

# Intangible Cultural Heritage in Singapore



Living Heritage in a  
Multicultural Urban  
Environment

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Multicultural Urban  
Environment

On 22 February 2018, Singapore ratified the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity. In doing so, Singapore commits itself to the safeguarding and promotion of its ICH for future generations.



IMAGE COURTESY OF NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD

A re-enactment of the social practices and rituals of a Peranakan wedding.

Singapore shares many similar cultural practices with countries around the region, a result of the arrival of early migrants from countries that include China, India, Indonesia and Malaysia. In turn, these early settlers brought along their cultural practices, and adapted them across generations into the ICH practices found in Singapore today.

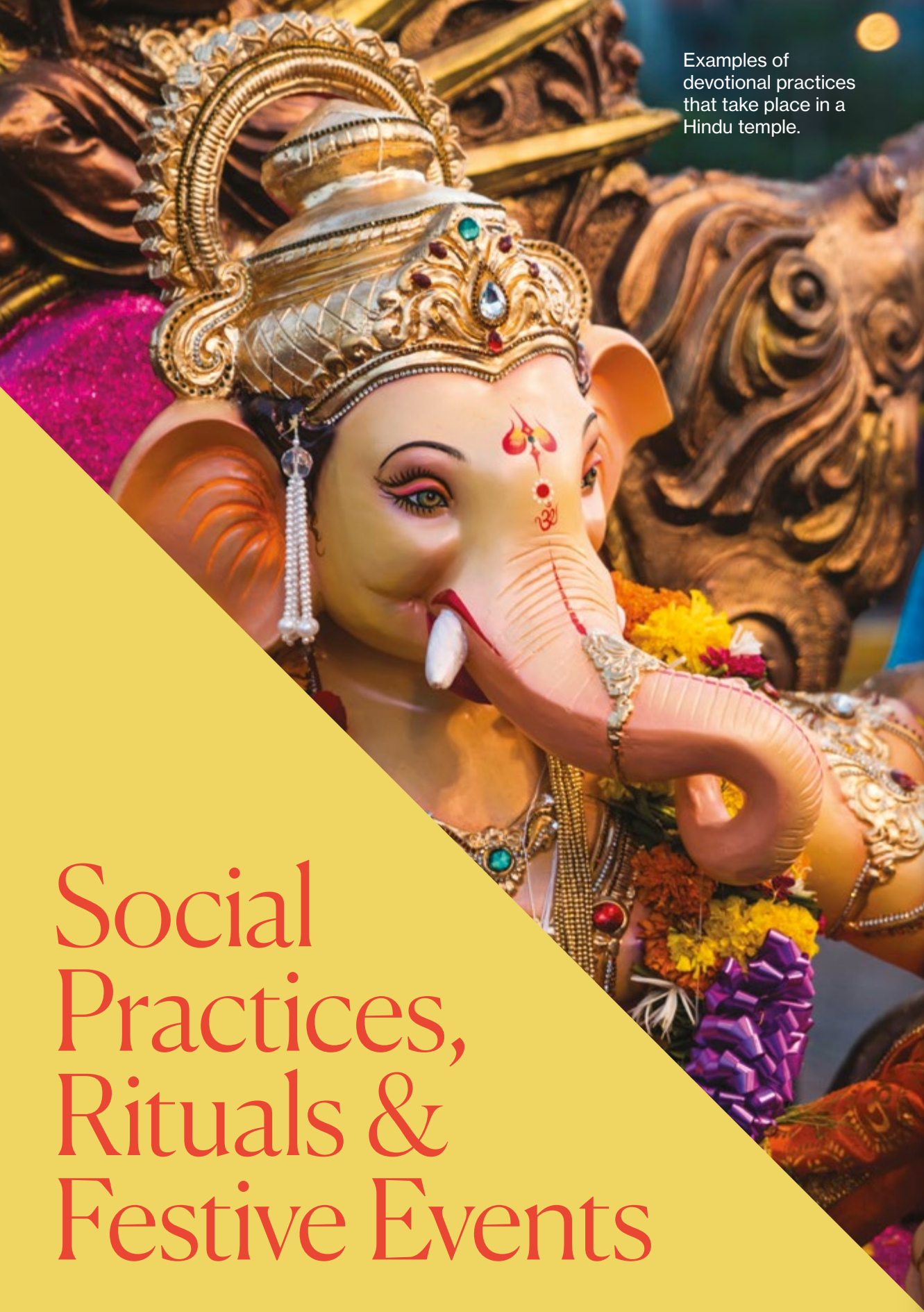
Over the years, Singapore has developed into a modern and multicultural urban city that is home to over 5.7 million people of different ethnicities and religions, all living and working in close proximity to one another. This multicultural urban environment has in turn encouraged ICH practices in Singapore to constantly evolve, often with the influences from the traditions, practices, and skills of other communities.

