

## Malaysian Travel Log – Masonic Visits

Dear Brothers, the 21st of June 1997 was a most memorable evening. I attended the Installation of Brother Yoke Lim Chew, to Right Worshipful Master of Tullibardine in the East 1118, Scottish Constitution.

The colour and pageantry of the evening is almost beyond description, but I will try. The various colours of the aprons and sashes worn by many of those present, from the Royal Stewart tartan, to the dark blue of the Scotia Lodge, the Green of the Irish Lodge and the Yellow sashes worn by the Brothers from Thailand. They had representatives from Singapore, Australia, Thailand, and were representing the UGLE, Irish Grand Lodge and of course the Grand Lodge of Scotland.

The procession bringing all of the distinguished guest into Lodge complete with three pipers and two drummers from the Kuala Lumpur Police band. The main guest of the evening was Right Worshipful District Grand Master District Grand Lodge of the Middle East, Bro Datu Dr. Peter C. Vanniasingham (also an honorary SGW of the GL of Scotland) (Datu is a title equivalent to a Knight-Sir) The installation ceremony was most impressive, interspersed with music and song. The RWM was installed then all of the other officers were lined up in three rows at the alter, the first row being the WSW, and WJW the deputy RWM, and Sec. the first row placed their hands on the VSL, and those behind put their right hand on the right shoulder of the Brother in front. As they moved to their positions they sealed their obligation by the manner ascribed to in their own religion. There were 6 VSLs used. Christian Brothers kissed the VSL, Hindu Brothers touched their VSL and then their forehead with both hands, Sikh Brothers placed their forehead on their VSL, Taoist placed right hand on VSL, left hand on their breast, there were two more that I was unsure of, but it was very interesting. At the close of Lodge, the Bible Bearer, carried all 6 volumes on a cushion leading the RWM and his officers out of the Lodge.

After Lodge we retired to the dining hall, and they put on what they call "Harmony" it started off with the Loyal Toast to the King of Malaysia - Seri Paduka Baginda Yang DiPertuan Agung (Agung meaning King). Then the grace was said, and this is how it goes.

Some hae meat that canna eat  
And some wad eat that want it  
But we hae meat and we can eat  
Sae let the Lord be thank it

Then the lights were dimmed, and the pipers marched in leading 6 Brothers carrying flaming swords followed by two Brothers carrying two bottles (each of Scotch Whiskey), and a platter with the haggis on it. Bro Datu Dr. Peter C. Vanniasingham then did the toast to the haggis, complete with Scottish Brogue, I have seen it done in Scotland and he would have made a Scotts heart swell with pride. They then served a most delicious meal, and all religions were taken into account during the meal. The Scotch and Brandy flowed freely throughout the meal. Then they had a series of toasts, and I was selected to respond to the toast to the visitors.

I got together with Yoke Lim, and he gave me some background on the Lodge, it is 84 years old, and in the first 15 or so years all the RWM were Scottish, English or European. Then there was a mix of Indians, and Sikhs, and in that time, there had only been one ethnic Chinese RWM, Brother Yoke Lim is only the second ethnic Chinese. So, we set out to give a humorous response to the visitor's toast, and this is what I said.

'Thank you, WJW, for the kind toast to the visitors and thank you, brethren of Lodge Tullibardine, for the warm manner in which you responded to it. I feel especially honoured this evening to have been asked to respond to this toast. First a little background, RWBro Yoke Lim and I first met electronically via the Internet. We communicated for just about a year before we had our first face to face meeting in January of this year.

I am a visitor in your beautiful country and am here on business. When I was here in January Bro Yoke Lim and I attended a few Lodge meetings, we visited Klang Lodge, Makepeace Lodge, and Royal Pahang Lodge in Kuantan, where we received with great warmth and Brotherly Love. On our visit to Makepeace Lodge, we received an especially warm welcome, the aircon was not working on that night.

When WBro Yoke Lim approached me to respond to the toast I decided that I had better do my homework and dig up some facts and information about Tullibardine in the East #1118 SC. I found out that Tullibardine is one of the older of two Scottish Lodges in Kuala Lumpur and the oldest in the District, having been consecrated in 1913.

'I was looking at the Roll of Masters of Lodge Tullibardine upstairs earlier this evening. The earlier names, I am familiar with, as they are Western. But at the bottom there are some twenty to twenty-five names I was puzzled by. They are obviously not Western names but if they are local names, they don't seem similar to the style that the RWM has his name, except for one. (Had some laughter here)

I asked and was told that that they are Indian names. I was further told that the majority of these are Malayalees originally from the Indian state of Kerala. The other large number, which had the word 'Singh' in their names, are Sikhs originally from the Indian state of Punjab. I am told that they are sometimes referred to warmly in jest as 'countrymen'.

[laughter here] I don't know why. Perhaps I will seek more light on this.

