

LIFE IN BRITAIN'S CROWN COLONY



Inquiry Question

Should Singapore's colonial period be
celebrated and **preserved** by Singaporeans?
(1867- 1945)

The Coloniser

How did the British overcome the challenges Singapore faced during this period and contribute to its development?



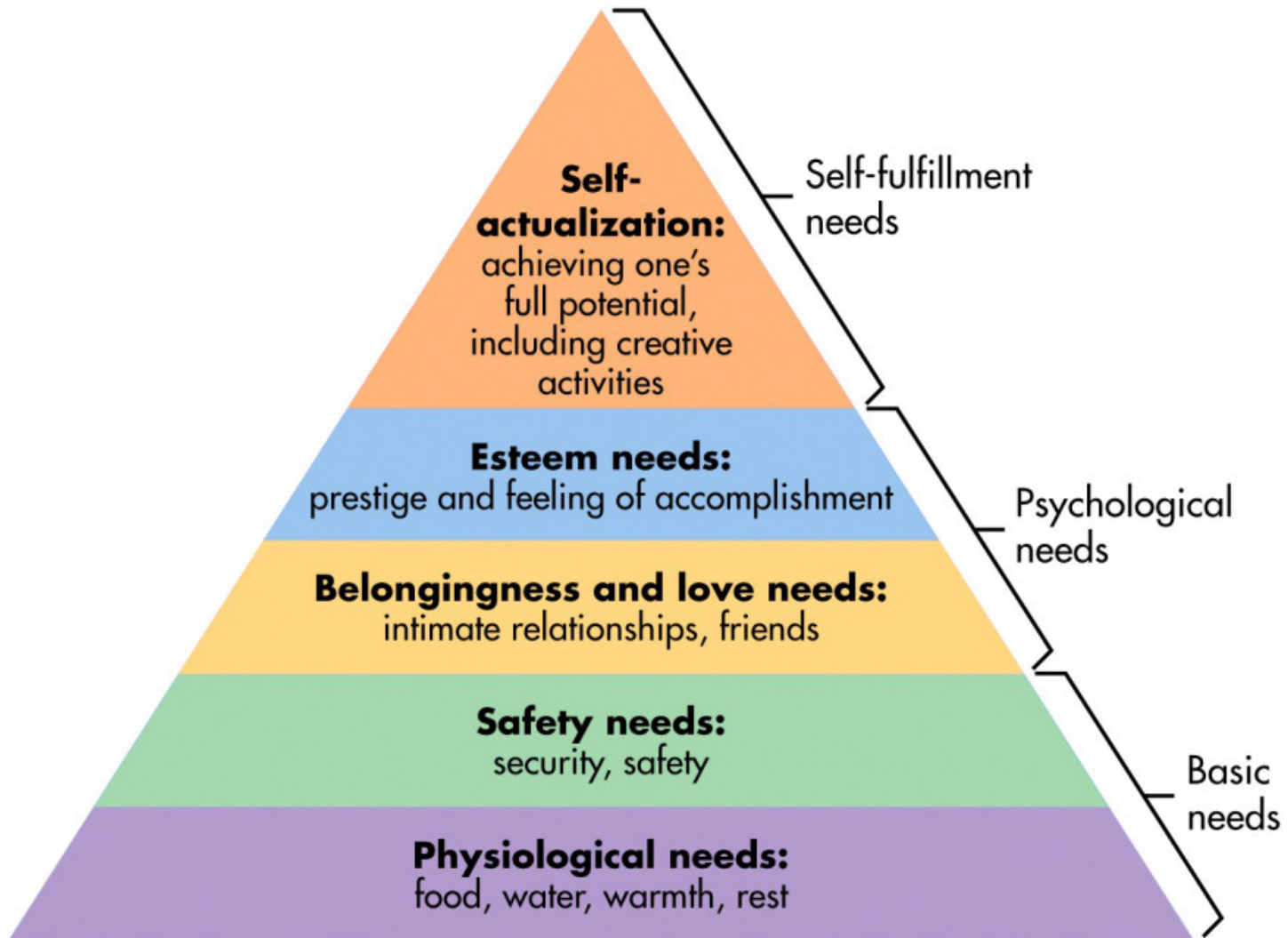
Imagine you are a British official in Singapore, what are your priorities, concerns and fears? How will you go about dealing with them?

The Colonised

How do we know that their lives were better off in Singapore?

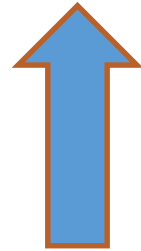


Manslow's Hierarchy of Needs

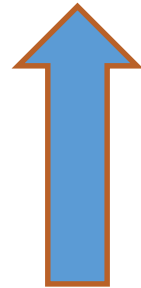


Governance (Coloniser): How was SG ruled?