This booklet will showcase the different multicultural elements that make up Singapore's diverse range of ICH, along with the innovative ways that members of the community have taken to ensure that ICH in Singapore is safeguarded for future generations.

A selection of common breakfast food items that include toasted bread, coffee and half-boiled eggs.



IMAGE COURTESY OF UNSPLASH



Examples of devotional practices that take place in a Hindu temple.

# Social Practices, Rituals & Festive Events

Social practices, rituals and festive events are actively practiced by people of different ethnicities and religions in Singapore throughout the year. The diversity of practices and festivals in Singapore, which are rooted in the cultures and traditions of the people, are a reflection of the multicultural communities that make up the Singapore society.

In Singapore, the most common forms of social practices, rituals and festive events revolve around the various festivals celebrated by Singapore's different ethnic communities. These festivals include Hari Raya Puasa (Malay community), Lunar New Year (Chinese community) and Deepavali (Indian community).

While each festive celebration has its own unique customs and practices, there are often similarities found between these festivals. These similarities include the purchase of new clothes, the preparation of festive food and snacks using family recipes, as well as the conferring of well wishes for the year to come.

# Deepavali

Known as the “Festival of Lights”, Deepavali is an annual festival that takes place in the Tamil month of Aipasi (mid-October to mid-November) and is celebrated by Hindus worldwide.

In Singapore, the festival is celebrated by Hindus, and also Indians of other religions such as Sikhs and Jains. In preparation for Deepavali, the doorways of homes are decorated with *diyas* (small clay oil lamps) and rangoli (intricate patterns made from coloured rice powder or rice grains) for auspicious and religious reasons.

Traditional snacks like *murukku* (a savoury, crunchy snack) are also commonly prepared by those celebrating the festival.



A festive lightup in Little India as part of Deepavali celebrations.

IMAGE COURTESY OF CHEW SENG KIM, SINGAPORE PRESS HOLDINGS



For some families, having a steamboat (a hotpot with an array of food items) is an essential part of their reunion dinner tradition.

# Lunar New Year

Lunar New Year is an annual festival that marks the start of the new year in the Chinese Lunar calendar, and is widely celebrated by the Chinese community in Singapore. In the lead up to the festival, the cultural enclave of Chinatown turns into a festive bazaar for the purchase of traditional goods and auspicious items such as decorative red paper cuttings.

Lunar New Year lasts for 15 days, during which families visit the homes of families and friends to exchange New Year greetings and gifts such as mandarin oranges, and red packets containing money known as a *hongpao* (红包).

A key practice amongst families is *tuan yuan fan* (团圆饭) or reunion dinner, a meal that takes place on the eve of Lunar New Year. The meal, which often features traditional Chinese cuisine, brings everyone together to renew and reaffirm their family ties.

IMAGE COURTESY OF UNSPLASH

# Hari Raya Puasa

Hari Raya Puasa, also known as Hari Raya Aidilfitri, is a major festival celebrated by Muslims in Singapore to mark the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. Preparations for the festival include the purchase of traditional clothes known as the *baju kurong*, and the making of festive food items like traditional pastries.

On the first day of Hari Raya Puasa, Muslims will visit relatives and friends to partake in communal feasts, where traditional food items like *ketupat* (rice cake wrapped in coconut leaves) and *rendang* (a spicy stew) are a common staple. During these visits, young members take turns to kiss the hand of the eldest or head of the family, as a form of respect and to seek for forgiveness and blessings.



