

# **A Tribute to Giok Ling**

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Giok Ling was a friend, a colleague and someone I liked to talk to. We were colleagues at NIE for 7 years until she passed away last year in 2009. We co-taught the Year 1 module: Elements of Human Geography for 3 or 4 years. I recall she was very friendly with the students but was very demanding in academic rigour in her assessment of students' works. I must agree that that was good in setting high standards and in ensuring students read and study hard.

### **1. *How I knew Giok Ling***

In was in 1986 when I was doing my PhD in the Department of Human Geography, ANU. I came across Giok Ling's PhD thesis on the shelf of the Resource Room. It was a thesis written on the *Geographical distribution of Chinese medicine in West Malaysia*, submitted in the early 1980s. I used it for my reference of formatting. We had the same PhD supervisor, Peter Rimmer who has published many works on Southeast Asian cities, transport development.

When I came to Singapore in 1989 to work for ISEAS as a research fellow, I did not know she was in Singapore. It was the Secretary of the Human Geography Department, Elizabeth, who was then visiting Singapore, called me that she was meeting Giok Ling for lunch. I joined them for lunch in one of the hawker centres in Pasir Panjang. I learned that Giok Ling was then working in the Research Unit of HDB.

## **2. Chapters that Giok Ling contributed to my edited volumes:**

- 'Trade and the Environment in Southeast Asia', 1999. *Development and Southeast Asia in the New Millennium*, Times Academic Press, Singapore.
- 'Globalisation and the City in Development Countries', 2005. *Teaching Social Studies: a Reader*, Pearson, Singapore.
- 'Ethnicity and the City in Southeast Asia', 2006. *Challenging Sustainability: Urban Development and Change in Southeast Asia*, Marshall Cavendish Academic, Singapore.

About cultural and social sustainable development in Southeast Asian countries in the globalisation era.

We did not have any joint paper, however, because our urban interests were quite different. After she joined Institute of Policy Studies in the early 1990s, Giok Ling was more inclined towards 'urban ethnicity', cultural diversity, citizenship etc.

It is a memorable moment to recall the pleasant working and personal relationship with Giok Ling one year after she left us!

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