

Asian Children's Writers & Illustrators Conference 2006

16, 17 & 18 November (Thursday, Friday and Saturday)
8.30 a.m. – 5.30 p.m.
National Library, Victoria Street, Singapore



Minister of State for Education, RADM (NS) Lui Tuck Yew at the opening ceremony of ACWIC



High Commissioner of India to Singapore, Mr Alok Prasad, Mrs. Sudha Murty, Ms. Lim Li Kok and Mr. Ramachandran at the book launch of The Magic Drum during ACWIC



At full attention for the Minister's speech



Hands-on & Interactive workshops conducted by acclaimed illustrator Sheila Dhir during the Asian Children's Writers & Illustrators Conference



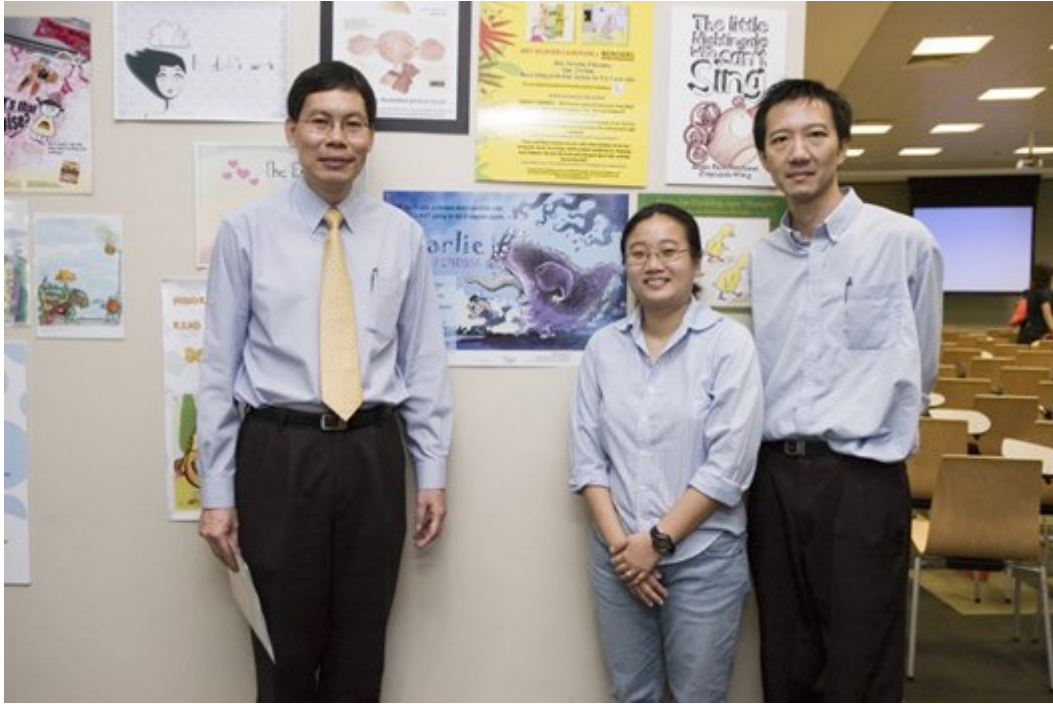
Minister Lui, Ms. Lim Li Kok, Mr. Ramachandran & Mr. Seto



Acclaimed writer Ho Minfong, Illustrator and Workshop Leader Ma Wenhai & President of the Society of Reading & literacy Serene Wee posing for a photograph



Minister Lui chatting with children's book writer, Ms. Conoor Kripalani



Minister Lui, Michelle Ha and her publisher, Enoch Ng from Firstfruits Publishing



SLP shortlisted author Mr. Anuar Othman & Mrs. Sudha Murty, philanthropist and chairperson of Infosys Foundation



Photo Shoot Minister Lui, Mr. Ramachandran, Ms. Lim Li Kok & Mr. Seto with the First-Time Writers & Illustrators Publishing Initiative Winners

Asian Art and Culture is much diversified and comprises many illuminating facets. Whenever I travel in Asia, I always find myself being inspired by its long history, rich cultural heritage and creative talents.

