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EXPERIENCE SINGAPORE

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COOPERATION PROGRAMME



In the sky, and on land

2014 Singapore
Airshow wows
crowds and sets a
new trade record



Making it their home

Expatriates give
back to the local
community in
various ways



Sharing experiences and making friends

Fijian officials tap on
Singapore's expertise

Chingay's Charm

Singapore's annual street
parade showcases the
country's cultural diversity

Ed's Note

Dear readers,

In the air, on land, out in the streets and in places of learning ... 2014 got off to a dynamic, colourful and educational start as the following pages of this issue of *Experience Singapore* will show.

Soon after the Lunar New Year, Singapore staged its annual Chingay street parade in early February. A celebration of the country's multiracial diversity and harmony, this year's edition featured 3,000 performers under the theme 'Colours of fabric, one people'. Among them was an international contingent of 500 performers from China, Indonesia, Italy, Malaysia, the Philippines and South Korea who added to the verve that has made Singapore's Chingay one of the largest street parades in Asia. Highlights of the event are captured in **Colours of the nation**.

Visitors were treated to more heart-stopping moments at the 2014 Singapore Airshow which ran from 11 to 16 February. It was the largest airshow staged so far with 60 of the world's top 100 aerospace companies as exhibitors and a record-breaking US\$32 billion worth of trade deals concluded. The highlight was acrobatic flying displays by elite air force pilots from six countries including Singapore. **In the sky and on land** gives an idea of the magnitude of the show.

Sharing experiences and making friends highlights how some visitors were also wowed by Singapore's expertise in human resource

development and other areas. Nine high-level Fijian officials, led by the country's Permanent Secretary for the Public Service Commission, were in Singapore in February on a study visit organised by the Singapore Cooperation Programme. The lessons they took home with them, said the officials, are very relevant to the civil service in Fiji.

Meanwhile, long-term visitors to Singapore are doing their part to give back to the local community. As **Making it their home** shows, some expatriate groups are engaged in charitable causes. Some are raising funds to support the underprivileged in Singapore. Others engage in cultural or sporting exchanges such as teaching karate or the *angklung*, a West Javanese musical instrument.

If the first three months of 2014 are any indication, a fruitful year of cooperation and friendship is definitely on the cards!

Teo Lay Cheng

Director
Public Affairs Directorate
Ministry of Foreign Affairs Singapore

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Keep in touch!

Share with us your memories, photos and experiences in Singapore under the Singapore Cooperation Programme. Email us at mfa@mfa.gov.sg.



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Focus
DIVERSITY ON SHOW

Colours of the NATION

CHINGAY 2014, SINGAPORE'S LARGEST
STREET PARADE, IS A CELEBRATION OF
THE NATION'S COLOURFUL ETHNIC FABRIC.

WORDS BY ALEX NGAI





Focus

DIVERSITY ON SHOW

W

ITH ELABORATE COSTUMES,

spectacular floats and eye-catching performances, street parades are a big part of many cities' identities, and Singapore's Chingay counts as one of the largest street parties in Asia.

Chingay, which means the 'art of costume and masquerade' in the Chinese Hokkien dialect, was brought to Southeast Asia by immigrants from China in the 19th Century. The modern Chingay parade was revived in 1972 by the Singapore government and organised by the People's Association to add to the festivities of the Lunar

New Year, and it soon became an annual event that celebrates Singapore's multiracial diversity.

The 2014 Chingay Parade on 7 and 8 February 2014 showcased some 3,000 performers in a two-hour visual spectacle that included an eight metre-tall straw horse, stilt-walkers and a mass ballet performance. Among the performers was an international contingent that comprised 500 performers from South Korea, China, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Italy. These performers brought their



own cultural traditions to the parade — like the Chinese Fujian Ningde Huotong String Lions troupe which displayed a 1,000-year art form using lion puppets similar to those in traditional Chinese lion dance; the Indonesian performance of *Gelar Tari Topeng*, a traditional mask dance accompanied by *gamelan* music, and the Maesta della Battaglia, a troupe of flag-wavers and musicians from Reggio Emilia in Central Italy.

'Colours of Fabric, One People' was the theme of this year's festivities and the parade featured a unique showpiece — two *batik* paintings, each 360m long, and put together by 40,000 locally-born Singaporeans and new immigrants from more than 30 schools, corporations and grassroots organisations. These were meant to signify the coming together of a uniquely diverse Singaporean culture made up of local-born Singaporeans and new immigrants from different ethnic groups, and the many international influences on the island that is often considered the business and tourism hub of South East Asia.

↑ Two batik paintings, each 360m long, were the showpiece of the parade.



