

President's Annual Report for 8th AGM held on 10 April 2010

Opening Remarks

Our Society has had a quiet year as far as activities for our members are concerned. Our focus of attention has been given to the big event when we will be jointly hosting a major international conference in 5-7 July this year (see below for details). We are pleased that our membership has increased over the past term from 55 Ordinary Members and 17 Associate Members totally 72 members as at end April 2009 to 57 Ordinary Members and 23 Associate Members making a total of 80 as of today. We continue our practice to maintain free membership to all who wish to join our Society.

New Address for our Society

We are pleased to let you know that we have moved our Society's premises to the Utraco-Greentech Building, 8 Commonwealth Lane, Singapore 149555 from our existing address of 6 Pioneer Place, Singapore 627705. Our new location is much easier to access and is only a few minutes walk from Commonwealth MRT station. Also there is ample parking space within the compound of the building.

Organizational Matters

We held three committee meetings in the course of the past term on 5 June 2009, 1 October 2009 and 15 January 2010. At the first meeting, as required by our Constitution, we appointed two internal auditors, Mr Tan Peng Yee and Mr Ng Siong Tee. They will serve a period of two years.

At our first committee meeting, we set up the following sub-committees and appointed a chairman to each subcommittee:

Membership & Publicity	- Mr Freddie Tay Kit Poh
Education & Seminars	- Dr Chua Soo Pong
Research & Publications	- Mr C.C. Chin
Finance	- Mr Ong Chu Meng
Social and welfare	- Mr Ng Foo Weng Kitson

We hope that we can continue this practice to get all the committee members to participate more actively in the affairs of our Society.

Our Website and e-Newsletter

Our efforts to make our website a trilingual one - English, Chinese and Bahasa Melayu – has not been materialize although we will continue to strive towards this goal. Our e-newsletter which started in January 2009 had been a monthly one until toward the end of 2009 when the last few issues became a bi-monthly one. We will continue to keep our members and those who have registered to view our newsletter from our website to be better informed of our Society's activities. We wish to encourage our members to visit our website www.chengho.org and to introduce this free e-newsletter to friends and acquaintances in order to widen our audience.

Research and Publications

As reported in the last AGM, my book *Zheng He and Islamization of Southeast Asia* has been published by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) and the Chinese version has also been published by Haiyang Chubanshe in Beijing. Unfortunately, the Bahasa Melayu version has yet to be published.

Conference on Zheng He and the Afro-Asian World

The Conference Committee comprises our President, Dr Tan Ta Sen, as Conference Chairman, our Vice President, Prof. Leo Suryadinata as Vice Chairman, our Research and Publications Sub-Committee chairman, Mr C.C. Chin (Conference Executive Chairman) together with Mr Lim How Seng (Conference Secretary) and other committee members: Mr Kua Bak Lim (Vice Executive Chairman), and members Dr Chia Lin Sien, Mr. Ong Chu Meng, Mr Tay Kit Poh, and Mr Ng Foo Weng Kitson. In all, the Committee has met on ten occasions to organize the Conference which has been set for 5-7 July 2010 to be held in Malacca.

The joint organizers of the Conference are PERZIM (Perbadanan Muzium Melaka), the Melaka Cheng Ho Cultural Museum and our own Society. Several visits to Malacca had been made by conference committee members to meet with officials of PERZIM. Ms Irene Huang, General Manager of Cheng Ho Cultural Museum, has been keeping in close touch with PERZIM officials on conference matters. We received about 60 offers of papers, roughly two-thirds of them are from China and Taiwan (and in Chinese) and the rest in English. We have drawn up a tentative conference programme that will be finalized when we receive the completed papers by the end of April.

The Cheng Ho Cultural Museum

Work to upgrade and enrich the exhibits in the Cheng Ho Cultural Museum in Melaka went well. The Museum received many local and foreign dignitaries including those from South Korea and China.

Financial matters

As in previous years, the Society has been operating on a very small budget. Most expenses have been met by contributions by committee members.

Concluding Remarks

I want to thank our Society's Committee and especially those serving in the Organizing Committee for the Conference for putting in a lot of time and hard work. I look forward to a successful conference in Melaka now only about three months away. We will be voting in new officers of our Society for the next two-year term. My wish is that the new team will be able to do more for our members and to raise the profile of our Society both locally and internationally.