An inter-generational family gathering is customary as part of the celebration of Hari Raya Puasa.

Devotees taking part in the festival of the Nine Emperor Gods.



A musical performance by a Peranakan ensemble.



# Oral Traditions & Expressions

Oral traditions and expressions in Singapore are practiced and transmitted between generations through many different languages and dialects. Aside from the four official languages of Malay, English, Mandarin and Tamil, Singapore's linguistic diversity includes a variety of other languages and ethnic dialects.

These languages and dialects include Hokkien and Cantonese (Chinese dialects), Javanese (a language from the island of Java spoken by parts of the Malay community in Singapore) and Kristang (a creole language spoken by parts of the Eurasian community, which comprises people of a mix of European and Asian heritage).

The practices of oral traditions and expressions come in many forms. They include theatre-type performances such as *getai* (歌台) and *wayang peranakan*, along with song and music traditions like *dikir barat*, a Malay choral ensemble. Through these channels, oral traditions and expressions are transmitted, and they enable communities to nurture and create their own cultures and identities.

# Getai

*Getai* (歌台), which translates literally from Chinese as “song stage”, is a form of entertainment involving live shows of music, song, and dance. It is characterised by loud and vibrant colours, with LED lights adorning the stage, and performers dressed in flamboyant outfits.

*Getai* is performed in Mandarin and other Chinese dialects like Hokkien and Cantonese. Performances often take place on temporary stages in open community spaces during festive occasions, such as the Hungry Ghost Festival or *Zhong Yuan Jie* (中元节), where Chinese Buddhists and Taoists believe the Gates of Hell are opened, and spirits of the dead roam the earth.

*Getai* in Singapore is continuously evolving and is able to keep up with the times by appealing to a younger generation through initiatives such as the use of online streaming of performances, and the introduction of modern genres of music like Korean-pop.



A crowd catching a *getai* performance, a form of live entertainment involving music, song and dance.



IMAGE COURTESY OF NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD

Wayang peranakan performance.

# Wayang Peranakan

*Wayang peranakan* is a theatre form derived from *bangsawan*, a type of Malay theatre in the early 20th century. It is performed by the Chinese Peranakan in the Baba Malay language, and serves as an avenue for the transmission of the language.

Since it was first staged in the 1920s, *wayang peranakan* has gone through numerous resurgences. Today, its narratives typically revolve around the daily life of a Peranakan household, with the central figures of the show being the elderly widowed mother, her son, and his wife-to-be.

For the comedic element, the cast often includes a non-Peranakan, be it a neighbour or *amah* (domestic helper).



# Dikir Barat

*Dikir barat* is a widely practiced form of oral tradition and expression for the Malay community in Singapore. Traditionally a choral ensemble, a *dikir barat* group is typically made up of youths or young adults.

The ensemble comprises a *tok juara* (lead vocalist), a *tukang karut* (jester), an *awok-awok* (chorus) of 12-16 persons, along with a percussion ensemble. A distinctive feature of *dikir barat* is the upbeat rhythmic and synchronised movements of the hands and arms accompanied by vocal performances such as the *lagu juara* (opening song).

*Dikir barat* continues to be a vibrant ICH element in Singapore, and there are about 70-90 active troupes who take part in regular competitions, while schools and community groups often have their own recreational ensembles.



IMAGE COURTESY OF NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD

Youths taking part in a *dikir barat* performance, which comprises a choral and percussion ensemble characterised by the upbeat rhythmic and synchronised movements of the hands and arms.

IMAGE COURTESY OF EURASIAN ASSOCIATION, SINGAPORE



Jinkli Nona Song and Branyo Dance performers taking part in a community event.

## Jinkli Nona Song and Branyo Dance

Jinkli Nona Song and Branyo Dance is a colourful and energetic song and folk dance practiced by the Eurasian community in Singapore. It is often performed at community events such as weddings or parties. While there are many variations of Jinkli Nona Song and Branyo Dance, the version in Singapore is adapted directly from the Portuguese Eurasians in Macau.

Traditionally, the Jinkli Nona tune is played using the accordion and other handheld instruments. It accompanies the Branyo Dance, known as “flirtatious dance”, as it is always danced in pairs, with dancers moving towards and away from their partners, without touching one another.

