

NEXT ISSUE

So sorry we were not able to appear in the spring months as first planned. All of us were heavily tied up with the preparation of the May Event 2003 (pictured right), followed by numerous embassy activities all the way into the busy summer months.

Comrade Pam is leaving. As a final contribution, she tried her best to still help gather some of the text materials as well as maintain the spirit for this second issue. "Continue with the torch, Theresa. Don't panic. Things will fall just nicely in the end. There's magic in this. I already feel it" were the last words she left on my answering machine.

As I cannot do this on my own and nobody was brave enough to volunteer, the AWC June 2003 Meeting finally appointed the following members to honor Pam's magic stick for the long, nightly work marathon: **Grace Valera-Jaramillo** [Philippines], **Noemita Taib** [Brunei], and **Rachdaporn Samonkraisorakit** [Thai] who happens to be inseparable from her friend **Nitima Nopakun** (so we got two lovely ladies at one blow).

Hundreds of hours have been tearfully spent on the search for the enchanting flowers in this issue. It has not been easy starting with zero clue as not all countries have an official data regarding their national flower, while those who do can have up to four national flowers. That aside, no flower picture can be obtained unless we know its precise variety in its Latin name. We surely can't expect the internet to recognize its local names as much as we can't expect ourselves to find the scientific name of plants that may not even have an English name to begin with. So, the only way to hunt for the pictures is by matching the various bits of puzzle-data submitted by kind members with the numerous, and sometimes conflicting, data found through the net.

We hope you enjoy the painstakingly searched flowers as well as the illuminating and well written stories about the wedding traditions in Brunei and Myanmar. We regret having to condense them for space. The original version describes the ritual more lively and intricately.

After marriage of course comes ... not suffering, not yet ... but, children first. For the next issue we hope to be able to present one main article about our **children** [±1½ page, Arial 10 pt, single-spaced] accompanied with a box on their **song** (plus music notation) and their **game** [each ± ½ page, Arial 10 pt, double spaced]. As for the Ten Tongues, would each country please send their translation for the phrase "Hello, how are you?"

Please send your suggestions, questions, corrections, and contributions (text or graphics) to any of the new editorial team below.

? Theresa – buthresdc@hotmail.com
? Grace – gvalera@yahoo.com
? Noemita – abbytaib@hotmail.com
? Rach – rachdaporn@thai.com
? Nitima – nitimav@hotmail.com

Texts and pictures will be edited in order to fit into the limited, assigned spaces. All graphics whose scanned result does not come out well or cannot be electronically transferred into our lay-out will have to be replaced with friendlier graphics which we will try to obtain from the internet or the library.

THE AWC FOOD AND SONGS FESTIVITY - MAY 2003



Photos by Mas Kiko – Indonesian Embassy, Press and Information Section

1. Secretary Ibu Suharti Brotodiningrat from Indonesia: Welcoming remarks from host of event
2. Best decorated table: Vice-president Daw Thi Thi Ta from Myanmar congratulated by Ambassador Datuk Sheikh Abdul Khalid Ghazzali from Malaysia (Chairman of the ASEAN Washington Committee—also known as AWC)
3. Myanmar's winning table
4. Ambassador Bapak Soemadi Brotodiningrat from Indonesia: Surprising audience with his *gamelan* mastery
5. President Datin Kamillah Abdullah (left, third) from Brunei and her Brunei table
6. Mrs. Rachdaporn Samonkraisorakit (in purple) and Mrs. Nitima Nopakun (in light green) from Thailand
7. Datin Faridah and Datuk Ghazzali from Malaysia with Treasurer Mrs. Hooi Ping Wong (in red)
8. Mme. Gretchen V. del Rosario (right, third), Ms. Grace Valera-Jaramillo (left, third), and Ms. Hjayceelyn Quintana (right, second) from the Philippines
9. Ms. Sophally Showalter (in blue) from Cambodia
10. "Mistress" of Ceremony Mrs. Audrey Loh from Singapore in front of the ASEAN flags
11. The "male" AWC's seated at the front row amidst audience
12. Mrs. Nguyen Minh Hanh (in orange) from Vietnam and her singing group
13. Project Officer Mrs. Lilik Purwanto (left) and Mrs. Laras Sukanto (right) from Indonesia: Inviting audience to come forward and dance to the crooned tune
14. Mrs. Somy Soukhathivong from Laos (middle) joining dancers from Brunei and Indonesia
15. Datin Kamillah Abdullah trying her steps, accompanying singer Mrs. Irma Pane (holding mike) from Indonesia

We have checked and rechecked the name spellings above. Those are certainly not the easiest names to type and remember. We hope we got them all correct. If not, please send us the correction by e-mail for future reference.

