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
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.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ........................................................................... ii
ABSTRACT ......................................................................................... iii

TABLE OF CONTENTS ......................................................................... v
LIST OF TABLES ................................................................................ vii
LIST OF FIGURES ............................................................................... vii

Chapter I INTRODUCTION ................................................................ 1
1.1 Background of the Babas ............................................................... 1
1.2 The Babas .................................................................................... 2
1.3 The Origin of the Babas ................................................................. 3
1.4 The Language of the Babas ......................................................... 5
1.5 The Sociological Evolution of the Baba Language .................... 8
1.6 Objective of the Study ................................................................. 10
1.7 Summary ..................................................................................... 11

Chapter II LITERATURE REVIEW .................................................... 12
2.1 The Baba Language ...................................................................... 12
2.2 Other Literary Expressions ......................................................... 13
  2.2.1 The Baba Newspapers .......................................................... 13
  2.2.2 The Baba Magazines ............................................................ 15
  2.2.3 “Pantun” and “Lagu” ........................................................... 17
2.3 Translated Works ........................................................................ 19
2.4 Baba Literature ........................................................................... 22
2.5 Bibliographies of Baba Literature .............................................. 25
2.6 Summary ..................................................................................... 27

Chapter III METHODOLOGY ............................................................ 28
3.1 Scope of the Research ................................................................. 28
3.2 Data Collection ........................................................................... 31
  3.2.1 Persons Involved ..................................................................... 32
  3.2.2 The Active Publishers of Baba Translated Works ................. 34
  3.2.3 Contents of the Baba Translated Works ................................ 34
  3.2.4 Physical Description .............................................................. 36
  3.2.5 Library Holdings ................................................................. 37
3.3 Data Analysis .............................................................................. 37
3.4 Problems of the Study ............................................................... 38
3.5 Summary ..................................................................................... 39
Chapter IV FINDINGS AND ANALYSES ........................................... 39
  4.1 Total Translated Work Identified ........................................ 40
  4.2 Persons Involved ........................................................... 42
  4.3 The Active Publishers of Baba Translated Works .................. 53
  4.4 Contents of the Baba Translated Works .............................. 58
  4.5 Physical Descriptions ..................................................... 69
  4.6 Library Holdings ............................................................ 71
  4.7 Summary ................................................................. 72

Chapter V DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION ............................... 74
  5.1 Discussions ....................................................................... 74
  5.2 Limitations ...................................................................... 78
  5.3 Suggestions ..................................................................... 80
  5.4 Conclusion ....................................................................... 81

BIBLIOGRAPHY .............................................................................. 83

APPENDIX I: Collected Baba Pantun and Syair ............................. 86

APPENDIX II: Translated Works from Six Libraries ..................... 102
LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Selected Information for Analysis ........................................ 32
Table 4.1: Baba Translation Works (1889-1950) .................................. 41
Table 4.2: Persons Involved and Total Publications of Translated Works ................................................................. 52
Table 4.3: Publishers and Number of Publications .............................. 53
Table 4.4: Categories of Publishers ....................................................... 55
Table 4.5: Printers and Number of Publications ................................. 55
Table 4.6: Categories of Baba Translated Works (1889-1950) ............ 59

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1: Baba Translated Works (1889-1950) ......................... 40
Figure 4.2: Prominent Persons Involved During 1889-1909. ............. 43
Figure 4.3: Self-Portrait of Tan Pheak Kong. ................................. 45
Figure 4.4: Illustrations of Tan Pheak Kong ..................................... 45
Figure 4.5: Prominent Persons Involved During 1910-1929 ............... 46
Figure 4.6: Prominent Persons Involved During 1930-1939 .............. 48
Figure 4.7: Roles of a Person ........................................................... 50
Figure 4.8: Persons Who Played More Than One Roles .................... 51
Figure 4.9: Sam Kok (1894: 2901) ..................................................... 58
Figure 4.10: Library Holdings and Number of Publications ............... 70