Performers also wear traditional folk dance costumes. The male performers are dressed in a pair of black pants, a long-sleeved white shirt, a cummerbund, along with a hat, while female performers are dressed in a red sleeveless dress, a white shirt, a black belt, and a headscarf.



IMAGE COURTESY OF NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD

Public performances such as *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet) help raise awareness of oral traditions and expressions in Singapore.

An ensemble of *nanyin* practitioners playing traditional Chinese musical instruments at a cultural performance.



# Performing Arts

Performing arts in Singapore take the form of various artistic practices such as music, dance and theatre. They provide an avenue for bearers and practitioners to explore their roots, and achieve a deeper sense of connection with their communities.

Today, there are over 100 active performing arts group in Singapore that organise more than 1,400 traditional arts activities and performances annually. These practices include traditional Malay music, Indian dance forms such as *kathakali* and Chinese opera.

IMAGE COURTESY OF NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD

# Indian Dance Forms

The diaspora of the Indian community in Singapore has helped develop the practice of a wide variety of Indian dance forms such as *bharatanatyam*, *kathakali* and *kathak*. Each dance form involves specific gestures, expressions, steps and postures rooted in traditions from the various regions in India.

Indian dance forms have been practised and performed in Singapore since the early 20th century. Traditionally staged within temple grounds or religious compounds, they are now commonly seen in public performance halls, as well as at annual arts events and festivals.



IMAGE COURTESY OF SINGAPORE TOURISM BOARD

Various characters in a *kathakali* performance, where music, script, voice and movements of the dancers come together to form an expressive performing art form.



IMAGE COURTESY OF NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD

A Chinese Opera performance.

# Chinese Opera

Chinese opera is a performing arts form rooted in Chinese traditions. Its origins in Singapore date back to the early 19th century, when it was first performed by early Chinese migrants.

Chinese opera in Singapore is performed in a variety of Chinese dialects that include Cantonese, Hokkien and Teochew. Music, acting, elaborate costumes and acrobatics are key features of Chinese opera performances, which are often based on stories related to Chinese folklore, history or literature.

Today, Chinese opera continues to be practiced and performed amongst the Chinese community by professional and amateur troupes that stage performances all year-round, often in open community spaces for public entertainment or at temples as part of a religious activity.

# Malay Dance Forms

Malay dance forms in Singapore are wide-ranging and diverse, and are actively practiced by members of the Malay community. They are practiced and performed throughout the year through professionally staged productions, festive events that includes weddings, social gatherings and community celebrations.

Malay dance forms in Singapore come in many different styles. Often accompanied by an orchestra featuring a variety of instruments such as the violin, *rebana* (drum) and *gendang* (two-headed drum), they range from the slow-paced and intricate movements of *asli*, the lively beats of *joget*, and the graceful movements of *inang*, which is commonly performed by pairs of women and men at social events.



IMAGE COURTESY OF NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD

A traditional Malay dance performance.

A group of Indian cultural performers taking part in the annual Chingay parade.



IMAGE COURTESY OF SINGAPORE TOURISM BOARD

With over 80% of Singapore's 5.7 million population living in high-rise apartments spread across the city, Singaporeans have learned to adapt and evolve their cultural traditions and practices to suit their environment.