'Now it is rumored that in order to be elected Master of Lodge Tullibardine, Bro. Yoke Lim had to become an honorary Malayalee. [laughter here] I could not determine the ritual that was used but he looks no worse for having been through the trial. [much laughter]

'Apparently that isn't enough. Bro. Yoke Lim becoming an honorary Malayalee may make the Malayalee brethren happy but that didn't do anything for the 'countrymen'. The RWM had to do more than that. So, you see, he has cleverly put Bro. Wong Yow Seng as WSW. [I pronounced it like the Sikh Singh] [howls of laughter here]. Because this is a Scottish Lodge the RWM cleverly placed a Scotsman as his WJW in the person of Brother Shawn MacGum (his name is Nachiappan Shanmugam) [lots of hooting and laughing here] To really complete the sense of a Scottish Lodge I propose to the Brothers of Tullibardine that we change RWM's name for the remainder of the year to MacChew. [they clapped and cheered for this one]

Right Worshipful Master, as you know the Lodge is supported by three great pillars and they are denominated, Wisdom, Strength and Beauty, with your wise leadership, the strength and support of your Senior Warden and the beauty spread by your Junior Warden, Tullibardine will be healthy, happy, and very productive. I speak for all of your guests here this evening Worshipful Master, we have all truly enjoyed this night and we all wish you great success.

I finished off with the following story:

God and the Gabriel were sitting on a cloud one day and God said, Gabriel, see this country, I am going to call it Scotland. I am going to give it high beautiful mountains, deep clear lakes filled with the best salmon in the world, rivers filled

with fat trout, the best golf courses in the world, a fluid called Whiskey that will be the envy of the entire world, a people that are hearty and robust and have a love of life.

Hold on, hold on says Gabriel, aren't you a little overly generous with these Scotts?

Yes, said God, but wait till you see who I give them for neighbours.

Loud applause and laughter.

The Director of Ceremonies for the Dinner then stood up and said, thank you Brother Wayne Douglas Anderson NAIR (pronounced N I Y A), in other words he made me an honorary member of his clan, and they were a warrior clan in earlier days. When he said this the Brothers clapped, banged the tables and roared their approval. Then Brother Rajnet Pardu Singh stood up and said that I should have been claimed by the countrymen and be called Anderson-Singh. Again, much laughter and good-natured jibing.

The Tylers toast was delivered by Brother Panjcker and it goes:

Dear Brothern of the mystic tie  
The night is waning fast  
Our duty's done the feast is o'er  
This toast must be our last  
Happy to meet sorry to part  
Happy to meet again

Good night Good night once more  
Once more repeat the farewell strain  
Happy to meet sorry to part  
Happy to meet again

To all poor and distressed Brethren  
Wheresoever they may be  
On land or on sea  
A speedy relief to their suffering  
And a safe return to their native lands.

After we retired to the bar there was much hand shaking and laughter over my new name Nair, and I told them that I would add that to my name tag on my office at work.

All in all, Brothers it was truly enjoyable, and in Lodge greetings were read from Brother George Robinson, Brother Floyd MacMillan WM of Markland my Mother Lodge these were received via the internet.

When the Brothers bring greetings in Lodge when the WM of the Lodge stands all members of that Lodge present stand with him. It is very interesting.

On Friday night, June 27th, I attended Emerald in the east with RWM Yoke Lim Chew, (In the Scottish Lodges they call the WM Right Worshipful Master). The members of Emerald in the East where a deep green sash and apron and all of the Brothers looked very sharp. The Director of Ceremonies carries an Irish (I will spell this wrong) Shelalie instead of the usual D of C's baton.

When they opened Lodge, the Deacons came around and received the "entrance" word from every Brother present, the entrance word for the 1st Degree is "by the hand of God, and under a tongue of good report"

The opening of the Lodge is similar to the opening of Lodge under the GL of Nova Scotia in that each officer states his duties and place in the Lodge. In each lodge I have visited they read the summons just after the Lodge is opened, as they do at home in Ontario.

They had a 3rd on that night and the ceremony of the 3rd degree was very impressive. The candidate is brought in and is prepared in the usual manner. Like Ontario he is not hoodwinked and the circle the Lodge three times. The section where the death of Hiram Abif is portrayed to the candidate is very much as it is done in Ontario.

I did however see the odd little thing here and there that is very similar to the work I was raised under in Nova Scotia. The opening and closing prayers are identical, and the long lecture for the history of the 3rd Degree is very close to what is done in NS.

So, I have determined Brothers that the work done in Nova Scotia, and some states in the US has influence from all the Grand Lodges of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

I have been invited to attend the installation of Officers at Emerald in the East on the 19th of July and I am hoping that I shall make that meeting and will round out my education in the area of Installations, in that I will have attended installations under the UGLE, Scottish and Irish Grand Workings.