THE HIGHLIGHTS OF CHINGAY 2014



➤ Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong (in red, middle) waves to the audience during the Chingay Parade at the Singapore F1 Pit Building in Marina Bay.





In Singapore

OF MEN AND MACHINES

In the sky, and on land

THE 2014 SINGAPORE AIRSHOW
WOWED THE CROWD WITH A NEW
RECORD-SETTING SHOW.

WORDS BY ALEX NGAI



↑ Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF) Black Knights performing aerobatics in their F-16 fighter jets.

IT WAS THE BIGGEST SHOW in the Singapore Airshow's six-year history and the event that ran from 11 – 16 February 2014 at Singapore's Changi Exhibition Centre certainly lived up to expectations. Featuring over 1,000 participating companies from 47 countries, the show counted 60 of the world's top 100 aerospace companies as exhibitors and saw a record-breaking US\$32 billion (about S\$40 billion) worth of trade deals concluded.

The public, which was allowed in on the last two days of this biennial event, had a spectacular show put up for them. With some 50 aircraft on the ground, it was the largest number of aircraft on display so far. The display included the debut of the Airbus A350-900, a new extra-wide airliner that can seat up to 550 passengers, at an international airshow. The public were also allowed to climb into the cockpits of fighter jets like the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter from the United States, and take a walk through the luxurious cabins of business jets from Gulfstream and Cessna.

The highlight was surely the breathtaking acrobatic flying displays by six teams of elite air force pilots from the United States, Australia, Indonesia, Russia, South



→ The Airbus A350-900 made its debut at the Singapore Airshow.



A visitor checks out the cockpit of a Republic of Singapore Air Force Boeing F15-SG Eagle.



↑ Pushing the right buttons in the modern cockpit of the Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner.



→ A captivated audience taking in the action of a US Air Force (USAF) Bell Boeing MV-22 Osprey tilt rotor aircraft performing aerobatics.

Korea and Singapore. To commemorate the 45th anniversary of the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF), the airforce's Black Knights — who were last seen at the inaugural show in 2008 — took to the skies in their F-16C Fighting Falcons. The six-man team drew gasps of excitement from the crowd with their tight-formation flying and precise manoeuvres.



Joining Hands
PART OF THE COMMUNITY

Making it their home

Whether through charitable donations or cultural exchanges, some expatriate groups in Singapore are making commendable efforts to give back to the local community.

WORDS BY WANDA TAN

SINGAPORE HAS A SIZEABLE FOREIGN COMMUNITY, with 38 per cent of the population — or 2.08 million out of 5.40 million people as of June 2013, according to the country's Department of Statistics — made up of permanent residents and non-residents. In an effort to make a positive difference to the society that they are a part of, albeit temporarily, some expatriate groups have reached out to local Singaporeans and enriched their lives in various ways.

ACTS OF KINDNESS

In Singapore, a wide variety of voluntary welfare organisations (VWOs) are on hand to render financial and other forms of support to the underprivileged. One such VWO is The Breadline Group which assists needy families by providing funds to pay for their rents, utility bills, school fees and other costs. Since the 1980s, one of its main benefactors has been the Scandinavian Women's Association (SWA) Singapore, founded in 1975 and made up of women from Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland.

SWA raises funds through income from membership fees, and through donations from Scandinavian and local companies as well as private individuals. "Our focus is on families with children, and the number of families we take on each year varies. For instance, last year we raised S\$3,750

→ **The Netherlands Charity Association in Singapore raises money for its charitable causes through events such as charity fairs.**



→ JKA Singapore's resident coach Tan Soo Lin teaches expatriates and locals karate, with the help of several foreign instructors.



Photo: Wilson Pang

for four families," says SWA President Ms Lisa Thrane. "Our Charity Officers also pay regular visits to the families in their homes to find out how they are doing, and to lend a ear if they want to talk. Making their lives easier helps us feel more connected to the place we call home."

Another expatriate group that carries out philanthropic activities is the Netherlands Charity Association (NCA) Singapore, established in 1968 by Dutch women living in Singapore. NCA offers aid to a number of VWOs and in 2009 started working with Sanctuary House, which provides short-term foster care for babies. NCA Committee Secretary Ms Melinda Klanderman says, "Sanctuary House helps to give children a fair chance in life, so we feel almost obligated to be a part of it."

NCA donates "several thousand dollars" to Sanctuary House each year, with the money coming from membership fees, individual contributions, corporate sponsorships and fundraising events such as charity fairs. "We also bring people who want to volunteer their time or give donations-in-kind — such as baby clothes, toys and diapers — in contact with Sanctuary House," says Ms Klanderman.

