

**Penang Jawi Peranakan Heritage Society (JAWI) - Pertubuhan Warisan Jawi Peranakan, Pulau Pinang**

**SYMPOSIUM**

**“THE MAKING OF A NATION”**

**(1)JAWI PEKAN-PERANAKAN STORIES 2017**

**(2) MALAY – ORANG TANJUNG STORIES 2018**

**(3) INDIAN MUSLIM-MAMAK STORIES 2019**

**8.30 0am - 6.00 pm**

**April 22 2017**

**Grand Ballroom, Heritage Wing, E& O Hotel, George Town**

*Overview*

The Penang Jawi Peranakan Heritage Society (JAWI) or *Pertubuhan Warisan Jawi Peranakan, Pulau Pinang* will be organising a Symposia series from 2017-19, to promote Malaysian and Muslim multiculturalism, in Penang and nationally, by highlighting the contributions of various Muslim communities to culture, heritage, history and socio-economic developments over the last centuries to present times. Narratives and visual presentations from personalities, academicians, descendants and experts in the field will be the highlight of the symposia. NGO's in particular will be welcomed to highlight their activities and contributions to Malaysia's vibrant civil society. Reflecting on global trends of neo-conservatism, economic nationalism and xenophobia with increasing marginalisation of ethnic and cultural minorities throughout the U.S., Europe and Southeast Asia, a primary objective of the symposia is to challenge these trends and celebrate the cultural diversity and ethnic heterogeneity of Penang and Malaysia, while simultaneously highlighting multiculturalism as the basis of a vibrant, sustainable modern democracy. The symposia is opened to the public

*Objectives*

1. To highlight the historic, political, economic and social contributions of the Jawi Pekan and Jawi Peranakans of Penang.
2. To illustrate the entrepreneurial achievements of urban Muslim communities in Penang and nationally.
3. To challenge neo-conservatism, radicalisation and xenophobia while forwarding Muslim multiculturalism as an intrinsic world-view towards progress, success and peace.
4. To lead in national discourses and policies of Malaysian multiculturalism, national identity and nation-building.

## *The Jawi Pekan and Peranakan*

*Now for our own tales:* There has been an increasing fervour for the diverse communities of Penang to tell their stories to revitalise interest in their origin, identity, material culture and living heritage. The Jawi Peranakans or Jawi Pekan share a unique icon in Penang's diverse ethno- history and have over the last five years, with the establishment of the Penang Jawi Peranakan Heritage Society, (JAWI) successfully recaptured their niche in the multiculturalism of Malaysia. Despite the diasporas of the Jawi Peranakan and Jawi Pekan out of Penang and Malaysia, many are now eager to narrate their stories, document and publish their diverse contributions to the economic, political and cultural history of Penang.

The society is happy to share these rare moments with the Malaysian and international community by hosting a Symposium where 'story-tellers' of the community will narrate episodes and events in the past and present which will spell-bound the audience.

**Jawi** was a term used by ancient Arab merchants to refer to Muslim communities of Southeast Asia. The term was also used to refer to the Malay script which borrowed from Arabic. Arab, Persian and Indian merchants married Malay and other indigenous women and over several centuries, the Jawi Pekan and Jawi Peranakan communities flourished in these port-cities. Extremely successful in commerce and politics, they assimilated well to Malay local traditions while excelling in tertiary education, business and commerce. Among their most successful businesses has been in shipping, textile, culinary catering, perfumery, building and architecture and printing.

While **Pekan** means "townsmen" and **Peranakan**, 'locally born', these communities were distinct from local Malay communities, the oldest being the Kedah Malays which once inhabited George Town by the thousands before the in-migration of the Hokkiens, Tamil Muslims and Arabs in the nineteenth century. In politics, the Jawi Peranakan supported colonialism and with the rise of nationalism from the 1920's to 1950's, gave their allegiance to Malays, eventually referring to themselves as 'Malays' except in the recapitulation of their urban social, political and economic histories. In these narratives, they firmly show they are the earliest 'urban Muslims' to sustain their niche in the port-cities of the Straits, namely Penang, Melaka, Singapore, Aceh and the port cities of eastern Sumatra

Often conveniently bundled by writers as 'Penang Malays', the Jawi Pekan and Jawi Peranakans like the Indian Muslim mamaks were and continue to be a distinct ethno-cultural community, with their own unique share of political history, language, culture and life-style; similar to the Peranakan or Straits Chinese but different in their adherence to Islamic values and identity. Karim (2010) in her book entitled "Straits Muslims: Diasporas of the Northern Passage of the Straits of Melaka" described them as hybrid Muslim communities of the Straits of Melaka, the Malay Archipelago and the Nusantara, usually inhabiting port-cities and heavily engaged in shipping, trade and commerce, across the Asian region, from the Levant, the Middle East, India, Southeast Asia and China. '