Colonial Office (London)



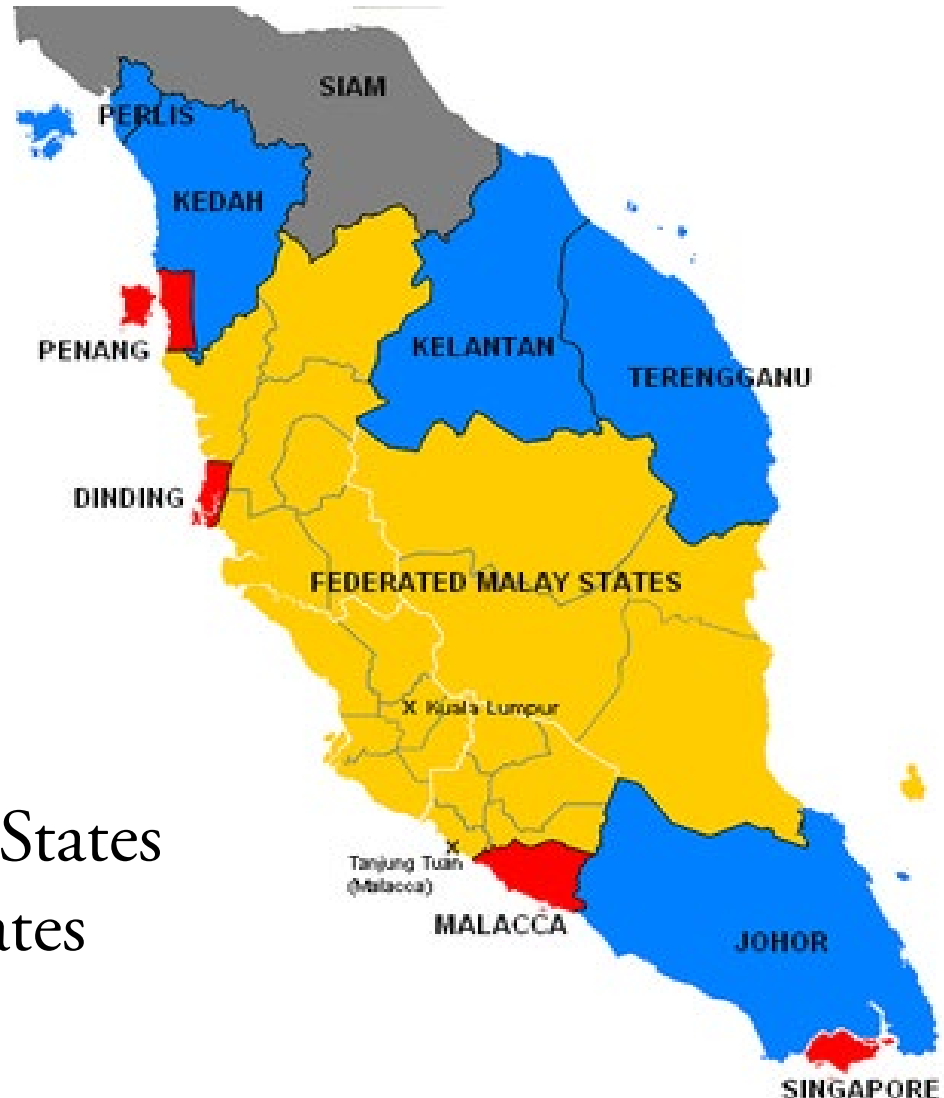
British India (Calcutta)



Straits Settlements (PMS)



Straits Settlements in Malaya formed in 1826



Malaya in 1922:

- Unfederated Malay States
- Federated Malay States
- Straits Settlements

Direct vs Indirect Rule

- **Direct vs Indirect rule**

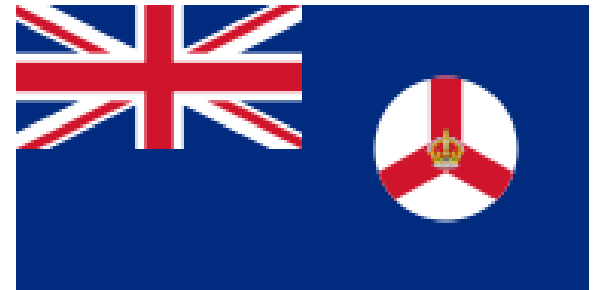
- Direct rule – Power takes direct control over the legislature, executive and civil administration of an otherwise largely self-governing territory.
- Indirect rule was colonial powers ruling through pre-existing indigenous power structures, who were afforded benefits, at the cost of losing control over certain parts of administration.

- **Pros and cons for the coloniser?**

Governance (Coloniser)

- Transfer to Crown Colony

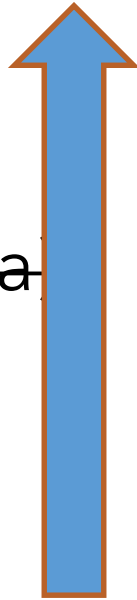
- 1867: Control of the Straits Settlements was transferred from the government in India to the Colonial Office in London.
- The Straits Settlements became known as a Crown Colony, directly administered by Britain, and belonging to the Queen of England.
- Beneficial or detrimental?