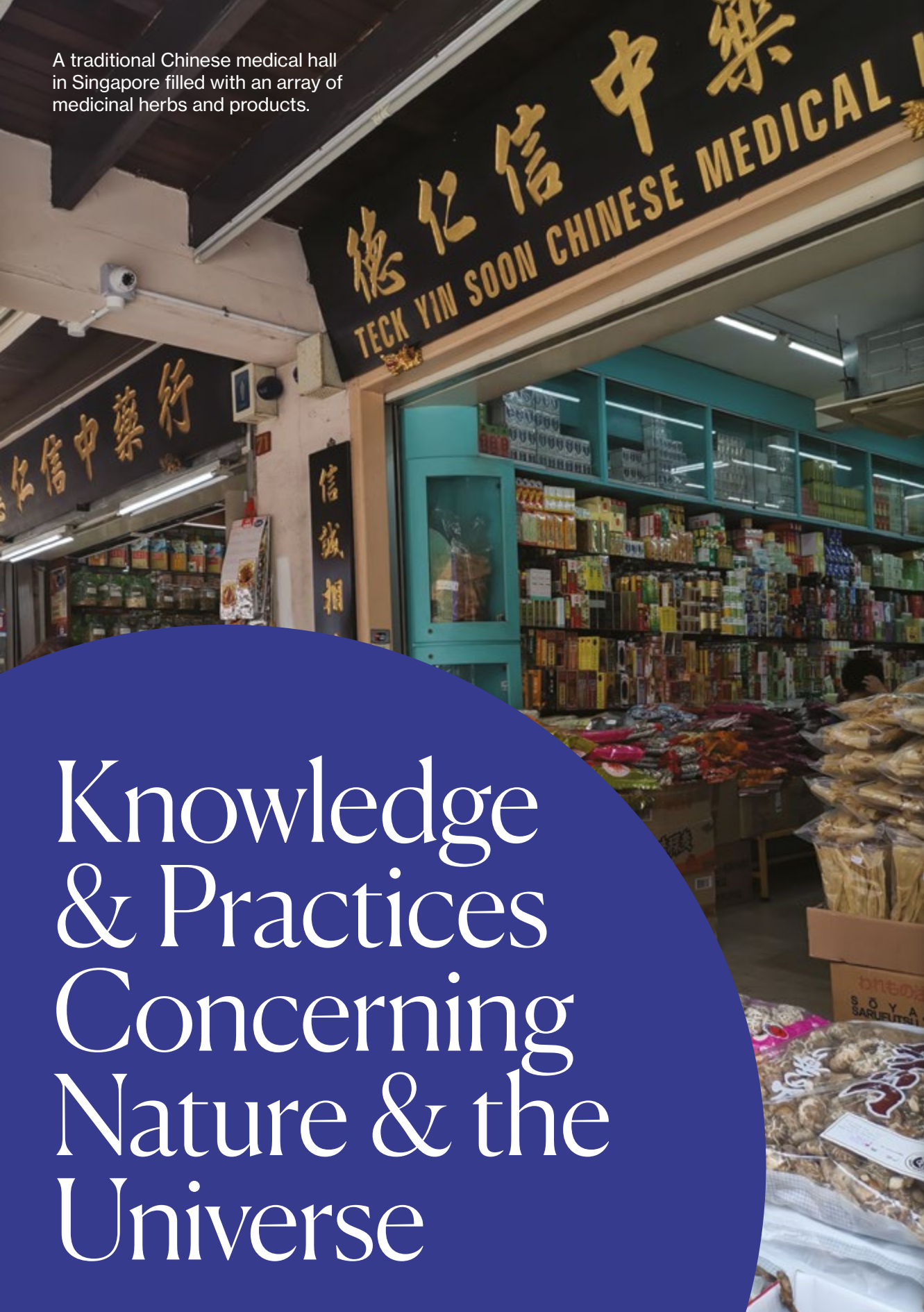
IMAGE COURTESY OF NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD

Members of the public enjoying a cultural performance at the Singapore Heritage Festival, an annual festival that helps to raise awareness and understanding of Singapore's cultural heritage.



IMAGE COURTESY OF NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD

A traditional Chinese medical hall in Singapore filled with an array of medicinal herbs and products.



# Knowledge & Practices Concerning Nature & the Universe

In Singapore, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe are most commonly associated with the cultural traditions and practices surrounding birth, health and death.

While the Chinese, Malay and Indian communities have their own traditional pre-natal and post-natal practices, it is common to see some of these practices, such as *jamu* (a herbal medicine used by the Malay community), being used by women across communities as part of post-natal care.

ICH practices pertaining to health are also actively practiced by the abovementioned communities and these practices include traditional Chinese medicine (or TCM), traditional Malay medicine and Ayurveda (a form of traditional Indian medicine).

# Traditional Chinese Medicine

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) is the practice of alternative medical treatment by the Chinese community. It adopts a holistic approach by viewing the human body as an organic whole. Common TCM therapies include acupuncture, cupping, and the use of herbs, all of which aim to help restore the body's resistance to diseases and illnesses.

