

**A BIBLIOGRAPHIC SURVEY ON BABA
LITERATURE: FOCUS ON CHINESE LITERARY
TRANSLATED WORKS INTO BABA MALAY**

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Computer Science and
Information Technology University of Malaya
In partial fulfilment of the requirement for the
degree of Master of Library and Information
Science

MAY 2001

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This thesis is made possible by the invaluable assistance I received from many people. In appreciation, I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to all concerned.

All glory and praise to God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit for giving me an inquiring mind, enthusiasm and patience to complete this thesis.

This thesis would not been possible without the help and constructive comments provided by my supervisor, Associate Professor Dr. Zainab Awang Ngah. I would like to acknowledge her invaluable advice in guiding me on the thesis. Many others have also contributed in terms of advice and helpful ideas. I take this opportunity to thank each of them. A special thanks to Associate Professor Dr. Ding Choo Ming who kindly shared his collected *Baba pantun* list. I would also like to thank Mr. Ismail Ibrahim for his resourceful experience in the study of early Malay materials.

In addition, I wish to express my appreciation and thanks to Canaan Church, Mr. Rascal Lee Hei Kuang and Mr. Lee Wen Shu for their unconditional love and endless support.

ABSTRACT

This study analyses the Baba translated works between 1889-1950, focussing on 68 unique titles identified from six libraries: University of Malaya Library, and the libraries at Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, University Science of Malaysia, National Library of Singapore, National University of Singapore and the British Library. The Baba translated works indicated three periods of publication productivity between 1889-1909 (the embryonic period), which produced 18 publications, between 1910-1929 (the stagnant period) with 10 titles and between 1930-1939 (the revival period) with 39 titles. One title was published in 1950. The main focus of the study is on the translator. Between 1889 to 1950, 11 persons were involved and the most prominent translator between 1889-1909 was Chan Kim Boon (6 titles). Between 1910-1929, 6 persons were active, and between 1930-1939, 14 persons were involved. In general, Wan Boon Seng was the most active with 22 titles, followed by Seow Chin San with 10 titles and Lee Seng Poh with 8 titles. Some of the translators were also editors and used Chinese and romanised Malay readers to help relate orally the Chinese classical stories. There were thirty two publishers and twenty one printers involved in the production of the Baba translated works. All the publishers were located in Singapore. The most active was Wan Boon Seng, Kim Seck Chye Press and Nanyang Romanized Malay Book co. The most active printers were Khai Seng Press, Tak Seng Press and Kim Seck Chye Press. The translated works basically cover historical stories (24 titles), chivalrous stories (18 titles), romances (10 titles), folklore (9 titles) and legends (7 titles). The titles were priced between 10 cents to 2 dollars in Straits currency. The sizes of the books were between 16cm x 10cm to 19cm x 14cm. The University of Malaya Library holds the largest number of collection (61 titles) of which 15 titles were not held by the other libraries. This is

11
6
14
31

followed by the National Library of Singapore (24 titles), University Science of Malaysia (22 titles), Dewan Bahasa and Pustaka (20 titles), National University of Singapore (16 titles) and the British Library (9 titles). This study describes the Chinese Peranakan literary contributions in the early years and highlights their contribution in enriching Malaysia's national literary heritage. It also reveals the incompleteness of the Baba translated works collection in all six libraries studied.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Babas

Historically, Malaysia encompassed a number of territories in the Malay Peninsular and in Borneo which were once ruled by the Portuguese, Dutch and British. The colonial powers enriched the culture of the population of Malaysia, which comprises mainly the Malays, the Chinese and the Indians. However, among the minority races, the Babas stood as the most unique and colourful ethnic group and was described as the rare and beautiful blend of the dominant elements of the Malaysian and Singaporean cultural traditions – Chinese, Malay and European, or more specifically English (Clammer, 1980). This blend is only found in this part of the world and their culture has evolved into something unique.

This study attempts to explore two of the Babas most interesting cultural aspects, their language and literature. Although works authored by the Babas were not many, numerous variety of literature had emerged through the years. They include newspapers, magazines, poems and translation works of Chinese classics. After the decline of Baba literature since 1950, it has reemerged, as reflected in the literary works of Chia. Felix Chia (1984; 1985) has written a play entitled *Pileh Menantu* (1984) (Choosing a daughter-in-law) and a Baba fiction entitled, *Laki Tua Bini Muda* (1985) (Old Husband, Young Wife). Very few people are aware of the existence of Baba literature, even among the Babas themselves. The Baba culture

has enriched the Malaysian culture and it is the concern of this dissertation to document and describe all identifiable Baba literature that can be located.

1.2 The Babas

To have a clearer picture on the Baba culture, an explanation of some terms are necessary. In the Malaysian context, the *Baba* and the *Peranakan* terms are used synonymously. Originally, Chinese born in the Straits are called Babas to distinguish them from those born in China, *Sinkeh* (Tan, 1993). Today, Baba refers to the descendents of the Straits born Chinese. The female Straits born Chinese are called *Nyonyas*. The term *Peranakan* is simply the Malay designation for locally born people of mixed parentage. In other words, a Baba is a Peranakan but a Peranakan is not necessarily a Baba. In Tan Chee Beng's *Chinese Peranakan Heritage in Malaysia and Singapore* (1993), the Babas of Malacca and Singapore are claimed Chinese Peranakan. Although Chinese born in the north east states of Kelantan and Terengganu may also be described as Chinese Peranakan, they are rarely referred to as Babas. They experienced a different acculturation compared to the Straits born Chinese. They are more influenced by the Malay, Chinese and Thai culture instead of the English.

The Penang Babas and the Malacca Babas came from different roots, although governed under the Straits Settlements after 1826. According to Purcell (1967) and Vaughan (1897; 1971), the children of the Penang Babas were always brought up in accordance to their fathers' ways, even though their fathers died young and the children were left to their local mothers. In Malacca, where the Malays were the majority, the women played essential roles in parenting. It is clear that the fathers

bore more influence on the Penang Babas while the Malacca Babas were more influenced by their mothers. This influence and dominance shaped their present day traits. The Singapore Babas are the offshoot of the Malacca Babas. After becoming the capital of the Straits Settlements in 1832, Singapore enjoyed a trade boom that resulted in the relocation of many Malacca Straits Chinese to the new capital.

The same influence and dominance is prominent in their spoken language. The Malacca Babas speak in a Malay accent juxtaposed with Chinese words of Hokkien dialect, whereas the Penang Babas speak Hokkien with Malay language influences. Today, the Babas are more widely referred to Malacca or Singapore Babas. For the purpose of this study, the word 'Babas' denotes the Malacca and the Singapore Babas.

1.3 The Origin of the Babas

The Babas have their root from three different races, Chinese, Malay and English. From the historical perspective, the early Chinese immigrants came as fortune seekers and eventually settled in the Malay Archipelagos. They later formed their own society. They were influenced by the English only after they were sent to English schools or studied overseas. Today, the identity of the Baba is obscured, partly because of the changed structure of society (Khoo, 1996). However, the origin of the Babas remained an arguable issue.

It is difficult to trace the origin of the Babas due to the gradual and unnoticeable acculturation process. The popular belief is that the Babas in Malacca were the descendents of Princess Han Li Bao's, who married the Sultan of Malacca's

subjects. It was believed that these subjects subsequently married females from the local community. The fusion of Chinese blood and the blood of other races did not convince many historians. An opposing viewpoint is that the culture of the Babas was more dominated by the Chinese. If they were descendents of Princess Han Li Bao's subjects, they would have converted to Islam and were more dominated by the Islamic way life. However, today the Baba culture is more entrenched in the Chinese tradition.

A number of scholars strongly believed that the ancestors of the Babas were Hokkiens from Fujian Provinces. They were all adventurers who came to trade or to make a fortune. They did not bring along their women because they never thought of staying in the Straits permanently. Eventually, these early Chinese migrants married the Malay women and this gave rise to the Baba society (Chia, 1980; Vaughan, 1971; Purcell, 1967).

These Chinese Peranakan exhibited certain local cultural characteristics. The nyonyas wore Malay-styled dresses (*sarong* and *kebaya*), cooked food that combined both Chinese and Malay cuisines and stayed in Straits eclectic-type building. According to Khoo (1996), the hybrid building style of the Babas has been given several other names, such as Sino-Malay-Colonial buildings, Sino Malay Palladian, Tropical Renaissance, Towkay Italianate, Chinese Palladian and Chinese Baroque. They also possessed several unique characteristics of daily life – combined with their own interpretation of certain aspects of Chinese culture especially religion, kinship and formal organisation. In addition to these, one that captured the interest of this study is, the language of the Baba. The Baba language is not the

standard Malay that is recognised as the national language in Malaysia. The language is colloquial Malay (*Melayu Pasar*).

It was initially developed as a spoken language. A number of literary works were published in this spoken language which enriches the national literary heritage of Malaysia.

1.4 The Language of the Babas

The Baba Malay is colloquial Malay. It has been studied since the early 20th century by William G. Shellabear (1913). He had distinguished between the High Malay language, the language of classical literature of the Malays and the Low Malay language, defined as the mixed multitude of various tongues of those who lived in Malaysia. He categorised the Baba Malay as the Low Malay, which was largely used as trade language. Shellabear's work contained an appendix, which listed Baba words. He mentioned in the same article, the evolution of the Baba Malay and the differences between Baba Malay and the colloquial Malay. Shellabear identified four main unique features of the Baba Malay:

- a. The use of words typical of Chinese origin;
- b. The use of the Chinese equivalents for unfamiliar Malay words;
- c. Mispronunciation of Malay words which produced new Baba Malay vocabularies; and
- d. Baba idioms which is an adoption of Chinese language rather than Malay language.

Although Shellabear was not the first person to provide a list of the Baba Malay vocabulary, his contribution towards the study of the early Baba Malay is unquestionable. The status of the Baba Malay was placed in prominence by him, resulting in more academic studies on Baba literatures by later scholars.

✓
Png Poh Seng (1963) was also one of the pioneers who compiled a list of Chinese loanwords in the Malay language. It was found that there were nearly 350 known Chinese loanwords. Many of these words were typically Chinese having no exact Malay equivalents. Png further elaborated that there are only ten percent of Baba usage of the Chinese loanwords in Malay language. His study did not focus on the Baba Malay, but it did highlight the relationship between Baba language and Baba literature.

Another scholar that has studied the Baba Malay is Tan Chee Beng (1980). He has a different viewpoint compared to Shellabear and Png who agreed that the Baba Malay is a corrupted Malay language. Tan analysed the main linguistic features of Baba Malay and has proven it to be a distinctive Malay dialect. According to Tan, Baba Malay has a consistent linguistic structure. There are definite patterns of variation from the Standard Malay and the Malacca Malay, as well as the Baba Malay. Definite Chinese loanwords are used in Baba Malay. Tan proposed that linguistic acculturation does not necessarily mean that the Babas have to speak the same dialect of language of the 'host' group. In fact, a new dialect may develop, giving the people a distinct dialect which also serves as a crucial symbol of ethnic identity. The new dialect should not be judged as corrupted or not proper. He concluded that the so-called Baba patois is a respectable dialect in its own right.

Later in 1981, he wrote another article regarding the Baba literature. He stressed that to study the Baba literature in-depth one has to learn the Baba language.

Anne Pakir wrote a thesis entitled, *A Linguistic Investigation of Baba Malay* in 1986. Her major concern is the linguistic identity of the Baba Malay vis-à-vis other Malay and the extent of Hokkien Chinese influence on the dialect. In the past, Baba Malay is recognised as a Malay dialect. This study investigated the similarities and differences between Baba Malay, other Malay and Hokkien and clearly established Baba Malay as a unique dialect of the Malay language. The study therefore concurs with Tan's.

Recently, William Gwee Thian Hock (1993) compiled a comprehensive list of words, phrases, sayings and idiomatic expressions from the Baba language, which were more commonly used in the past than in the present. He attempted to trace as far back as possible the original Malay and Hokkien words in his collection. Although not an academic piece of work, it contributed to the literary heritage of the Baba Malay.

A more recent work was done by Thurgood (1999) who analysed not only the language of the Babas but also two other groups of Peranakan Chinese: Kelantan Peranakan Chinese and Peranakan Chinese of Java. The study provided a detailed analysis of Baba Malay nouns, phrases, and sentence patterns. It also provided evidence that the Hokkien features in Baba Malay structures represented, not only the result of Creole formation, but also the expected influence of Hokkien speakers shifting to Baba Malay. Although a new viewpoint, it did not explain why the

Hokkienese who were Chinese educated did not write Baba literature, as the Baba literature was written mainly in Baba Malay.

1.5 The Sociological Evolution of the Baba Language

Most Babas today speak English or Malay fluently as a result of the education system in Malaysia. Their predecessors were seldom Chinese educated. In the early stage, the Chinese immigrants who sought fortune in the Malay Archipelagos only used the Malay language as the medium to trade merchandize with the local community. These immigrants were mostly petty merchants or poor peasants who possessed little knowledge of written Chinese. As such they assimilated easily into the Malay language even though they were practicing the colloquial Malay.

Inter-marriages between the early Chinese settlers with the Malay and Indonesian women forced them to communicate in the Malay language at home. Therefore, the early Chinese settlers gradually created a new language that is, the Baba Malay. Shellabear (1913) was the first person who named this language as the Baba Malay. As the name suggests, Baba Malay is not a corrupt form of the Malay language but a dialect which has developed out of a particular kind of historial process and belongs to the Babas (Tan, 1980).

The Baba Malay possessed several characteristics which differentiate it from the standard Malay language. Five differences between the Baba Malay and the standard Malay are identified below (Tan, 1980):

- a. Loanwords and loan translations;

- b. Phonetic differences;
- c. Lexical differences;
- d. Semantic differences; and
- e. Syntactic differences.

If there was a lack of appropriate Malay words to express particular aspects or concepts in religion, kinship, business affair and social activities, the users will naturally adopt words from Hokkien. In the course of its historical development, Malacca first fell to the Portuguese, later to the Dutch and finally the British. This subsequently led to Portuguese, Dutch and English loan words being added to the Baba language either directly or indirectly besides Hokkien.

Later, the Baba language attained wide and popular usage even outside the community and became the *lingua franca* in the Straits Settlements in the 19th century up to the first few decades of the 20th century. It is the Baba Malay rather than the standard Malay that was used among the people of different nationalities in the Straits Settlements. Shellabear (1913) described this phenomenon as, "Baba Malay is the language of the man on the street."

The popularity of the Baba Malay language was because the Babas played active roles in the Straits commercial world. It was the language of commerce (Tan, 1993). Shellabear mentioned that Baba Malay was the *lingua franca* not only in the Settlements but everywhere. This is reflected in the distribution of Baba publications beyond the settlements to other towns in Malaya. In fact, the Baba was the pioneer among the Chinese to publish in the Malay language. They were also

among the pioneers in Malaya to use romanised Malay. The Babas had published newspapers, magazine, poems and translated works of Chinese stories. These publications boomed only up to the late nineteenth century and became extinct in the mid twentieth century. The reasons will be described in the later part of this study.

1.6 Objective of the Study

This study attempts to compile a union list of all Baba translation works. The list being prepared is based on the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) of the University of Malaya Library (UML), Library of Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBPL), University of Science Malaysia Library (USML), National University of Singapore Library (NUSL), National Library of Singapore (NLS) and the British Library (BL). However, only the collection of UML and DBPL were examined physically due to the time constrain afforded for this study.

This study on the Baba literature is an attempt to supplement other studies on national literary heritage. Definitely, the existence of the Baba literature as part of Malaysian literature has been neglected.

Although the Babas declared themselves as Peranakan or local-born, their translated works are basically stories from the Chinese classic. During its popular years, the Baba publications were owned by mostly every Baba family. However, the demand for these publications slowly declined with the introduction of English education in the Settlements. As a result, the Baba language itself began to be affected and the popularity of the Baba Malay and literature declined drastically after the 1950s.

This study aims to survey the Baba publications in romanised Malay with particular reference on the Babas translated works – from Chinese to Baba Malay. According to Tan (1981) there are two general categories of Baba publications. The first category are publications of the Baba's own writing which comprised newspapers, magazines and poems. The other are translated works of stories and fictions from the Chinese classics. The latter is the main focus of this study. The focus is on works solely in romanised Malay and exclude English publications. The Babas have published English newspapers as well, for example, *Straits Chinese Magazine* in March 1897 till September 1907 and *Malacca Guardian* 2 January 1928 till 1940. This study will emphasis on translated works of Chinese stories such as *Water Margin*, *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, *Journey to the West*, etc.