Transfer to Crown Colony 1867

Colonial Office (London)

~~British India (Calcutta)~~



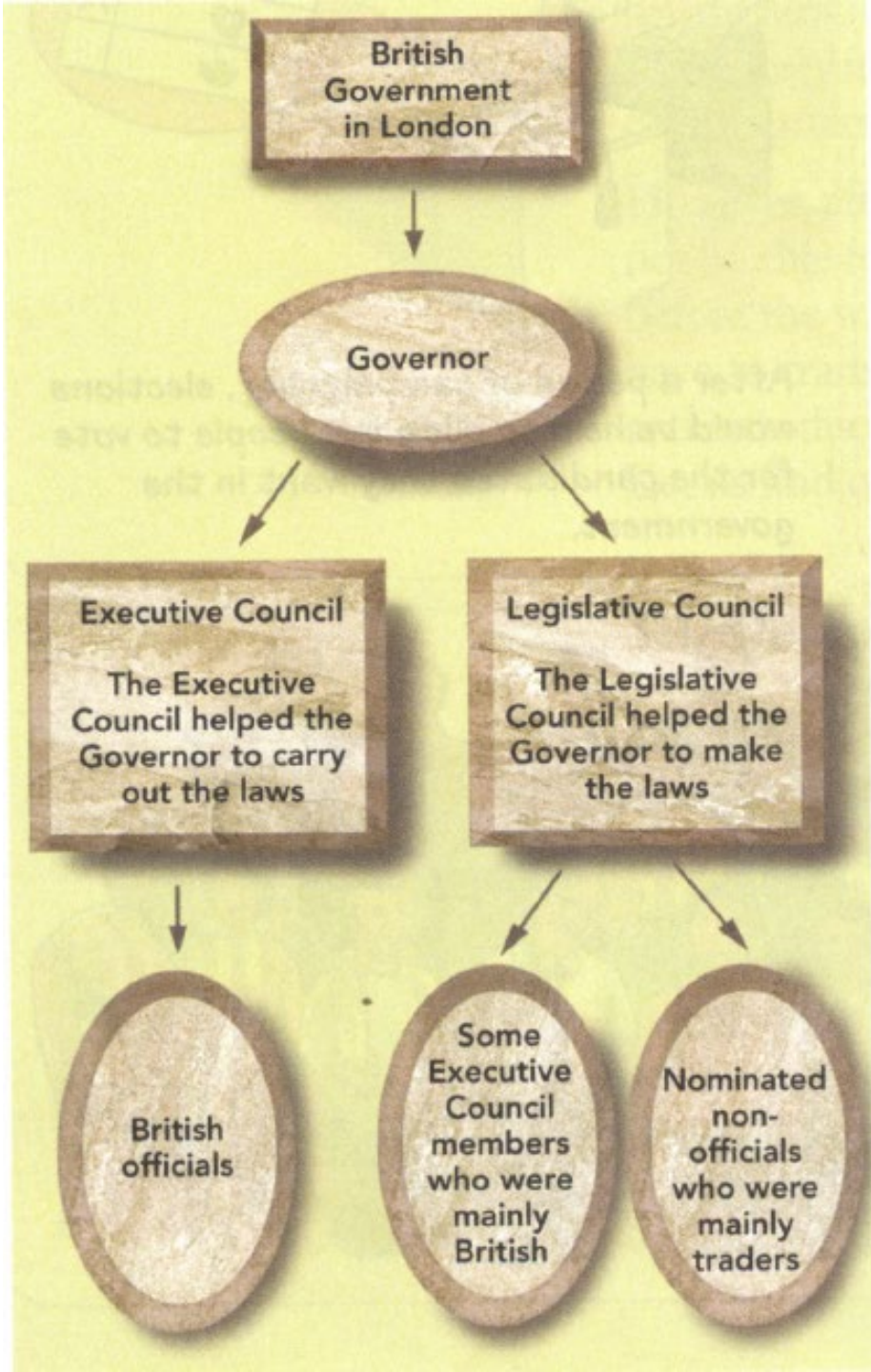
Straits Settlements

Governance (Coloniser)

