurt my mouth. When my mother asked what happened with my mouth, I lied that I was not careful and had a fall. I did not think to tell them the truth because I was afraid that my mother would go quarrel with her and cause a bigger conflict. I knew that, at that time, it was difficult for my mother to raise us. In brief, there are good people and bad people anywhere, and farmers are not synonymous with goodness either.

I was the first and only female undergraduate in my village. As a girl, it was a miracle that I could get into university from a place where boys could not always get an education. My father made all of this come true. My father is a veteran, his outside experiences led him to send me to be educated. His original intention was that I could read the characters and distinguish the toilet. At that time, we had to go to the school approximately 10 kilometres away. There were dozens of children for primary school, but after graduating from primary school, I was the only one that persisted with studying.

I had 2 reasons for that, one was that I had worked so hard. I always represented my school to compete with others from primary school to middle school, so my father might get the hope of getting out of the countryside through my excellent performance. Second reason was that when I was in school, I could do some work made of grass at the same time. We called it "cao-bian," which can be used for the straw making. In that period, a "cao-bian" could sell for 0.2 yuan, and I could knit 5.

I never did my homework or notes in class, I earned money when I was at school. This is another reason that I could continue my education. But my 3 other sisters paid the price by dropping their studies for my continued education. My youngest sister went to the brick plant with my father to carry bricks, my thin and weak father pulled the handcart and she assisted him by pushing it. They had to carry the brick to the place 2 kilometres away, and the whole process only could earn them 0.2 yuan.

Then I went to middle school. I lived at school and far away from home, so I stopped knitting the "cao-bian." I was always the youngest student, because I had skipped several grades. I was also mature for my age because I knew that it is very difficult to get an education, and if I could get out of school early, I could start earning money earlier. So I got into campus at the age of 16.

I chose to go to university because of the existing financial support from the government for students in campus. If you could get a high score, you could pay less for your education. I could get 40 yuan to 60 yuan for living expenses every month. I spent nearly 600 yuan when I got into university. A fat pig my father had been raising for a long time was sold for this 600 yuan.--)

($\$1.00 = 4.7 \text{ yuan}$)

--) The governmental policy changed when I graduated from university scarcely. They would not take responsibility for the jobs of graduates who had to find jobs by themselves. It was impossible for me to go back to my home town, first reason was that I was no longer suitable for the life of the countryside, another one was that I would be a negative example for the villagers: 4 years' learning in city resulted in nothing but going back home.

This would be their excuse to persuade their children to drop learning. I had to live in the city, and it was impossible for me, not like others, to find a suitable job slowly. I had to find a job that could offer me dinner and a place to live, since I had no money in my pocket and I mustn't ask for money from my family either, I had to earn money by myself. In order to earn money, I changed several jobs and cities. My mother needed money for medicine, my brother needed money for learning and my sister needed money for skill learning. But, I found what I earned was not enough and was not very much, even though I was very thrifty.

My brother's high tuition fees of 10 thousand yuan scared me and my family extraordinarily. We could not get the certificate of loan because the village head did not want to attest to our poverty. Only those who were orphans or only had a single parent without self-reliance could get the certificate, but my family did not belong to those categories because I had graduated from university and had a job to earn money.

In fact, the reason of this was so simple. The village head envied 2 undergraduates in my family and he deliberately wanted to make it difficult for my family because he was always the king of the village. I could not borrow money from my neighbours firstly because they were so poor too, second because they were not fervent and kind-hearted in that kind of environment. If you were poorer than your neighbours or relatives, they would look down upon you because they were afraid that you would come to borrow money; but if you were rich, they would come to please you for benefits from you. My family was poor because of the high tuition fees of my brother.

Guys without education went out to work for construction and earned some money, and if it was busy in the village, they could come back for busy season. But I and my brother could do nothing after graduating from university because we had not enough power to do some works in the countryside.

After that, I followed my father to the university where my brother was studying and brought some presents to seek help from the vice-chancellor. He promised us to let us pay the tuition fees by stages. However, the money was not enough either. At that time, I feel how difficult a person subsisted, I even thought of suicide.

I just wanted to study hard to find a good job and earn money for my family before, but in fact, a girl from the village, without good-looks and English skills (in schools of villages, English was not a course), trying to find a good job was so difficult. I was not willing to indulge myself, so I felt everything was meaningless without aims.

The idea of suicide always emerged in my brain, but if you wanted to die, you had to choose some way that benefited yourself. In order to get enough money for my brother and my family, I could sacrifice my life.

Finally, being hit by a car was my choice. In a tangled street, I found an expensive car to collide with, I also put my ID in pocket, if this would come true, my family would get some compensation from the owner of the expensive car who would never care about it. This idea, however, was so impudent, I did really.

When I went to collide with the car, the driver stopped his car quickly without injuring me. Instead of dying after being hit by a car, I was beaten damnably by him. But after his angry hitting, he took me to the hospital. What I said may be beyond someone, but everything I have described is the truth, I described the whole story so simply, but this is the truth and most valuable memory in my life.

The driver sent me to the hospital and asked me if I wanted to die. I nodded my head and told him my story, then he gave me five thousands yuan and left. This was the man I met who helped me the most, I did not know what his name was or what he did, but I always wanted to find him to thank him. But before I found him, he was detained by police for drug trade. I got his name after the police came to find me when investigating him, and the name I will remember for my whole life. Please do not suspect the truth of this story, though I may not have described everything very well. After the case was published on the local newspaper I knew he got life imprisonment, and I remembered the police that investigated me. Then I went to jail to find him, I got nothing but was conned 100yuan by the police who were working in the jail. Up to now, I did not know the place where he was kept.

Shanghai

I am in Shanghai now, I came here because I heard the salaries here are high. But as a girl who is from the countryside, nearly at the age of 30 and without English skills,

finding a job with high salary is almost impossible. Even as an officer in a company, the salary was only 1800 yuan without bonus. I share a rented apartment with others and have to pay 600 yuan every month for it.

I also had to post 800 yuan to my family and that left me 400 yuan for my daily life, including dinner, traffic and others expenses. In order to save money, I always have one meal a day. The most terrible thing for me is being sick. Once I had fallen sick, not only did I lose my salary, I also failed to pay the rent and medicine cost. The medicine cost in Shanghai is high.

I fainted and was sent to the hospital because of malnutrition. After I got to the hospital, I woke up and the doctors said I was OK. But doctors checked me a lot and gave me a bill of more than 1000 yuan. It really was a dreadful bill for me. Now, I lost my job because of China national identity card. I was fired during the Olympic Games period because I got my national identity card when I was in school and now it is expired. I even went back to my village to keep my hukou, but they refused me for the reason that my hukou did not belong there because of my education. Then, I went to the town for that, but I got nothing either. So I just have the hukou booklet which cost me 200 yuan. Without a job, my financial resources will be cut off and I may be evicted by my landlord since I cannot pay the rent, and I may die of hunger. Before my death, I summarise my miserable life was just because of poverty.

I rented an apartment with 3 other girls when I first came to Shanghai. But we have completely different lives after several years. One of us has become a concubine to a man from Hong Kong. She lives in a top house, wears famous brands, has expensive dinners, and she gets spending money of 10,000 yuan per month.