EXPL



RING ASEAN

No.2 // Summer 2003

AWC // ASEAN WOMEN'S CHAT OF THE DAY



Dear Friends

Our association has come to a point where verbal cultural exchanges between members of the Executive Committee needs to be addressed in a concrete manner. When Ibu Suharti Brotodiningrat (Indonesia) recommended a form of newsletter, I strongly felt we have reached another milestone where we continue to improve the quality of our monthly meetings.

Our first issue was a surprise gift which was a thorough research of the Chinese New Year celebration by Mrs. Pamela Leo (Singapore). It was expertly printed by Ibu Theresia Sastromihardjo (Indonesia). Following the same format, Ibu Suharti suggested a wedding theme, hence this current newsletter.

I would like to urge our members to continue working toward future issues as our perseverance will not only benefit ourselves but also the Washington community if they are interested in learning more about our culture. One day, when we have enough material, we might turn this collection into a book!

Datin Kamillah Abdullah (Brunei)
President 2003
ASEAN Women's Circle
Washington, D.C.

Brunei Malay Wedding: All the Gold and Glory of the Ancient

Families stretch themselves financially to provide the most elaborate ceremonies which are shining examples of Brunei's ancient tradition.

Since Brunei identifies itself as a Malay Muslim sultanate, the majority of wedding ceremonies is "Malay Wedding" which is a combination of *shariah* or Muslim religious law and *adat* meaning custom.

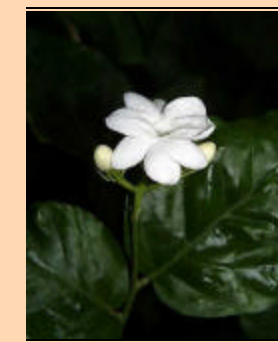
24-Karat Gold

A Malay wedding is a very large event. Prior to the actual wedding day which always falls on a weekend, the bride and groom hold a few ceremonies in their separate homes. Virtually all extensive family members are included in the guest list which could range from one to several hundred. They are entertained in brightly decorated tents around the compound. Inside the homes, the dais is a *piece-de-resistance*. This is for the bride and groom to sit during the many ceremonies.

The first day of the wedding is the *berbadak* ceremony. The bride and groom are adorned in dazzling traditional Malay costume made from the *songket* which is a rich brocade woven into an intricate pattern from silk and 24-karat gold thread. *Songket* is extremely costly, therefore it is treated as an heirloom.

After the evening prayer, when guests are already seated, the couple is led by elder folks to the dais where the bride sits with eyes downcast to display modesty. Elder relatives and guests take turn to dab liquid powder and scent onto her upturned palms. A similar ceremony takes place on the second night, but on this *berinai* or *berpacar* ceremony they use henna instead.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



<http://aoki2.si.gunma-u.ac.jp/BotanicalGarden/HTMLS/maturika.html>

The above dew speckled white jasmine [*jasminum sambac*] is used in Brunei (though now becoming rare), Malaysia, Myanmar, and Indonesia to decorate the bride's hair.

As a decoration, the Melati, as it is called in Malay languages, is usually strewn together into a garland.

In Thailand, the white jasmine is often sprayed with chemicals to make it last and look shiny, albeit in effect making it lose its special fragrance.

Similar to the one shown above, the simple white jasmine of the five-petal variety happens to be one of Indonesia's national flowers. Coincidentally, the flower which symbolizes purity and simplicity is also the national flower of the Philippines, where it is called the Sampaguita.

BEHIND THE SCREEN // INITIATOR : Ibu Suharti Brotodiningrat (Indonesia) // TEXT RESEARCHER AND STORY HUNTER : Pamela Leo (Singapore) // LAY-OUT, GRAPHICS, AND THE REST : Theresia Adam Sastromihardjo (Indonesia) // EDITORS-IN-WAITING : All three of the above // CONTRIBUTORS : You! Yes, you, dear fellow -ASEAN readers and friends // PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER : Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam.

NATIONAL FLOWERS

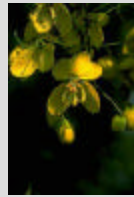
Brunei



<http://www.state.hi.us/dnr/dofaw/hortweeds/species/dilsuf.htm>

The hardy Simpor Bini [*dillenia suffruticosa*] can survive anywhere, thus chosen to symbolize Brunei's ability to withstand economic challenges. The presence of this plant is an indicator of the existence of underground water source. The flowers can be eaten. The leaves used as platters and food wrappers.