- Transfer to Crown Colony

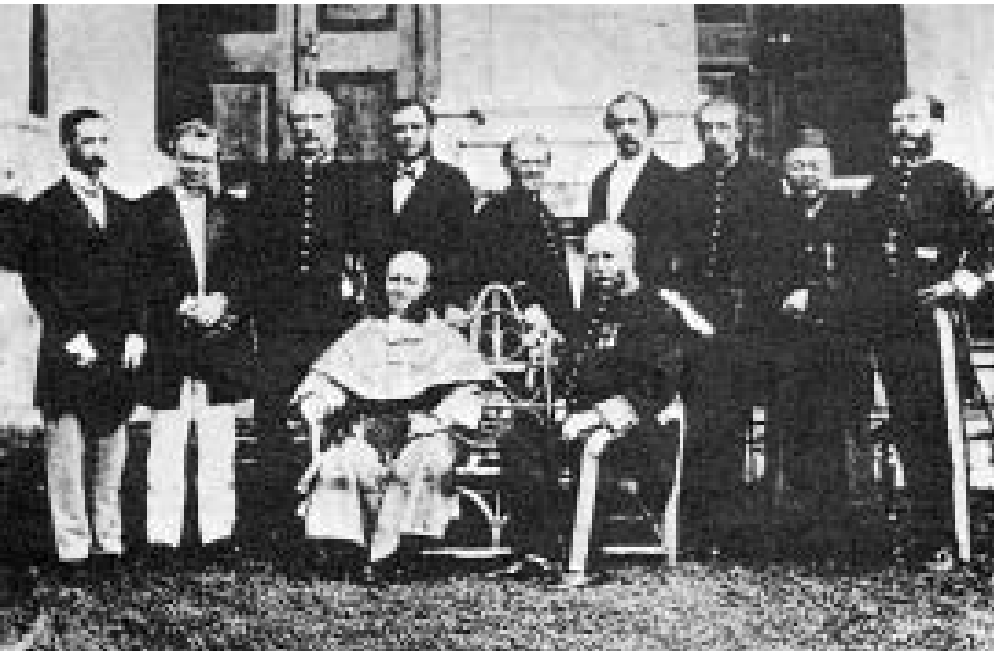
- Under the Colonial Office, a British official called the **Governor** was put in charge of the Straits Settlements.
- Ruled with the help of **two bodies**:
- **Executive Council**
 - Helped the Governor to **carry out laws**
 - Made up of high-ranking British **officials** ('officials')
- **Legislative Council**
 - Helped the Governor to **make laws**
 - Comprised members of the Executive Council ('officials') as well as '**non-officials**' nominated by the Governor.

Structure of government in the Straits Settlements (1867-1942)



Governance (Colonised) - Political Participation?

- Singapore's population was mainly Asian but the British government ruled with **little Asian participation**. Why?



Legislative Councils in 1867 and 1948: Spot the difference

Governance (Colonised) - Political Participation?

- Why was it important that the locals participated in the government?
- Who was the first Asian non-official to be appointed in 1869?
- 1924: Equal number of non-officials and officials in the Legislative Council.



Hoo Ah Kay (also known as **Whampoa**)

Governance (Colonised) - Pioneer Generation?

Dr Lim Boon Keng

- Dr Lim saw that many of the poor could not afford housing with high rental rates, he asked the Legislative Council to pass a law to **control house rents**.
- The Legislative Council passed a law that stopped landlords from raising house rents.



Dr Lim Boon Keng

Governance (Colonised) - Pioneer Generation?

Eunos Abdullah

- President of the Singapore Malay Union.
- Appealed in the Legislative Council in 1927, and successfully attained over 600 acres of land for a Malay settlement called *Kampung Melayu* (Geylang Serai)
- **How did it benefit the local Malay?**
- The land provided **low-cost housing** and allowed Malays to **earn a living** by growing fruits and vegetables and rearing poultry.



Eunos Abdullah

Governance (Colonised)

- Political Participation?

- However, there were still **limitations to local participation** in government through the Legislative Council:
 - Governor did not have to follow the **advice** of the Legislative Council.
 - Governor retained the right to agree to or **veto** all bills.
 - All unofficial members were **appointed** by the Governor. No election until the late 1940s.
- => All these limited the extent of **real participation** in government by locals.

Internal Security (Coloniser) - Improvements?

Think:

If you were part of
the colonial
government seeking
to control the secret
societies,

what measures
would you take?



Internal Security (Coloniser)

- First steps

- 1869 Dangerous Societies Suppression Ordinance
 - Required societies to be **registered** but ineffective in practice.
 - Oaths, rules, and membership lists were faked to mislead the authorities. No way of verifying the real leaders' names.
 - **Do you think this was successful? Why or why not?**

Internal Security (Coloniser)

- Turning point?

- In 1877, the Chinese Protectorate was established to handle all matters related to the Chinese.
- **William Pickering** was the first Protector of the Chinese.
- **Why was he successful?**
 - Fluent in Mandarin and various dialects.
 - Genuinely sought to improve the conditions of the Chinese and gradually won their trust:
 - Worked closely with the Chinese and arbitrated over their petty quarrels.
 - Inspected coolie houses and ships to ensure coolies were treated fairly and that they came willingly.
 - Registered brothels, prostitutes, and established the Po Leung Kuk for the protection of girls who had been sold or unwillingly lured into prostitution.



William Pickering



Chinese Protectorate building in Havelock Road

“However degraded the [Secret] Society may have become in its present hands, there is great reason to believe that originally... its object was to benefit mankind by spreading a spirit of brotherhood...” — William Pickering, writing in the Journal of the Straits Branch of the Asiatic Society, July 1878.

Internal Security (Coloniser)

- Turning point?

- All these efforts, however, brought Pickering into conflict with the secret societies:
 - Undermined secret societies' control over immigration and prostitution. Effects?
 - Matters came to a head (literally) when Pickering tried to tackle the problem of illegal gambling, a source of much profit to the secret societies.
 - 1887, Pickering was **attacked** by a Ghee Hin member.
- In light of the attempt on Pickering's life, the government stepped up efforts to suppress secret societies.