In November 2006, writers, illustrators and publishers of Children's Books from all over the world will congregate in Singapore for the Asian Children's Writers and Illustrators Conference (ACWIC). ACWIC would like to be the catalyst for the inspiration of good Children's Books with an Asian content. This conference will actively promote and foster the exchange of ideas on the global market.

Participants enjoyed stimulating talks from acclaimed writers like Ho Minfong, Jim Aitchison and Steve Morris as well as interactive workshops conducted by renowned publishers and illustrators.

ACWIC also presents great networking opportunities for established players and budding newcomers alike. Last year, we launched *The Tale of Lady Cabbage*, a charming story by aspiring writer Serene Wee, with a publisher from the Philippines.

This year, we look forward to bringing about more opportunities for regional collaboration and successful partnerships.

Lim Li Kok (Ms)

Chairperson

National Book Development Council of Singapore

Highlights



Opening Ceremony

Date: 16 November 2006, Thursday

Time: 9.30 am – 10 am

Minister of State for Education, RADM (NS) Lui Tuck Yew will be the Guest of Honour for the Opening Ceremony.

Book Launch



Date: 17 November 2006, Friday

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Imagination Seminar Room, National Library Board

Mrs Sudha Murty, chairperson of the Infosys Foundation and wife of Mr. N. R. Narayana Murty, co-founder of Infosys Technologies, is a prolific writer. She has written nine novels, four technical books, three travelogues, one collection of short stories and three collections of non-fiction pieces. Her books have been translated into all the major Indian languages and have sold over 150,000 copies. In conjunction with ACWIC, Mrs. Murty will be launching her third children's book *The Magic Drum* on 17 November, Friday, 6.30 pm, Imagination Seminar Room, National Library Board.

In conjunction with the Asian Children's Writers & Illustrators Conference, the Shortlisted entries of the Singapore Literature Prize 2006 will be on display at the Singapore and South-East Asian Collection, level 11.

Speakers

Ho Minfong

Ho Minfong is the author of several critically acclaimed titles such as *Sing to the Dawn*, *The Clay Marble*, *Rice without Rain*, and *The Stone Goddess*. After the birth of her third child Ho shifted her focus to writing books for young children, and came out with such books as "Hush! A Thai Lullaby", and "Maples in the Mist". She has presented workshops in many institutions and has won numerous awards for her writing, among them the Cultural Medallion and the Caldecott Honor Award.

Jim Aitchison (James Lee)

Jim Aitchison was former executive creative director of Singapore's legendary Batey Ads. He won over 600 awards, many for advertisements which he wrote in Chinese. Jim is now applying marketing principles to his new career as an author. Since 1994, he has published forty-five of his works across different genres. His greatest success has been the MR MIDNIGHT series of suspense thrillers for 7-12 year olds published by Singapore's Flame of The Forest. MR MIDNIGHT is regarded as Asia's own children's fiction brand in its genre, selling over 1 million copies in five languages in Asia.

Alex Chacko

Alex Chacko is publisher at Flame Of The Forest Publishing Pte Ltd, Singapore's biggest-selling book publisher. Since its inception 17 years ago, the company has producing a steady and phenomenal string of bestsellers. Chacko did his MBA in the Australian Graduate School of Management, Asia's leading MBA School, in University of NSW, Sydney after graduating from the National University of Singapore. Before venturing into book publishing, he worked as a journalist in The Sydney Morning Herald, The Australian Financial Review, and in various newspaper, TV and radio organizations in Singapore.

Steve Morris

Steve Morris is an internationally renowned leadership consultant, personal development coach and highly acclaimed author. His articles have appeared in The Asian Wall Street Journal, The Straits Times, Asian Business, Asia Manager, Today's Manager, The Economic Bulletin and Britain in Business. Recently he wrote a children's book "The Boy who climbed the Mountain".