Thailand



http://www.beautifullassam.com/html/gal_chan_mahanla.htm

The Chaiya Pruek or Golden Shower [*cassia fistula*] is the royal flower of Thailand. Its golden yellow flowers shower down in bunches up to 40 cm long. Though popularly planted as ornamental tree, its leaves, bark, and fruit (long, woody, cylindrical pods) have been documented to cure a wide range of maladies: from constipation to syphilis and even cancer.

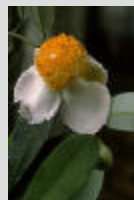
Malaysia



<http://www.hoteltravel.com/malaysia/kedah/guides/overview.htm>

The Bunga Raya [*hibiscus rosa sinensis*] grows in abundance in Malaysia. The red color represents courage. The five petals symbolize Malaysia's five principles of nationhood. Its petals were used to darken and enhance women's eyebrows. Its roots to cure fever, while a poultice prepared from its leaves to cure headaches.

Myanmar



http://www.beautifullassam.com/html/gal_chan_mahanla.htm

The Gangaw flower from the Ironwood Tree [*mesua ferrea*] is considered the king of flowers in Myanmar. It is so fragrant that ladies mix the yellow pollen with their special astringent paste (made from fragrant bark) to enhance their complexion.

**Myanmar Wedding:
A Blessed Freedom for the Hearts**

When a man and a woman decide to get married it is sufficient for the couple to be recognized as such by the community

Just Say It

Marriage in Myanmar is more a social process than a judicial one. Under the Myanmar Buddhist Laws, which govern social matters, a couple can just declare without any ceremony that they intend to live together and they are then married. However, it is more usual for the couple to announce their intentions to the elders of the community and have a simple ceremony of paying respects together to the elders and offer some food afterwards. Couples may also choose to just sign a marriage certificate in front of a judge, a process introduced by the British during colonial times.

Thazin Orchid

For a larger wedding ceremony, guests usually assemble in a big hall awaiting the appearance of the couple. The groom traditionally wears a turban made of fine silk draped over a cane form. A soft jacket goes over a 4-meter long sarong tied in front in a long fold. Meanwhile, the bride dons her hair in a topknot with tresses on side of the knot. Her costume consists of a two-part top over a long wrap-around sarong with an attachment that pools around the feet with a long net that trails behind the bride like a train. Her whole outfit shimmers with sequins and gold and silver thread embroidery that complements the glitter of necklaces and bracelets worn by the bride. The hair is adorned with jewels and flowers. The flowers of preference are the many sprays of a delicate orchid called Thazin. In Myanmar, this orchid with its tiny



http://exoticbulbophyllum.tripod.com/page/bulbophyllum_a.htm

The fragrant Thazin orchid [bulbophyllum auricomum] is one of the royal flowers in the time of Burmese (now Myanmar) kings.

fragrant white blossoms symbolizes purity and rarity.

Eugenia Sprigs

The Master of Ceremonies calls for the bridal party to appear and a singer sings about the auspiciousness of the day. The bridegroom makes his way with his best men and parents following him to the front of the hall. The bride in turn appears with her bridesmaids and parents towards the left side of the groom. Parents sit with their relatives on either side or in the front of the room. The Master of Ceremonies then motions the couple to sit on cushions where the bride as previously rehearsed makes one graceful movement so

I LOVE YOU

- ? BRUNEI SAYA CINTA PADAMU
- ? CAMBODIA KIOME SALANGE OUN
- ? INDONESIA AKU SAYANG KAMU
- ? LAOS KHOY HAK CHAO
- ? MALAYSIA SAYA CINTA PADAMU

<http://www.sitagita.com/catinteractives/wedding/images/malaysian.jpg>



Malay bride and groom

her legs settle to one side and her arms fall on the triangular arm rest placed between the cushions. The MC then reads a special poem describing their virtues and attributes to honor them. A chosen senior couple, usually successful and esteemed members of the community, are then called forward to perform the marriage.

The senior male instructs the couple to pay respects to their parents and to the assembled audience. The couple does so, each time with a sprig of young Eugenia (laurel) leaves between their hands held together. Eugenia symbolizes victory and auspiciousness. They bow three times in a gesture of paying respects.

Jasmine Garland

The male senior then wraps around a silk scarf and pours water, the indivisible matter, to the paired hands of the bride and groom into a silver bowl. The older couple take two garlands of jasmine, slip them over the head of the newly wedded husband, take one off again to slip it over the head of the newly wedded wife. At this point, a conch is blown and the Master of Ceremonies declares the wedding a success. As part of the celebration, confetti and puffed rice and money is tossed around in what is known as a rain of gold and silver. This symbolizes giving and donating in important occasions. The celebration can be made more elaborate by exchange of rings influenced by western custom.

