

SUN YAT SEN IN PENANG

孫文



Khoo Salma Nasution



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Khoo Salma is a writer, cultural heritage advocate and local historian who has written extensively about Penang and Perak. This is her eighth book. She is conducting research in Phuket under an Asian Public Intellectual Fellowship grant from the Nippon Foundation. She continues to explore Fujian, Indian and Arab networks in the western littoral of Southeast Asia. She is custodian of the Sun Yat Sen Penang Base at 120 Armenian Street.



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This book highlights an episode in Dr. Sun Yat Sen's career as leader of the Chinese Republican Revolution, before he became the first President of the provisional government of China.

From Penang, Sun Yat Sen planned the famous Second Guangzhou Uprising which took place in southern China in the spring of 1911.

Through the dedication of his Penang supporters, the Nanyang Headquarters also played an important role in shoring up the Xinhai Revolution after the Wuchang Uprising on 10th October, 1911.

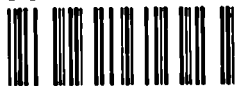
The Nanyang Headquarters operated from 120 Armenian Street. From here, the *Kwong Wah Yit Poh* was first published as a revolutionary newspaper.

This house has been preserved to remember the role that a group of people in Penang played in the 1911 Chinese Revolution, a major event in world history.



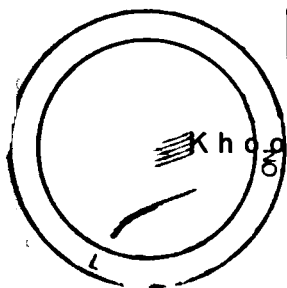
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Khong Salma Nasution



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*To my mother Linda Ch'ng Cheng Ee and
my sister Su Yin Mustier,
who have been ever so supportive of
my efforts to conserve the historic house
at 120 Armenian Street, and to the memory of
my maternal grandfather Ch'ng Teong Swee.*

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Foreword

by Lynn Pan

A portrait one might call 'The Revolutionary' should, but does not, belong in the imaginary museum of every Chinese. The criteria would be too difficult to set. This becomes apparent the moment you place Mao Zedong next to Sun Yat Sen, two very different revolutionaries. For one thing, the Father of the Republic was extremely well-travelled while the Father of the People's Republic was a stay-at-home. Mao did not make any excursions beyond China's borders until he was 56, and this was only to the Soviet Union. Sun, on the other hand, crossed the ocean from his native Guangdong to Hawai'i when he was still in his teens.

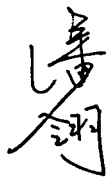
Thereafter you could trace his footsteps all over the world, and he is remembered by museums, memorial halls and exhibitions in a large number of places, from Penang to Kobe. He went to these places to further his revolutionary cause. Indeed, you might say that he was China's first successful international fund-raiser, tapping the wealth and patriotic support of Chinese living overseas.

Far from being greeted with a slammed door, he and his associates found many supporters in Singapore and Malaya. One of these associates, Wang Jingwei, inspired so much admiration that a girl who heard him speak in Penang, Chen Bijun, decided to follow him to Beijing, becoming his accomplice in an attempt on the life of the Manchu Prince Regent there. The two married shortly after the dynasty fell and the Republic of China was inaugurated. Their

union is but one of countless examples of the close connections forged between the Chinese in China and the Chinese overseas.

These and many other protagonists in the story of Penang's part in the Chinese revolution are featured in Khoo Salma Nasution's book. The book is doubly interesting for the fact that it is as much about Penang as it is about Sun's revolution. What makes a given dot on the map come alive is the people you find there and why. Fascinatingly and usefully, the book includes a 1920s map of George Town showing the sites associated with Dr Sun and his supporters in Penang. From one of these sites, 120 Armenian Street, Salma has scraped the dust of decades, not only restoring the historic building that stands on it but researching its past to reveal its links to Sun's revolution as well as to her own family.

In this and other ways the book helps the people of Penang to rediscover their own history. I commend it to all those who believe, as I do, that heritage is what provides the places where they live with so much of their character and meaning.



Lynn Pan • Shanghai, August 2007