Sudha Murty

Sudha Murty is known for her philanthropic work as chairperson of the Infosys Foundation. A prolific writer in English and Kannada, she has written nine novels, four technical books, three travelogues, one collection of short stories and three collections of non-fiction pieces. Her books have been translated into all the major Indian languages and have sold over 150,000 copies. "Dollar Bahu" (Dollar daughter-in-law), a book she wrote, was adapted to a television serial in 2001.

Ma Wen Hai

Born and raised in northeastern China, Ma Wen Hai graduated from the Central Academy of Drama in Beijing and Carnegie-Mellon University in the USA with a BFA and MFA degree respectively. He has illustrated children's books and magazine articles, designed sets and costumes for theatre productions and written biographical essays for various newspapers. Ma has had numerous group exhibitions and one-man shows both in China and the USA. He has also had many picture books published in the USA, the UK, Canada, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

John Bittleston

John Bittleston is CEO of Singleton Pte Ltd and Doubleton Limited, consultancies specialising in Management Training, Management Organisation and Development, and Business and Personal Mentoring. John developed his mentoring skills advising businesses on profit improvement and product development as well as coaching gifted Singaporean children. In addition, he has written several management and children's books.

Ian J Shelley, Intrare Consulting, Singapore & Hong Kong

Ian has worked in managing director or director level positions for a number of blue chip publishing companies, as well as having held responsibilities for global sales and marketing at Springer-Verlag,

Berlin. Ian has been a pioneer of two dotcom companies, with interests in content management, digital rights management, and various online publishing models.

Recently as Commercial Director for Reed Business Information, a leading global publishing company with c.37,000 people worldwide and revenues of \$10 billion he had a mandate to spearhead strategic planning, market research, and new business development across Asia. As member of the corporate management team in Reed Business Information Asia, he was responsible for the monitoring and control of all pan-Asian Business Units to ensure they exceeded expected P&L performance.

Ian now runs his own consultancy company specializing in publishing, media, and related industries.

Kenny Chan

Having worked in the book and publishing field for the past twenty-three years, Kenny Chan has already familiarized himself with the various aspects of the book retail industry. Currently, Kenny is the store director of Kinokuniya Singapore. He is involved in the day-to-day operations of the store including the acquisition of book titles. He has worked in different organisations in the book industry such as the Popular Bookstores, Reed Elsevier Publishing and SNP Publishing.

Ilangoh Thanabalan

Ilangoh Thanabalan is currently a sales manager at Pan Macmillan Asia based in Hong Kong. Pan Macmillan is enjoying tremendous success with their children's books in the Asian markets and are leading children's books publishers. Prior to this appointment, Ilangoh spent 13 years in the book distribution industry in Singapore. He was last a division manager at Pansing Distribution where he had marketed books of all genres and categories.

Sheila Dhir

Sheila Dhir graduated from the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, and has a Masters in mass communication from University of Denver, Colorado. A freelance graphic designer and winner of the Indo-Soviet Nehru Award when she was just thirteen, Sheila's works reflect the eternal child in her, as well as her love for vibrant colours. She has written and illustrated several books for children. Her creation "Gandhi" received the 1984 Public Relations Society of India Award.

Suporn Arriwong, Panna Kantilal & Er Lai Kuan.

Suporn Arriwong is a Senior Librarian and has been selecting Singapore titles for the National Library Board since 2000. Currently, she selects materials from the region as well. Before joining the collection development team, she was a reference librarian with the National Library.

Panna Kantilal is a Senior Librarian and she has been with the National Library Board for ten years. She initially started work at Bukit Merah Community Library and then she went on to work in collection development for children and young people's materials. She has eight years of experience in this field. She is also an avid storyteller.

Er Lai Kuan is a Librarian with the National Library Board. She has been with the library for ten years -- eight years in the finance department and for the past two years with the collection development department selecting materials for children and young people.