1.7 Summary

The political, economic, social and cultural background has resulted in the uniqueness of this community, especially their language and literature. During the colonial period, the Babas spoke Baba Malay and had created their own literature, the Baba literature. This literature had flourished and is an example of early Malay literary works in Malaysia, which is explored in more detail in chapters two and four of this study.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A search was made from the CD-ROM at the UML of the following databases: *Singapore National Bibliographies* and *Singapore Periodical Index*. Printed materials, periodicals and conference papers at UML and DBPL were also perused for issues related to the subject under study. The keywords that were used to retrieve the literature were Baba, Peranakan, Straits-born Chinese, literature, language, Baba Malay and a combination of these. The findings from the literature are summarised in the following sections.

2.1 The Baba Language

The Baba language is colloquial Malay, in contrast to standard Malay. The Babas saw the need for a written language to fulfil their reading needs. From the late 1880s to 1950, the publication of romanised Baba Malay in the form of newspapers, magazines, poems and translated works on Chinese classics appeared under Baba penmanship especially in Singapore. Basically the newspapers were used for broadcasting and advertising, and the rest of the published Baba literature were used for leisure purposes.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the Babas started to publish newspapers, magazines and books in Baba Malay. The Babas published their first romanised newspapers, in 1894 and their first romanised periodical appeared in 1919 (Roff, 1972). The first

published newspaper was a bilingual (English and Malay) newspaper called *Straits Chinese Herald* in January 22, 1894.

As more Babas gained proficiency in English, they began to speak in English rather than their own mother tongue. Consequently, the demand of either translation works or Baba literature decreased. After the Second World War, the Baba publications had shown a distinctive falling off. This was caused by the loss of their financial position as a result of the Japanese military occupation of Malaya.

2.2 Other Literary Expressions

2.2.1 The Baba Newspapers

The *Straits Chinese Herald*, which was also known as *Surat Khabar Peranakan* was published in Singapore and was sold on a subscription basis at the Straits currency of \$1.00 per month. Outside Singapore, it was sold at \$1.30 post-free. The paper was published daily except on Sundays. The paper carried mostly local and foreign news, stories and advertisements. In the first issue, five reasons were proposed to motivate the editors to continue with the publication of the newspaper even when they were facing hard times, and there are:

- a. To improve the knowledge of the Asiatic world;
- b. To know events of daily life;
- c. To learn English;
- d. To learn colloquial Malay; and
- e. To act as an instrument for voicing out opinions.

However, the *Straits Chinese Herald* did not survive long. In May 5 1894 issue (volume 1, number 87), the editorial announced that the paper would be absorbed by

The Daily Advertiser from May 7, 1894. This information was printed in the *Straits Chinese Herald* on 22 January 1894 till 5 May 1894.

(1894)
The second Baba newspaper was called *Bintang Timor*. It was published in Singapore on July 2, 1894. This was started by Song Ong Siang who was a lawyer, and Tan Boon Chin, who was a clerk. The manager of the paper was Song Seck Kum. *Bintang Timor* was the first fully romanised Malay newspaper in Malaya. It was a daily paper until the end of March 1895; there after it was published thrice weekly on every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. It was also distributed in Singapore, Batavia (now Jakarta), Padang (now Sumatra), Kuala Lumpur, Labuan, Perak, Johor and Sarawak. This information was printed in *Bintang Timor*, 2 July 1894 till 2 July 1895.

There are four pages in each issue of the *Bintang Timor*. The first and the last page were usually devoted to advertisements and announcements. The rest were daily news, stories in series and poems. In fact, it provided the opportunity for the Baba writers to publish their works. Tan Chee Beng (1982) studied one of the Baba *pantun* (poem) written by Si Melata and published in volume 1, no. 10, in 12 July 1894 in-depth. Tan commended that *Bintang Timor* is a good resource of research on the Straits Chinese's views and writings at that time (1981). However this newspaper ceased publication after the July 2, 1895 issue because of poor subscription and bad debts. The reasons were made known in the issue published on 2 July, 1895, volume 2, no. 112.

Goh Cheng Lim and Wan Boon Seng published another romanised Malay paper called *Kabar Slalu*, also known as *Daily News* in English on January 5, 1924. The paper carried business news, advertisement, local and foreign news, editorial views and stories. It was also the first newspaper which published a series of translated works of the Babas. It too ceased publication on 16 May 1924. This news was reported in *Kabar Slalu* from 5 January 1924 till 16 May 1924.

Kabar Uchapan Baru is another weekly bilingual publication (English and Baba Malay), which was also known as *Eastern Weekly Review*. The first issue was published in 4 February 1926. After 1927, it was published fortnightly. Siaw Hay Yam was the translator. It was published from 4 February 1926 until January 1931.

2.2.2 The Baba Magazines

Beside newspapers, a number of Baba magazines were published at the same time. One such outstanding magazine was *The Straits Chinese Magazine: a Quarterly Journal of Oriental and Occidental Culture*. It was published in English. The first romanised Malay magazine was *Bintang Pranakan*, a romanised Malay weekly published by Wan Boon Seng on 11 October 1930 in Singapore. It was published in Baba Malay on each Saturday and was sold at ten cents per copy. Wan Boon Seng provided a series of the Chinese story *Ow Liat Kok Chee* which was translated by Seng and San. These series of stories were later published in four volumes in 1931.

Altogether there were 36 pages in each issue of the *Bintang Pranakan*, including the front and back covers. The front cover had two portions, the lower portion was for advertisements and the upper portion was for the regular logo of the magazine. The

design showed a star shining over the title '*Bintang Pranakan*' which means Pranakan Star. The title was surrounded by a coconut tree on the left and a rubber tree on the right. There was also a picture of a lion, a tiger and a bag of tin below the title. Coconut, rubber and tin symbolised the important natural products of Malaya. The lion symbolised Singapore, whilst the tiger symbolised Malaya.

Bintang Pranakan had regular features of editorials, local and foreign news, sports, market quotations, announcements, columns for humour, poems and photographs. *Bintang Pranakan* seemed to be widely distributed as it had agents in Malaya (Malacca, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Batu Pahat, Johor Bahru, Seremban, Kuala Pilah, Kampar, Taiping, Ipoh, Butterworth, Alor Setar, Sungei Patani and Trengganu), Sarawak (Kuching and Miri), Labuan, as well as in Tandjong Pinang of Rhio, Java (Semarang, Soerapaya), and Bangkok. However, *Bintang Pranakan* did not last long. According to Roff (1972) the magazine ceased publication in June 1931 after 34 issues.

(1932)
In April 1932, *Sri Pranakan* was published weekly by Wan Boon Seng. The content of this issue was similar to *Bintang Pranakan*. However, almost half of the stories were devoted to publishing the series of Chinese story called '*Yeo Boon Kong Cheng Lam Ban*', translated by Seng and San. Wan Boon Seng later published this story in four books between 1933-1934. *Sri Pranakan* seemed to published poems and songs more regularly than *Bintang Pranakan* did.

Each issue of *Sri Pranakan* had 32 pages, including the front and back covers. The front cover showed a tiger on the left and a lion on the right, with their front legs

reaching up to a shining star. This magazine was more expensive and it was priced at fifteen cents per copy. The magazine was published in Singapore but was also sold in Malaya (Malacca, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Johor Bahru, Seremban, Taiping, Trengganu, Kuala Lipis and Teluk Anson). Sarawak (Kuching), Java (Semarang and Soerabaya) and Thailand (Bangkok).

Another periodical was *Story Teller*, a fortnightly publication. The first volume was published on 30 June 1934 and the last volume was on 12 October 1935. This magazine merely published the Chinese story of *Beng Leh Koon*, which was translated by Khoo Peng Yam.

2.2.3 “*Pantun*” and “*Lagu*”

After a few centuries of residing in Malacca, the Babas have adopted many aspects of the Malay culture. The Babas have contributed greatly towards the variations in *bangsawan*, *pantun* (poems) and *lagu* (songs) of Malay literature.

Bangsawan is a type of opera, which performs stories based on folklore, with singing and minimal spoken dialogue. It was first introduced in Penang in the late 19th century. Soon it became popular and was adopted as a local culture. The Babas who patronised this type of opera were called Baba *bangsawan*. It is a sort of musical entertainment in which, the dialogue is interspersed with songs and Malay poems. The songs and the Malay poems that came between the *bangsawan* were called *pantun* and *syair*. (Khoo, 1996)

A *pantun* consists of four rhythmic lines in the sequence of a, b, a, b, the first two of which are shaped to prepare line three and four phonetically by means of an alluding sound, or to allude in a symbolic way to the essence of the last two lines. *Pantuns* are proverbial in nature. In the past, they were not commonly written down by the Malays but rather recorded by European scholars. The *syair*, with its final rhyme scheme (a, a, a, a), can achieve epic length. *Syair* normally expressed the feelings of a mystic or lover but also narrated historical and legendary events (Khoo, 1996).

In Malacca, the most popular Malay poem and music adopted and developed by the Babas is in the form of *Dondang Sayang*. *Dondang Sayang* or love poems are rendered in rounds of quick repartee between two singers or group of singers. The *Dondang Sayang* style originated from Malacca and eventually spread to Penang, Singapore and Sarawak. It is one of the most elaborate forms of *pantun* singing. It is accompanied by the music of a violin, a gong and *rebana* (tambourines) (Tan, 1981).

Vaughan (1879) mentioned that the Babas in Malacca were good in *pantun* and lagu. This is actually in reference to *dondang sayang*. This form of oral literature has become written literature as the Baba society grew and developed. The earliest *pantun* was written by Mohamad bin Moor Ta Kup in 1889, and was published by the Koh Yew Hean Press in Singapore. The title of the book is *Ini Pantun Karang-karangan*. Salmon believed that he was a Muslim converted Baba (Salmon, 1980). However this copy is not accessible in any of the local libraries. The last copy of *pantun* that is available was written by Lee Chee Lin in 1999, named *Pantun dulu-*

kala Peranakan Cina according to Ding's unpublished list *Buku Pantun dan Syair Baba Malaysia yang Sudah Dikumpul*. (16 February 2001).

The description of the various manifestations of previous Baba literary works shows that very few studies have been undertaken on the Baba publications. Although the study of Baba culture is well recommended by the anthropologist and sociologist, very few studied the Baba literature, and there is no attempt as yet to bibliographically control all Baba literary works. This would be the main focus of chapter four.

2.3 Translated Works

One important contribution of the Baba newspapers is that they devoted some columns to creative writings such as poems and short stories. The *Bintang Timor* published a serial entitled *Hikayat Perchintaan Si Puteh* (The Love Story of Si Puteh) commencing from its first issue. The magazines were published mainly to advertise short stories as well as translations of Chinese serial classics. The *Sri Pranakan* carried a series of story entitled *Yeo Boon Keng Cheng Lam Ban*. The Chinese story published in the *Story Teller* is *Beng Leh Koon*. Like the short stories published in the newspapers, these translations were well received by readers, and they were later published into books by popular demand. In fact, the most outstanding writings of the Babas were their translated works rather than the original creative works (Teo, 1980).

As early as 1889, people like Chan Kim Boon had already begun to publish novels translated from Chinese classics, but the development of such literature was

hindered in the 1920s. Chan who wrote under the pen name 'Batu Gantung' was one of the famous Baba literary figures. He specialised in translations of Chinese classics into Baba Malay. His epic work was a translation of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* or *Sam Kok*, which ran to 30 volumes. In addition to that, he also translated *The Water Margin* and *Journey to the West* (Tan, 2001).

Yang Gui Yi in 1987 had published an article on inter-translated works between Chinese and Malay. He categorised the evolution of the inter-translation activity into three periods. The first period was the social interactions that caused the inter-translation process. Yang also noticed that the Malay language that was being used at that period was the 'broken' Malay or Baba Malay. The second stage was the patriotic idealism period that stirred the speedy inter-translation. That was also the time that Standard Malay was introduced widely. Lastly, education was broadly introduced after the independence of Malaysia in 1957. This implied that inter-translations became unnecessary as most readers could read Malay directly. However, the Chinese translated works still remained. The difference is the translated material has led to a shift to local literature from Chinese classic. This implied that the extinction of the Baba literature was not sudden but gradual. Although there is still a small number of Baba works being published, the Baba Malay that is being used is different from the past.

Kow Mei Kao (1988) studied solely one of the translation literature – *Liao Zhai Zhi Yi*. He proposed *The Transmission of the Liao Zhai Zhi Yi in the Malay World*. Four versions of translation works on *Liao Zhai Zhi Yi* have been discovered. The first translation appeared in Batavia in 1895. This translation contained 28 stories on the

supernatural that originated from *Liao Zhai Zhi Yi*. In 1915 another translation appeared in Jakarta, but it was almost identical to the original version. Similarly, there was also another translation of *Lian Xiang*, one of the stories from *Liao Zhai Zhi Yi* in 1938. However, in 1965 Neo Jo-Ian translated three stories that had not been translated before into Malay in a work entitled *Sastera Tionghua Sa-pintas Lalu*. Kow had attempted to contribute to the enrichment of the language and literature of the local Baba society. Kow's research showed that the Baba translators did not translate the whole piece of a particular Chinese classic, but they were translated selectively.

Liao Jian Yu (1991) in his *Chinese Literature Translation Works in Indonesia and Malaysia* showed that a small number of Chinese literatures have been translated to Indonesian language and Malay. Besides that, the qualities of the translation work were not impressive. The Indonesian translated works seems to be more in numbers compared to translations into Baba Malay. Most of the Indonesian translated works are translated from the popular Chinese fiction or *Tong Shu Xiao Shuo*, whereas the Malaysian translated works were mainly from the Chinese classics. Liao expected that the quantity and quality of the translated work would improve giving better impact to the Malay literature. His expectation did not really happen as the present translated works used Standard Malay rather than Baba Malay.

Yang Quee Yee (2001) published an article which described his study on the groups of people who were involved in the inter-translation and their works. Mainly, there are two groups of translators. The first group was the English educated Chinese, which implied that the Babas were the pioneer and had produced over sixty titles.

The second group was the Chinese educated Chinese. Though they only started writing after 1950s, their works undoubtedly survived better than those writers by the first group. The translation works of these two groups were entirely different. The Babas selected the Chinese classic as their material and used colloquial Malay as their medium. The latter selected not only Chinese classic, but also the Malaysian Chinese literature, and the translation was into standard Malay. Yang concluded that the latter group contributed more to racial interaction since they have selected local material and used standard Malay, which is understood by a larger population of readers. The Babas translation works survived for sixty years and the main reason for its cessation was the decline in the use of the Baba language.

2.4 Baba Literature

Studies about

Many studies have been made of the historical, sociological and linguistic aspects of the Baba community, but apparently until the late 1970s nobody had raised the question of how, and to what extent this community felt the need to create a body of literature in Malay. Salmon (1977) was the first person who seriously studied the Baba literature. Before her, there was a small number of writers who published various articles. Mei (1961) wrote an article regarding Chinese novels in the Malay language. He commented that these novels were not given enough attention than it actually deserved. Huang Yao (1967) also commented that the Baba literature was hardly read by the non-Baba community and proposed more research in this area. Wen (1970) introduced one small article on Chan Kim Boon, one of the outstanding Baba writers.

In 1977, Salmon wrote *Writings in Romanized Malay by the Chinese of Malaya: a Preliminary Inquiry* in French in *Archipel* 14, 1977: 79-100. An English translation by Anne Destenay with a few commentaries and corrections was published in *Kertas-kertas Pengajian Tionghua (Papers on Chinese Studies)* vol. 1, December 1977: 69-95. Salmon (1987) later revised her list of the works in Romanized Malay. In the revised list, Salmon listed 94 titles. She highlighted a few representatives of the Baba literature penmanship such as Chan Kim Boon, Na Tian Piet and Wan Boon Seng. She divided the Baba literature into two periods. The first was the years between 1889-c.1920 which was regarded as the early development stage of the literature and was dominated by Chan Kim Boon. Year c1930-1942 was the recrudescence period, which was dominated by Wan Boon Seng. Salmon commented that the Baba literature should not be approached as literary criticism. It should be taken as a study of linguistic or history. Salmon's work has inspired further study on the Babas through their literature.