Internal Security (Coloniser)

- Turning point?

- 1890 Societies Ordinance
 - Dangerous societies were banned completely
 - Did not succeed in eliminating the secret societies but broke them up into small gangs of thugs which continued to extort protection money and fought among themselves for control of areas.
 - Many continued to operate underground under front organisations.
 - But never able to recover the widespread power they wielded previously.
- Overall, the establishment of the Chinese Protectorate and the ban on secret societies brought more law and order into Singapore.

Security (Colonised)

- Source of wealth

- Secret societies became increasingly powerful due to their **control over the vice industries**.
 - Opium smuggling
 - Coolie brokering
 - Brothel operations
 - Robbery, theft, extortion, kidnap, murder, etc.
- Often clashed with each other as each had their **own agenda and interests** to protect.
- Police force was incapable of controlling the Chinese population.

Infrastructure (Colonisers)

- How much do we owe it to the British?

Task: Find three things part of Singaporean landscape that are of British origins!

1. What were they used for, what are they currently used for?
2. What was its colonial significance?

Infrastructure (Colonised) -Solely the British's effort?



Public structures

North and South Bridge Road, Serangoon Road and New Harbour Road (today's Keppel Road). Cavenagh Bridge (last major project undertaken by Indian convict labour in 1869).

Commercial Square (Raffles Place). Collyer Quay, which spanned Fort Fullerton at the Singapore River mouth to Telok Ayer, in around 1864.

Kampong Glam

The area was developed in 1831 by 200 convict workers in eight months, at a total cost of \$500.

Prisons

Pearl's Hill Prison (1847) and Bras Basah Convict Jail (1860).

Infrastructure (Colonised) -Solely the British's effort?



St. Andrew's Church

- **Places of worship**
Sri Mariamman Temple (1843)⁴¹ and the second Church of St Andrew in 1856.
- **Port**
Blasted the rocks at the mouth of the Singapore River (Fort Fullerton). They also cleared and widened Keppel Harbour's western gateway in 1848, including blasting of the rock formation there known as Batu Berlayer or Lot's Wife.⁴³
- **Lighthouses**
Convicts were employed as stone cutters, blasters and labourers for the construction of the Horsburgh Lighthouse (1851)⁴⁴ and the Raffles Lighthouse (1855).⁴⁵
- Forest clearing, Land surveying, tiger hunting,

Education (Colonisers) - Provision

ST

SINGAPORE

POLITICS

ASIA

WORLD

VIDEOS

MULTIMEDIA

LIFESTYLE

FOOD

FORUM

OPINION

BUSINESS

SINGAPORE



Courts & Crime

Education

Housing

Transport

Health

Manpower

Environment

Never forget the incompleteness of our history

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Eugene Lim

In May 1823, a group of British dignitaries led by Sophia Hull, better known as Lady Raffles, founded the Singapore Malay Female-School.

This was the first school in Singapore, a title often claimed by its better-known counterpart, Raffles Institution (then Singapore Institution), which was founded by Sir Stamford Raffles.

Few records remain of the Singapore Malay Female-School, but a report by its managing committee in 1825 declared that the school's mission was to spread Christianity "among the lower classes of the female natives".



Education (Colonisers) - Provision

In contrast, Sir Stamford Raffles himself stated that Singapore Institution would "educate the sons of the higher order natives" and "collect the scattered literature and traditions of the country".

Along with needlework, Malay, writing, and arithmetic, students of the Female-School were taught to recite catechisms and read scripture. Despite its humbler ambitions, a quick examination of its list of donors reveals the importance of the school to the British colonial class: besides Raffles, the list includes familiar names like Napier, Farquhar and Maxwell.

Today, our colonial history is often nearly packaged into a montage of familiar episodes: Raffles' arrival; the revival of the entrepot; immigrants from across Asia; and so on. The route taken by our forebears looks almost inevitable, chugging along from one station to another.

Education (Colonisers) - Provision

Yet, as a closer look at the Singapore Malay Female-School reveals, it was more complicated than that. The rules and regulations of the Female-School demonstrate the egalitarian ideals of the committee: "**Females of any Class or Denomination admissible**" and "**destitute or orphan children**" were **fully funded by the school's donors**. Yet the report also betrays the outdated racism of its writers, who expressed surprise at the progress made by some of the students "considering their native habits of indolence, and their want of energy."

It includes an anecdote about one student who left the school under the influence "of the priests and devotees of false religion" - her Muslim relatives - but later begged to return, to the obvious satisfaction of the writers. However, it is unknown whether it was religion or the material benefits of being in the school that caused her change of heart.

Few other records of the Singapore Malay Female-School persist beyond the brief period of early British colonisation. It is likely that it **became defunct after Raffles left Singapore - another discarded piece of history.**

Education (Colonisers) - Provision

“The report is only one of many rich sources of Singapore's colonial history which still exist today. Yet, for many Singaporeans, our knowledge of this period of our past is often **limited to key figures, events and places** - most of us would never have been taught about things like the Singapore Malay Female-School. Such an approach compartmentalises the flow of time into ahistorical boxes, creating gaps that prevent us from understanding our national history in a complete manner.”