### *(1) The Malays and the Orang Tanjung.*

The identity of a 'Malay' is itself multi-cultural for constitutionally, a Malay is a Muslim who practices Malay culture, language and has assimilated to a Malay way of life. After independence in 1957, the majority of the Jawi Peranakan adopted this definition of identity for their children but retained many distinct family and cultural institutions, including global networks bound by business partnerships of trust and ethics. In Penang, the oldest of these communities are indigenous Kedah Malays who lived on the island as subjects of the Sultan of Kedah. With British colonisation, the Arab Peranakan from Aceh, Minangkabau, Bugis, Rawa and Mandailing communities populated the island along the ports and estuarine areas, leading to the creation of the 'Malay Town' at Lebuah Aceh, the Malay Street or Lebuah Melayu, leading to the Malay harbour, rebuilt as the Noordin Pier; the "Malay Lane" at Armenian Street and the back lanes and the mushrooming of mosques, cemeteries,

shrine and villages throughout the island. Muntri (Menteri) Road, Penang Road, Kedah Road were among the most populated by Kedah Malays.

The Acehnese, Minangkabau, Rawa, Javanese and Mandailing communities rapidly assimilated to the Malays in Penang, Perak, Negeri Sembilan, Melaka and Johore and adopted the Malay language as a lingua franca, while retaining family, kinship and clanship systems and networks. In the inner city, urban Muslim communities who spoke the distinct Penang Malay dialect came to be known as the *Orang Tanjung* or 'People of the Cape' and on the mainland as *Orang Seberang* or "People across the Straits". In time, social divisions were based on class differences or urbane versus agrarian lifestyles rather than ethnicity. Famous *Orang Tanjung* of George Town were Ku Din Ku Meh, Mohd Ariff Mohd Tajoodin, Wan Chik Ariffin, S.M Zainul Abidin; S.M. Yusuf Abidin; B.A. and while those of Arab Peranakan origin were Syed Mohamed al-Attas, Sheikh Omar Basheer, Sheikh Zakaria bin Omar Basheer, Syed Ahmad Al-Mashoor Syed Shaykh al-Hady.

Every community has its own unique history of diasporas, economic and businesses interests and flavour of politics and it is interesting that 'Malayness' thrives on this heterogeneity, like a sponge, absorbing different cultures over history to create an ethnic metamorphosis united by faith. The transformation is diffusive, organic and vibrant, enabling other communities to thrive without strong divisive lines until and unless monopolistic interests in politics and economics create imbalances in and reconsolidation of power.

## *(2) Indian Muslims and the Mamak*

Although a component of the Empire, the Indian Muslims are the most vibrant, visible, articulate and economically successful of the Muslim communities, upholding strong family traditions of businesses and marriage alliances, with a patriarchal tradition of honour and support for the extended family. They are distinguished from other Muslim groups in their preference for Tamil as a language of communication in business and socially with Malay as a second or third language after English. Second or third generation Indian Muslims who marry into the Malay community adopt Malay culture very easily and third or fourth generations may eventually drop Tamil and become Jawi Peranakan, if there is continuous out-marriages.

The Indian Muslims had the highest concentration of family businesses in George Town, before the immigration of the Hokkien communities into Chulia Street, Pitt Street, Ah Quee Street, Transfer Road, from the mid-nineteenth century, till present times, focusing on global shipping, retailing, logistics, textiles, food and spices. The community has created legendary community and business leaders and pioneers, notably, Kapitan Kader Merican and Mahomed Noordin Merican of Nagapattinam. Mahomed Noordin Merican's son, Mahomed Mashuridin Merican Noordin, also known as MM Noordin was also a leader of the Indian Muslim community. Others were Shaik Mohd. Ismail, Hashim Yahya, Shaik Eusoffe Shaik Latif; the Patchee Brothers, Habib Mohamed Abdul Latif, Hafiz Ghulam Sarwar and Abu Backer Mohd Hussain.