Clammer (1980) was also one of the scholars who studied the Baba literature. From the sociological point of view, Clammer proposed several reasons why the Babas did not produce great literature and the worth of studying their literature. The Baba roots arose from the combination of three competing traditions – the Malay language, the Chinese heritage and the British colonial political culture. As a result of these features, there was no full concentration in developing its literary aspect. Nevertheless the study of the Baba literature was still being encouraged for four reasons:

- a. It fascinated scholars on minority literature in Southeast Asia;
- b. It provided a source to study the internal changes of the Baba culture;

- c. It provided a model of interaction between literature and society; and
- d. It provided a source of social history, customs, culture and mores of the nineteenth and twentieth century.

Tan Chee Beng (1981) approached the subject of Baba literature in accordance to the type of Baba publications comprising poems, newspapers, magazines and translated works. Tan studied the sociology of the Babas and their language, ethnicity, customs and their literature. In the conclusion, Tan pointed out that the enthusiasm for publishing Baba literature is an expression of pride of the Baba identity. Chinese stories were mainly chosen to be translated because the Baba culture remained deeply rooted to its Chinese connection. Tan's research provided an understanding not only of the translated works but also of the Babas' creative works such as their poems, newspapers and magazines.

Another scholar, who examined the Baba literature thoroughly, was Teo Lay Teen (1980). She looked at the characteristics of one full Malay translation of the Chinese classic, entitled *Khian Leong Oon Yew Kang Lam* (Emperor Qian Long Toured the Jiangnan). The study devoted two chapters to the Malay language used by the Baba translators. She has narrowed the scope of the study to loanwords and grammar, and to the characteristics of the translation compared to the original. She commented that the translation works are not easy to read. Most were 'loose' translations of the translated works. The translators emphasised the content of the stories and were not attached to any style. She further explained that this may be because the literary works were mainly used as reading materials for leisure. Teo's work has opened avenues to the documentation of the Baba works.

Mei Jing (1983) studied about Baba translation literature, in his paper entitled, *Chan Kim Boon and Baba's Translation of Chinese Literature*. He studied the relationship between Baba Malay and the translation literature. At the same time, he upheld that Chan Kim Boon pioneered the Baba translation works and was the best translator. His study focused on Chan Kim Boon and opined that Baba literature played an important role in the literary development in Malaysia.

2.5 Bibliographies of Baba Literature

Very few bibliographies on Baba literature has been compiled. Proudfoot (1993) has compiled a list by working through the registration of *Straits Settlements Government Gazette* (SSGG), which was the quarterly *Memoranda of Book Published*. However, he observed that the Baba publication was rarely registered in the SSGG.

Perpustakaan Tun Sri Lanang, National University of Malaysia has attempted to compile a union list of Baba literature. They have published *Katalog Induk Koleksi Sastera Cina Peranakan* (1988) and succeeded in gathering Peranakan titles held in three of the major local university libraries, National University of Malaysia, University of Malaya and Science University of Malaysia. However, the peranakan literature listing was extended to include works by the local Baba community as well as the Indonesian Peranakan community. The total collection of this list is 1,322 titles, the majority being the Indonesian Peranakan literature kept in the National University of Malaysia collection. The intention of preparing this bibliography was to assist researches who wanted to study the literature and

language of assimilated Chinese. Another objective is to inspire the researchers to compliment the list. Nevertheless the bibliography is only limited to titles found in the three university libraries.

In 1989, an attempt was made to locate and record Malay books published in the Malaysia and Singapore region during the first hundred years of printing, from 1818 to 1920 by Ian Proudfoot (1989). He has recorded about 2,200 items which were located in 13 national, public and academic libraries in England, the Netherlands, Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia. The books included Christian missionary publications, a few Baba translations of Chinese romances, school books, guides to Islamic doctrines, and a great number of popular *syair* and *hikayat*. Many of these old books may now survive in only one copy. In conclusion, he pointed out that the task of identifying, securing and preserving this material is urgent. His effort of identifying the material has successfully increased an awareness of the need to identify, secure and preserve the Peranakan material. ✓

Proudfoot has completed a bibliography of the early Malay printed books in 1993. He assembled 1,000 titles comprising over 2,000 editions and located 2,650 items. The list was restricted to publications in Malay, other Southeast Asian languages and Arabic, which were issued in the Straits Settlements, the Malay States of the Peninsula and immediate associated areas (Sarawak, Riau, Palembang and Bencoolen). Proudfoot has compiled the list according to persons and institutions, places of publication, languages other than Malay, Baba books, Titles, Bibliographical lists and Library Shelf lists. Proudfoot's work is heavily referred as the basis for the present study. 1993

Chapter 1.1

The Za'ba Memorial Library first attempted a listing of peranakan literature in *Katalog Koleksi Melayu* (1980). Lately, it has published *Koleksi Sastera Peranakan*, the listing of Baba literature in University of Malaya (1998). The intention is similar to the publication of Perpustakaan Tun Seri Lanang. However the list is restricted to holdings of the University of Malaya Library (UML) only. The UML holds about 150 titles of both Baba literature and Indonesian Peranakan literature. However the listing is brief and provide only the main entry, title of the book, edition and publisher. The shelf number is not provided.

19.98

2.6 Summary

The search on available literature shows that very few studies have been undertaken on the Baba literature. The Babas has published creative and translated works since the 1880s. The creative works consisted of the Baba newspapers, magazines and *pantun*. The Baba translated works exemplified the main creative effort of the Baba community at that period of time. Very few listings of the Baba literary and translated works were undertaken. Published sources also indicate that studies on the Baba language was more popular than on the Baba literature. Chapter four will describe in detail the translated works found from the various listings mentioned in this chapter.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the method used to gather data, the scope of the research, the method used for data analyses and the problems faced when gathering the data.

3.1 Scope of the Research

Data about the Peranakan literature was mainly gathered through OPAC searches. The main concern of this study is on Baba Malay language translated works from Chinese classics. Nevertheless, there are a small number of Baba translations of English works. There are Bible translation works and hymn song by the Christian missionaries. William G. Shellabear was one of the translators. He had also translated John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* entitled, *Charita Orang Yang Chari Slammat* in Baba Malay in 1905.

There were few English literature translations into Baba Malay by the Babas. *Chrita der-hal Florence Nightingale* was one of them, which was translated by Goh Hood Keng in 1908. The same translator had translated another story entitled *Si Hitam yang Chantik* (Black Beauty) in 1913, published by Methodist Publishing House, Singapore. These works would not be included in the present study.

To identify the existence of Chinese literature translation to Baba Malay, a search was made of eight major library catalogues. However, only six libraries hold the Baba collection, and these include the University of Malaya Library (UML), Dewan

Bahasa dan Pustaka Library (DBPL), National Library of Singapore (NLS), National University of Singapore Library (NUSL), University of Science Malaysia (USML) and the British Library (BL). National Library of Malaysia and National Archives of Malaysia do not hold any such collections. The National Museum of Singapore is also one of the libraries that owned a small number of Baba publications (Proudfoot, 1989).

The catalogues of the NLS, NUS, and BL were searched through the Internet and the records are downloaded. UML and USML catalogues were search directly through their OPAC. For the DBPL, a card catalogue search was made since their library's online catalogue is still under construction.

It was found that UML possesses the largest collection of the Baba translated works currently. It has a total of 61 titles, followed by DBPL with 20 titles, USML with 24 titles, NLS holds 24 titles, NUSL holds 16 titles and BL holds 9 titles. The total number of Baba translated works retrieved was 154 titles. However, among these, duplicate copies were identified. Only 68 unique titles were finally chosen for analyses.

Only the collection of UML and the DBPL were being accessed physically. The majority of the Baba publications are kept as part of the various libraries' rare collection. In other words they are kept in closed stacks. The UML keeps these publications mostly in the Za'ba Memorial Library, except for copies on microfilms and microfiches, which were stored in the main library. The DBPL keeps the Baba collection in the Documentation Department, which was also the closed stack

section. However, a small number of the Baba collections are displayed at the open shelves in DBPL. The advantage of the open shelf copies is that they can be borrowed and photocopied freely by researchers. This is totally different with the UML, which only allowed limited photocopying at the Za'ba Memorial Library.

The Za'ba Memorial Library was founded in 1976 and hold the bequest of the personal library of Tan Sri Zainal Abidin bin Ahmad. However, the library began collecting Baba literary works only in the late 1970s (according to the ex-officer of the library, Mr. Ibrahim Ismail). The Baba works are shelved according to Library of Congress Classification scheme and only restricted access is allowed.

The Baba translated works can be accessed either at the library reference hall within the premises of the Za'ba Memorial Library. The collection is in poor condition with the majority damaged by the book pests. A photocopy and bound version of the collection can also be referred to within the library's reference hall. Four titles of the translated works held in UML, are in microform (either microfilm or microfiche form).

DBPL mainly served researchers in the field of Malay literature and languages. The library holds a small collection of Baba literature. The books of DBPL are arranged in the Dewey Decimal Classification scheme. The OPAC of the library is not ready and library search has to be conducted through the card catalogue. To identify the relevant titles, a search was made under "fiksyen cina" (Chinese Fiction). Four *Peranakan* titles are kept on the open shelves and one is kept in microfilm form. The rest is stored in the Documentation Department. As these books were obtained

from private donations from the public, the conditions of some of the books are poor. One fifth of the DBPL's Baba publication cannot be traced (6 given titles cannot be located). It is suspected that the titles may have been discarded during previous weeding processes. Some of the books are being bound and no duplicate copies were made.

3.2 Data Collection

After accessing the translated works from both UML and DBPL, it was found that the books contains valuable information about translation scripts, advertisements, announcement of new publications, introduction of the translators, publishers etc. Only titles that have been accessed were selected for an in-depth study. Each title was entered into an Excel databases and presented in tables. For some of the title published in numerous volumes, each volume is entered separately. The rationale is that each volume might have different information such as year of publication, printing company and even title. If a book contained two different stories, the information is entered into the column for note. Each story is entered separately as a different record. Any peculiarities about the book, such as differences in the title found on the cover and the title page will be noted in the "notes" column.

For most titles, the information found on the cover is used as the title of the record. Baba translated works seldom provides title pages. Most books merged the title page and the first page of the content into one page. For this study, only selected information was chosen for analysis. They are mainly divided into five categories and this is indicated in Table 3.1.

Table 3. 1: Selected Information for Analysis

Persons Involved	Publishers	Contents	Physical Description	Library Holdings
Translator Editor	Publisher Place of Publication	Content	Title from Front Page Title from Title Page Parallel Title Design of the book Size of the book	Location
Illustrator Chinese reader Romanised Malay reader Helper	Year of Publication Address of Publisher Printing Company Address of Printing Company		Pagination Illustration Volume Price Edition	

As a result of the poor condition of some titles and many were unprofessionally published, full information about some titles cannot be determined. In such a situation a question mark (?) will be entered in the appropriate columns. For example, a question mark will be noted at the edition column, if the edition cannot be found and *San.* or *s.l.* was entered where ever the name of the publisher or place of publication cannot be determined. However, for some titles' information was obtained from the government gazette, contemporary advertisement and announcement found in the published book. Another major source of information is *Early Malay Printed Books* by Proudfoot (1993).

3.2.1 Persons Involved

The persons involved refers to the following persons together with the designation used to establish their roles (given within brackets):

- Translator (tr.)
- Editor (ed.)
- Illustrator (ill.)

- Chinese reader (C.re.)
- Romanised Malay reader (RM.re.)
- Helper (he.)

Most of the translated works were translated from the Chinese popular fiction and the author of the original story cannot be traced. The story itself could already be popular before it was written into a book. According to Teo (1980), the translations were mostly written by someone who had often listened from a storyteller. In this study, the author of works is not indicated. For example, the translator of *Botan Kiang Choo* was indicated to be: Wan Boon Seng (tr.). Since the translated work of the Baba is the focal point, the role of a translator will be given more attention than the other roles. The editor normally coordinates the translator and illustrator for published works. In *Ang Bin Sio Chia*, "Itu Baba Seng [Wan Boon Seng] sudah ator-kan ini chrita punya peratoran chakapan dan ehjaan surat (spelling)..." [Baba Seng has arranged (edited) the story in terms of sentence structure and spelling]. However, the editor sometimes could also be the translator.

The illustrators were less recognised and their names were seldom mentioned in books. Their names were sometimes printed beside the illustrations. For most works, illustrators were not mentioned. The Chinese reader was the ones who understood and read the Chinese story to the translator or the helper. The Romanised Malay reader was a bilingual (Baba Malay and Chinese) person who was illiterate. His role was to interpret the Chinese stories into Baba Malay language for the translator. The role of a helper was not well defined in the book. Their jobs were probably to assist the translator or read to the translator.

Three types of information are obtained for the persons involved. This comprises chronological analyse of persons involved, their principle roles and their other roles. Lastly, those who played more than a role will be mentioned in detail. Five of the most active persons involved will be studied in depth.

3.2.2 The Active Publishers of Baba Translated Works

The field “publisher” contains the following data: publishers, place of publication, year of publication, address of publishers, printers and address of printers. The data of the proprietor or sales agents which can be found in the books, is not included in this analysis. ‘Publishers’ information is used to analyse the publishers and printing company involved and the category of the publishers involved.

Sometimes the translator might also be the publisher of a publication. They might publish their own works by hiring helpers (assistants). It could be a Chinese reader or Romanised Malay reader. This situation makes it difficult to differentiate the role of a person. In such cases, additional evidence is searched to resolve the confusion. However this is not always possible because of the limited resources.

3.2.3 Contents of the Baba Translated Works

One of the most important information being analysed is the content of the book. The books are divided into five categories. Each category reflects different emphasis of the stories. However, the description about the contents of the book is subjective.

The purpose of analysing the content is to trace the interest of the readers and the expertise of the persons involved in early 20th century. The contents are described in accordance to the following five categories,

a. Folklore

The titles in this category cover traditional beliefs. Normally, it encompasses stories told by the elders in a community, handed down from generation to generation. Examples are, *Gong Kiah Sie*, *Ngo Chu Low Tang Kia* and *Song Kang*.

b. Romances

These are love stories. Normally, the moral behind the stories upholds the love between lovers or passion towards a country. Stories such as, *Gnoh Bee Yean*, *Pat Bee Toh* and *Kek Hua Sio Chia* bear such features.

c. Chivalrous stories

These stories normally portray the characters of knights or warriors and highlight the spirit of courage, loyalty, devotion to the weak and helpless. Normally these knights had supernatural powers, such as characters in *Flying Swords*, *Lek Boh Tan* and *It Ki Mui Peng Suanh Chat*. Usually, the Chinese traditional value will apply in the story, such as *It Ki Mui* (1936) which mentioned in the preface that 'Orang benar pulang di benar atau Orang baik mesti dapat pembalasan yang baik' [The right prevails or good deed will always receive good returns].

d. Legends

These stories normally highlight the characteristics of godliness or the mysticism. The story normally involved supernatural or imaginary persons. For example, *Kou Hey Thian* tells the story of how a monkey which had supernatural power, succeeded in obtaining scriptures from the West. *Hong Sin* and *Chay Kong Wak Hood* are the other two stories that revealed stories of similar characteristics.

e. Historical stories

These titles usually narrated true stories in the past. The historical story did not necessarily describe times of war but could be recorded as an imperial history, such as *Cheong Moh Inn*, *Cheng Teck Koon Yew Kang Nam* and *Khian Leong Koon Yew Kang Nam*.

Sometimes it is difficult to ascertain the true content of a title. It could be a story of historical romances, such as the story of *Cheong Moh Inn*, which elaborated on the plight of an empress who was ugly (blue-faced) but intelligent. It tells about the bitter-sweet romances between Cheong Moh Inn and the emperor. The categorisation of works is therefore subjective. The analyses here stress on the trend of story contents over the sixty-year period, which reflected the interest of readers during that time.

3.2.4 Physical Description

In this section, information of the physical description of a book will be collected. The objective of capturing these information is to give a full description and documentation on the literature. In this study, no graph or chart will be presented.