Do you agree? How much should be remembered?

What should be retained?

Education (Colonisers)

- Initial Lack of Provision

- Throughout the 19th century, the British government **did not see the need to provide education for the locals.**
- Happy to leave education in the hands of private organisations.
- Can you think of any organisations that founded schools and their reasons for doing so?

Education (Colonisers)

- Turning Point

- In the late 19th century, the colonial government started to **take more responsibility and give more money** for English-medium education.
- Why do you think this was so?
- **More money was given to English-medium schools:**
 - As trade grew and government structures became more complex, more English-literate Asians were required.
 - Supported English education to maintain loyalty to the British Empire.

Education (Colonisers) - Contributions

- For the first time, **government provided English-medium primary schools**.
- Established the **Queen's Scholarship** for top secondary school students to further their studies in British universities.
- **Higher education** became possible only later.
 - 1905: Medical School
 - 1928: Raffles College



**Queen's Scholars from
Singapore, 1886 – 1888**

Education (Colonised)

- Shorter end of ... No stick?

- British did not treat all schools in the same way, Chinese and Tamil education continued to be left to private charities.
- Chinese-medium schools were neglected:
 - British believed these schools raised **anti-British feelings** among the students.
 - Offered some **grants** in exchange for **increased government supervision**.

Education (Colonised)

- How about British allies?

- Malay education was supported but not geared to the needs of the people:
 - The aim of Malay education was to keep Malays contented in their **traditional way of life** by educating them to be better farmers and fishermen.
 - Focused on practical arts, crafts, and gardening.
 - Held Malay children back from Singapore's development.
- **Overall effect of education policy on society?**
- Divisive -> separating the English-educated from those taught in the **vernacular** and widening the gap between different communities.

Read More:

- Vernacular Education on Infopedia
 - http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_2016-10-03_094744.html

Public Healthcare (Colonised)

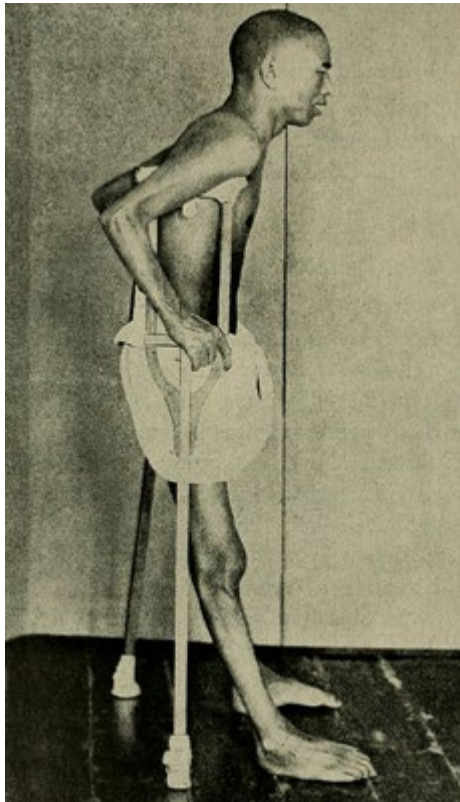
- How about the poor?

- Before 1840, there were virtually **no medical services** apart from one or two gvt doctors and few private practitioners .
- 1872, senior army medical officer warned that “the town is a **nursery for disease**”
- 1896 commission of enquiry (headed by Dr. Lim Boon Keng) revealed that **mortality rate** was higher than that of Hong Kong, Ceylon or India [44-51 per 1000 in the early 1900s]

Public Healthcare (Colon) - Common Killing Diseases



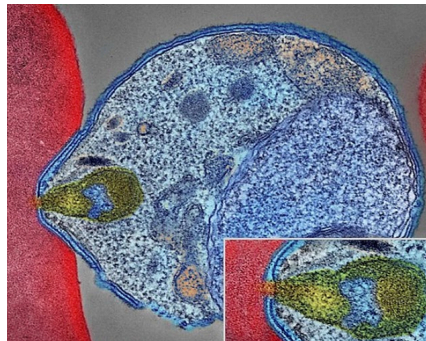
Tuberculosis



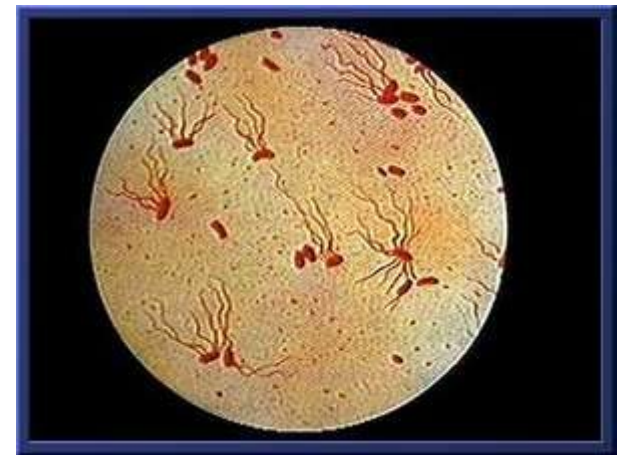
Beri-beri



Dysentary



Malaria



Enteric/Typhoid Fever

Public Healthcare (Colonised)

- Common Killing Diseases



Smallpox was a highly contagious human disease caused by the virus variola. Since smallpox is a virus, there is no treatment. In the 20th century, the virus was eliminated from the human population, the result of a successful World Eradication Program.