Another one went on the streets in the night clubs. She will not worry about her bread and cheese, however, being a prostitute is always disgusting. The third one married a guy from the countryside, they worked hard together and earn 5000 yuan a month. Although they have to rent an apartment, they feel happy. Their biggest dream is to earn enough money to buy a house in their hometown. It is just a dream to buy a house in Shanghai for them. But now, her husband is ill and was fired by his company. He is recuperating at home now. There are no safeguards for people who do not belong to this city so she has to pay the rent, water and gas fee. She also has to spend money for her husband's medicine with her little salary.

Working during the day, washing and making dinner at evening, the difficult life changed her a lot. They do not dare to have a baby because they can not afford the cost of raising a baby. It is so hard for her but her husband's mother always asks for money, because it was very difficult for his family to help her husband graduate from university, so they need her to return what they have paid for that.

This girl once told me that if you want to marry, you had better not marry a poor man, because 2 poor people will only get a poorer life, so you should marry a man who has an apartment and you would not have to fear eviction at any time.

I am not a concubine because I have no chance to be. But if someone wants me, I think I will be a concubine for him. What I ask for is not so high, I just want to find a place to live and have every meal. I think this is better than a prostitute.

Comments from Sina:

Gaoshan says:

The gap between rich and poor is so great in China. I once cut through a building development in Beijing on my way to a friend's apartment (a friend who own 5 apartments in Beijing). As my eyes were still adjusting to the darker area I was passing through it took me a second to realize I was surrounded by people sleeping under blankets out in the open. It was the workers. Most of the ones I could see were laying there staring at me. As a 2 meter tall foreigner I was really out of place. No one said anything and I continued through the development but the contrast between them living in the open under just a blanket and my friend's multi-million dollar apartments was pretty jarring.

SniperWZ says:

Sad story, but that's the truth of today's China, many people get left behind, with no hope for the future. I hope this changes in the future, yet a story like hers defines modern society these days...

SH.Yang says:

I do not know how ture this story is. but I think it is the aspects of the life in Countryside of China and its people.

I have read some chinese stories written by some foreign reporter. they are not city fast growing but slow development of countryside in China. I think the gap between the city and countryside become bigger and bigger.
As a boy from village. I really want to go back home to do something for its improvements. but what can I do? I really do not know! to be a teacher? to be a doctor or to create your own factory?

anon says

I quote "... would rather be a mistress than to marry a poor person."

Keep dreaming about snagging a rich man to be his wife/mistress. He has plenty of options better than you, China peasant woman.

On another note, these country bumpkins should be forcibly sterilised, or at least be given free birth control. I know life is harsh in the countryside; in the day you work the farms, at night with nowhere to go, no nightlife, so your only source of entertainment is banging that peasant bitch on that rickety bed in your hut.

Then after 9 months another baby is squirted out, another mouth to feed is produced, and you wonder why you became even poorer.

The dumb and uneducated people who keep breeding will never be rich. Raising a kid is never cheap, not even for a peasant.

Triozon says:

I do not know if the story itself is true... but the description of country life in China certainly is. I had several opportunities to stay in this kind of remote villages and yes, life is very very hard! Village chiefs are indeed "little kings" and can make very miserable for villagers if they want to!

Education, guts and luck are the only ways for youngsters to get out of there.

I was able to finance the building of some village schools in remote Yunnan mountain villages. When a new school makes attendance rise from 28 to 54 children in 4 months time (98% of the kids of the village are now attending, including all girls), we feel that it is worth helping them. Parents are very supporting now in sending their kids to school... the only way for the next generation to have a somewhat better life...

SniperWZ says:

I think Shao Hua is the blogger who translated the article from Sina...the person who wrote this was interviewed by CCTV and is probably doing better? She stopped blogging in Mid September, can someone from Chinasmack follow up and see what updates there are regarding this?

Ann says:

...The choice of being marry rich is rather common through out the world. Women biologically, like others in nature, always look for a good provider for her children. Some in less developed countries are lucky enough to find a husband of means , others are forced to accept the second place as concubines or whatever numerical place in Muslim societies.

Ultimately poverty drives women to prostitution, to concubine arrangement. The only time a woman should be judged is when she abandons her children for a richer man.

ZL says

the problem with this girl (assuming it's not fake) is that she does not just wanna survive but also to live a luxury life. Why a rich man's mistress? Why not a hard-working engineer's WIFE? why not a computer programmer's WIFE? If u just wanna 'survive', there are plenty of middle class single Chinese men who are willing to take care of you (and maybe your family as well) while saving your dignity! gree in nursing. She is now happily working as a nurse in a small town....so I guess ppl are really different, aren't they?


GuoBao says:

I can't believe some of you guys replies. People who scold this girl should be beaten long and hard with a spiked baton. I have lived a life in luxury compared to people like her but if I had experienced what she had I would do anything to survive,, just hopefully not anything illegal.

China should change radically towards a more socialist way of thinking within 5 years, this raging capitalism is making rich people way too rich and the rest caught up in a hopeless undignified way of "living".

Raise the goddamn tax rates on incomes above 4-5000 yuan. Let people who earn more than 10.000 yuan a month pay 30 percent tax, get a logical business tax going. In some countries people pay very high taxes and feel good about it coz we know that the money will be spent to help our poorer countrymen, supply free healthcare and education and a lot of other things that is good for the people and the country.

Who wants to see money like that going into corrupt officials pockets? or businessmen who already are making millions of yuan every year? Wake up China,, limitless



capitalism is not the way to go.

kelvin says:

In China is developing rapidly, although saw some achievements, but there are still many people are poor. There are many children have no new clothes, do not have enough to eat.

Full article:

<http://www.chinasmack.com/stories/peasant-girl-my-life-is-miserable-because-i-am-poor/>



Nation

World Updates

Courts

Parliament

Columnists

Opinion

Honours List

Tuesday January 5, 2010

Husband's organ donor is wife's lover

A BUSINESSMAN who was given a new lease of life after receiving a kidney transplant found out later that the donor was his wife's lover, *China Press* reported.

The daily quoted the businessman, in his 40s, who said that the man had saved his life but took away his wife.

Things got worse when he realised that the biological father of a child whom he had regarded as his own was actually that of his wife's lover.

The Singaporean, known as John, had been suffering from kidney problems for seven years and started undergoing dialysis in 2007.

"My wife told me one day that a friend of her buddy named Peter was willing to donate one of his kidneys and I was so touched," he said.

"Two months after undergoing surgery in August 2008, my wife of 12 years told me that she had been sleeping with Peter since 2006."

"I had wanted to reconcile with her for the sake of the child but a private investigator I hired found out that she was still on good terms with her lover and this disappointed me," he told the daily.

> *Sin Chew Daily* reported that a widow in Singapore has slept with at least 24 men in two years, including a married man resembling her late husband.

The daily said the businesswoman had to "pleasure herself" during the six months after her husband's death from a heart attack.

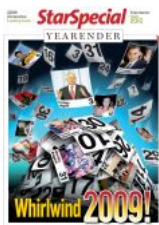
A few months later, she met a man, who looked like her late husband, and began pursuing him with expensive gifts.