Solely description regarding the book will be mentioned. For instance, the style of the title, the normal size of the book, the elements found on the preface, the effect of the illustration and the design of the book will be studied as a whole.

3.2.5 Library Holdings

Library holding is analysed to indicate the location of each publication found in Malaysia and Singapore. Mainly six libraries have catalogued their Baba translated works under the subject of Peranakan fiction, Peranakan literature, Chinese fiction, Chinese literature, and Chinese literature translation into Malay (according to Library of Congress Subject Headings)

In this section, the location of a book is indicated by institutions holding it and excluded the shelve numbers given. However, for publications in microforms, the microform number is indicated. The same title could be located in several libraries at the same time, such as *Kou Chey Thian* is located in all libraries except the British Library.

The size of the collection in the libraries will be examined, and the proportion of each collection which comprises unique items will be presented. The unique items are those not held in the other five libraries.

3.3 Data Analysis

The data is analysed using Windows Excel. The raw data is converted into conventional graphs with corresponding legends or table. It is used to analyse the five major categories of persons involved, publishers involved, library holdings, and

contents. The results are presented in the form of linear graphs, pie charts and bar graphs with explanations.

In short the data will be keyed to serve two purposes, one is to present a bibliographic list and another is to be used for analysis. For the bibliographic list, more data will be keyed in. The findings and description is given in Chapter four. The bibliographic list is presented in the appendices of this paper.

3.4 Problems of the Study

A number of bibliographies on Baba literature have been published. University Malaya has published *Koleksi Sastera Peranakan* (1998) and *Early Malay Printed Books* by Ian Proudfoot (1993). Proudfoot did not include the collection from USML. The National University of Malaysia (UKM) has also published *Katalog Induk Koleksi Sastera Cina Peranakan* which lists Malaysian Baba and Indonesian Peranakan literature (1988). Scholars like Teo Lay Teen (1980), Tan Chee Beng (1981) and Claudine Salmon (1987) have also listed a substantial number of Baba literatures in their papers respectively. They listed the translated literature according to translators rather than chronologically. In short, there is no one source which collates all published Baba literature.

One of the main problems of collecting data on this subject is the fact that some literatures are held in the foreign collection such as the British Library. The British Library kept this collection in their Oriental Collection. According to Proudfoot (1989), most of the Oriental Collection can only be accessed through card catalogue. The National Museum of Singapore is facing the same problem. Here, the Baba

collection is treated as material for exhibition. As a consequence, it is not accessible on the OPAC.

Difficulties of physically accessing are another obstacle to this study. The Baba translation works were distributed in limited copies and very few were reprinted (excepts *Sam Kok*, *Hong Keow*). Hence, such translation works have become rare and are kept as rare collections in libraries. This has made access to it difficult. A number of the collection is in private individual collection which also make access difficult. The difficulties are further exacerbated by incomplete library catalogue holdings.

3.5 Summary

This chapter explains the method and types of data to be collected for the study. The scope of the Baba literature is narrowed down to Baba translated works of Chinese classics. The Baba literatures are analysed in accordance to five categories, persons involved, publishers, contents, physical description and library holdings.

Chapter IV

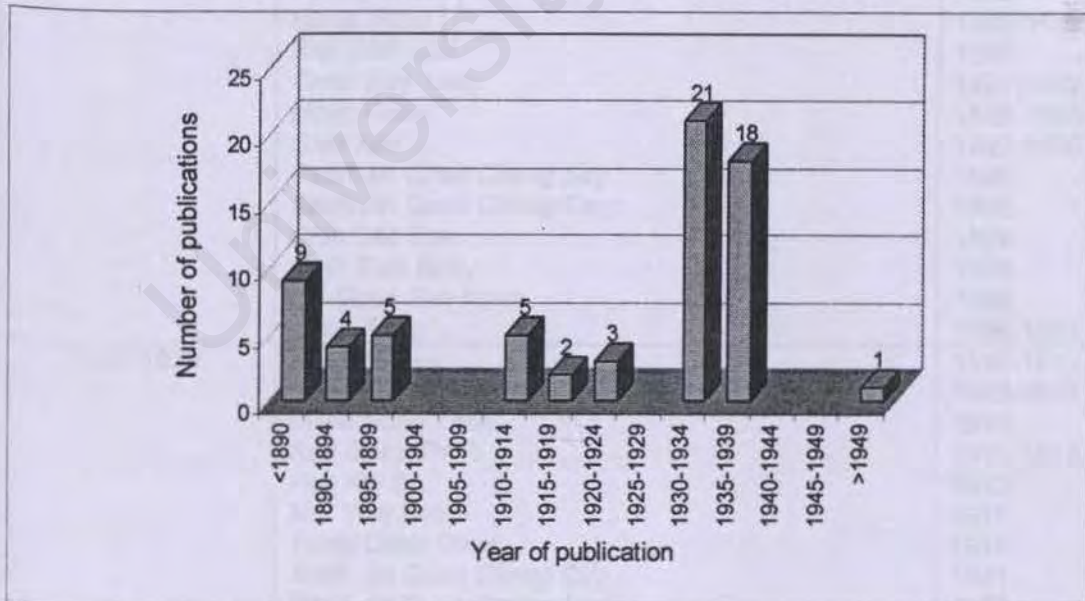
FINDINGS AND ANALYSES

In this chapter, the findings of the study will be presented. Baba translated works were studied in-depth in accordance to the five major areas, persons involved, publishers, contents of the translated works, physical description and the library holdings.

4.1 Total Translated Work Identified

Through the OPAC search of six libraries, 68 unique titles are identified and examined closely (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: Baba Translated Works (1889-1950)



The Baba translated publications revealed an outstanding feature. Figure 4.1 revealed a three-peak period of the Baba translated works that emerged. The most

active period was during the 1930s, when more than 50 percent of the Baba publications were published (39 out of 68 titles).

Table 4.1 indicated that the translated works may be divided into three periods. The first period was 1889-1909, the embryonic period, which published 18 publications. The second period was 1910-1929, the stagnant period, which produced 10 publications. The last period was 1930-1939, the revival period, which produced 39 publications, and is also the peak of total Baba translated works published. Only one publication, *Botan Kiongchoo* was published in 1950.

Table 4. 1 Baba Translated Works (1889-1950)

Period	Titles	Year(s)
1889-1909	<i>Gong Kiah Sie</i>	1889
	<i>Heng Guan Seo Chia</i>	1889
	<i>Kasatu Bijak Lahsana</i>	1889
	<i>Kim Ko Kee Quan</i>	1889
	<i>Lwee Hong Thak</i>	1889
	<i>Mai Yeu Long</i>	1889
	<i>Teong Chiat Ghee</i>	1889
	<i>Hong Keow</i>	1889-1892
	<i>Ban Wah Lau</i>	1890
	<i>Gnoh Bee Yean</i>	1891-1892
	<i>Hong Keow</i>	1892-1893
	<i>Sam Kok</i>	1892-1896
	<i>Seeh Jin Quee Cheng Say</i>	1895
	<i>Seeh Jin Quee Cheng Tang</i>	1895
	<i>Chin See Bee</i>	1899
	<i>Chin Suat Buay</i>	1899
	<i>Lip Guan Poh Kuan</i>	1899
	<i>Song Kang</i>	1899-1902
1910-1929	<i>Ban Wha Law</i>	1910-1912
	<i>Sum Hup Poh Kiam</i>	1910-1916
	<i>Lwee Hong Thak</i>	1911
	<i>Kou Chey Thian</i>	1911-1912
	<i>Pho Kiu Si</i>	1913
	<i>Mai Yew Long</i>	1915
	<i>Tiong Chiat Ghee</i>	1915
	<i>Seeh Jin Quee Cheng Say</i>	1921
	<i>Seeh Jin Quee Cheng Tang</i>	1922
	<i>Teck Cheng Ngo Ho Peng Lam</i>	1922
1930-1939	<i>Ang Bin Sio Chia</i>	1931
	<i>Ow Liat Kok Chee</i>	1931
	<i>Say Han</i>	1931
	<i>Tang Chay Liat Kok</i>	1931
	<i>Wakang</i>	1931
	<i>Pat Bee Tor</i>	1931-1932

	Sam Ha Lam Tong	1931-1932
	Hong Sin	1931-1937
	Hong Sin Ban Sian Tin	1931-1939
	Lee Tan	1932
	Ngo Chu Low Tang Kia	1932
	Siang Ha Ngo Liong Huay	1932
	Sam Kok	1932
	Cheng Teck Koon Yew Kang Nam	1933
	Chit Sih Pat Meng Su	1933
	Kek Hua Siochia	1933
	Lee Lo Chia	1933
	Yeo Boon Kong Cheng Lam Ban	1933-1934
	Hoon Chong Lau	1934
	Khiang Tai Kong	1934
	Cheng Tiong Suat Gak	1934-1938
	Chay Kong Wak Hood	1935
	Khian Leong Koon Yew Kang Lam	1935
	Lek Boh Tan	1935
	Nah Kong Tong Pak Han	1935
	Sam Hap Beng Choo Pokiam	1935
	Teck Cheng Cheng Pak	1935
	Tian Pah Tor	1935
	Ong Cheow Koon Hoe Huan	1935-1936
	Chow Thau Hong Boo Koon	1936
	Flying Swords	1936
	It Ki Mui/ Chit Kiam Chapsahnh Kiap	1936
	It Ki Mui/ Chit Chu Chapsahnh Seng	1936
	Tio Kong Inn	1936
	Lam Koon Ong Soon Pin	1936-1938
	It Ki Mui Peng Suanh Chat	1938
	Sam Kok Inn	1938
	Cheong Moh Inn	1938-1939
	Tai Lau Sam Boon Kuay	1939
1950	Botan Kiongchoo	1950

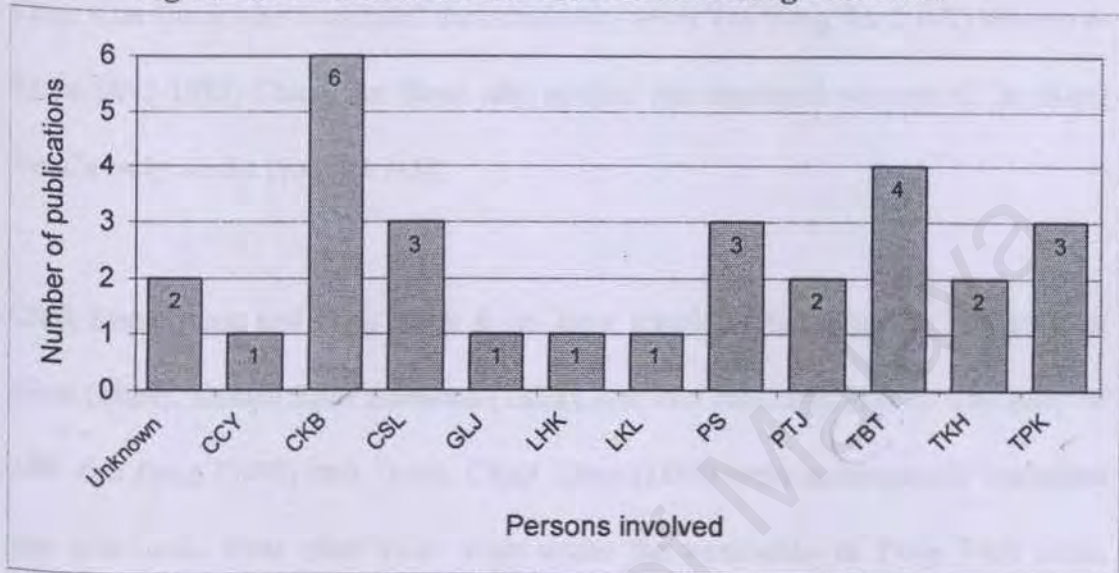
4.2 Persons Involved

During the embryonic period, eleven persons were involved. The more prominent persons were Chan Kim Boon, Tan Beng Teck and Tan Phiak Kong (Figure 4.2).

Chan Kim Boon, also known as Batu Gantong was born in Batu Gantong, Penang in 1851. He was probably the most famous translator during the embryonic period. His translation works was *Sam Kok* (1892-1896) and *Song Kang* (1899-1902). The former was translated from the Luo Guang Zhong's *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and the latter from Shi Nai An's *Water Margin*. The other well-known translations were *Hong Keow* (1891), *Hong Keow* (1892-1893) and *Gnoh Bee Yean*

(1891-1892). Chan continued to translate another two famous Chinese classics entitled *Pho Kiu Si* (1913) and *Kou Chey Thian* (1911-1912), or *Journey to the West* in the second period.

Figure 4.2: Prominent Persons Involved During 1889-1909



CCY	Cheah Choo Yew	LHK	Lim Hock Kee	TBT	Tan Beng Teck
CKB	Chan Kim Boon	LKL	Lye Kam Lim	TKH	Tan Kheam Hock
CSL	Chek Swee Leong	PS	Peng Swee & co.	TPK	Tan Phiak Kong
GLJ	Goh Leng Joo	PTJ	Pang Teck Joon		

According to an announcement in *Sam Kok* (15 December 1892), Chan promised to translate the following titles: *Kim Ko Ki Kwan*, *Leow Chai*, *Pow Kong Ann*, *Si Kong Ann*, *Na Kong Ann*, *Swi Huo* atau *Song Kang*, *Lim Ai Chu*, *Chey Thian Hoey Sion*, *Wan Ju Yak*, *Keng Gno Cheong*, *Hoon Chong Lau*, *Chit Hiap*, *Cheng Tong*, *Cheng Sai*, *Ho Gnoh Tai*. However, only *Song Kang* (1888-1902) and *Chey Thian Hoey Sion* [which was later entitled *Kou Chey Thian* (1911-1912)], can be traced. The rest are not found in UML or DBPL.

Tan Beng Teck was another prominent translator. He was also the earliest translator that can be traced. His first translation works was *Heng Guan Seo Chia* (1889),

Hong Keow (1889), *Kim Ko Kee Quan* (1889) and *Lwee Hong Thak* (1889). Surprisingly, his translated works was published only in 1889, and after that date his works stopped. According to Tan (1981), Tan Beng Teck was the first to translate the *Hong Keow* but he left for Japan after publishing only three volumes. It was Chan Kim Boon who continued the translation when Tan Beng Teck left (volume 4-8). In 1892-1893, Chan Kim Boon also revised the translated version of Tan Beng Teck's early works (volume 1-3).

Chek Swee Liong and Peng Swee & co. have translated three stories, *Teong Chiat Ghee* (1889), *Kasatu Bijak Lahsana* (1888), and *Mai Yeu Long* (1889). The story of *Mai Yeu Long* (1889) and *Teong Chiat Ghee* (1889) were subsequently compiled into one book. Four other titles were under the translation of Pang Teck Joon, though only two were translated in the first period (*Chin Suat Buay*, 1899 and *Chin See Bee*, 1899).

Lye Kam Lim addressed himself as L.K. Lim, translated the *Gong Kiah Sie* (1889), a story about the most stupid person in the world. Other translators of the embryonic period were, Goh Len Joo who translated *Seeh Jin Quee Cheng Tang* (1895), and Lim Hock Kee who published *Ban Wah Lau* (1890).