On Saturday the 28th of June along with Yoke Lim, his good lady Cathryn and Anne Comyn (a lady working with me and is also from Kingston) left Kuala Lumpur at 0845 headed for the city of Ipoh (pronounced EeeePooo). It is 295 Km north-east of Kuala Lumpur. Going up we drove on a highspeed four lane express toll road. We stayed at the Rega Hotel in Ipoh and is brand new, the rooms were a little small but very clean and bright. The cost was very reasonable 80 Malaysian Ringetts, or 40 Canadian.

On the way up we were motoring along on the express way, and I was passing two large trucks, when I noticed in my mirror the hood ornament of a Mercedes and a rotating blue light. I was doing 115 kmph at that point and all I could see in the mirror was the grill. I sped up, pulled back to the left-hand lane and a large Mercedes filled with police officers, followed by 3 stretched Mercedes with a fancy gold emblem on the license plate, and second police filled Mercedes went flying by. Yoke Lim told me that it was likely the Sultan of the State of Penang. When I pulled left, I was up to 120 and they were walking away from me.

First stop in Ipoh was a Chinese cave temple. The artwork and the carvings on the entrance to the temple was very impressive. You went into the cave and traveled a twisting turning route through some very large caverns and smaller 'rooms' and exited into an open area. This area was lush and green, huge walls all around and went up some 800 feet. In the middle was a large pond full of tortoises and the ranged in size from a few inches across the shell to many feet across. We were given some plants to feed them, and they sure went crazy over the food. The Chinese believe when you feed the tortoise you will increase your chance of long life.

We visited a second Cave temple, and it was very large with many large and small rooms, there were stairs that went up to the very top of the cave and eventually you came out at the top of the limestone rock. The view was breath-taking.

That evening we attended Angus Lodge #1529, Scottish Constitution. It was their installation night. The Lodge Hall is an old English Mansion, set against the backdrop of the limestone hills in a lush palm oil plantation.

There were some 200 Brothers in attendance. The Lodge room on the top floor of the building was like being in a boat turned upside down, the ceiling and ends of the lodge had the boat shape and the acoustics in the Lodge were so that wherever you sat you could hear the RWM very clearly. One Brother demonstrated to me, he had me sit in the Sr. Warden's area, went to the east and spoke very softly and I could hear him perfectly. Same for Jr.

Warden, but just a few feet out from either chair he had to speak slightly louder.

On the wall behind the Sr. Warden is two great Claymore Swords done in Gold and Silver, these belonged to the original owner of the Mansion, behind the Sr. Warden was a mural of the Sun at Meridian height and the RWM had the blazing sun and the letter G.

The installation ceremony was very much the same as what was done at Yoke Lim's Lodge. At the dinner we did have Haggis and it was a little dry but very tasty.

Sunday morning, we headed back to Kuala Lumpur, and we took the old road and traveled through the countryside and through many small towns and villages. We got some photos of the typical Malaysian house called a Kopong and they are built on stilts and have a high swept roof. Most are metal now, but the true original was made of palm leaves.

On Saturday 19th of July, with RWM Yoke Lim Chew, I attended the installation ceremonies of Emerald in the East, Irish Constitution. Again, the turn out for the installation ceremony was tremendous. They had approximately 250 Brothers in attendance. There were visitors from Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand, Scotland, Ireland, Turkey, India, and of course Canada.

The colour and pageantry of the evening was impressive again with all the various colours of the aprons worn, the dark blue of Scotia Lodge, Scottish Constitution, the bright red tartan of the MacDonald Clan worn by the Brothers of Kilwinning Lodge, and the tartan of Murray Atholl, worn by Tulabardine in the East, the yellow sashes and green sashes worn by Grand Lodge officers.

The installation ceremony is very similar to what is done here in Ontario, however, when the installed the Sr. Warden (I did not witness the WM as I was outside the door of the Lodge) two Brothers walk him around the room twice, then walk him

to his chair, face him towards the east and place their hands on his shoulders and literally slam him down into his seat. "He has been properly seated, Worshipful Master." Is repeated for SW and JW.

The entertainment after Lodge at the Refreshment was excellent, much toasting, singing and every attendee received a gift from the newly installed WM.

So, dear Brothers, my sojourn in Malaysia was one of great joy and great Masonic experience. I have said it before and will say it again, one of the best ways of seeking light in Masonry is by travelling and visiting other Lodges. By the graciousness and warmth of RWM Brother Yoke Lim Chew, I was able to take part and truly enjoy my visit to Malaysia. Not only did we attend Lodge together, but we also made many sight seeing trips, one was to Singapore and that was a very enjoyable weekend.

Brothers if you want to know what it is like to visit Lodges in Malaysia, dig out Kipling's poem, My Mother Lodge Out There....it will tell you pretty much what it is like.

Looking forward to my next trip to Malaysia and I will be going over in Mid October.