He became her lover but they broke up six months later as he could not fulfil her desires.

She began picking up men in various night clubs and could not focus on her work even after consulting a psychologist.

She has since met a divorced man, in his 50s, who was able to satisfy her.

Other News & Views is compiled from the vernacular newspapers (Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese and Tamil dailies). As such, stories are grouped according to the respective language/medium. Where a paragraph begins with a sub-heading, it denotes a separate news item.



Ads by Google

[Singapore Urology Centre](#)


Urologist of International Standing For Appointment Call (65) 6838 1212
www.DrMichaelWong.com

[Beautiful Chinese Women](#)

Chinese Women For Dating & Marriage Join Us And Find Your Love Today!
www.chnlove.cn

[Meet Singapore Singles](#)

Meet Local Singapore Singles Today. Don't Miss Your Chance. Join Free!
www.SingaporeLoveLinks.com

 Email This  Printer Friendly  SHARE 

More News

Nation Headlines



Central

North

Sarawak

South & East

Sunday

Friday March 19, 2010

Foreign takeover in the heart of KL

By JAYAGANDI JAYARAJ and PRIYA MENON

metro@thestar.com.my

FOREIGN worker Mani, 29, was leaning against a wall reading a Nepalese newspaper.

The worker from a textile shop in Jalan Tun Tan Siew Sin, Kuala Lumpur, was catching up on the news back home.

Jalan Tun Tan Siew Sin, better known as Jalan Silang, has been home for Mani for the last 10 years and he works at his brother's shop selling blankets and sheets from his homeland.



Busy street: Various signboards in the area are made with letterings in Nepali.

"Ten years ago, many Nepalese workers started coming to Malaysia to work and in Kuala Lumpur and Jalan Silang has been one of our main hangouts.

"Due to the huge number of us here, we have restaurants providing our native food and even have newspapers brought in from Nepal so we can catch up on what's happening there," he said.

However, the road is not only a focus for Nepalese workers, as it is also a meeting place for workers from other countries like Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Thus, the street and adjoining streets like Jalan Yap Ah Loy, Jalan Tun Perak and Jalan Hang Lekiu, have come to reflect the cultures that these foreign workers are accustomed to.



Tasty treats: This outlet sells authentic Bengali delicacies.

In terms of food, there are plenty of outlets that serve specialities close to these cultures.

Outlets serving Bengali treats and Myanmar food outlets can be found here and there was even a quaint little Gurkha restaurant, which serves authentic Nepali food, where the waitresses were adorned in uniforms resembling their national costume.

Out on the walkway, there was a person selling *Paan*, which is a traditional form of Betel leaf (*Piper betle*) chewed with areca nut popular among the South Asians.

Meanwhile, the shops run by the locals in the area are also more focused on providing for the needs of the foreigners.

For example, there are many phone kiosks that provide prepaid facilities for the workers to contact home. However, amid the hustle and bustle of the area, there was not a single foreign woman in sight despite it being an off day.

Mani said it was cultural that women spent their time indoors.



Traditional favourite: A Paan vendor does brisk business with the foreigners in the area.

"That's why you see no women out here although there are many men on the streets," he said.

Meanwhile, Bukit Bintang MP Fong Kui Lun said he had been receiving numerous complaints from businessmen in the area.

"We have been receiving complaints of noise pollution along Jalan Silang. Every time we lodge a report with the Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL), the noise levels go down but only for a couple of weeks," he said.

According to Fong, several shops along the road used loud speakers to broadcast their songs and increased the volume to compete with their neighbours.

Fong said the DBKL had to continue to check on the business licences of the traders to ensure that all businesses in the area were legal.

"The street has become very foreign, I have visited several times after receiving the complaints and I noticed they are valid," he said.

However, when asked if the crime rate had gone up, Fong said although there were incidents of small fights, the crime rate was stable.



Catching up: Mani reading a newspaper from Nepal.

"Nothing major has occurred yet but there have been cases of fights and bickering," he said.

Jenice Yap, who works in a nearby company, said walking into the Jalan Silang area felt like walking into another country.

"Maybe, it's a prejudice we have against them but I feel really uncomfortable walking there these days. It is the same in Lebu Ampang where there are a lot of foreigners from Africa," she said.

Yap added that there was no need to walk there as most of the things sold in Jalan Silang were foreign and catered only to the Bangladeshi, Nepali and Pakistani communities.

Her colleague T. Vijayaletchumy also felt the place was "dodgy" due to the foreign presence.

"They say they are in the country to work but they have so much time to linger around Jalan Silang. That is why we are suspicious. What if they are jobless and resort to snatching purses," she asked.

She also added that many of her colleagues had stopped carrying their belongings out of the office and walked around with small change and a photocopy of their MyKad.

Both the women added that the foreigners sometimes blocked the corridors, forcing people to walk on the streets alongside oncoming traffic.

Ads by Google

[Top Nepal News](#)

Get Breaking Nepal News From FT.com - View Articles Now

[FT.com](#)

[Kuala Lumpur Hotels](#)

106 Hotels sorted by Price, Review Get Hot Deals and Save !

[Sprice.com/Kuala_Lumpur](#)

[-75% Kuala Lumpur Hotels](#)

Compare All Hotel Booking Sites, Pay the Lowest Prices for Hotels.

www.Hotelsio.com/kuala-lumpur

 Email This

 Printer Friendly

 SHARE 

Source:



[More News](#)

Central Headlines

Wednesday June 2, 2010

Prostitution is seen as chance to escape from misery

DIVORCED and stranded with four mouths to feed, Daisy* was helpless and lost in a city that was new to her.

The native from Sabah married a man chosen by her family but never knew he would leave her and the children penniless. After the divorce, he disappeared without providing alimony for his children.

Daisy knew the weight of her young family rested on her shoulders. She decided to make an honest living working at a salon and, at night, she would wash dishes but this only amounted to a meagre income.



Where the ladies roam: The infamous Lorong Haji Taib 2 in Chow Kit.

"I was only 25 when I went into the sex trade, I was so scared but my pay was never enough to feed the babies. So, when my friends invited me to take bookings from nightclub patrons, I agreed," said Daisy who is now 45.

Finding the business lucrative, she and her friends decided to do it full time. She entertained the guests for many years but as her youth drained away, so did the business.

She hated every moment of it. She earned between RM200 and RM300 per person at the clubs but now she can only charge RM30. She and her friends waited in hotel rooms hoping someone will turn up.

Guilt envelopes Daisy every day as she looks into the faces of her children aged between 23 and 16.

"I am forced to keep my job a secret from the children. They think I am working at a restaurant at night," she said,

Unlike Daisy, Rose* is single but she craved love and attention, something her broken family failed to provide her.

At the age of 29, she left home, hoping to find someone who would love her. Her mother, a single parent, often lost her temper and abused Rose and her siblings.

Unable to withstand it any longer, she found her way to Kuala Lumpur and met new friends.

"My friends were 'too' social, I joined them in their escapades. I can't blame them and now it's too late," she said.

She, too, began her life at night clubs — drinking, dancing and entertaining clients.

"I have many boyfriends but until today, I have not found someone who will love me or someone who will ease the loneliness," she added.