Tan Phiak Kong was one of the most outstanding illustrators of this period. He illustrated *Chin See Bee* (1899), *Chin Suat Bee* (1899) (Figure 4.4), *Gnoh Bee Yean* (1891-1892), *Seeh Jin Quee Cheng Tang* (1895) and later *Ban Wha Lau* (1910). In *Ban Wha Lau*, he only illustrated the first volume. In volume five of *Gnoh Bee*

Yean, Tan provided a portrait of himself in Ming Dynasty's costume, holding a paper fan and wearing glasses (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3: Self-Portrait of Tan Phiak Kong



Figure 4.4: Illustrations of Tan Phaik Kong

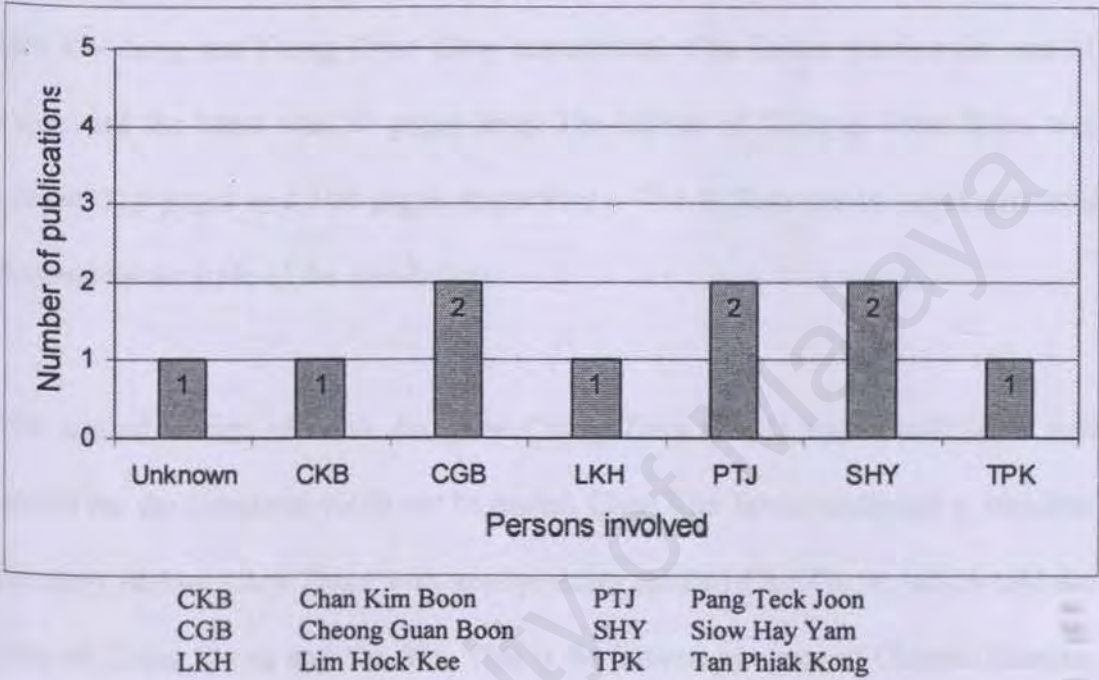


Tan Kheam Hock who was the helper of Chan Kim Boon in *Gnoh Bee Yean* (1891), volume 6-8 of *Hong Keow* (1892) and the revised version of volume 1 of *Hong Keow* (1892). Tan Kheam Hock was born in Penang and took a prominent part in the public life of the Settlement. (Song, 1923). Another helper of Chan Kim Boon was Cheah Choo Yew who helped to translate volumes 6 and 8 of *Hong Keow* (1891). There are also two titles, that bore no translators' name and these are *Lip Guan Poh Kuan* published in 1899, and *Seeh Jin Quee Cheng Say* in 1895.

What made Chan Kim Boon well-known and different from the other translators of the time was his effort in translating three famous Chinese classics, namely *Sam Kok* in 30 volumes in 1892-1896, *Song Kang* in 19 volumes in 1899-1902 and *Kou Chey Thian* in 9 volumes in 1911-1913 (Tan, 1981). After the death of Chan Kim Boon in 1920, the activity of translation works declined. During this period, from the First World War (1914) to 1929, very little translation works was undertaken.

During the stagnant period between 1910-1929, the well-known persons involved were Cheong Guan Boon, Pang Teck Joon and Siow Hay Yam. Pang Teck Joon and Cheong Guan Boon continued as translators during this period. (Figure 4.5)

Figure 4.5: Prominent Persons Involved During 1910-1929



Only 10 titles were being translated during this period. Pang Teck Joon has translated *Lwee Hong Thak* (1911) and *Ban Wha Law* (1910). Tan Phiak Kong was the illustrator of *Ban Wha Law*. In 1889, Tan Beng Teck translated the *Lwee Hong Thak*, a legendary story about a black and white snake with Kho Boon Han. Lim Hock Kee has translated the *Ban Wha Law* in 1890. His edition of *Ban Wah Lau* was spelt differently compared with that of Pang Teck Joon. This was a military story about a Song dynasty’s general, Tek Cheng. Lim Hock Kee translated this story in 8 volumes, where else Pang Teck Joon translated it in 10 volumes.

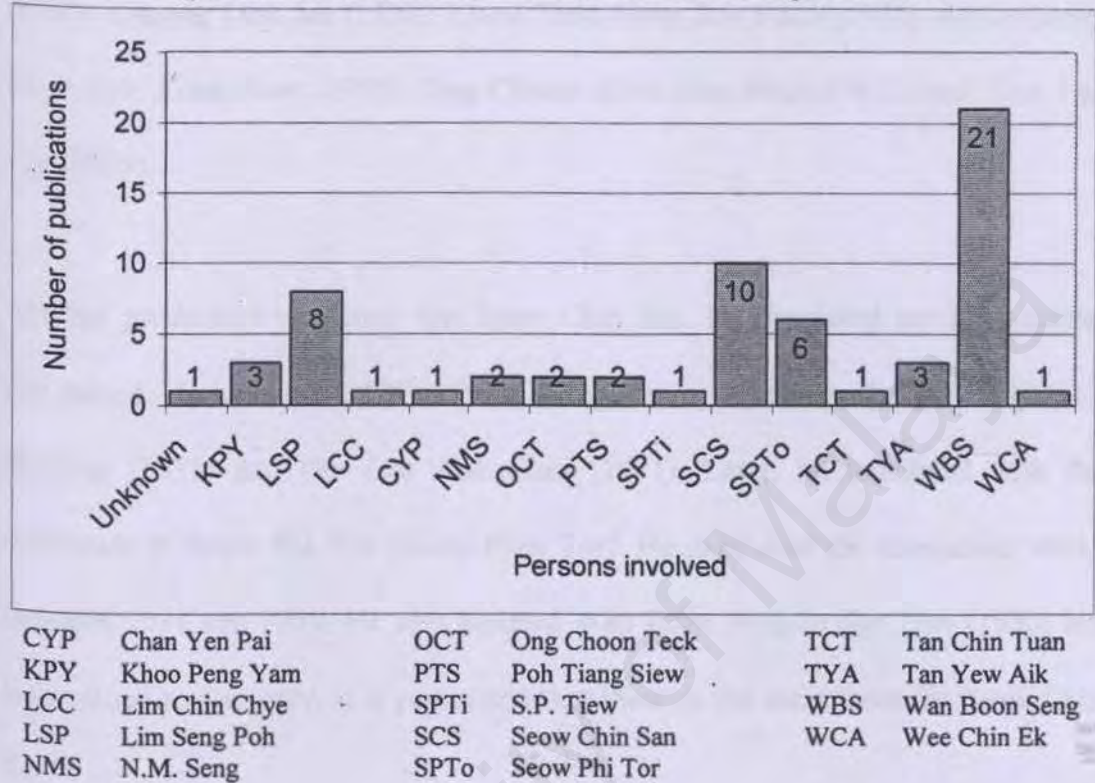
Siow Hay Yam translated *Teck Cheng Ngo Ho Peng Lam* (1922) in 7 volumes and *Seeh Jin Quee Cheng Say* (1921) in 10 volumes. Cheong Guan Boon translated *Mai Yew Long* in 1915 and *Tiong Chiat Ghee* in 1915. The *Mai Yew Long* and *Tiong Chiat Ghee* has been translated by Chek Swee Liong and Swee Peng & co. in 1889. However, the title of previous edition by Chek Swee Liong was spelt differently as *Mai Yeu Long* and *Teong Chiat Ghee* respectively. The former publication was 31 pages and the latter was 57 pages long. The edition of Cheong Guan Boon was longer, 116 pages and 100 pages respectively. The differences in pagination was dictated by the style of the translations.

The second edition of *Seeh Jin Quee Cheng Tang* (1922) was translated in this period but the translator could not be traced. Chan Kim Boon continued to translate the story of *Kou Chey Thian* with another story entitled *Pho Kiu Si*, which told the story of Zhang Sheng and Yin Yin. This is the famous romance of Chinese classics. Chan Kim Boon started the story on the eighth volume of *Kou Chey Thian*, and continued it into the ninth volume. Lau Kim Hock translated the story of *Sum Hup Poh Kiam* in 1910. His other translated work was *Loh Thong Sau Pak* (1907). This title could not be traced in any of the six libraries. It was mentioned by Salmon (1987), Tan (1981) and Yang's (2001).

The year ending this period revealed no publication of Baba translation works. According to Teo (1980), the reasons for this situation was the shortage of proficient translators and the difficulty in obtaining the original Chinese texts for translation. However, after 1930, a revival was observed. During this period, 38 titles was published and 14 names emerged. This was also the peak of the

publication period for Baba translated works. Most of the titles were translated by Wan Boon Seng (Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6 Prominent Persons Involved During 1930-1939



The most prominent translator was Wan Boon Seng or pseudonymed as Panah Pranakan. He alone has translated 21 titles during that period. In 1950, he translated another Chinese story entitled *Botan Kiongchoo*. This was also the last translation work of the Babas that can be traced. In other word, other than the publication of *Botan Kiongchoo*, the Baba tradition of translating Chinese literature came to an end by the time of the Second World War. Normally Wan Boon Seng did not translate all the works by himself. He was often assisted by Lee Seng Poh, Seow Chin San, N.M. Seng, Tan Yew Aik and Tan Chin Thuan. Perhaps this was the reason behind his high publication productivity.

There were eight titles related to Lee Seng Poh. His name was first listed in *Hoon Chong Lau* (1934) as a helper and also *Sam Hap Beng Choo Pokiam* (1935). Later he translated Chinese book on his own, which included *Chay Kong Wak Hood* (1935), *Cheong Moh Inn* (1938), *Chow Thau Hong Boo Koon* (1934), *Khian Leong Koon Yew Kang Nam* (1935), *Ong Cheow Koon Hoe Huan* (1935) and *Tian Pah Tor* (1935).

Another productive translator was Seow Chin San. He translated ten titles during this period. He had assisted Wan Boon Seng in three translations, *Say Han* (1931), *Wakang* (1931) and *Ow Liat Kok Chee* (1931). Later, he translated with the assistance of Seow Phi Tor [Seow Phee Tor]. He published six translation works between 1931 and 1938. He also assisted Wan Boon Seng in *Say Han* (1930) but was named as San only. It is postulated that 'San' is the short form for Seow Chin San.

The names of other persons were mainly involved in one or two titles. Poh Tiang Siew translated *Sam Kok Inn* (1938) in one volume and *Tau Lau Sam Boon Kuay* in 22 volumes (1939) with the assistance of a Chinese reader, Ong Choon Teck. Ong also helped Lee Seng Poh who translated *Cheong Moh Inn* (1939). He was a Chinese and romanised Malay reader rather than a translator. Another Chinese reader was N.M. Seng, who also helped Wan Boon Seng in translating *Hoon Chong Lau* (1934) and *Sam Hap Beng Choo Pokiam* (1935). Tan Yew Aik was also the Chinese reader for Wan Boon Seng who helped to translate *Lek Boh Tan* (1935) and *Tio Kong Inn* (1936).

Wee Chin Ek translated the story of *Lee Tan* in two volumes in 1932. Lim Chin Chey helped Lee Seng Poh to translate *Chay Kong Wak Hood* (1935). Tan Chin Thuan was the Chinese reader of Lee Seng Poh in his translation of *Tian Pah Tor* (1935). One illustrator emerged in this period. He was S.P. Tiew who illustrated the front page of *Ngo Chu Low Tang Kia* (1932). No further information on this person can be traced.

Figure 4.7: Roles of a Person

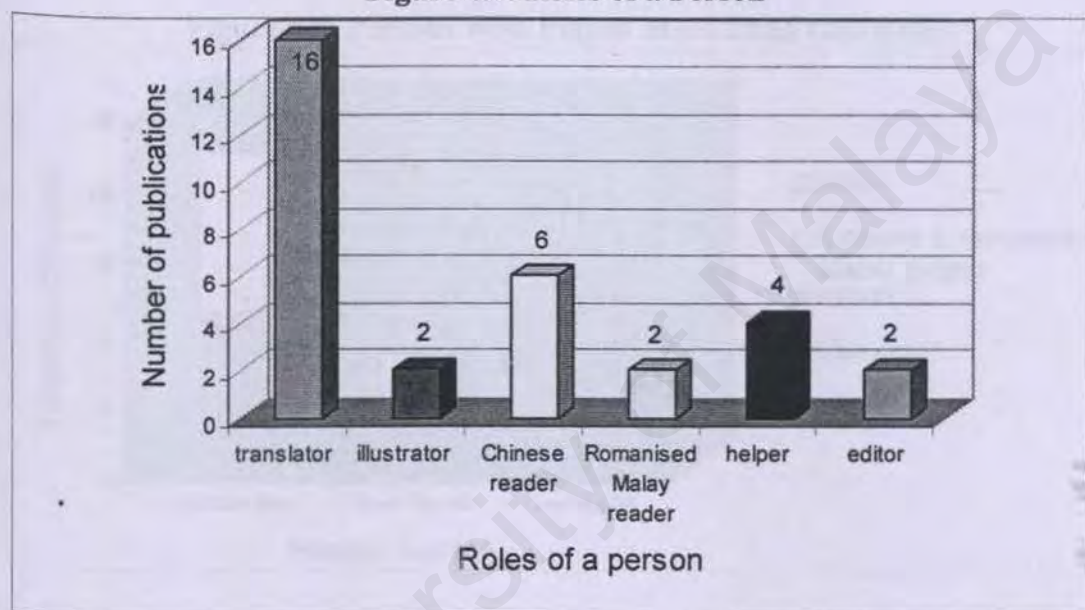
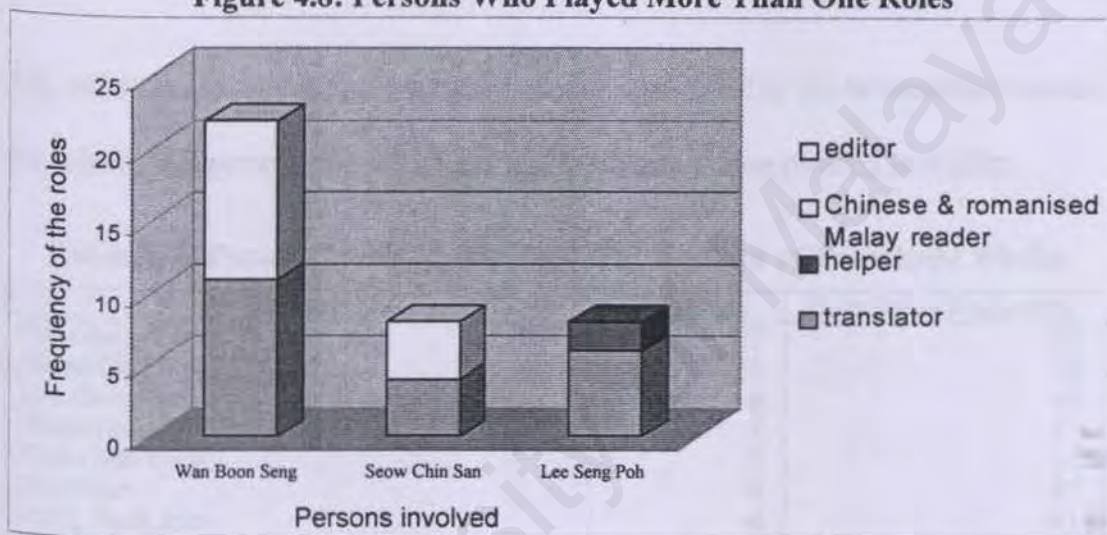


Figure 4.7 summarises the role of persons involved in Baba translated works. Almost two third of person involved are the translators (16 persons). Others include the Chinese readers. The role of a translator and a reader are different. A translator might not understand a certain language. For example, Wan Boon Seng was always assisted by a person who can read Chinese or a Chinese reader. He himself was not literate in the Chinese written language.

There were also four titles that did not indicate any names. These *Pat Bee Tor* (1931-1932), *Lee Tan* (1892), *Lip Guan Poh Kuan* (1899) and *Seeh Jin Quee Cheng*

Say (1895). Since the books were dated, it is difficult to trace the persons involved in the publications. It might be the lack of knowledge of the standard practise of publishing a book, that results in publications with incomplete information. Although *Pat Bee Tor* was published later, no person involved was mentioned. Only the publisher, Chew Tian Sang and assistant publisher, Khoo Peng Yam was mentioned. This situation might have arisen because the publishers disagreed to nominate a translator or editor for the said publication.