Keynote Address

Asian Children's Books in the Global Marketplace

Keynote 1

Worldwide Potential for Children's Books set in Asia

By John Bittleston

The twenty-first century belongs to Asia, economically, culturally, socially and politically. Many need to understand because they work and live in Asia; some, because their countries are multi-cultural and their neighbours are Asian; all, because the world has been shrunk so much by the internet.

John Bittleston will explore how children's writings can help to satisfy this thirst for knowledge about Asian culture. He will discuss the various aspects of Asian culture built up upon flavour and trust. When we know the flavour – the real culture – of a people, we want to trust them. John will talk about the job of the children's writer in feeding those young minds and hearts with the material that will give them the flavour to stimulate the search for trust.

Keynote 2

'The Boy who climbed the Mountain'

By Steve Morris

In a vivid exploration of the Asian publication process, Steve Morris describes the journey of his cross-cultural fable 'The Boy who Climbed the Mountain' from conception to print and beyond. Steve will share with the audience how a single idea grew into a bi-lingual illustrated hardback fable starting with a small market in Singapore and ending up at an International Book Fair in the US.

Steve's talk will touch on how one can recognise an idea or inspiration, the next steps to take, finding and working with artists, choosing a publisher and distributor, sharing the story with kids, parents and teachers as well as the ongoing processes associated with writing a book such as follow-on applications, outgrowth projects and net-working with other storytellers and illustrators. Packed with helpful advice and tips, this is a must for any aspiring Asian children's writer.

Keynote 3

Children's book publishing and markets in East Asia

By Ian Shelley

Ian will focus on the East Asian market for children's books: the size, scope, unique qualities, reading habits, and the challenges. Key statistics for some Asian countries, Book Fairs, and marketing opportunities for publishers are presented. Questions asked are what makes a bestseller, what do children want to read, will digital media prove too distracting, or is the literate mother still the most important influencer in the reading habits of a child?

Keynote 4

Children's Stories

By Sudha Murty

Publishing for children is a niche field which has gradually taken on more importance in today's developing societies. This is especially so in the Asiatic region where increasing affluence has given rise to the trend of parents purchasing enormous amounts of reading materials for their children.

Sudha Murty, in an extempore speech, talks about her ideas regarding children's stories—their functions, their roles in the community as well as their reception in India. Peppered with personal anecdotes, this talk provides an insightful contextual basis for the overarching theme of Children's literature in the region.

Keynote 5
Heart, Hand and Head
Using writing to weave together the different languages
By Ho Minfong

Born in Burma to Chinese parents, and raised in Thailand, Ho Minfong grew up learning first Chinese, then Thai, and later English. She thinks of these languages as concentric circles rippling outwards, with Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin) as the language of the 'heart', Thai as the language of her 'hands' and English that of her 'head'. Writing has become her way of trying to weave the linguistic fragments of herself into a integrated whole.

She hopes that her experiences may provide some insight for other writers in the region, especially those who are also multilingual, and writing in a language that they may not have grown up in.

Seminars

Seminar 1
Penetrating the Global Market with Asian Children's Books
By Kenny Chan

While the global market for children's literature is one with immense potential, it can prove quite a formidable one to break into. Kenny Chan shares his experiences in marketing Asian Children's books worldwide. He will talk about the basic requirements Asian stories should possess before they can capture the attention of overseas book retailers. He will also talk about how the advent of the internet has given rise to an entire host of unconventional approaches to marketing children's literature. Kenny will then conclude by summing up the future of Asian Children's stories vis a vis the global marketplace and the many probable roadmaps that lie ahead.

Seminar 2
Mr Midnight: One Million Copies and Still Counting — Children's Books for the Mass Market
By Jim Aitchison (James Lee) and Alex Chacko

This talk cum interactive discussion session will be conducted by noted children's writer Jim Aitchison and moderated by publisher Alex Chacko from Flame Of The Forest Publishing Pte Ltd. Jim will share his experiences as an author as well as touch on how his books have encouraged avid reading habits among children who were non-readers and how he solves the problem of language levels. He will analyse the market appeal of his works--why they are read by 6 year-olds right through to 20 year-olds, across countries like Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, China, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam, and how he has managed to engage young readers and sell over one million copies of his books.