Food follows the ceremony and the couple might circulate among the guests urging them to eat while accepting good wishes and thanking them for coming and sharing the moment with them.

Many people choose to follow a smaller morning wedding ceremony with a larger afternoon reception or may choose to give a feast at a monastery where the monks bless the new couple and invited guests are given a full lunch or elaborate breakfast. The couple then donates money and goods as a sign of appreciation. ?

Thi Thi Ta

Kamilah and Norhashima

FROM PAGE 1

The legalization of the marriage takes place in either a mosque or at the home of the bride or groom. This *akat nikah* ceremony, which seals the verbal contract between the bride's father or his representative and the groom, is performed by the Kadhi who is a religious official. While all other ceremonies may be omitted, the *nikah* ceremony is an Islamic requirement without which no marriage is valid.

The Dowry

The *majlis hantaran* (sending of dowry and exchange of gifts) precedes the *nikah* at the bride's home on the same day as the *nikah*. The dowry and gifts for the bride, beautifully displayed on traditional gift trays called *gangs*, are carried by the groom's party into the bride's house. It would then be displayed in the middle of the bride's living room to be admired by the guests.

The highlight of the wedding is the *bersanding* which always falls on Sunday. This is the day both bride and groom, in their matching attire, are presented together on the dais. The groom and his party make a significant journey to the bride's home. The mood is jubilant with the sound of gongs and singing. After a short prayer, the new couple greet each other's family members who are now related.

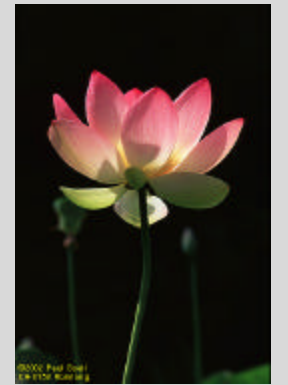
Following this mid-day event are more songs and dance in the evening, where a smaller gathering for both sides of the newlywed's family and friends called *malam berambit-ambilan* takes place.

Three days later the newly married husband makes a journey back to his own home to spend an afternoon with his family. He comes back in the evening for a ceremony known as *muleh tiga hari* marking the end of the weeklong wedding. He returns to his wife with essential household goods for his new family.

Nowadays couples might continue to live with either set of parents or move out to start a nuclear family of their own. ?

NATIONAL FLOWERS

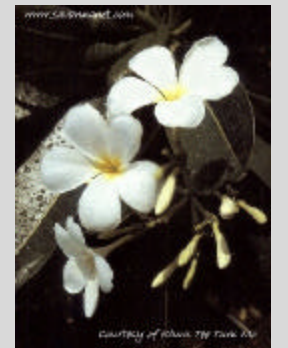
Vietnam and Cambodia



http://www.fotolink.ch/fotosellen/blumen/otosblume_31.htm

The sacred pink lotus [*Nelumbo nucifera*] (called Lien Hoa in Vietnamese; Malis in Cambodian), is the supreme lotus in Buddhism. Lotuses adapt well in all kinds of water. Unaffected by their surrounding, they instead purify the muddy water they inhabit. Thus, symbolizing the Buddhist virtue of remaining pure amidst worldly corruption. Every part of this noble plant can be eaten as delicious food or used as medicine, especially the seeds.

Laos



<http://www.savannanet.com/dokchampa.htm>

The white Dok Champa or Frangipani is also called Plumeria after the French botanist Charles Plumier. It is the most celebrated flower in Laos. The flowers are used for offerings at temples. Dried in the sun and steamed, the petals can be made into tea, good for lowering blood pressure. The leaves when cooked with fish or meat can bring out tastier flavor to the dish.

Singapore



<http://www.nparks.gov.sg/plants/van/pla-van-van.shtml>

The Vanda Miss Joaquim of the Agnes variety is a natural hybrid between Vanda Teres and Vanda Hookerana which was accidentally discovered by Agnes Joaquim in her garden back in 1893. Its resilience and all-year blooming resonate Singapore's continual strive for excellence and progress in all aspects of development.

IN TEN TONGUES



Myanmar bride and groom

- ? MYANMAR I LOVE YOU - CHIT TE
- ? PHILIPPINES MAHAL KITA
- ? SINGAPORE I LOVE YOU - WO AI NE
- ? THAILAND CHAN RAK THER
- ? VIETNAM ? : ANH YEU EM - ? : EM YEU ANH

<http://www.myanmar.com/myanmartimes/MyanmarTimes9-168/index.htm>