Figure 4.8: Persons Who Played More Than One Roles



Some of the names emerged played more than one role (Figure 4.8). For example Lee Seng Poh was the helper of two publications, as well as the translator of six publications. As mentioned earlier, the task of a helper could be various, such as assistant translator, or a reader for the chief translator. Wan Boon Seng was the translator of eleven publications, as well as the editor of eleven publications. Wan was not only a translator, he was also a publisher as well as a poet (see Appendix I). Wan did not translate all the works by himself. He was often assisted by Lee Seng Poh, N.M. Seng, Seow Chin San, Tan Chin Thuan and Tan Yew Aik. Normally, if there is a helper, Wan will named himself as *pengarang*. This shows that Wan himself did not clearly differentiate between the role of translator and editor.

Table 4.2 shows that Wan Boon Seng involved in the largest number of publication (22 titles), followed by Seow Chin San (10 titles), Lee Seng Poh (8 titles), Seow Phi Tor (7 titles) and Chan Kim Boon (6 titles). The rest involved in a small number of publications only. There is one remarkable person, Tan Phiak Kong who was the illustrator of four publications. The others were normally translators or helpers. There are ten names that were mention only once in the 68 publications.

The result indicated that there were 103 persons involved in the 68 translated works for which, two persons were involved in 26 titles and three persons in 4 titles.

Table 4. 2: Persons Involved and Total Publications of Translated Works

Persons Involved	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency
Wan Boon Seng	22	22
Seow Chin San	10	32
Lee Seng Poh	8	40
Seow Phee Tor @Seow Phi Tor	7	47
Chan Kim Boon	6	53
Unknown	4	57
Pang Teck Joon	4	61
Tan Beng Teck	4	65
Tan Phiak Kong	4	69
Chek Swee Liong	3	72
Khoo Peng Yam	3	75
Peng Swee & co.	3	78
Tan Yew Aik	3	81
Cheong Guan Boon	2	83
N.M. Seng	2	85
Ong Choon Tek	2	87
Poh Tiang Siew	2	89
Siow Hay Yam	2	91
Tan Kheam Hock	2	93
Chan Yen Pai	1	94
Cheah Choo Yew	1	95
Goh Len Joo	1	96
Lau Kim Hock	1	97
Lim Chin Chye	1	98
Lim Hock Kee	1	99
Lye Kam Lim	1	100
S.P. Tiew	1	101
Tan Chin Thuan	1	102
Wee Chin Ek	1	103

4.3 The Active Publishers of Baba Translated Works

There were 32 publishers and 21 printers involved in the production of the Baba translated works. More than 50 percent of the publishers are one time publishers of Baba translation works (17 out of 32). More than 50 percent of the printers produced more than two titles each.

Table 4. 3: Publishers and Number of Publications

Publisher Names and Addresses	Number of Publication	%
1. Wan Boon Seng	8	11.4
2. Kim Seck Chye Press, 98 & 99, Cross Street or Teluk Ayer Street, Singapore	6	8.6
3. Nanyang Romanized Malay Book Co., 10 & 12, Upper Cross Street Singapore	5	7.1
4. Chan Kim Boon	4	5.7
5. Pranakan Book Coy	4	5.7
6. Seng Poh Huat Coy, 12 Upper Cross Street Singapore	4	5.7
7. Chin Ho Bros., 56, Upper Cross Street, Singapore	3	4.3
8. Seow Chin San, 14 Upper Cross Street, Singapore	3	4.3
9. Sing Seng Book Co., 12, Upper Cross Street, Singapore	3	4.3
10. Chin Inn & Co.	2	2.9
11. Chinese Directory & Press, 102, Tank Road Singapore	2	2.9
12. D.T. Lim & Co., 353 North Bridge Road, Singapore	2	2.9
13. Koh Kim Guan	2	2.9
14. Peng Swee & co., 125, Victoria Street, Singapore	2	2.9
15. Tan Beng Teck, 621 North Bridge Road, Singapore	2	2.9
16. What Seck Chye Press, 20, Mansur Street, Singapore	2	2.9
17. Chin Poh Huat	1	1.4
18. Chin Teck Bee & Co., 185 South Bridge Road, Singapore	1	1.4
19. Chop Seng Poh Huat Shanghai Press, no.12, Upper Cross Street Singapore	1	1.4
20. Fang Heng Press	1	1.4
21. Kong Guan Hin Press, 1 Kim Seng Road, Singapore	1	1.4
22. Lat Pau Press, Singapore	1	1.4
23. Lim Eng Hock	1	1.4
24. Lye Kim Lim, 13, Kim Seng Road, Singapore	1	1.4
25. Mercantile Press	1	1.4
26. Nanyang Malay Romanized Book	1	1.4
27. Oon Sye Chin & Sons, 193, Joo Chiat Place, Singapore	1	1.4
28. Poh Teng Siew	1	1.4
29. Sam Kong Cheah & co., 5-24 River Valley Road, Singapore	1	1.4
30. Sang & Yam [Chew Tian Sang & Khoo Peng Yam]	1	1.4
31. Sing Seng Wah Seong Press	1	1.4
32. Union Press	1	1.4
Total	70	100.0

A total of 32 publishers were involved in publishing the 68 titles. However, the total counted was 70 titles as 7 titles of the Baba translated works were published by two publishers and 5 titles did not indicate the publishers involved. The results indicated that all the publisher were located in Singapore. Among the publishers, Wan Boon Seng was the most active. He had published eight titles out of 68 titles (11.4%).

According to Sidin (1998), Pranakan Book Coy was owned by Wan Boon Seng. If this is true, then Wan Boon Seng had published 12 titles in total (17.1%). Pranakan Book Coy was also one of the most popular publishers of that period of time and it was listed as the tenth representative publisher (Sidin, 1998). Wan Boon Seng did not only published Baba translation works, he also published three representative Baba magazines, *Bintang Pranakan*, *Sri Pranakan* and *Story Teller* and two Baba newspapers, *Kabar Slalu* and *Kabar Uchapan Baru*. His contribution towards the Baba community was indeed significant.

The second active publisher was Kim Seck Chye Press, located on Cross Street, Singapore in the late nineteen century and later moved to Teluk Ayer Street, Singapore in the early twentieth century. It has published six titles of Baba publications.

The third active publisher was Nanyang Romanized Malay Book, which published 5 titles. One of the publishers, whose name was Nanyang Malay Romanized Book was suspected to be the same publisher as Nanyang Romanized Malay Book co. (see *Tau Lau Sam Boon Kuay* in 1939).

Chan Kim Boon and Seng Poh Huat Coy were the fourth active publishers. They each published four titles. Chan Kim Boon's translated works were also published by other publishers. For example, Koh Kim Guan had published *Sam Kok* (1892-1896), Lat Pau Press had published *Hong Keow* (1892-1893) and Kim Seck Chye Press had published *Gnoh Bee Yean* (1891-1892). The rest of his translated works were self-published.

The results indicated two categories of publishers, that is the personal publishers and commercial publishers (Table 4.4).

Table 4. 4: Categories of Publishers

Publishers	1889-1909	1910-1929	1930-1939	Total	Percentage of Total %
Personal publishers	4	-	6*	10	31.3
Commercial publishers	7	3	12	22	68.7
Total	11	3	18	32	100.0
Total number of publication	18	10	40	68	

*Included *Botan Kiongchoo* which was published in 1950

Compared to the total publication of the Baba translated works, there are more publishers involved in the embryonic period. The ratio was one publisher to 1.6 books. The ratio for the stagnant period was 1 : 3.3 and 1 : 2.2 for the revival period. However, there are four publications whose publishers could not be identified and those are *Lip Guan Poh Kuan* (1899), *Seeh Jin Quee Cheng Say* (1895), *Seeh Jin Quee Cheng Say* (1921), and *Seeh Jin Quee Cheng Tang* (1922).

Table 4. 5: Printers and Number of Publications

Printers' names and Addresses	Number of Publications	%
1. Khai Sing Press, 64, Upper Cross Street Singapore	11	18.0
2. Tak Seng Press, 147 Hill Street or 23-9, Coleman Street, Singapore	7	11.5
3. Kim Sek Chye Press, 174, Telok Ayer Street, Singapore	6	9.8
4. Nai Beng & Co., 166, Cross Street or 115, Amoy Street Singapore	5	8.2
5. Lat Pau Press, Singapore	4	4.9
6. Poo Wah Hean Press, 621, North Bridge Road, Singapore	4	6.6
7. Shanghai Press, 48, Upper Cross Street, Singapore	4	6.6
8. Chinese Directory & Press, 102 Tank Road Singapore	3	4.9
9. Mercantile Press	3	4.9
10. Fang Heng Printing Co. 28, Pagoda Street, Singapore.	2	3.3
11. Hock Song Eng Kee Press, 83, Cross Street Singapore	2	3.3
12. What Seck Chye Press, 20, Mansur Street, Singapore	2	3.3
13. A.M.R. Nayudu	1	1.6
14. Chee Yow Press, no.10, Trengganu Street Singapore	1	1.6
15. City Press, 116, Bencoolen Street Singapore.	1	1.6
16. Denodaya Press	1	1.6
17. Koh Yew Hean Eng Kee Press, 18, Notrh Bridge Road, Singapore	1	1.6
18. Lim Kim Poh	1	1.6
19. Nanyo Printing Office, 75-77, Middle Road, Singapore	1	1.6
20. Nee Hwa Press, 32, Purvis Street, Singapore	1	1.6
21. Union Press	1	1.6
Total	62	100.0

Based on the 68 titles published between 1889-1950, it is found that there are 21 printing presses involved in printing 62 Baba translated works. A total of 15 titles did not provide the names of their printing presses and 9 titles was printed by two printing presses. All printing presses were located in Singapore. The most prolific of these were Khai Sing Press, Tak Seng Press, Kim Seck Chye Press and Nai Beng & co. They each printed five or more Baba translated works. Among the 68 titles held by the six libraries, eleven were printed by Khai Sing Press (18%). Based on the advertisement of *It Ki Mui Peng Suanh Chat* (1938), it was indicated that Khai Sing Press was the printers, lithographers, photo engravers, stationers, account book and rubber stamp manufacturers. It's slogan was ' Satisfaction guaranteed; Printing work of every kind neatly done; Charges very moderate; Orders from all points on the Malayan Coast; Promptly attended'.

The twenty most active printing presses between 1920-1950 were Khai Sing Press and Mercantile Press (Sidin, 1998). According to Sidin, these presses published about 46 and 42 titles respectively. However, only 11 titles were discovered as Baba translated works printed by Khai Sing Press and 3 titles by the Mercantile Press.

Tak Seng Press was the second biggest printing press responsible for publishing Baba translated works with 7 titles. The location of Tak Seng Press cannot be ascertained. In some publications, the address given was at 147 Hill Street while in some titles it was printed at 23-9, Coleman Street, Singapore. Kim Seck Chye Press was one of the famous publishers has printed 6 titles of the Baba translated works. Nai Beng & co. was the fourth largest printing press which printed 5 titles between

1931 to 1939. In the early 1930s it was located at Cross Street and later, between 1936 to 1939, it moved to Amoy Street. Information on the other printing presses were difficult to trace. Denodaya Press was owned by an Indian Muslim and printed the *Ban Wah Lau* (1890).

Very few printing presses were personal presses. One personal press was Lim Kim Poh, the printer of *Song Kang* (1899-1902). Personal printing presses were rare because the cost of owning a printing machine was high. According to Sidin (1998), Koh Kim Hean Press and Union Press were two of the printing presses that owned lithography units. In general, the Baba printing presses gained better and newer printing technology compared with the Malay printing presses (Sidin, 1998). Kim Seck Chye Press used the letterpress approach in printing.

There were seven printing presses which were also publishers. Among them were Chinese Directory & Press, Fang Heng Press, Kim Seck Chye Press, Lat Pau Press, Mercantiles Press, Union Press and What Seck Chye Press. Lat Pau Press also published a Chinese daily newspaper entitled *Lat Pau*.

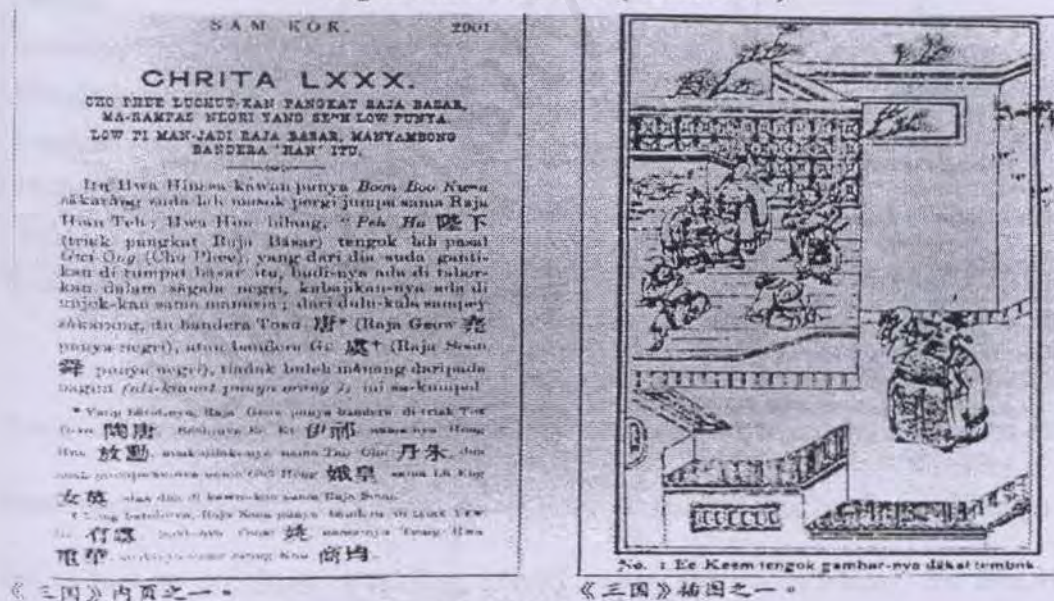
Very few has been written or researched about these publishers and presses. Some of the Baba printing presses and publishers also published *pantun* (poems), such as Tak Seng Press, Koh Yew Hean Press and Chee Yow Press, Chin Inn & co. It is observed that the publication of Baba translation was initiated and made popular in Singapore. In fact the Babas in Singapore migrated from Malacca, yet the Babas in Malacca had shown less interest in publishing Baba translated works.

4.4 Contents of the Baba Translated Works

Most of the Baba translations were historical and chivalrous stories. Out of the 68 titles, only 10 were romances, 9 were folklore and 7 were legendary stories. Though the stories were narrated in Baba Malay, some of the stories were interspersed with English expressions, Chinese characters and transliterations. Explanation was normally provided after the Chinese transliterated word or Chinese characters (Figure 4.8).

For example in *Sam Kok* (Figure 4.9), there are 15 Chinese characters, included those found in the footnotes. For each Chinese character there is an explanation behind it. This practice made it easy for readers who did not understand Baba Malay well.

Figure 4.9: *Sam Kok* (1894: 2901)



Another distinctive characteristic of the Baba translated works was its serialised format. Out of the 68 titles, 48 titles were serialised. The longest serial was *Cheong Moh Inn* (1938) which consisted of 55 volumes and ran up to 1,759 pages. Another,

Sam Kok (1892-1896) was published in 30 volumes and the total pagination ran up to 4,622 pages.

According to Proudfoot (1993), the serialised publication format was not the normal practice of European and Muslim presses. One of the reasons was that the Baba translation works was distributed based on subscriptions within Singapore only. Where else the distribution of titles printed by the Muslim presses were distributed not only in Singapore but also throughout Southeast Asia. The Baba readers were also more urban dwellers and lived in big cities like Singapore, Malacca and Penang.