Today, TCM continues to be a viable trade, and is seen as a complement to modern medicine. Presently, there are over 2,000 licensed TCM practitioners in Singapore, many of whom run their own independent clinics conveniently located in housing estates.

IMAGE COURTESY OF NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD



*Jamu*, a form of herbal medicine, is a common remedy used by women after their pregnancy.

# Traditional Malay Medicine

Traditional Malay medicine comprises diverse practices, approaches and knowledge of health and healing that are associated with Malay culture and passed down via *ilmu* (knowledge) through generations.

Practitioners of traditional Malay medicine, such as the *bidan* (midwife), also hold specialised knowledge related to women's health that include *jamu* (a herbal medicine) and *urut* (traditional massage techniques).



IMAGE COURTESY OF JONATHAN CHOO, SINGAPORE PRESS HOLDINGS

The use of acupuncture is a common form of treatment in traditional Chinese medicine.



# Ayurveda

Believed to have started in Singapore in the late 19th–20th centuries, Ayurveda is a widely-practiced form of Indian medicine based on the applied philosophy of “metaphysical fitness”.

Physician-practitioners of Ayurveda are known as *vaidayas*, and they use medical formulations of plant, animal and mineral origins, along with massage treatments. Ayurveda has been gaining popularity in recent decades because of its emphasis on a holistic approach in treating long-term ailments and achieving balance.




IMAGE COURTESY OF VYASA YOGA SINGAPORE

A selection of remedies that are used as part of the practice of Ayurveda.



IMAGE COURTESY OF NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD

Owners of songbirds gathering at a communal space to watch, listen and admire their beloved songbirds.

A close-up photograph of a craftsman working on a lion dance head. The craftsman is focused on his work, using a tool to adjust the intricate details of the head. The lion head is covered in white fur and features large, expressive eyes with blue and black patterns. The background is slightly blurred, showing a workshop setting with various tools and materials.

A traditional craftsman putting together a lion head which is used as part of lion dance performances.

# Traditional Craftsmanship

Traditional craftsmanship in Singapore consists of a wide selection of trades carried out by practitioners, who have been honing and transmitting their skills across generations. Examples of traditional crafts in Singapore include the making of traditional clothing wear like the *sari* or *baju kurong*, handicrafts like Nyonya beadwork and embroidery, and Chinese musical instruments.

To keep pace with emerging trends and globalisation, some traditional craftsmen in Singapore have been reinventing their crafts and exploring ways to appeal to a new generation of customers, while retaining the foundations of their respective practices.

An example will be the modernising of traditional women's clothing like the *cheongsam* (a form-fitting dress with a cylindrical collar worn mainly by the Chinese), *sari* (a garment of cotton or silk draped around the body worn mainly by women from South Asia) and *kebaya* (a light loose tunic worn mainly by the Malays and Peranakans) into fashionable wear that appeals to the younger generation and changing tastes. By doing so, practitioners of traditional crafts are able to keep their trade alive and ensure the continued transmission of their traditional crafts.

# Nyonya Beadwork and Embroidery

Nyonya beadwork and embroidery are intricate craft forms associated with the Peranakan community. They can be found in decorations for everyday household items, and also on ornamental pieces for special occasions such as weddings.

Female Peranakans from the Chinese Peranakan community are usually the practitioners of Nyonya beadwork and embroidery. The knowledge and skills they possess are primarily transmitted within the family, from grandmothers and mothers to their daughters.

Two iconic examples of the craft are the *kasut manek* (beaded slipper) and the traditional dress of sarong kebaya, which continue to be worn by Peranakan women today.



IMAGE COURTESY OF SINGAPORE TOURISM BOARD

A practitioner in the process of crafting a Nyonya beadwork and embroidery piece.



IMAGE COURTESY OF THOW KWANG POTTERY JUNGLE

Practitioners in the process of firing up the dragon kiln used to create ceramic pieces.

## Making of Wood-Fired Pottery

The production of traditional wood-fired pottery using dragon kilns draws on millennia of pottery traditions in China. It is a practice that requires a vast amount of experience and knowledge to manage various components, including maintaining the temperature of the kiln, which can go up to 1,300 degrees Celsius.