Photograph - variola particles, enlarged 2000X

Source : <http://www.seercom.com/bluto/smallpox/introduction.html>

Public Healthcare (Colonised)

- Why were diseases so rampant?

Can you think of any reasons why?

1. No adequate water supply – water pollution
 2. No sewerage scheme (night soil collection)
 3. Few official health services
 4. Increasing population leading to overcrowding – homeless labor
 5. Opium addiction
- What was the state of government hospitals at that time?

Public Healthcare (Colonisers) - Substantial Contributions?

- 1819: The government built a pauper hospital using money from taxing pork.
 - **Was it effective?:**
 - Hospital was dirty and instead of being cured, some people fell even more ill.

Public Healthcare (Colonisers)

- Substantial Contributions?

- 1856: **Public Health Services** were provided by the Municipal Council
- 1868: **Quarantine Law** whereby passengers arriving in Singapore by ship had to be examined to ensure they were not suffering from infectious diseases.

Public Healthcare (Colonisers)

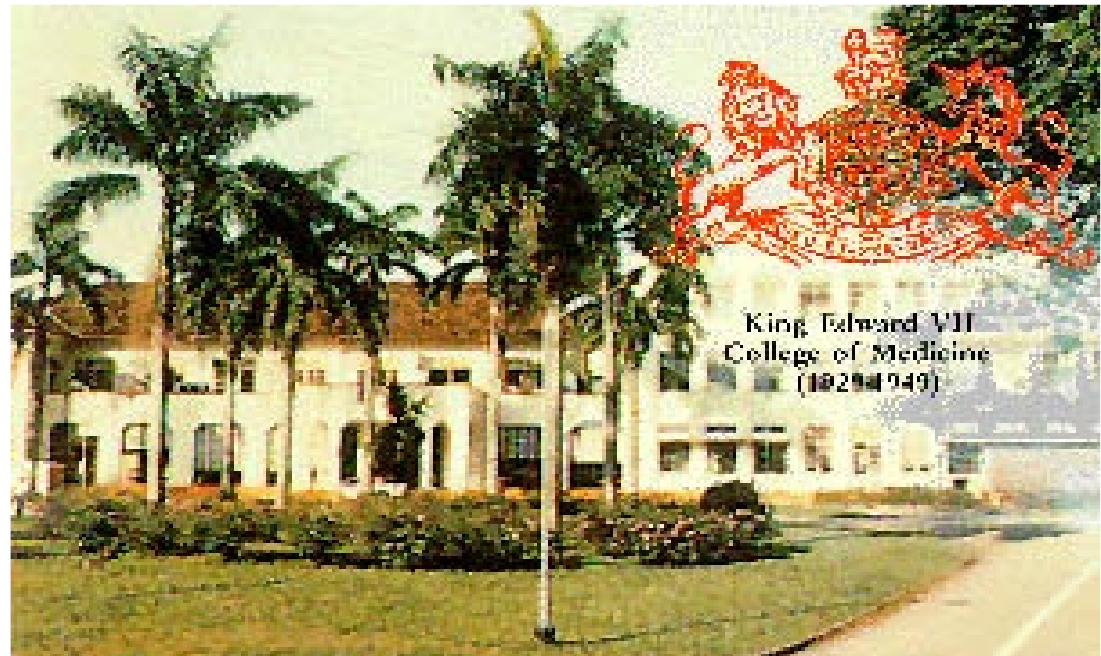
- Substantial Contributions?

- 1882: General Hospital **set up at Sepoy Lines along Outram Road.**
- 1884: Kandang Kerbau Hospital set up in the late 1850s dealt solely with prostitutes (treating venereal diseases)
- 1887, **Public Health Department** established to improve public health in the town.
- **Malaria committee** set up to supervise the infilling of mosquito-infested swamps.
- Night soil collection gradually replaced by **modern water-carriage sewage system.**

Public Healthcare (Colonisers)

- Substantial Contributions?

- Dirty streets and drains **cleared**.
- Hospitals, leper camp, and lunatic asylum set up.
- **King Edward VII College of Medicine** (1905)
- By the 1940s, public health generally improved.



Public Healthcare (Colonised)

- Was it a British initiative?

- **King Edward VII College of Medicine (1905)**
 - Singapore businessmen petitioned the government for the establishment of a medical school to train doctors.
 - Government agreed on the condition that the Chinese community raise funds.
 - Local community responded with enthusiasm and raised \$87,000 and eventually the school was set up.

Public Healthcare (Colonised)

- Was it a British initiative?