Table 4. 6: Categories of Baba Translated Works (1889-1950)

Categories of Contents	1889-1909	1910-1929	1930-1939	Total
Folklore	6	1	2	9
Romances	4	1	*5	10
Chivalrous stories	2	2	14	18
Legends	1	2	4	7
Historical stories	5	3	16	24
Total	18	9	41	68

*Included *Botan Kiongchoo* which was published in 1950

Table 4.6 indicates that historical stories were the most common type of Baba translated publications. The publications were for recreational reading. Although the Babas had no problems in reading literary works written in Malay, the historical background of those works barred them from appreciating the theme of these works. They instead turn to translated works from Chinese stories. This interest was partly inspired by the numerous number of Indonesian Peranakan translations and partly because they were more comfortable with stories set within the Chinese ideology

and culture. Therefore, it was not surprising that historical and chivalrous stories attracted the Baba readers most. Lastly, as long as there were readers, such works continued to be published. As appropriately explained in *Sam Kok Inn* (1938), “Ada rupa-nya, ada nama-nya dan ada penguna-nya serta ada-lah dengan harganya”.

Below is a brief list of Baba translated titles published between 1889-1950, according to the categories of their contents.

a. Chivalrous stories

i. *Ban Wah Lau* (1890)

Edited by Lim Hock Kee in 10 volumes, which narrated about General Teck Cheng who overcame difficulties during the reign of Emperor Jin Chang.

ii. *Ban Wha Law* (1910-1912)

Translated by Pang Teck Joon in 8 volumes. The content is similar to the title listed as no. (1).

iii. *Chit Sih Pat Meng Su* (1933)

Translated by Seow Phi Tor and Seow Chin San in 3 volumes. The story tells about seven corpses and eight lives during the Qing Dynasty

iv. *Chow Thau Hong Boo Koon* (1936)

Translated by Khoo Peng Yam and Lee Seng Poh in 18 volumes. This is a story about the foul-headed Emperor Hong Boo during the late Yuan Dynasty.

v. *Flying Swords* (1936)

Translated by Seow Phi Tor and Seow Chin San in 4 volumes. This story dwells on twenty four chivalrous warriors who were keen swordsmen during the late Yuan Dynasty.

vi. *Hoon Chong Lau* (1934)

Edited by Wan Boon Seng, helped by Lee Seng Poh and the Chinese reader was N.M. Seng. Published in 20 volumes. Tells the story of Hoon Chong Boudoir during the late Tang Dynasty.

vii. *It Ki Mui Peng Suanh Chat* (1938)

Translated by Wan Boon Seng; helped by Tan Aik Yew in 1 volume. This is a story about the hero, It Ki Mui who pacified the mountain bandits during the Ming Dynasty.

viii. *It Ki Mui/ Chit Kiam Chapsahnh Kiap* (1936)

Translated by Wan Boon Seng in 24 volumes. This is also a story about It Ki Mui or the seven swords and the thirteen chivalrous warriors during the Ming Dynasty.

ix. *It Ki Mui/ Chit Chu Chapsahnh Seng* (1936)

Translated by Wan Boon Seng in 9 volumes. Again this is a story about It Ki Mui or the seven lords and the thirteen gentlemen during the Ming Dynasty.

x. *Nah Kong Tong Pak Han* (1935)

Edited by Wan Boon Seng in 4 volumes. This story is about Nah Kong and Tong Pak Han during the Warring State period.

xi. *Sam Hap Beng Choo Pokiam* (1935)

Edited by Wan Boon Seng in 1 volume. This title dwells upon the story of the triple sword adorned with bright pearls, the sequel to the story of *Sam Hup Poh Kiam* during the Han Dynasty.

xii. *Siang Ha Ngo Liong Huay* (1932)

Translated by Wan Boon Seng in 2 volumes. This story is about Siang Ha Five Dragon Society, the sequel to the story *Wakang* during the Tang Dynasty.

xiii. *Song Kang* (1899-1902)

Translated by Chan Kim Boon in 19 volumes. This story narrates about 108 robbers during the Song Dynasty. It was well known as *The Water Margin*.

xiv. *Sum Hup Poh Kiam* (1912-1916)

Translated by Lau Kim Hock in 8 volumes. This story is about the Triple Swords during the Han Dynasty.

xv. *Tai Lau Sam Boon Kuay* (1939)

Translated by Poh Tiang Siew, the Chinese reader was Ong Choon Teck and published in 22 volumes. This is a story about the disturbance of the hero Lee Kong in the Sam Boon Kuay during the Meng Dynasty.

xvi. *Tian Pah Tor* (1935)

Translated by Wan Boon Seng, helped by Lee Seng Poh, the Chinese reader was Tan Chin Thuan and published in 20 volumes. This is a story about Tian Par Tor, Seeh Pek Ha and Seeh Pek Hian during the Ming Dynasty.

xvii. *Tio Kong Inn* (1936)

Translated by Wan Boon Seng, the Chinese translator was Tan Yew Aik and published in 5 volumes. This title tells the story of the Red Faced Emperor, Tio Kong Inn during the Tang Dynasty.

xviii. *Wakang* (1931)

Translated by Wan Boon Seng and Seow Chin San in 2 volumes. This title is about Wakang or Eighteen parties that rebelled against the emperor during the Sui Dynasty.

b. Folklore

i. *Chin See Bee* (1899)

Translated by Pang Teck Joon and illustrated by Tan Phiak Kong in 1 volume. This is a story about the misbehaviour of Chin See Bee during the Song Dynasty.

ii. *Chin Suat Buay* (1899)

Translated by Pang Teck Joon and illustrated by Tan Phiak Kong in 2 volumes. The volume comprises various short stories, such as Chin Suat Buay the step mother, Mother of Mengzi, Khong Yong (Kong Rong), etc.

iii. *Gong Kiah Sie* (1889)

Translated by Lye Kam Lim in 1 volume. This is a story about a foolish son in-law from China.

iv. *Kim Ko Kee Quan* (1889)

Translated by Tan Beng Teck in 1 volume. This volume contains various stories entitled *New and Old Wonders (Kim Ko Kee Quan)*, *Justice Pao* and *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio (Leou Chay)*.

v. *Lee Tan* (1932)

Translated by Wee Chin Ek in 2 volumes. This is a story about the emperor of Lee Tan and Hong Keow during the Tang Dynasty.

vi. *Lip Guan Poh Kuan* (1899)

No writer was given, it was only published in 1 volume. This story puts forward the moral notion of "Doing good for good".

vii. *Mai Yeu Long* (1889)

Translated by Chek Swee Liong and Peng Swee & co. in 1 volume. This is a story about an oil peddler, taken from the story of *New and Old Wonders* during the Song Dynasty, the sequel from the previous story was entitled *Teong Chiat Ghee*.

viii. *Mai Yew Long* (1915)

Translated by Cheong Guan Boon in 1 volume. This story is similar to the title listed as item no (7) in this category.

ix. *Ngo Chu Low Tang Kia* (1932)

Translated by Seow Phi Tor and Seow Chin San in 1 volume. This title covered the story of the five rats which made disturbance at the Eastern Capital during the Song Dynasty.

c. Historical stories

i. *Cheng Teck Koon Yew Kang Nam* (1933)

Translated by Seow Phi Tor and Seow Chin San in 4 volumes. This is a story about the Emperor Cheng Teck who travelled through South China during the Ming Dynasty.

ii. *Cheng Tiong Suat Gak* (1934-1938)

Translated by Seow Phi Tor and Seow Chin San in 10 volumes. This is a story about the General Gak Hwee who was loyal and faithful during the Qing Dynasty.

iii. *Cheong Moh Inn* (1938-1939)

Translated by Lee Seng Poh, the Chinese reader is Ong Choon Teck in 55 volumes. This is a story about Cheong Moh Inn, the blue-faced Empress during the late Autumn and Spring period.

iv. *Kasatu Bijak Lahsana* (1889)

Translated by Chek Swee Liong and Peng Swee & co. in 1 volume. This title narrates about the supreme wisdom as it is described in *Sam Kok, the Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

v. *Khiang Tai Kong* (1934)

Translated by Wan Boon Seng in 1 volume. This is a story about Khiang Tai Kong during the Song Dynasty.

vi. *Khian Leong Koon Yew Kang Lam* (1935)

Translated by Khoo Peng Yam and Lee Seng Poh in 27 volumes. This story relates the journey of Emperor Khian Leong through South China during the Qing Dynasty.

vii. *Lam Koon Ong Soon Pin* (1936)

Edited by Wan Boon Seng in 3 volumes. This is a war story between Lam Koon Ong and Soon Pin during the Warring States Period.

viii. *Ong Cheow Koon Hoe Huan* (1935-1936)

Translated by Khoo Peng Yam and Lee Seng Poh in 14 volumes. This is a story about Ong Cheow Koon and the barbarians during the Han Dynasty.

ix. *Ow Liat Kok Chee* (1931)

Translated by Wan Boon Seng, the romanised Malay reader is Seow Chin San and published in 4 volumes. This is a story about the end of the period of the Warring States during the reign of Emperor Chin Si.

x. *Sam Ha Lam Tong* (1931-1932)

Translated by Wan Boon Seng in 3 volumes. This is a story about the three expeditions to the Southern Tang during the Song Dynasty.

xi. *Sam Kok Inn* (1938)

Translated by Poh Tiang Siew in 1 volume. This story narrated about the three kingdoms. Also known as *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

xii. *Sam Kok* (1892-1896)

Translated by Chan Kim Boon, helped by Chia Ann Siang and Tan Kheam Hock and published in 30 volumes. This is a story of three kingdoms, Siok, Gwi and Gor during the Han Dynasty. Also known as *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

xiii. *Sam Kok* (1932)

Revised by Chan Yen Pai, the son of Chan Kim Boon in 30 volumes. Covers the same story as item no. 12 in this category.

xiv. *Say Han* (1931)

Translated by Wan Boon Seng, helped by Seow Chin San in 5 volumes. This is a story about the Western Han, during the Han Dynasty.

xv. *Seeh Jin Quee Cheng Say* (1895)

No writer was named and it was published in 10 volumes. This title narrated the story of Seeh Jin Quee who conquered the West during the Tang Dynasty. The original version was Xue Ding San or son of Seeh Jin Quee who conquered the West.

xvi. *Seeh Jin Quee Cheng Say* (1921)

Translated by Siow Hay Yam in 10 volumes. This title covers the same story as item no. 15 in this section

xvii. *Seeh Jin Quee Cheng Tang* (1895)

Translated by Goh Len Joo and illustrated by Tan Phiak Kong in 7 volumes. This is a story about Seeh Jin Quee who conquest the East during the Tang Dynasty.

xviii. *Seeh Jin Quee Cheng Tang* (1922)

No writer was given and it was published in 7 volumes. This title covers the same story as item no. 17 in this section.

xix. *Tang Chay Liat Kok* (1931)

Translated by Wan Boon Seng in 2 volumes. This is a story about Tang Chay Liat Kok during the reign of Emperor Chin Si.

xx. *Teck Cheng Cheng Pak* (1935)

Translated by Wan Boon Seng in 5 volumes. The story is about Teck Cheng who pacified the North during the Song Dynasty.

xxi. *Teck Cheng Ngo Ho Peng Lam* (1922-19?)

Translated by Siow Hay Yam in 7 volumes. The story is about Teck Cheng, the five Generals' conquest of the South.

xxii. *Teong Chiat Ghee* (1889)

Translated by Chek Swee Liong and Peng Swee & co. in 1 volume. This title dwells on two stories, that is *Teong Chiat Ghee* that described Pek Lee Hey and his child combined with the story of *Sey Oh Sip Wee* that described the oil peddler (also Mai Yeu Long).

xxiii. *Tiong Chiat Ghee* (1915)

Translated by Cheong Guan Boon in 1 volume. This is a story of Tiong Chiat Ghee during the Chew Dynasty.

xxiv. *Yeo Boon Kong Cheng Lam Ban* (1933-1934)

Translated by Wan Boon Seng in 4 volumes. This story is about the Emperor Yeo Boon Kong who pacified the South Fujian and fought the eighteen caves during the Song Dynasty.

d. Legends

i. *Chay Kong Wak Hood* (1935)

Translated by Lee Seng Poh, helped by Lim Chin Chye, the Chinese reader is Tan Yew Aik and published in 10 volumes. This is a story about Chay Kong the living Buddha during the Southern Song Dynasty.

ii. *Hong Sin Ban Sian Tin* (1931-1939)

Translated by Seow Phi Tor and Seow Chin San in 17 volumes. The title narrates the story of Hong Sin, the sequel of Hong Sin during the Shang Dynasty.

iii. *Hong Sin* (1931-1937)

Translated by Seow Phi Tor and Seow Chin San in 17 volumes. This is a story about Hong Sin, the investiture of the gods during the Shang Dynasty.

iv. *Kou Chey Thian* (1911-1913)

Translated by Chan Kim Boon in 9 volumes. This is a story about Kou Chey Thian, the monkey who journeyed to bring back the Buddhist scriptures from the West. It was well known as *Journey to the West* as well.

v. *Lee Lo Chia* (1933)

Translated by Wan Boon Seng in 1 volume. This is a story about Lee Lo Chia, the superpower child during the Shang Dynasty.

vi. *Lwee Hong Thak* (1889)

Translated by Tan Beng Teck in 3 volumes. This is a story about the black and white snake and Kho Hun Boon during the Yuan Dynasty. It was known as *The Tale of White Snake* or *The Thunder Peak Pagoda*.

vii. *Lwee Hong Thak* (1911)

Translated by Pang Teck Joon in 2 volumes. This is a similar story as listed in no. 6 but published in a different edition.

e. Romances

i. *Ang Bin Sio Chia* (1931)

Translated by Wan Boon Seng in 1 volume. This is a story about the red faced lady during the Song Dynasty.

ii. *Botan Kiongchoo* (1950)

Translated by Wan Boon Seng in 1 volume. This is a story about Princess Botan during the Song Dynasty.

iii. *Gnoh Bee Yean* (1891-1892)

Translated by Chan Kim Boon in 6 volumes. This title narrates the story about the man with five wives during the Ming Dynasty.

iv. *Heng Guan Seo Chia* (1889)

Translated by Tan Beng Teck in 1 volume. This story tells about Heng Guan Seo Chia and Mwee Liang Giok during the Tang Dynasty. Also known as *Jee Thoe Moey* or *The Plum-Tree Blossoms Twice*.

v. *Hong Keow* (1889-1891)

Translated by Tan Beng Teck in volumes 1-3, continued by Chan Kim Boon; and helped by Cheah Choo Yew in volumes 4-5, helped by Tan Kheam Hock in volumes 6-8. The story was about Lee Tan and Hong Keow during the Tang and Chou Dynasty. It was taken from the *Fan Tang, Revolt Against the Tang Dynasty*.

vi. *Hong Keow* (1892-1893)

Translated by Chan Kim Boon in 3 volumes; helped by Tan Kheam Hock in volume 3, as revised edition of Tan Beng Teck. The story was about Lee Tan and Hong Keow during the Tang and Chou Dynasty.

vii. *Kek Hua Siochia* (1933)

Translated by Wan Boon Seng in 1 volume. This is a story about the chrysanthemum lady during the Warring States Period.

viii. *Lek Boh Tan* (1935)

Translated and edited by Wan Boon Seng; the Chinese reader was Tan Yew Aik and published in 11 volumes. This is a story about Bau Choo Ann who fought for a wife during the Tang Dynasty. The famous poem, entitled *Lek Boh Tan* was found in the story and the story was named *Lek Boh Tan*.

ix. *Pat Bee Tor* (1931-1932)

This title was most probably translated by Chew Tian Siang and published by Chew himself. Khoo Peng Yam was the assistant publisher in the 4 volumes. This is a story about eight beauties during the Song Dynasty.

x. *Pho Kiu Si* (1913)

Translated by Chan Kim Boon as the sequel of *Kou Chey Thian* in the 8th and 9th volumes. This is a story about the love between Eng Eng and Tionh Seng in the temple of Pho Kiu.

4.5 Physical Descriptions

Romanised typesetter was used in the printing technique. The typography used in the Baba translated works was complicated. They indicated Romanised Malay, Chinese characters, English expression, punctuation marks and the use of the footers and header, the italic font style, the superscripts and subscripts. In other words, the works were published in a fanciful style. Nevertheless, the works were successfully distributed among the Baba community.

The data collected for this section includes the title, preface, illustration, size of the book, prices of the books etc. Among the 68 titles, 60 titles started with the phrase "*Chrita dulu-kala bernama...*" which means "This is a ancient story entitled..." In fact, this is the usual way a Chinese storyteller would begin a story. Baba translations have reconstructed the Chinese style of story telling into a written form

by beginning a title with "*Chrita dulu-kala*". However, there was no standard spelling used. "Cerita" was variantly spelt as *chrita*, *chreta*, *charita* and *cherita*.

