

**CDNLAO NEWSLETTER***No. 44, July 2002***(News from the National Library of Singapore)****Singapore Library Festival  
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The amazing collection of rare and ancient books dating back to 1823 housed in the National Reference Library's Heritage Collections is so exquisite that only serious researchers and collectors are allowed to have access to them.

During the Singapore Library Festival 2002 however, the National Library Board organised guided tours for members of the public to give all a rare chance to see the priceless items up close.

Held in conjunction with the inaugural [World Library Summit \(WLS\)](#), the festival is an open house event where everyone can find out more about the rarely seen collections at selected libraries through free guided tours held from 22 to 26 April.



As part of the tour package, visitors were treated to the extraordinary view of a historical collection of more than half a million animal and plant specimens and books from Southeast Asia. The exhibits from the Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research at the National University of Singapore date back to 1849.

Over at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Library (ISEAS), participants of the festival were also afforded the privilege of browsing through an extensive collection of over 490,000 multi-lingual and multi-format items on Southeast Asian applied social sciences since the nineteenth century.



The other libraries in the festival itinerary were Woodlands Regional



Library, library@orchard and all community children's libraries in Singapore.

The exclusive nature of the tours elicited favourable reviews from the festival participants. Mr Wong Teck Wei, a 55-year-old retiree, was thrilled at the chance of being able to go through the rare collections at Heritage Collection and the Raffles Museum. "There's so much history and culture preserved in these places--I just hope more people get a chance to see these books and collections," he remarked.

Woodlands Regional Library also had its fair share of historical items when it hosted an antique map exhibition "Wonders of Asia--Map Exhibition" and an art exhibition "Exhibition: Expressive Fascination" as part of the library festival.

Featuring a treasured collection of 90 antique maps, some dating back from the 16th century, the display included the 26 metre long 'Grant Map of Three Gorges of the Yangtze River'.



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