Both these women are lucky to have found the Pink Foundation, an organisation that offers education and a place to ease their troubled lives.

For 30-year-old Delia, debts to loan sharks pushed her into the world's oldest profession. While Rose and Daisy look for customers along the road and in hotels, Delia advertises her services online.

She has been at it for only five months after losing her job last year and she says she earns three times more than her previous job.

Delia gets between RM100 and RM300 per hour depending on the customer's requests.

"The men I meet online treat me better than either my ex-boyfriend or the men I met at the clubs did," she said. Her family is also unaware of the nature of her work. (*All names have been changed to protect the privacy of those involved)



Related Stories:

[Questionable sites can be reported](#)

[Sex in the city](#)

[The job of entertaining bored men](#)


 Email This  Printer Friendly  SHARE 

 Like  Be the first of your friends to like this.

Source:



[More News](#)

Central Headlines 



- Central
- North
- Sarawak
- South & East
- Sunday
- People's Voice

Wednesday June 2, 2010

Sex in the city

Stories by STARMETRO TEAM

The oldest profession in the world has gone high-tech to lure customers. Those offering sex services no longer have to walk on the streets to strike a deal. StarMetro scoured the cyberworld for websites, forums and blogs that publicise their services.

The Internet has created new opportunities for all kinds of businesses, including the world's oldest profession — prostitution.

With the right keywords in the search engines, contact numbers of sex workers and their agents can be found easily. In one such forum, gigolos, or aspiring gigolos, left their mobile phone numbers for potential customers to ring them up.

They used descriptions like "muscular, six-feet tall, handsome, decent looking guy" to promote themselves, and appealed to "lonely women" to call them.

"Datin, wife and widow, please call me. RM100 to RM1,000 only," one such posting read.

There was one which specified the age group he was willing to service, "Sugar mummy aged 30 to 60. The older the better. Interesting and romantic service."

Another appealed to potential customers to try his "sincere service" as he had to support school-going siblings.

In a different classified website, "lonely, emotionally strained and frustrated men" were encouraged to try the escort services provided by "attractive, multilingual and educated girls".

The hourly rates were priced between RM380 and RM1,280.

"We also offer college girls for your enjoyment," the website claimed.

Another company promised "unrivalled service with attention to detail, honesty, integrity, discretion and promptness" and the girls were taken in based on their "friendliness, beauty, charm and reputation within the escort industry".

Apart from these, there were also sites that rate the services provided by the sex workers.

Vivid and explicit descriptions on the sex workers' vital statistics and performance were given in the "field reports".

The contributors at one such website even rated the prostitutes' appearance, body shape, skin and attitude on a scale from one to 10.

Special terms and abbreviations were widely used. For instance, *nasi*

lemak referred to Malay sex workers, *tomyam* Thai girls, *roti canai* Indians.

Photos were sometimes attached to tease other potential customers.

The blog — with Chinese and English versions — seemed to be pretty popular as it was updated frequently. It also attracted a string of comments by interested men asking for the contact numbers of the sex workers in the Klang Valley.

"Brother, please share with me the contact number. I want to try," a commentor requested.

StarMetro pretended to be an interested customer and left a comment on the blog.

Within an hour, we received the first reply from a blog reader who was eager to know if we had obtained the contact details.

A few similar e-mails came later. The blog owner responded as well but he asked for donation of RM20 before he would reveal the contact number.

"One donation for one contact only. RM30 for a local girl, RM20 for others or RM50 for three contacts," he said.

Exchanging of contact numbers was also possible.

To attract more contributions, there was even a contest organised to encourage the customers to write their "field reports" with cash prizes offered.

Gathering from the blog posts, the sex workers were either freelancers, or attached to agents (pimps) and operated from massage parlours, pubs and hotels.

For those in hotels, the interested customer had to first contact the pimp, who would then reveal the room numbers for the customer to choose the girls based on their appearances. Otherwise, a customer could contact the sex workers directly for an appointment. The site also named the massage parlours, hotels and one eating place in Pudu, the places to go for sex services.

Related Stories:

[Questionable sites can be reported](#)

[Prostitution is seen as chance to escape from misery](#)

[The job of entertaining bored men](#)

Ads by Google

[Hottest Colombian Women](#)

100s Ravishing Colombian Women Seeking Men for Chat, Dating & Love

[AmoLatina.com](#)

[Moonit](#)

Your relationship compatibility for dating, friendship and business

[Moonit.com](#)

[Male Singles](#)

Find the partner for life now. Free trial. Join now!

[www.be2.sg](#)

 Email This

 Printer Friendly

 SHARE   

Like Be the first of your friends to like this.

Source: **StarMetro**

More News

Central Headlines



- Central
- North
- Sarawak
- South & East
- Sunday
- People's Voice

Wednesday June 2, 2010

The job of entertaining bored men

I WAS quite nervous when I made the call to *Ricky, whose contact number I got from a website that offered escort services and recruited escorts.

I called to enquire about a job as an escort, and Ricky was accommodating and patient in providing me with answers. We began with self-introductions — I was a 22-year-old student who lived with some friends in Mont Kiara, Kuala Lumpur.

Ricky asked me if I knew what an escort's job was all about. I told him that I was not familiar although I knew escorting involved entertaining men, and asked Ricky to elaborate.

Ricky told me not to be offended by the nature of the job, and that he would be honest about it. The decision, he said, was entirely mine.

"The job's basically about entertaining bored men. It's about a man and a woman in a hotel room and you know what that means. I will text you the hotel room details and you have to get there within 30 minutes.

"These clients don't wait for one or two hours," he said.

For this reason, Ricky pointed out the importance of having easy access to transportation. He advised me that going by taxi was better than driving to a destination as it saved time parking. Another important question was if I had a boyfriend or someone who could be jealous when I went out with men.

"If you have a boyfriend, it could complicate things for you. You don't want a jealous boyfriend when you're at work," he said.

Ricky also insisted that our correspondence via text messages be deleted once I have read and understood the messages. He also advised me not to leave my mobile phone around for other people to access.

A few minutes into the conversation, Ricky politely paused to ask my vital statistics and physical features — skin colour, hair length, height and weight. He also insisted on bust size and was rather pleased when I answered that I was a D cup.

He explained certain clients requested for certain types of women. Sometimes, when a client was not happy with a woman's appearance, Ricky added, the client would politely cancel the engagement.

"Do you wear make-up? Clients prefer women with make up. They don't like women who look tired. But not too much lah," said Ricky.

After a while, I enquired about rates.

"Once you're at the room, you introduce yourself and collect the money first before work begins. If an hour is RM300, you bank in RM150 to my account," he said.

If it was an all-night engagement that started with dinner, then it became a package. That costs RM900 and more. Ricky also checked with me the hours that I was available during the week and if was able to do overnight jobs.

He also checked if I preferred local or foreign customers and advised me to choose foreigners as they were more willing to pay the high prices.

"There is a risk of knowing the client if he is a local. And locals also have qualms about meeting in hotel rooms — especially if they are staying in Kuala Lumpur. You don't have to worry as you will meet your clients at five-star hotels," he said.

"Sometimes a client would not like a woman upon meeting her," Ricky added.