**Registration: 8.30 -9.00 am**

Morning coffee

**9.00 Introduction**

By Raqib Karim Razha

**Welcoming Address by**

*Dato' Dr Wazir Jahan Karim, President of the Penang Jawi Peranakan Heritage Society*

**Theme Song Led by Raqib Karim & Nawiza Ariff**

Suriram

**“Tell me the tales that to me was so dear”** -Thomas Haynes Bayly (1797 – 1838)  
(Lyrics: Thomas Haynes Bayly (1797-1839) Music: English folk song -Skotsk folkemelodi)

**Session 1 -10.30am -12.00 noon**

**“The Making of Penang’s Muslim Civil Society”**

**Tuan Hj Yusof Azmi Merican: ‘Founding of the Malay Woman’s League in 1946 ‘**

*Tuan Hj. Yusof Azmi Merican* is an Old Free, former head-master and local historian, writer and specialist on the Jawi Peranakans and Boria. He is a direct descendant of the Hashim Yahya clan and the last *Nazir* or Trustee of the Hashim Yahaya Merican *waqf*. He is an ardent collector of old prints, manuscripts, photos and paraphernalia of the Jawi Peranakans of Penang.

**Dato’ Seri Nazir Ariff : “ My Grand-mother, Lady Rehman Ariff”**

*Dato’ Seri Nazir Ariff* is the eldest grandson of his paternal grand-mother, Lady Rahiman Ariff, Georgetown’s pioneer of the modern Malay woman’s movement in Penang. Lady Rahiman founded the Malay Woman’s League or *Perikatan Perempuan Melayu Pulau Pinang* in 1946, at the height of Malay nationalism. The objective of the League was to improve the livelihoods of the poorer Malay woman and prepare them for modernity and progress.

Dato’ Seri Nazir is a successful Jawi Peranakan businessman, the very few who has built his business base in Penang. He is the co-founder and Executive Chairman of the *Aspen Group* of Companies and is also on the board of several Public Listed Company in Malaysia. Dato’ Seri Nazir is also a Director of the *Penang Institute* a State Government think tank. He sits on the Board of *Penang Future Foundation* (State Scholarship Board) and is also on the Advisory Board of *WWF Malaysia*, The President of *Children Protection Society* and is also the Trustee of the *Handicapped Children’s Centre*.

Dato’ Seri Nazir is a patron of the arts in Penang and a dedicated social worker for the welfare of destitute children and orphans.

**Q & C 12.00 -12.45 pm**

**Luncheon Key-Note Address 1.00 – 1.30 pm**

**YAB Tuan Lim Guan Eng, Chief Minister of Penang**

**“The Making of a Nation: The Rise of Peranakan Muslim Civil Society”**

**Launch**

**Lunch 1.30-2.30**

*solat*

## SESSION 2: - 2.30 - 4.30pm

### **Dato' Dr Wazir Jahan Karim: Jawi Peranakans and the Women's Institute: Romanising the Empire'**

*Dato' Dr Wazir Jahan Karim* is an economic anthropologist and a prominent Conservatoire of Orang Asli, Malay and Jawi Peranakan Heritage. She founded the Women's Centre for Development (KANITA) and the Southeast Association of Gender Studies in Universiti Sains Malaysia and is also Founder and President of the *Penang Jawi Peranakan Heritage Society* (JAWI) or the *Pertubuhan Warisan Jawi Peranakan, P.Pinang*. She pioneered *Women and Gender Studies* in Malaysia and has published internationally on women, minorities and globalisation. She is also a Life Member of Clare Hall, U. of Cambridge; founder and Chairperson of *Jawi House*, Life Trustee of the *Pan Pacific Southeast Asia Women's Association* (PPSEAWA) and a Board Member of the international journal, '*Globalization*'. She sits on several committees on Malay and Muslim Heritage in Penang.

### **Tan Sri Hj. Ibrahim Zain: 'My family and the Early Life-styles of the Orang Tanjung**

*Tan Sri Ibrahim Zain* is a highly successful Jawi Peranakan businessman and entrepreneur. He is a Director of Brahims Holdings Bhd. and has previously served as Chief Executive of Amanah International Finance Bhd., Amanah Chase Merchant Bank and Oriental Bank. He has also been appointed Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Setron (Malaysia); Chairman of Bank Kerjasama Rakyat (M); Pan Malaysian Industries; Pan Malaysian Holdings. He is a Director of Director of K & N Kenanga and AMMB Holdings.

### **Puan Hj. Mariatul Kabtiah 'Sailing to Mekka as a welfare volunteer'**

*Puan Mariatul Kabtiah*, a descendant of the Perak royal family and has made a home in Penang. She is a Committee member of the Women's Institute and pioneer member of various other women and ethnic associations in Penang, including The Penang Malay Society, the Muslim Woman's Welfare Council, the Malay Woman's League or *Perikatan Perempuan Melayu Pulau Pinang* and the *Penang Jawi Peranakan Heritage Society*. She is Vice-President of the *Penang Malay Women's League* and has organised several fund-raising charities associated with these associations. She has one of the best collections of colonial chinaware of the Johnson Brothers era in Penang and vintage Malaysian and Indonesian batik.