- The Straits Times also stated that, of the 36,000 Chinese inhabitants in Singapore, about one third had no visible means of support. It quoted police figures to show that nearly 6,000 were close to starvation, with more than 100 succumbing to it each year.
- Still the government felt that the Chinese should take care of their own.



wealthy Hokkien
merchant, land owner,
entrepreneur and
philanthropist named Tan
Tock Sing

Public Healthcare (Colonised)

- Was it a British initiative?

- 1849: **Tan Tock Seng Hospital** was completed with most of the money coming from **private charity**.

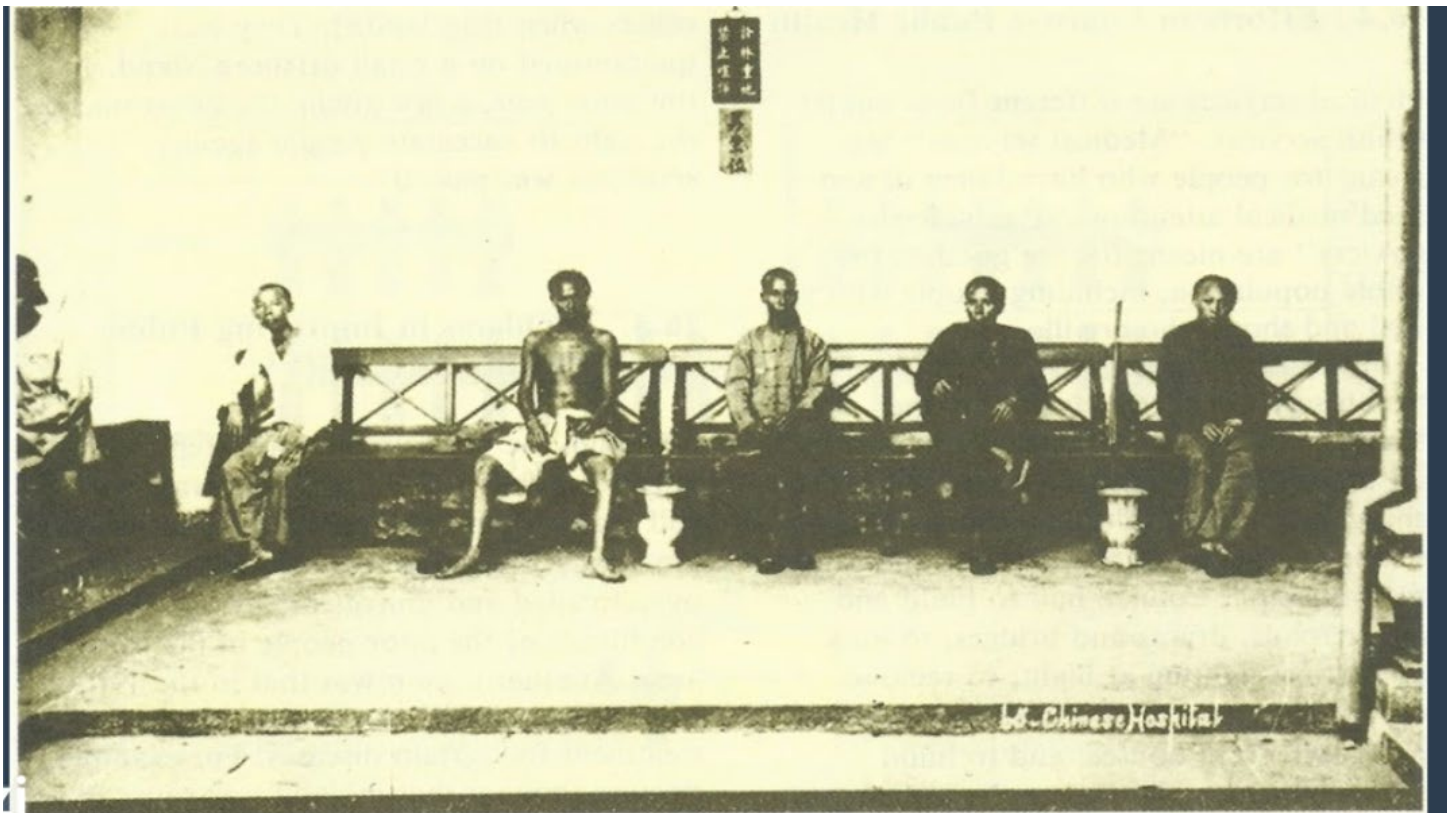


The first Tan Tock Seng Hospital

This is a close-up view of the first Tan Tock Seng Hospital at Pearl's Hill.

Public Healthcare (Colonised) - Was it a British initiative?

- Late 19th century: **Thong Chai Medical Institution** opened, giving free treatment and free medicine to poor people of all races.



Patients at the Thong Chai Medical Institution

Public Health: British glory?

FIGURE 3.1

Annual Mortality Rates of the Total Municipal Population, 1893–1929



Source: ARSM, Health Officer's Department/Health Officer's Report/Municipal Health Office, 1893–1929.

Inquiry Question

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(1867- 1945)

1. Coloniser
2. Colonised