"If they say you are not their type, you can leave but you can ask them for taxi fare of RM30 or RM50, but if they refuse, don't argue and just leave. If you insist, the client can call the hotel security to get you out. That's not nice," he warned.

Then the conversation took a turn when Ricky asked me questions on what I was willing to offer sexually. He was very careful when asking these questions so as not to offend me in any way. He said clients sometimes made certain requests when ordering a service.

He also stressed the importance of protection. "Always, always use protection. Don't ever work with a client without protection. Always carry condoms," said Ricky.

Ricky added that when the work was completed, the client might chat with an escort for a while.

"However, if the client wants your phone number, please refuse. Ask him to contact you through your boss. When you give out the phone number, they may pass it around and put it on the net and it can be dangerous for you. Some women have changed phone numbers because of this.

To my question of facing possibly abusive clients, Ricky said all clients were well-mannered and never abused an escort.

At the end of our conversation, Ricky asked me to take my time to think about it and only sign up if I was comfortable with the job. There was absolutely no pressure from him.



Related Stories:

[Questionable sites can be reported](#)

[Sex in the city](#)

[Prostitution is seen as chance to escape from misery](#)

 Email This  Printer Friendly  SHARE 

 Like  Be the first of your friends to like this.

Source: 

[More News](#)





Nation

World Updates

Courts

Parliament

Columnists

Opinion

Honours List



Thursday June 3, 2010

China dolls on offer via MMS

By TAN SIN CHOW
sctan@thestar.com.my

GEORGE TOWN: In a move to evade constant raids by the authorities, sex syndicates here are offering China dolls to customers via the multimedia message service (MMS).

It was learnt that the message contains the image of a scantily clad China doll, her age, sex services menu, working hours and contact numbers of the pimps. The pictures are said to have been taken at a photo studio.

However, it was also learnt that only selected or frequent customers would receive such MMS from the syndicates.

Once a deal was struck between a potential customer and the pimp, sources said the women would be sent to a hotel to meet up with the customer, with each customer charged at least RM200 per session.



Hot messages: A man checking out the MMSes containing the images and particulars of China dolls offering sexual services.

Sources said the syndicates resorted to using the MMS as they could no longer afford to lose their China dolls in raids carried out on budget hotels and entertainment outlets.

"They have spent thousands of ringgit to bring them here. This latest method will at least enable them to recover their investments," said the sources.

A check with the police and the state Immigration Department showed at least six anti-vice raids were carried out over the past two months on hotels in Anson Road and Macalister Road, and entertainment and karaoke outlets in Pulau Tikus. Even gay joints were not spared.

A reader who received several of such MMSes said he was shocked when he saw the contents and the pictures.

"I dread what would happen if such MMSes are sent to teenagers and students," said the man who declined to be named.

Penang deputy police chief Senior Asst Comm (I) Datuk Tun Hisan Tun Hamzah advised those who received such MMSes to lodge police reports.

"The culprit could be charged with distributing obscene materials under Section 292 of the Penal Code," he said.

A Penang Commercial Crime Department spokesman said they had secured the MMSes.

"We are now tracing the senders of these messages," he said.

Ads by Google

[Penang Hotels from 28SGD](#)

The best discount hotels compared Save Time and Money on Sprice
sg.sprice.com/Penang

[Penang Hotels - Agoda](#)

Are you looking for Penang hotel? Visit us now for special offers!
Agoda.com.sg/Penang_Hotels

[Bangkok Hotels, Thailand](#)

fr SGD25/night. Book here ! Bangkok Great Value Hotels.
SG.PYOTravel.com/Bangkok

 Email This  Printer Friendly  SHARE 

 Like  36 people like this.

[More News](#)

Nation Headlines

Go

Sunday August 29, 2010

Weighing the death penalty

By RASHVINJEET S.BEDI

rashvin@thestar.com.my

Malaysia's efforts to seek clemency for Yong Vui Kong, who is on death row in Singapore for a drug trafficking offence, have raised questions about maintaining capital punishment in the country.

SINCE he was arrested for drug trafficking in Singapore three years ago, Yong Vui Kong has turned over a new leaf. He has taken to Buddhism and is always meditating, says his lawyer M. Ravi. He has shaved his head and is also teaching his fellow prisoners the precepts of Buddhism.

"The guards say they have never seen anyone as caring as Yong," adds Ravi.

Before he was arrested, Yong only spoke in Chinese. Now he can speak Malay and English and according to Ravi, he wants to be an advocate against drug abuse.



Vohrah

Yong, now 22, was sentenced to death on Jan 7 last year for the crime he committed when he was 18. He is now on death row. Last week, the Singapore Prisons Department extended the deadline for him to file a plea for presidential clemency. The deadline was initially set for last Wednesday.

Yong's case has attracted a lot of attention and there is a *Save Vui Kong* campaign to petition for his life to be spared. Even the Malaysian government, through the Foreign Ministry, has sent a letter to the Singapore government pleading clemency for Yong.

There is a hint of irony in Malaysia's efforts to seek clemency for Yong, however, as the death penalty or capital punishment is also used in this country.

In Malaysia, the death penalty carried out by hanging is mandatory for crimes such as murder, possession of firearms, waging war against the King and drug trafficking.

Recently, there have been suggestions that even those involved in baby dumping, ending in the death of the baby, should be tried for murder.

But human rights practitioners have maintained that the death sentence is the ultimate denial of human rights and should be abolished entirely.

According to Amnesty International, 18 countries were known to have carried out executions in 2009, ending the life of at least 714 people.

(This figure does not include the thousands of executions that were likely to have taken place in China,

which refuses to divulge figures on its use of the death penalty.)



Away with death: South Korean human rights activists protesting against capital punishment in Seoul. Human rights practitioners have maintained that the death sentence should be abolished entirely. – AFP

In 2007, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) called on states which maintain the death penalty to establish a moratorium with a view to abolition and in the meantime, restrict the number of offences for which it punishes and to respect the rights of those on death row. It also called on states which have abolished the death penalty not to reintroduce it.

In Malaysia, those who support the abolition of the death penalty include Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Datuk Seri Nazri Abdul Aziz.

"If it is wrong to take someone's life, then the Government should not do the same. It's ironic and not correct," he tells *Sunday Star*.

Some countries would not extradite a wanted person if it is known that the person would be facing a death sentence if he was sent over, Nazri says.

Inhumane act

Another anti-death penalty advocate is Nora Murat, director of Amnesty International Malaysia, who insists that it is time to do away with this punishment. It is cruel, inhumane and degrading, among others, she says.

"People say no to stoning but say yes to the death penalty. If we value life, there is no way we can condone murder," she stresses.



Nora: 'If we value life, there is no way we can condone murder'

Human rights lawyer Edmund Bon says most countries are now moving away from capital punishment.

In 1977, only 16 countries had abolished the death penalty for all crimes. As of December 2009, that figure stood at 95. Of the 58 countries that have retained it, only 18 are known to have carried out executions in 2009.

"The criminal justice system is not perfect. We shouldn't be playing God. We must be consistent with international human rights standards," says Bon.

But whenever there is a spate of heinous crimes such as the rape of children, there will always be someone suggesting the death penalty.