## Session 3: 4.30 -5.55pm

### **Tan Sri Hj. Yussof Latiff : ' Early Founders of the Penang Malay Society or Pemenang'**

*Tan Sri Yussof Latiff* is a prominent mover of civil society in Penang and is President of several associations including the Penang Malay Society or *Persatuan Melayu P.Pinang* (Pemenang), the Muslim Heritage Society or *Pewaris*, the Goodwill Society, the Association of Mosque Committees (*Qariah-Qariah Masjid*), pioneer President of the Association of Malay Clubs; pioneer President of Association of P. Ramlee Fans and of the Penang Islamic Chamber of Commerce. He chairs or sits on more than 30 ethnic, welfare and charitable associations in Penang.

### **Dato' Halimah Mohd. Said & Hj. Serajudin Ismail : " In Conversation : Exploring Images of the Jawi Peranakan"**

**"Moderated by Raqib Karim.**

*Dato' Halimah Mohd. Said* is the Founder-President of the Association of Voices of Peace, Conscience and Reason (PCORE), a citizen movement focused on addressing some of the country's key issues and areas of concern. Professionally trained as a linguist, she taught for 71/2 years in secondary schools and 25 years at the University of Malaya. Her areas of specialisation are Linguistics, English Language and Literature, Translation

and Interpretation. Besides being a citizen journalist who contributes regularly to the newspapers, she is an author and editor of several publications. She was a member of the MACC Advisory Board for 41/2 years and actively engages in anti-corruption and integrity matters. She paints in oil, watercolour and mixed medium. She is the co-writer of the book (with Zainab Abdul Majid) *Images of The Jawi Peranakan of Penang: Assimilation of the Jawi Peranakan Community into the Malay Society*.

*Hj.Serajudin Ismail* had his childhood at the area around Mesjid Kapitan Keling. He had his tertiary education at Institute Technology MARA and is the former Executive Secretary of the Consumers Association of Penang (CAP) and former Marketing Manager of Bata Malaysia. In year 2000, he joined Malaysian Rubber Export Promotion Council as its first Director of Marketing and established the first Malaysian Consortium of Rubber Product Manufacturers in Malaysia. He was the first Chief Executive Officer of the Consortium till February 2017 and now remains as its Consultant.. He currently sits on the Committee of the Malaysian Rubber Product Manufacturers Association. In June 2016, he was elected President of the *Persatuan Kebajikan Anak Melayu Pulau Pinang di Wilayah Persekutuan dan Selangor*.

**5.55-6.00**

### **Concluding Remarks**

Dato' Seri Nazir Ariff and Dato' Wazir Jahan Karim

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*Lyrics*

*Suriram*

Suriram, suriram, ram ram  
Suriram, anak manis  
Adohai anak suriram  
Anak suriram dipandang manis

Kain sutera ditenun Melayu  
Hai suriram  
Bawa ke Tanjung atas perahu  
Hai suriram  
Mari kita rajin selalu  
Meraikan pesaka yang menyusuk kalbu

Suriram, suriram, ram ram  
Suriram, anak manis  
Adohai anak suriram  
Anak suriram dipandang manis

Orang Tanjung dan Muslim India  
Hai suriram  
Gemar menuntun ghazal dan Boria  
Hai Suriram  
Tamadun lama, harap dijaga  
Lambang sejarah, budaya dan bangsa

Suriram, suriram, ram ram  
Suriram, anak manis  
Adohai anak suriram  
Anak suriram dipandang manis

"Tell me the tales that to me was so dear" - Thomas Haynes Bayly (1797 – 1838)  
Lyrics: Thomas Haynes Bayly (1797-1839) Music: English folk song (Skotsk folkemelodi)

"Tell me the tales that to me were so dear,  
Long, long ago, long, long ago,  
Sing me the songs I'm delighted to hear,  
Long, long ago, long ago.

Now you are come, all my grief is removed,  
Let me forget that so long you have roved.  
Let me believe that you love as you loved,  
Long, long ago, long ago.

Do you remember the paths where we met?  
Long, long ago, long, long ago.  
Ah, yes, you told me you'd never forget,  
Long, long ago, long ago.

Then to all others, my smile you preferre'd,  
Love, when you spoke, gave a charm to each word.  
Still my heart treasures the praises I heard,  
Long, long ago, long ago.

Tho' by your kindness my fond hopes were raised,  
Long, long ago, long, long ago.  
You by more eloquent lips have been praised,  
Long, long ago, long, long ago,

But, by long absence your truth has been tried,  
Still to your accents, I listen with pride,  
Blest as I was when I sat by your side.  
Long, long ago, long ago.  
Long, long ago, long ago.  
Long, long ago, long ago"

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