While dragon kilns are no longer used for the production of commercial products, various studios and community groups in Singapore continue to use them to produce pieces for artistic purposes, thereby contributing to a vibrant and active pottery community.

# Rangoli

Rangoli, which means “an array of colours” in Sanskrit, is a multi-coloured floor decoration made from ingredients such as rice flour, flower petals, seeds, and other natural substances.

The design is traditionally drawn freehand on the ground, with patterns ranging from geometric shapes of peacock motifs, to floral designs or faces of Hindu gods. Another key feature of a rangoli pattern is that it is made of unbroken lines, as it is believed that this prevents evil spirits from penetrating through the gaps.

The practice of rangoli is particularly prominent during the festive period of Deepavali, during which, Indian households display them at the entrances of the homes as a symbol of wealth, joy, and thanksgiving to deities.



IMAGE COURTESY OF NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD

Members of the Indian community coming together to create a rangoli, a multi-coloured floor decoration.



A traditional craftsman conducting a demonstration as part of the Singapore Heritage Festival.

IMAGE COURTESY OF NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD

A female hawker  
serving a dish at her  
hawker stall.



# Food Heritage

For many Singaporeans, food heritage is the form of ICH that they can most readily appreciate and identify with. Singapore's food heritage connects people of different backgrounds and ethnicities, and represents the diverse cultures and rich traditions of Singapore's forefathers.

Singaporeans enjoy a wide array of cuisines that include Eurasian, Peranakan, Indian, Malay, Chinese, and many other international dishes. Across generations, practitioners and bearers of food heritage have constantly adapted their recipes to include ingredients and cooking techniques of other communities, allowing Singaporeans to enjoy a multitude of cross-cultural flavours.

In a 2017 public poll, 'Food Heritage' came up top, as the most important aspect of Singapore's ICH amongst more than 3,000 respondents. Following public consultations and suggestions from the community, Singapore has included 'Food Heritage' as an additional category in its ICH Inventory in 2018.

IMAGE COURTESY OF NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD

# Eurasian Cuisine in Singapore

Eurasian cuisine in Singapore features a myriad of European and Asian influences, particular those of the Portuguese and Malay lineage. It is characterised by strong and rich flavours, with dishes that include soups, stews and curries. A key ingredient in many Eurasian dishes is *rempah*, a herb and spice paste that highlights the bold flavours of the cuisine.

Eurasian dishes are often associated with celebratory occasions related to Christianity. For instance, *feng* (a stew made with pig's innards) would be served along with rice during Christmas, while the famous curry *debal* (better known as Devil's curry due to its spiciness) is a staple on Boxing Day.



IMAGE COURTESY OF QUENTIN'S EURASIAN RESTAURANT

Curry *debal*, also commonly known as Devil's curry, is a spicy staple of Eurasian cuisine in Singapore.

IMAGE COURTESY OF NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD



Laksa is a spicy noodle soup dish flavoured with coconut milk and dried shrimp, ingredients commonly found in Peranakan cuisine.

# Peranakan Cuisine in Singapore

Peranakan cuisine can be described as a hybrid of Chinese, Malay, Indian, Thai and Western colonial influences. It arose through a blend of Chinese ingredients and cooking techniques, along with spices and native ingredients used by the indigenous Malays.

Peranakan cuisine is typically aromatic and spicy, and its ingredients include Malay spices such as *belacan* (dried fermented shrimp paste) alongside Chinese ingredients like pork and *kiam chye* (pickled vegetables).

The recipes and techniques for preparing Peranakan cuisine are passed down between family members. This means that there is no one conventional way of cooking Peranakan cuisine as it differs according to the preference of each family and/or individual.

# Hawker Culture in Singapore

Hawker Culture in Singapore comprises hawker centres, hawkers and hawker food. It is practiced throughout Singapore, and involves all members of the community regardless of age, gender, ethnicities and social backgrounds. Practitioners of Hawker Culture include hawkers, who prepare hawker food, and serve as the bearers and masters of the culinary practices. Alongside them are the patrons, who dine and mingle over hawker food in 'community dining rooms' called hawker centres. Hawker Culture is transmitted through the generations, and comprises a wide variety of cuisines that reflects the multicultural identity of Singapore. Over the years, hawkers have continuously adapted their cuisine to include ingredients and cooking techniques from the Chinese, Malay, Indian and other communities in Singapore.