In fact, even lawyer Karpal Singh who is known to be against it shockingly called for the death penalty to be introduced for child rape a few weeks ago.

The general public usually feels the same way for such crimes.

Even in Switzerland, there are campaigners who want murder involving sexual abuse, particularly of children, to be punishable by death. (Switzerland abolished the death penalty 70 years ago.)

"It is very natural for people to feel outraged by such crimes. This response involves anger towards the perpetrator," says psychologist Dr Goh Chee Leong of Help University.

Retired Court of Appeal judge Datuk Mahadev Shankar believes the death penalty should be repealed for offences that are out of sync with the public conscience and where it has proven to be ineffective as a deterrent.

Some facts about the death penalty

1. More than two-thirds of the countries in the world have abolished the death penalty in law or in practice. Of 58 nations who have not abolished it, only 18 are known to have carried out executions. The others have mostly stopped executions in practice.
2. The death penalty is considered to be a form of legalised murder by the state.
3. Methods of execution include electrocution, beheading, the firing squad or other sorts of shooting, stoning in some Islamic countries, hanging, and lethal injection.
4. Europe, with the exception of Belarus, is death penalty free.
5. Countries that still practise the death penalty include China, United States (certain states), Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Vietnam and Japan.
6. Nine inmates sentenced to death in the US were exonerated and freed – having spent 121 years between them on death row.
7. Sixty-nine people were publicly beheaded in Saudi Arabia in 2009.
8. The death penalty is irreversible.

Source: Amnesty International GRAPHICS © 2010

He cites examples of drug offences, where the possessor is a proven addict, and certain firearms cases.

But for heinous crimes, he is all for capital punishment.

“In outrageous cases like the Canny Ong murder where there were absolutely no mitigating circumstances, it would be a mistake to abolish the death sentence which must deter even if it contains an element of retribution,” he says in an e-mail interview.

But Nora says that no crime, no matter how heinous, warrants the death penalty.

“Politicians will say that the *rakyat* (people) want it, but they should be able to make hard decisions,” she says.

But what about the families of the victims who were murdered? Wouldn't they want the death penalty on the convicted perpetrator?

“Human beings are emotional,” says Bon.

“If their child or friend was accused of such a crime they wouldn't be saying such a thing. They would be fighting hard to release their family member.”

Nora, who believes that the concept of forgiveness is much larger than revenge, says there are other forms of punishment such as life imprisonment.

“I can understand their feelings but you can't condone murder especially if you have just lost someone yourself,” she says.

Lawyers for Liberty's N.Surendran adds that the death of the perpetrator would not ease the grieving process.

In fact, he says, there are many cases worldwide where families of murder victims do not want the convicted perpetrator to be executed.

Bon also points out that in Malaysia, any form of murder carries a mandatory death sentence. There are no mitigating factors (such as a crime of passion or killing done while blinded by rage) to reduce the sentence, he says.

“This is a breach of fair trial rights and the judges' hands are tied,” says Bon, adding that an Indian court ruled a similar mandatory provision to be unconstitutional in 1983.

It is the same for drug trafficking where the act specifies a mandatory death sentence if the perpetrator is found to have more than a prescribed limit in his possession. For example, those caught in possession of 200g of marijuana or 15g of heroin are automatically handed the death sentence.

“We are hanging people based on presumptions (that they are trafficking),” says Bon.

This may be one of the reasons why the conviction rate for drug trafficking crimes is relatively low, says a well-placed source.

He explains that judges are generally reluctant to send someone to the gallows and would use the slightest doubt to throw away the case (such as not knowing the contents of the package).

“If there was no mandatory death sentencing, then maybe the conviction rate would be higher,” he argues.

Mahadev admits that in drug cases where the margin of the quantity exceeded the maximum permissible, the mandatory death penalty did not sit easy with the judicial conscience. This is especially so where the offenders were mules or addicts themselves.

Former High Court and Court of Appeal judge Datuk K.C. Vohrah says his family could always sense when he was dealing with a trial involving capital punishment. He would usually be quiet and look worried as he pondered the facts of the case.

“You had to be vigilant to ensure that fairness prevailed with accordance to law,” he says.

Vohrah says that he and several other judges would deliver a speaking judgement when they handed the death sentence.

“Everything that you needed to know about how we came to the decision was written down before the judgement was delivered,” he says.

The burden on judges became even heavier after the jury system was abolished in 1995, says Vohrah. (In the jury system, the fate of the accused rested upon seven people.)

“It was so terrible that I never wanted to do those sorts of cases again. Before I went up to the bench to deliver the decision, I would pray to God that I did the right thing. I would ask for blessings for the accused if he were convicted. It was a terrible burden,” he says.

Another former Court of Appeal judge, Datuk Shaikh Daud Shaikh Mohd Ismail, says passing the death sentence was not a pleasant thing to do.

He remembers the first time he had to do it.

“Just before the sentence, I adjourned the court. When I went up, my knees were shaking and I found it hard to utter the first words. After delivering it, I was sweating all over,” he recalls.

He says it became subsequently easier to deliver, although there was always fear in doing it.

“With a stroke of a pen, we are taking a person’s life. I didn’t like it at all but the law is there and there is nothing that you can do about it,” he says.

“On reflection, it is better not to have it.”

Then there is the issue of insanity. Recalling a case where the medical report of one mental hospital differed from the other, Bon says he is not convinced of the mental health regime’s ability to identify or categorise different forms of mental illnesses.

“If there was no second opinion, we would lose the case and end up hanging an insane person,” he says.

Surendran also believes that capital punishment draws attention from the real problem, which is crime prevention. One of the reasons the death penalty is bandied about is that it will act as a stern deterrent.

“Malaysia is still a transit for the drug trade and murders still happen. This lulls people into a false sense of comfort,” says Surendran, who also highlights that in drug trafficking cases, only the mules are caught while the kingpins and drug lords generally get away scot-free.

“The strata of people caught are usually from the lower income groups, marginalised and unprivileged backgrounds.”

Take Yong, for instance. He comes from a broken family and left home at 12 to work.

Surendran says it would be better to seek the underlying causes of the crime and for better police work.

The wait to be executed is also another form of cruelty, he says. According to a prisons official, those sentenced to death could wait up to four years from the date of their sentencing before the execution is carried out (after the various appeal stages).

Irreversible move

Another, and the most important, aspect about the death penalty is its irreversibility once the sentence is carried out.

Most lawyers agree with the fact that there is no such thing as a perfect criminal justice system and that mistakes could be made.

In short, someone could be wrongly punished for something that they did not commit.

Surendran points out the case of 23-year-old Vignes Mourthi from Perak who was hanged for drug trafficking in Singapore in 2003.

The former machine operator was convicted based on a hand-written transcript of a conversation he had with an undercover officer.

The undercover officer, however, was facing allegations of rape, sodomy and bribery at the time he gave the evidence. This fact was not presented to the court at the trial. (The officer was subsequently jailed for 15 months for bribery.)

Vignes, who was jobless and recovering from an accident when he was arrested, said he had been duped into delivering packages which he believed were incense stones.

“If we make a mistake, we can’t undo it,” says Surendran, citing the case.

