



WELCOME GUIDE FOR TOUR OPERATORS
FROM THE DESK OF BABA & NYONYA HOUSE MUSEUM

Thank you for your keen partnership to keep our Peranakan heritage alive through your tours! Here is a quick guide to the rates of our museum, some house rules, and contact people for your assistance.

ENTRANCE FEES 2014

Adults:	RM15.00
Children 5-12 Yrs.:	RM10.00
Intl Schools & Colleges:	RM12.00 per student

OPENING & TOUR TIMES

Office Hours:	9:30am-5pm, Monday-Friday
Morning Tours:	10am-1pm, last morning tour starts at 11:45am
Afternoon Tours:	2pm-4:30pm, last evening tour starts at 3:45pm

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS & CLOSING TIMES

On most public holidays, we are open to public. In the case that we will be closed, we will send out an e-mail to our mailing list two weeks prior to closing. To be on our mailing list, please send an e-mail to admin@babanyonyamuseum.com

Public Holidays, which we are closed:

Vesak Day, Malacca Governor's Birthday, Christmas Day

ADVANCED BOOKINGS FOR TOUR GROUPS

Strictly for groups of 10 persons or more, please ensure you have made a booking in advance, to avoid any disappointment due to overcapacity. You can make a booking through "book a tour" facility on our website www.babanyonyamuseum.com or contact Carmel at +606-283 1273/ admin@babanyonyamuseum.com

To secure your booking, please make payment via bank transfer:

Bank Name:	OCBC
Account Name:	Chan Heritage Sdn Bhd
Account No.:	735-103458-4

HOUSE RULES

To retain the exclusivity of artifacts within the home, the management kindly requests **no photography or videography** of the house be taken.

SOME NOTES FOR YOUR TOUR:

WHO ARE THE PERANAKANS?

From as early as the 16th Century, when migrants travelled from their home country, some began to adopt the local culture and inter-married with the locals. Indeed, there are many tales that attempt to trace the origins and identity of this unique hybrid culture termed ‘Peranakan’.

Some folklore suggests that Peranakan roots in Malaya began with a princess from China who married a local prince. Historically however the term Peranakan was used to refer to a number of different ethnic and cultural groups in Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. The word Peranakan comes from the Malay and Indonesian word, *anak* or child, referring to locally born descendants.¹

In Malacca, besides Peranakan-Chinese, there are also the Peranakan Jawi and Peranakan Indian (Malacca-Chitty) amongst others.² This new assimilated identity, which many communities took on, formed the roots of young Malaya.

The beginnings of the Peranakan Chinese in South East Asia date back to the twelfth century³. Many Southern Chinese merchants had actively engaged in trade more than 2000 years ago, but the first permanent settlements in cities on the isle of Java and the Malay Peninsula were not established until the thirteenth century.

This identity within the Chinese community began to form when Chinese traders intermarried with local women and adopted South East Asian social practices and the local language. The Peranakan-Chinese have picked up many nicknames over the years: from being honored as the ‘Kings Chinese’ during colonial times, to more recent times being called *orang cina bukan cina* (Chinese people who are not Chinese), they have indeed garnered quite a reputation!

Baba is an honorific term for a Straits-Born gentleman, while *Nyonya* is an honorific term referring to a Straits-Born lady.

¹ Neither Fish nor Fowl, Constructing Peranakan Identity in Colonial and Post-Colonial Singapore, Patricia Ann Harwick, Indiana University,

² Malacca, Voices from the Street, Lim Huck Chin & Fernando Jorge, Heeren Street

³ Deconstructing Creole, Typological studies in language, Edited by Umberto Ansaldo, Stephen Matthews and Lisa Lim, John Benjamins Publishing Company



ABOUT THE MUSEUM

The Baba & Nyonya House Museum is located in Melaka, a World UNESCO Site. The house combines three lots: Nos. 48 50 and 52 that was bought by a Peranakan-Chinese family in 1861. Four generations lived in this townhouse before it was opened and managed by the family as a museum in March of 1985.

The resident to have left the most notable impression in the house was Baba Chan Cheng Siew who was a planter, sat on the board of several businesses, and served as a Justice of Peace. He spared little expense in displaying his wealth as a planter, Justice of Peace and landowner. The artifacts and furnishing seen in the household today are a testament to the life that he lived between 1865-1919.

Set above lavish Blackwood furniture from China, inlaid with mother of pearl and marble, is 5-meter high silk paintings, which greet visitors in the main guest hall. A unique staircase made of solid cenggal wood leads to the second floor with its intricately woven gold-leaf carvings on the underneath of the staircase, reputed to be the first seen in South East Asia. These are just some of the distinctive features of the house.

Each space in the house provides clues of how the Peranakans were a true hybrid culture of Chinese roots, Malay culture, Indian tastes and Colonial influence. From Chinese ancestral worship halls, to Indian *putu mayam* makers and the *sireh* sets (betel nut sets), Dutch tiling, and Victorian cornicing. These are just some of the intricacies to look out for when one visits the house.



ABOUT THE FAMILY

Chan Cheng Siew J.P (Justice of the Peace) was born 27th June 1865, and began his career as a planter. He was commonly known in the estates as *Towkay Cermin Mata* (Businessman with Glasses). He began his plantation growing Gambier, (a plant which was used for its medicinal purposes, as well as for tanning leather, most commonly chewed with sireh). However as the world was awakening to her industrial age, Malacca was seen as a suitable location to grow rubber trees. Cheng Siew switched his crop plantation from Gambier to rubber in order to meet the ever-growing demands of this new world.

Cheng Siew died suddenly in 1919, at the age of 54, leaving his wife Chee Gee Geok Neo, three concubines and his son Chan Seng Kee, who became trustee to his estate. Seng Kee did not have the same appreciation for living in a bustling town. Complaining of the incessant noise from the tok-tok mee (wanton mee) man on the street at night, Seng Kee built a house by the seaside that was completed in 1932 and moved his family there to stay before and during the war.

After World War II, the family stayed in town again, although shortly. As time moved on and the children went overseas or began their own families, the house was intermittently used by Seng Kee's sons as they found their footing, before moving on to their own homes. For many years, the family abode was only used as an office and for *semahyang* (prayers) as a *Rumah Abu* (Ancestral Home).

In the 1980s, Cheng Siew's eldest grandson, Baba Chan Kim Lay had a vision to turn the house into a museum. The doors opened in March 1985 to visitors from around the world who wanted to learn about this fascinating hybrid culture. Today, the house is still owned and managed by the Chan family, and still serves as a meeting place for family members to remember their heritage, ancestry, and for reunions.

Thank-you for your kind patronage to our house!
Yours Sincerely,

The Baba & Nyonya House Museum