CLOSING THE 'CULTURE GAP'

Collaboration between foreign and local communities is not limited to charitable deeds either. A case in point is the Japan Karate Association (JKA) Singapore — affiliated to the JKA headquarters in Japan — which conducts karate classes for an affordable fee of S\$60 per term (12

sessions) at several locations in Singapore. Set up in 1993 by Ms Karen Hasman, a German then based in Singapore, JKA Singapore initially held classes for expatriates at the American Club. In 2008, it began teaching locals as well at the Jalan Besar Community Club (CC).

CC classes are now held three days a week, with up to 80 students ranging from four to 63 years old. JKA Singapore's Resident Coach Sensei Tan Soo Lin, a 58 year-old Singaporean, trains the participants with the assistance of several foreign instructors including Mr Shiba Toshiro, an Indonesian-Japanese who has been working in Singapore as an IT consultant for the past five years. "I have a deep passion for karate and enjoy teaching it to others," says Mr Toshiro, 40. "It makes me happy to hear local students say how the sport has made them stronger both physically and mentally."

Taking a different approach is the Singapore International Foundation (SIF), whose aim is to effect positive change by building enduring relationships between local citizens and world communities. SIF's 'Little by Little' programme — launched in October 2011 with the Little Arts Academy (LAA), an arts centre for local youths — brings together LAA students and members of the foreign diplomatic and professional community in Singapore every month for a two-way exchange of cultures in areas such as food, dance and music.

To date, over 20 such exchanges involving 14 nationalities have been held. For example, the February 2013 session saw representatives from the Indonesian Embassy demonstrate how to play the *angklung* — a West Javanese musical instrument made of bamboo — while LAA students introduced them to some Singapore-themed songs. Ms Soh Lai Yee, Deputy Director of International Networking at SIF, says, "These cultural connections allow foreigners to gain insights into our way of life and enable Singaporean youth to grow as future global citizens."

↓ Representatives from the Indonesian Embassy in Singapore demonstrating the *angklung*.



Main photo: istockphoto



Reflections

WARM RELATIONSHIP

Sharing experiences and making friends

High-level officials from Fiji tapped Singapore's expertise in human resource development and training during a study trip.



I**N FEBRUARY 2014**, nine Fijian government officials visited Singapore on a study visit organised by the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP).

The delegation spent three days in Singapore, meeting with various senior Singaporean officials and attending briefings and detailed one-on-one discussions. They exchanged views on public sector reforms, policy development, public administration and effective human resource development in the public sector.

Delegation leader, Permanent Secretary for the Public Service Commission in Fiji Parmesh Chand, found the experience very satisfying.

➔ The delegation, led by Fiji Permanent Secretary of the Public Service Commission Mr Parmesh Chand (first row, third from left), received a warm welcome from the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Civil Service College.



↓ PS Parmesh Chand with former Deputy Secretary of Singapore Ministry of Finance Mr Lim Hup Seng, who led a leadership dialogue with the delegation during their programme.



→ The delegation visited Marina Barrage to learn more about Singapore's water conservation policies.



"Overall, we have acquired a wealth of information from this trip," he said. "The programme covered good content and featured speakers of good calibre who have wealth of experience and knowledge in public service governance and administration."

A HISTORY OF COOPERATION

Singapore and Fiji enjoy a warm relationship, as fellow members of the Small Island Developing States. During the early years of its development, Singapore also faced problems endemic to developing countries. In recognition

of this common context, Singapore shares its developmental experiences and expertise with other small island states such as Fiji through the SCP.

Over the years, many Fijian officials have attended SCP courses in a variety of subjects, such as public governance and administration, economic development, and civil aviation. Singapore also organised a Ministerial Study Visit for Pacific Island States in 2012. After the Ministerial Study Visit, Fiji requested to learn from Singapore's expertise in human resource development and training.

"It showed us the way Singapore has developed over time, particularly in the areas of civil service and I think the lessons learnt from this trip are very much relevant to the needs of Fiji."

MR PITA WISE

Permanent Secretary of Strategic Planning,
National Development and Statistics, Fiji

Another participant, Permanent Secretary of Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics Pita Wise, said that the programme was a good learning experience for his colleagues and him. "It gives us a better idea on how best to take back home the lessons that we have learnt and apply it in Fiji for the good of the civil service.

"It showed us the way Singapore has developed over time, particularly in the areas of civil service and I think the lessons learnt from this trip are very much relevant to the needs of Fiji."

↓ A lighter side of work: The delegation enjoying a local Singaporean meal.