Workshops

Workshop 1
Illustrating for Asian Children—the Finer Points
By Ma Wen Hai

Using examples from the children's books he has illustrated, Ma Wen Hai will point out the salient features in Asian Children's literature from Vietnam, China, Korea, Japan and India. He will also use traditional Chinese proverbs and idioms to explain techniques in Asian illustrations, expounding on how these can add life and colour, depth and perspective to the reading experience.

Workshop 2
Conversations
By Ho Minfong

This is an informal question-answer session where participants will get the opportunity to quiz writer Ho Minfong about whatever they like. Minfong will draw upon her own experiences in writing for the children's book industry, and touch upon what she refers to as "The Three "R"s of Being Published " : Writing, Revising, and Royalties".

Don't miss this rare chance to chat with an established writer with a global readership base.

Workshop 3
Selection of children's Materials set in Asia: the National Library Board's Perspective
By Panna Kantilal, Suporn and Lai Kuan

This workshop will be geared towards the selection of children's materials where senior National Library Board (NLB) staff members Panna, Suporn and Lai Kuan will discuss the criteria of selection, categorisation of books, policies that govern the books NLB purchases, problems faced in daily operations of selection, publishing output and distribution issues.

They will then embark on the challenges faced in selecting Asean & Asian materials, and how NLB has overcome them. There will also be a show and tell session where the differences in the quality of Asian works and non-Asian works, and Asian works published in the US as opposed to their indigenous country are discussed.

Workshop 4
Illustrating—Water Colouring with a Chinese Brush
By Ma Wen Hai

A highly interactive and hands-on workshop where Ma Wen Hai will demonstrate some of the techniques involved in the usage of a Chinese brush instead of the European-style watercolour brush. He will talk about his composition concepts and some methodologies influenced by Chinese paintings. A refreshing and innovative breather, this workshop offers an alternative mode of illustration differing from the bold and bright prints of the conventional children's stories.

Workshop 5
The Book Show—Learning the Tricks of the Craft of Writing and Illustrating Books
By Sheila Dhir

This two-hour workshop on writing and illustrating for young writers focuses on "the art of looking sideways". It will take you on a journey of creativity where ideas explode with the intensity of their charge.

Aspiring, young writers will be given actual exercises in creative thinking with tips and simple techniques to enhance the joy of children's books, be it writing, illustrating, dreaming, or simply using these exercises to rediscover the child in each of us. A little 'surprise' is included in the presentation and participants will have something fun to take back with them.

Workshop 6
Promoting and marketing Children's Books set in Asia
By Ilangoh Thanabalan

"What makes a successful children's title? How is designed and marketed? Are they published for the market or is it otherwise? These key questions will be answered using Pan Macmillan's criterion for publishing children's books." The workshop will outline factors governing the choices and decisions made by the key decision makers in book buying and promotion. It will also examine various strategies adopted by the publishers in other countries to grow their markets for children's books, which is fast becoming a challenging market.

Workshop 7
"The Book Shop"
Workshop for young writers on the art and craft of writing and illustrating books
By Sheila Dhir

Tips and creative techniques will be shared through a prototype book and its journey from concept to the hands of the publisher. There are ropes to learn and ropes to skip when the language of prose and poetry are explored. A close encounter with 'writer's block', visual images and getting published, will be explored in this fun-filled, stimulating mini-workshop. The talk will take you through a place where East and West meet...where rules are meant to be broken to experience, explore, excite and participate. There will be an element of the unexpected in the presentation and a gift from the heart to take back with each of you.

Manuscript Critique Session

Calling all aspiring Children's writers! Are your drawers bursting with piles of manuscripts? Are you stricken with doubts about your writing skills?

Here is your chance to get advice from professionals in the industry.

Sheila Dhir, acclaimed children's books author, will join us for this exclusive manuscript critique session. She will evaluate your manuscript, offer constructive feedback and suggest possible markets.