There are currently over 110 hawker centres located across the island, and they house more than 6,000 hawkers, enabling Singaporeans from all walks of life to continuously partake and enjoy Hawker Culture on a daily basis, be it breakfast, lunch or dinner.



A typical scene at a hawker centre, an open-air space where people from all walks of life get to enjoy an array of different cuisines.



A female hawker preparing *biryani*, a spiced rice dish that is commonly served with mutton or chicken.

# Safeguarding Practices & Initiatives

A veteran practitioner teaching a child the techniques of traditional embroidery.



A traditional woodcarver conducting a demonstration.

The responsibility to safeguard ICH in Singapore involves all members of the community. These include practitioners, the public, communities, private organisations, NGOs and governmental institutions. The following are some of the initiatives that have been introduced to safeguard ICH in Singapore through the various channels of documentation, community engagement, grants and public education.



Youths performing a traditional Malay dance routine.

A musician teaching a student how to play a traditional Malay musical instrument.





# ICH Inventory

In April 2018, Singapore launched its ICH Inventory (<https://roots.sg/ich>) to serve as a repository for ICH elements in Singapore. To date, there are 70 elements in the ICH inventory. The inventory is updated regularly with inputs from heritage experts, practitioners and members of the public.

## Involvement of Communities

The community in Singapore is actively involved and engaged in the safeguarding of ICH. Together with both private and public institutions, they work on co-creating and engaging with fellow citizens to raise awareness and understanding of ICH in Singapore.

To support ground-up efforts of communities, the National Heritage Board provides various financial grants to practitioners, academics, NGOs and community groups to conduct research and showcase Singapore's ICH.

These grants have supported research papers, publications, exhibitions, programmes and talks that promote public awareness and facilitate the transmission of ICH in Singapore.

Cultural festivals such as the Wan Qing Dumping Festival provide the younger generation with an opportunity to learn traditional practices such as the making of dumplings.



IMAGE COURTESY OF NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD

Schools also play an active role in developing the interest of students in topics of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Here, students are learning more about the traditional game of five stones.

## Stewards of Singapore's Intangible Cultural Heritage

In October 2019, the National Heritage Board launched its Stewards of Singapore's Intangible Cultural Heritage scheme to recognise individuals and groups that have made outstanding contributions in their respective fields of ICH.

The scheme also aims to raise public awareness and appreciation of Singapore's ICH, and to enhance the transmission of ICH elements to ensure their long-term sustainability.

IMAGE COURTESY OF NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD

# Conclusion

ICH is part of everyday life in Singapore and helps to foster a sense of identity and belonging amongst people from all walks of life.

From the daily appreciation of Singapore's food heritage, to the observance of social practices, rituals and festive events that take place throughout the year, ICH is a vibrant reflection of Singapore's multicultural heritage.

In recognition of the importance of ICH, Singaporeans acknowledge that the safeguarding and transmission of ICH are the responsibility of everyone, from the individual to the community to the state.

Consequently, while it is important for the state to engage with stakeholders on policies and safeguarding measures, members of various communities are encouraged to come forth to be supporters, advocates, as well as the next generation bearers of ICH in Singapore.

In multicultural and multiracial Singapore, it is important to note that Singaporeans acknowledge and celebrate both the individual and cross-cultural practices that make up Singapore's diverse ICH landscape.

This openness towards different ICH elements across diverse communities encourages communities to go beyond understanding, and provides them with opportunities to be involved with the cultural practices of other communities.

However, the safeguarding of ICH in Singapore is not without its challenges. Like many other major cities across the globe, urbanisation and globalisation have led to the dwindling and eventual disappearance of ICH practices in Singapore.

It is thus important that the concepts of resilience, adaptation and innovation be embraced with regards to the safeguarding and practice of ICH. This will enable ICH practices to constantly evolve and ensure their continued survival and transmission to future generations.

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