Related Story:

[Abolish death penalty, it's incorrect to take someone's life, says Nazri](#)



Tuesday, 02 April 2013

[HOME](#) | [NEWS](#) | [VIEWS](#) | [FEATURES](#) | [FAST FACTS](#) | [#SgPol](#) | [GALLERY](#) | [EVENTS](#)

Singapolitics > Views > Story

Why Chinese nationals and S'poreans don't always get along

Posted on Mar 27, 2013 12:38 PM Updated: Mar 27, 2013 5:15 PM



By Peidong Yang
views@singapolitics.sg

[Like](#) 1.1k

In a recent Lianhe Zaobao article, Dr Ji Yun points out that Singapore continues to be misunderstood by the Chinese from the People's Republic of China (henceforth 'Chinese') in various ways. Specifically, he notes how ordinary Chinese show the tendency to conflate those who are geopolitically Chinese (zhongguo ren) and those who are cultural-ethnically Chinese (hua ren). Unfortunately, he did not elaborate on this point, as his article was focused on other issues.

Drawing on my ongoing doctoral research, I would like to offer a few thoughts and observations on the misunderstandings between Singaporeans (here, I am primarily concerned with those of Chinese ethnicity - henceforth 'Chinese Singaporeans') and the Chinese, as well as the implications of such misunderstandings with regard to social cohesion.

As Dr Ji Yun's article points out, one first and foremost way in which the Chinese misunderstand Singapore, especially in the case of those Chinese immigrants who are relatively new to the city-state, has to do with the discrepancy between the Chinese and Singaporeans' respective ethno-national imaginations.

Many Chinese find it somewhat problematic to conceive of a sufficient distance between Chinese citizens on the one hand and those that are considered 'ethnically Chinese' on the other. This is not to say they simply cannot distinguish the two, which is rarely - if ever - the case; instead, it is about how much distance they are consciously and subconsciously able to put in between the two categories.

This tendency on the part of the Chinese is in no small measure due to the nationalistic ideology that has long saturated China which often obfuscates the line between political status/belonging and ethno-/racial identity—an ideology that is very much in active service in relation to, for instance, the Taiwan problem. In other words, the nationalistic ideology in China operates by trying to shorten or omit the hyphen in 'nation-state', among other things.

Under the influence of this ideology, many Chinese tend to view other countries and/or societies with predominantly ethnically Chinese population with a sense of familiarity (qinqie)—which can be productive—but also a sense of presumptiveness—which can be counterproductive. In the Singaporean context, such presumptiveness may manifest in, among other things, assumptions about local Chinese Singaporeans' fluency or willingness to speak mandarin or assumptions about local Chinese Singaporeans'

understanding and acceptance of certain behaviours and ways of doing things. On a daily basis, these have all proven to be occasions in which misunderstandings and disaffections occur.

In certain circumstances, the Chinese presumptiveness develops into arrogance, such as when, for example, service workers from China refuse to try to communicate in English with customers despite Singapore's multilingual social makeup; it is no wonder that people sometimes get the impression that immigrants from China do not make enough effort to integrate or that they simply 'behave as if they are in their own country'.

Not knowing enough about the historical trajectory of Singapore as an independent nation-state and not sufficiently recognising the psychological distance between Singaporeans and Chinese constitute the first major source of misunderstanding on the part of the Chinese immigrants. The significant distance in terms of autonomous national-cultural identity that the Singaporeans have traveled away from the ideological Chinese imagination is illustrated in some small but pregnant instances.

For example, Singaporean friends of mine who are open-minded enough would sometimes admit to me that some Chinese Singaporeans are 'racist' against the 'PRCs'. Both the terms 'racist' and 'PRC' are significant. Mainland Chinese would hardly ever consider discrimination from the Chinese Singaporeans to be 'racist', as there is no doubt in their minds that they belong to the same race; in fact, even Chinese Singaporeans should have no reason to characterise their prejudice against the 'PRCs' to be racist if Singapore's founding ideology of multiracialism is to be strictly adhered to.

But the fact that some Chinese Singaporeans—especially the younger ones—are ready to reflect on their prejudice towards the Chinese as racism seems to be due to more than just the loose or wrong employment of the term; instead, it precisely reflects how much more distinct and distant the new generations of Chinese Singaporeans have come to conceive of themselves as opposed to the Chinese. At the same time, because Chinese Singaporeans still believe themselves to be 'Chinese' in some ways, they therefore need to label the Chinese some other way in order to mark the distinction, and the phrase 'PRC' is used—the full title of a geopolitical entity.

Unfortunately, the daily use of the term 'PRC' can no longer be seen as innocent in Singapore; instead, it often carries a derogative connotation. This is the reason why I resist calling Chinese from the mainland 'PRC Chinese'; it is to the credit of local press that they have not endorsed this term either, preferring 'Chinese nationals' or other similar phraseology. The pejorative 'PRC' remains widely used in the realm of the often tendentious Singaporean blogosphere; but then blogosphere everywhere is tendentious.

Related to the first, a second source of misunderstanding has to do with Chinese Singaporeans' bilingualism, which ironically has the effect of entrenching the first type of misunderstanding as I outlined above. Chinese Singaporeans may express welcome or congeniality to the Chinese immigrants by speaking to them in Mandarin; this, however, makes the urgency for immigrants to speak English and therefore to integrate into the multilingual Singaporean society even less apparent. Chinese Singaporeans' bilingualism in Mandarin to some extent confirms the Chinese immigrants' ideology-influenced imagination of Singapore as a 'Chinese society' (huaren shehui).

The problem is further complicated here, because neither English nor Chinese is a so-to-speak 'risk-free' language between the immigrant Chinese and the local Chinese Singaporeans. When immigrant Chinese—especially those with lower educational levels—speak English, they often cannot make themselves clear or they make the listeners comfortable; this can lead to much misunderstanding and unpleasantness, but may also become a reason for Singaporeans to look down on and laugh at them.

Yet, when being snubbed, the immigrant can always return the snub by denouncing Singlish or Singaporean accented English, an act that is regarded as very offensive. Reversely, when Mandarin is spoken, there is often the danger that the Chinese will come across as 'upstaging the host', as they are after all speaking their first language. The nationalistic ideology that to a greater or lesser extent characterises the Chinese makes them consider the Mandarin spoken by Singaporeans to be of inferior standards. Thus, language, which supposedly

connects people, is also capable of pitting them against each other, as language is always invested with history, power, and desire.

Although we assume Singapore's bilingualism makes it easier for Chinese immigrants to integrate, this may not in all circumstances be the case. I sometimes even wonder if the tension between Singaporeans and the Chinese immigrants might not be less if Singaporean Chinese actually did not speak any Chinese/Mandarin at all. This is a rather counterintuitive idea at first, but perhaps not so counterintuitive if we agree that one of the reasons for the current tension is the presumptiveness on the part of the Chinese.

A third very important source of misunderstanding has to do with class perception and attitudes. Since the post-Mao reforms in the late 1970s, the class gulf has widened enormously in the Chinese society. The rural-urban binary divide that has existed as an administrative infrastructure since the founding of the PRC developed into a huge class divide as the poor and poorly educated rural domestic migrants flooded into Chinese cities to seek labour-intensive employments. The official discourse of *renkou suzhi*—meaning 'population quality'—castigates the poorly fed, poorly educated and unpolished in China as a low quality class, while the urbanites, generally with better standards of living and education, pride on having higher *suzhi*.