Some of the cover of the titles are colourful, such as *Chow Thau Hong Boo Koon*, 1936). The intention was to attract buyers. The size of the publications was normally within the range of 19cm x 14cm to 16cm x 10cm. In the UML collections, the photocopied titles were given a bigger margin of 21cm. The size of the books were handy for readers to keep and read. This was probably another attractive marketing strategy.

The main characters and incidents were sometimes illustrated on the front page. The illustrations used for the books were normally related to the story of each chapter. However, not every publication was illustrated. The illustration was drawn in the style of woodcuts, the traditional form of illustration in Chinese xylographic printing. This phenomenon revealed that the Baba community was attracted to stories with illustration.

Some of the titles have informative prefaces. Normally the preface gives information about current releases. In *Lek Boh Tan*, it was stated that "In satu chrita dulu-kala nama-nya *Lek Boh Tan*...blom perna lagi siapa sipa kluar-kan ...Chritanya betol Extra Special A – chuma di-dalam 10 buku saja, complete set-nya." The preface was used to persuade (in a polite tone) readers to purchase it (see *Ngo Chu Low Tong Kia*, 1932). Chan Kim Boon, one of the Baba translators, used the preface. He has used it for self-introduction or introduce other persons involved (see *Kou Chey Thian*, 1912). In fact, he even printed his own photograph on the

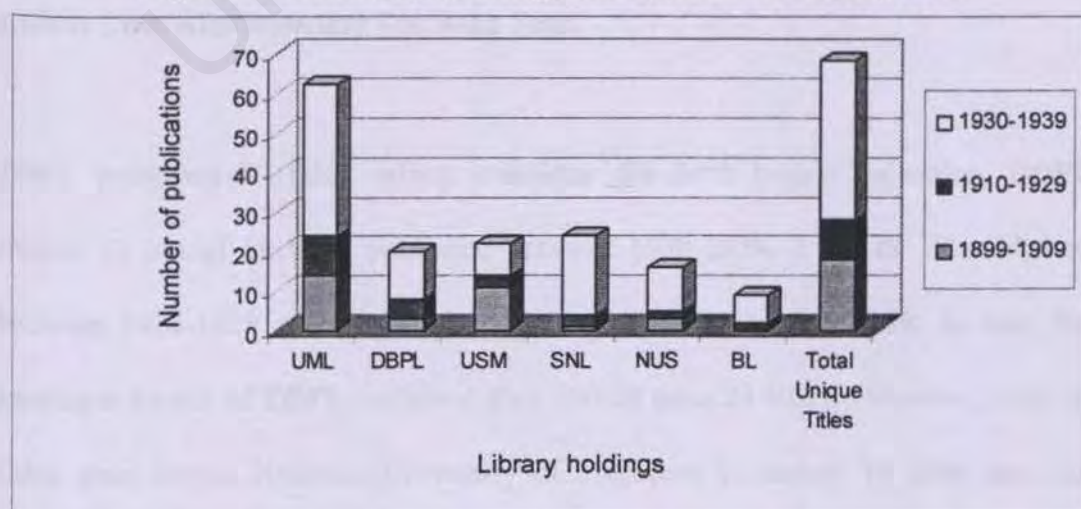
preface. This was done to create a sense of belonging. Chan Kim Boon also published several readers' correspondence. The contents of the correspondences in the prefaces were normally in praise of his good effort in the translation works and those who complimented and encouraged him.

The cost range of each title from ten cents to two dollars in Straits currency. This was costly and few could afford it at that period of time. Therefore, the buyers of the translated works were probably in the upper class. The books were also printed in attractive colours of red, brown, blue and black. This is a hint that they were meant for the richer readers. Only a few publishers indicated the contents and the format was not standard and books were often not paged.

4.6 Library Holdings

The attempt to locate the Baba translation works indicates that the University of Malaya possesses the largest collection of Baba titles (61 titles). This is followed by SNL, USM, DBPL, NUS and BL (Figure 4.10)

Figure 4.10: Library Holdings and Number of Publications



UML possesses 14 out 18 titles published between 1889-1909, 10 out of 11 titles published between 1909-1929 and 38 out of 41 titles published in the period of 1930-1939. Most of the titles held were duplicated in order to prevent the collection. Out of 61 titles, UML holds 15 unique items, which was not held by any other libraries.

National Library of Singapore (SNL) is the second largest collector of the Baba translated works. It owns 24 titles of the Baba translated works. The majority of the collection was published between 1930-1939 (20 out of 24 titles). SNL was the former depository library during the Straits Settlement Government. It owned one unique title entitled, *Lee Tan* (1932).

The third largest collection of the Baba translation is in the USM Library. USM holds 22 titles, almost one third of the total Baba translated works. USM also holds 3 unique items which are not owned by any other libraries. USM also owned more titles published during the period of 1889-1909 (11 out 22 titles). The reason for this was probably because the translator of the earliest period mainly came from Penang, such as Chan Kim Boon and Tan Beng Teck.

DBPL possesses 20 titles, which constitute the forth largest collection. DBPL owned 12 out of 18 titles published between 1930-1939, 5 out of 10 published between 1920-1929 and 3 out of 18 published between 1889-1909. In fact, the catalogue record of DBPL indicated they should have 24 titles. However, only 20 titles were found. National University of Singapore possesses 16 titles and the British Library possesses 9 titles. These two libraries mainly owned Baba translated

works published between 1930-1939. NUS owned 11 out of 16 and 7 out of 9 was owned by BL.

4.7 Summary

A total of 68 unique titles were studied to obtain information about persons involved, publishers involved, contents and physical description of the works, and the library holdings. The five most prominent persons were studied in-depth through their publications. The most active publishers and printing presses were studied as well. However, information about the publishers and printing presses are not easily obtained compared to the translators. The physical description of the translated works were published in a standard format, such as the title of the book, size of the book, the prices of the books, etc. information about the library holdings are useful in providing the location of each of the publications. The findings indicate that Baba translation works reflected the socio-economic, as well as the state of book industries in the early years.

Chapter V

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussions

Today, Baba translated works can be traced in various libraries, while some are in individual holdings. This literature has been studied from various aspects. Clammer (1980 and 1981) has made an attempt to study the Baba literature from the social aspect, while Teo (1981) analysed the Baba language through translated works. She also provided a list of 69 titles of Baba translated works. These two contributions have provided a platform for further exploration into state of the Baba literature. This study began by describing the background and the relevant issues concerning the Baba literature. The Baba translated works were once the favorite reading material of the Baba community.

From the period of 1880s to 1950s, the Baba community achieved high financial and political positions. They declared themselves as "True British Subject". This implied that the Baba community during this period was settled and possessed good relationship with the colonial government. They have also assimilated the habit of reading.

They read Baba literary works for leisure time. Those involved in publishing, did not publish with the intention of gaining money, as they were already rich. The publishers have mentioned that the price of the books was minimal. As a result,

Baba literature did not survive long when the colonial government withdrawn from Malaya and the Babas lost their financial and political positions.

The existence of the Baba translated works came along with the introduction of the printing technology in 1880s. It was traced that the first printing in Malaya was introduced by the London Missionary Society (Byrd, 1970), which was later taken over by the private sectors, who began to produce large number of literary works. The Baba translated works were produced mainly by the Baba's own publishers and printing presses. Due to their educational background, the Babas have published their literature in Baba Malay and the English language. The Baba Malay literary works were published in large numbers and were more popular compared with their English works. Basically the Baba literature was divided into creative works and translated works. Both creative and translated works had not receive enough attention as they deserved.

A few attempts have been made to bibliographically control the Baba literary works. Salmon (1977; 1987) pioneered the study in this area and had raised the interest of many scholars. She has compiled 94 titles of Baba literary works, out of which 71 titles were translated works, and the rest were Baba *pantun*. Tan Chee Beng (1981) compiled a list of 74 titles of Baba translated works in 1981. Both Salmon and Tan provided a brief bibliographic listing which also included English translated titles. Their lists were used as secondary source to locate the existence of the present Baba translated works. However, some of the titles from the list are not held by major libraries both in Malaysia and Singapore.

University of Malaya Library and National University of Malaysia Library (UKM) both published a list of Malaysia and Indonesian Peranakan literature. A total of 63 out of 176 titles provided by UML and 60 out of 1,322 titles provided by UKM are Baba translated works. Proudfoot also compiled a list of 26 titles on Baba translated works up to year 1920. This amount is almost equivalent to the result of this study which has collected 25 titles from the time frame of 1889-1919. The differential amount among the list was minor. The result of this study indicated 68 unique titles published between the period of 1889-1950. The minor difference might be caused by the fact that the previous studies had included titles from private and uncatalogue collections.

After perusing the OPACs of six libraries and bibliographic listings, this study provided 68 unique titles. Many early published Baba translated works have undoubtedly been lost and the attempt to preserve is crucial. From the findings, the British Library which was the former depository library possessed the smallest collection (only 9 titles). It is believed that many of the early published materials have not been catalogued and therefore cannot be accessed through the OPACs. In time, it is hoped that more titles will be discovered.

The effort of studying the persons involved in the Baba translated works was worthwhile. The results indicated that the translators were mentioned in most titles. Probably, they were the key person in the process of translation. The role of other persons was less mentioned as their main responsibility was to assist the translator to complete the publication. Hence, those who worked with assistants produced more publications. Wan Boon Seng who translated 22 titles was assisted by various

persons. The partnership between Seow Chin San and Seow Phi Tor who translated 6 titles also indicated that co-operation produced more publications.

This study has helped to highlight those involved in Baba translated works. Their contributions towards the national heritage of Malaysia literature cannot be denied. The names that emerged in the study can be used to supplement the list of literary writers in the early 20th century.

Publishers and printing presses of the Baba translated works were mostly located in Singapore. However the creative works, such as the *pantun*, are published in Penang, Malacca and Kuala Lumpur (see Appendix I). The reasons for this situation are complicated and various. The distribution of the Baba translated works was restricted by the characteristics of the publication, which may be serialised. Due to the serialised format, it has limited circulation and are mainly confined to those in the Straits Settlements. Where else the publications of the *pantun* which was normally completed in one volume, could be published whenever and wherever the creativity of the author arise.

The Babas were also mainly English educated and very few were Chinese literate. For the translated works, knowledge of both Chinese and Baba Malay language were needed. Therefore the publication of the translated works did not grow in every Straits Settlement. The publication of translated works thrive under conducive economic conditions, manpower and the demand of the market. This was indicated for the period in the early 1990s.

The contents of the translated works were categorised in five groups: folklore, romances, chivalrous stories, legends and historical stories. The sources of the translated works were mainly Chinese classical stories, which reflected the taste of the Baba community. The Chinese classical stories revealed five major contents. However the ideology of Confucianism is not directly introduced to the Baba readers. There is no evidence to show that the philosophy of the Chinese, Confucianism and Taoism are strongly held by to the Baba community. The Babas were English education and were given and obtained much favour by the colonial government. The Babas were culturally influenced by the Chinese. Because of their strong colonial favour, and could afford to translate works under better economic conditions.

In the later years, the Babas no longer published their literature in large numbers. The language that they used has shifted to proper Malay, or standard Malay instead of Baba Malay. The national education system was introduced since the independence of Malaysia. The majority of the society was literate only in the standard Malay and this equally apply to the Baba family. Today, the Baba language is only spoken in a Baba family and was seldom written. As a result, the Baba literature with its own language did not receive good response from the society in general as well as the Baba community. The activity to bibliographically control the Baba literature is few. Entries in the primary sources were studied and a list of Baba translated works were identified and listed.

5.2 Limitations

This study has some limitations. The Baba translated works was distributed in limited copies and very few were reprinted, except for *Sam Kok* (1932). Hence, such translations have become rare and at the present are only available in a few libraries and personal collections. Consequently, this has created access problem to those who want to study the individual titles.

The Baba translated works are categorised as rare collection in all of the six libraries and kept in closed stacks for preservation purposes. This has also created access problems to the titles. Besides, some libraries have not catalogued this collection and titles could not be identified from the library catalogue. Salmon's list (1987) heavily depended on British Library Catalogue and discovered various titles that were not catalogued.

Collections from the National Museum of Singapore and School of Oriental and African Studies have not been accessed and this has limited chances of discovering more unique titles. Physical examination of titles is crucial in order to collect the descriptive elements of the titles. In addition, organisation like the National Museum of Singapore is not a library and therefore only provides a bibliographic listing. This has prevented the researchers from making a closer study of this collection.

Furthermore, the study on the Baba penmanship, publishers and printing presses and their works are very few. Therefore, the process of data collection consumes a great deal of time.

5.3 Suggestions

There are still scope for future studies to supplement the findings obtained from this study. There are some publications which cannot be located in any of the six libraries. These are *Gak Wee* (1891) by Wee Kay Seck, *Soon Bang Yan Ghee* (1904) by Lau Say, *Loh Thong Sau Pak* (1907) by Lau Kim Kok, *Bang King* (1931) by Lim Soon Seng, *Heng Guan Seo Chia* (1933) by Koh, Johnny, *Beng Leh Koon* (1936) by Khoo Peng Yam, *Ang Siew Chua* (1936) by Lim Siew Him and Koh Choon Kwang. These titles were found in the Salmon (1987) and Yang's (2001) list. Besides, the incomplete volume in the collection has caused problems in compiling a complete list of titles. As such, there are gaps in the list provided in the appendix. Main collectors such as UML should endeavour to identify the location of those titles and acquire accordingly to complete the existing collection.

In future, this study could include other Baba works such as the creative works of the Babas, *pantun* and *syair*. The Baba *pantun* were original creative works, which reflected their thinking and culture. Besides, the contents of the *pantun* are different compared with the translated works. The contents of the *pantun* mainly reflected the Baba daily life. The authorship of the *pantun* is another area yet to be explored. According to the collected Baba poem (see Appendix I), there are single publication solely on the *pantun*. Short poems were also published in the Baba newspapers. Hence the direction for further study on this aspect is clear. This contribution hopes to enrich the studies on Baba literature, as well as the Malaysian literature.

Besides the *pantun*, the newspaper published by the Babas which are full of contemporary information, might provide an area of study. The newspapers were

used to publish not only the news, but also the advertisement, announcement and literature. To have an extensive viewpoint of the former time and Baba community, the newspapers becomes one of the most useful sources. The Baba magazines, such as *Sri Pranakan*, *Bintang Pranakan* and *Story Teller* were also used to published serialised translated works. The stories from those magazines, provided another facet to the Baba literature.

The comparison between Baba literature and Indonesian Peranakan literature can be made to complete the study on Peranakan community. Although these two ethnic communities had assimilated the local culture, they are entirely different in presenting their way of lives and culture. These can be studied in detail from the literary viewpoint and through the library listing.

Further studies of primary records can be undertaken to include the study on specific coverage, the study of the authorship of the Baba literature, the publishing trade and the reading culture of the Baba community.

5.4 Conclusion

This research has attempt to analyses the Baba literature produced by its community between 1889 to 1950, with particular reference to Baba translated works. From the historical aspect of the Babas, the study has provided political, economic, and social perspective to the analysis of the Baba literature. Basically, there are two major categories of Baba literature. The earliest existence of Baba literature can only be traced as far as back to 1894, when the newspaper, *Straits Chinese Herald* (1890)

and *pantun* such as *Buku Sahyer dan Pantun Melayu* (Lim Hock Chee, 1890) and translation works (1889) was published.

The translated works has been discussed in-depth through the analysis of five major fields. This includes the persons involved in the publication, the active publishers and printing presses, the favourite of the readers and translators, the description of the translated works and the library holdings.

The Baba literature has not been given sufficient attention throughout the century until recently. However a thorough study of the Baba language, Baba translation works, Baba literature and Baba bibliographies in the Straits Settlement have been undertaken. The records of the major collectors of Baba translated works were studied and analyses to serve the purpose of exploring the Baba community. The major library is Malaysia and Singapore has put extra effort on collecting the Baba literature. The British Library which is the former depository library of Straits Settlement also holds a few of the Baba literary works. The investigation on the Baba literature should be active. Even though the publication of the Baba literature has declined, their contribution to Malaysian literary heritage is undeniable.

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