This class mentality and discourse may be reproduced and reenacted when the relatively privileged urban Chinese set foot abroad as skilled immigrants or, 'foreign talents' as is more commonly known here. In the context of Singapore, Chinese dialects remain an important anchor of identity for a significant number of citizens, especially of the older generations; whereas English and Mandarin are still tinged with a sense of foreign imposition.

Speaking Chinese dialects, while perhaps being an expression of identity for some Chinese Singaporeans, often also coincides with disadvantaged socio-economic position in the Singapore society. With Chinese dialects carrying connotations of ruralness and backwardness, the encounter between the more privileged immigrant Chinese and the less privileged Chinese Singaporeans can take on a class inflection. The same kind of discourse employed by Chinese urbanites to condescend on their rural compatriots may also be employed to bear upon those of lower socio-economic and educational backgrounds in Singapore, particularly in scenarios of conflict. This is the context in which we should understand—but of course not condone—the perceived arrogance of some Chinese 'foreign talents' in Singapore; in my opinion, this is probably also the nub of the issue in last year's Sun Xu case, which I found interesting as my research is exactly focused on Chinese students in Singapore. While I am not familiar with the comparative situation about Indian immigrants in Singapore, according to a scholar colleague of mine, a similar scenario occurs with some Indian immigrants in Singapore who consider themselves to be of superior status (either based on caste, ethno-linguistic, class or other backgrounds originally in India) compared with some local Indian Singaporeans.


In the context of Singapore, misunderstandings between immigrants and the local populations can be multifarious and complicated, as both the immigrant and local populations have very complex make-ups and trajectories. In this article, I have only touched on several of them in the Chinese dimension of the issue, and this is only meant to be indicative. When two or more peoples come into contact with each other, they each carry their own sets of social, cultural and historical baggage with them. To hope that they drop their baggage and enter into context-free cosmopolitan interaction is often an impossible ideal, because that baggage may well be the treasured cornerstones based on which each of them derive their deep senses of identity and ontological security.

As such, the best that can be done is for the parties to the interaction to understand each other better and to understand why they misunderstand each other in the first place. In the case of immigration, the duty naturally falls more heavily on the immigrants to understand their host society and to correct their own previous misconceptions, but unfortunately this often takes some time; the duty on the part of the host, then, is to be patient, and to be willing to know where the 'other' has come from, literally and metaphorically.

Peidong YANG is a final year doctoral student in the social science division at Oxford University, UK. He is finishing a dissertation on 'foreign talents' in Singapore, with specific reference to the experiences of Chinese students receiving Singapore government scholarships.

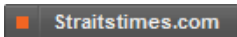
TAGS: XENOPHOBIA, FOREIGN WORKERS AND IMMIGRATION

NEXT STORY: [It's good politics to engage all elected MPs](#)

Like  and 11 others liked this.

Add New Comment

Required: Please login below to comment.




Type your comment here.

Post as ...


Showing 5 of 23 comments

Sort by Subscribe by email Subscribe by RSS

Real-time updating is **paused**. (Resume)


 **mingwah tham** 4 days ago

The article is too full of bombastic words, making it hard to read and understand. At the end of reading a paragraph, you can easily summarize it back to two or three simple sentences. This makes you feel like you've wasted a lot of time on the whole article, which conveyed only two ideas really. In my opinion, cut away all the flowery big words and use simple terms to truly immerse the reader in your ideas. You can also pack more ideas if you write simply.

 Anthony Chia and 13 more liked this

 **Shawn Wee** 4 days ago *in reply to mingwah tham*

or you could expand your vocabulary. i actually though the article was very readable.

 Shawn Quek and 19 more liked this

 **Reader86** 4 days ago *in reply to mingwah tham*

It's a good article. The language is typical of scholastic papers, a bit wordy but still readable. It's probably part of his PhD dissertation. It's good of him to share his findings as we don't often get an objective study like this.

8 people liked this.

 **Shawn Quek** 1 day ago *in reply to mingwah tham*

This is an insightful and easy to read scholarly work. If the author dumbs it down to a simpler level, it will lose alot of its

critical depth.

Your lack of understanding is an intellectual limitation on your part, not the author's, and that's not suggesting any form of elitism or 'ivory tower' syndrome. As long as you can gather 1 or 2 key ideas from this article, I think it has served its purpose.

Also, the notion of "simple common layman language" is misleading because you are suggesting a false and non-existent normative standard. For example, what is 'layman' to you may be challenging to digest for non-native English speakers.

Perhaps what the author could do is provide an abstract at the beginning to tease interest and also highlight the key points of the essay.

1 person liked this. [Like](#) [Reply](#)

 **Peidong Yang** 23 hours ago in reply to Shawn Quek

Shawn, thanks for your sympathetic remarks! And also to readers who have previously commented on the style of the article: yes, it's a little bit more 'scholarly' than the normal commentaries one gets to read on the Internet or the newspapers, but it's difficult to simplify the language further because otherwise the nuance and complexity of the issue might be lost. Given that this is a touchy topic, I think it's more important to preserve the integrity of the argument than try to achieve the maximum reception through simplifying the ideas. Some might find this problematic, but my position is that, for this topic, it's actually better to have people not-understand it than to have them mis-understand it.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)

[Load more comments](#)


comments powered by [DISQUS](#)


RELATED STORIES


[Population White Paper debate: Who's xenophobic?](#)

Political Tweets

[irenengph](#) Bench dedications | TODAYonline [todayonline.com/singapore/benc...](#)
42 seconds ago · [reply](#) · [retweet](#) · [favorite](#)

 [ZaiFASLeague](#) "The bitterest truth is better than the sweetest lie." – from the movie MIB3
about 1 hour ago · [reply](#) · [retweet](#) · [favorite](#)

 [WongKanSeng](#) Bishan Motorsports Group in the news again! Catch them on Channel NewsAsia Headline News on 2 April 2013. [fb.me/2McQJPHM](#)
about 1 hour ago · [reply](#) · [retweet](#) · [favorite](#)

 [VivianBala](#) Farewell to a princess – Putri fought a long brave battle with cancer in her four short years. It is always... [fb.me/C1zVLMHP](#)



[Join the conversation](#)



MOST POPULAR



Why Chinese nationals and S'poreans don't always get along

The best of April Fools' 2013

MOF deputy secretary appointed as returning officer

It's good politics to engage all elected MPs

Amy Cheong gets stern warning from police

MOST COMMENTED

1. PM Lee: Don't "go overboard" when setting new course for S'pore | News | Singapolitics

2. Debate over economist's call for US to learn from Singapore

3. A taxing question of luxury vs necessity

4. Govt must work more openly and accept more untidiness: PM

5. Have your say: How to strengthen NS?

DON'T MISS



President Tan meets Myanmar's top leaders during state visit



MOF deputy secretary appointed as returning officer



The best of April Fools' 2013



INSIGHT: Hire locals first



Coming home to a 'messier' Singapore