

## RARE & PERSONAL COLLECTIONS AT NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MALAYSIA

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### ABSTRACT

This paper aims to explore the characteristics of rare and personal collections or known as Malaysiana Collections at National Library of Malaysia (PNM). The explanations on definition, type of collections, policies or acts that related to rare materials collection, the challenges faced by National Library of Malaysia in acquiring the rare collection, acquisition of rare collection and promoting the collection to the public discussed. The review from this paper will expose to the audience about the rare and personal collections in Malaysia as a whole. Other than that, the several issues and challenges on maintaining and managing on rare materials will discuss in detailed. Hence, this paper will give the positive impact and awareness to people about the importance and knowledge on how to manage, preserve and appreciate the rare and personal collections that have significant to the future generations on country's heritage and ancient history.

**Keywords:** *Rare collections, Malaysiana collections, National Library of Malaysia , Personal collections*

### INTRODUCTION

National Library of Malaysia or known as Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia (PNM) began the operation in 1966 at the Federal Building, Petaling Jaya, Selangor, nearby National Archive of Malaysia. There are three objectives of establishment National Library of Malaysia such to make available for the use of present and future generation a national collection of library resources, to facilitate nationwide access to library resources available within the country and abroad and lastly to provide leadership on matters pertaining to libraries. Some of the collections in National Library of Malaysia consist of Malaysiana Collections (Private Collection, Ephemeral Collections and Limited Collection / Classified / Banned). "Koleksi Nadir" is referred to the rare collections. Rare collections have been classified as one of the special collections in the National Library of Malaysia (Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, 2011).

### REVIEWS: RARE COLLECTIONS OF MALAYSIANA

Rare book is defined as a book that is distinguished by its early printing date, its limited issue, the special character of the edition or binding, or its historical interest. Books and other types of rare collections are rare because they are unique or irreplaceable, including limited editions, works valuable because of content and private press books, important association copies and important works autographed by their authors, illustrators or printers that are significant first editions and editions of special note from the colonizer and merchant and also books of high monetary value or high quality facsimile editions of important books.

National Library of Malaysia (2010) has defined rare collections of Malaysiana as a collection that includes in one of these following criteria;

- i. Materials published before 1930 and/or hard to acquire in the country
- ii. Old print issues that related to Malaysia (including Straits Settlements, Malaya, Persekutuan Tanah Melayu, Kepulauan Melayu and Alam Melayu)
- iii. Old print issues that not being published and issued anymore
- iv. Old print issues by the Malay authors and researchers or Malaysia
- v. Old print issues by the authors and researchers who lived in overseas wrote in multi-language that related to Malaysia

These rare collections provide information and act as resources of knowledge about the ancient history of Malaya that comes into various types such as books, brochures, pictures, maps and others. Rare collections of Malaysiana are very valuable and require a continuous effort to collect, preserve and manage these special collections.

## COLLECTIONS

The process of acquiring the rare collections of Malaysiana in National Library of Malaysia has been started during the early of 70's. Based on the interview the most elderly collection that they kept in the library is *The Dictionarium Malaico-Latin* and *Latino-Malaicum*. It was first published in 1631 by the Vatican Press in Rome. This is the dictionary type that provides the translation from Malay to Latin and Latin to Malay language. On the subject of rare collections, there are hundreds of collections had listed in the catalogue of rare and personal collections published by the National Library of Malaysia (Junaidah Rosliy, 2015). The 30 titles of rare and personal collections that are available in National Library of Malaysia are listed as below:-

- i. Batu Belah Batu Bertangkup
- ii. Pelita Bahasa Melayu Nippon dan nahunya
- iii. Bahawa inilah kitab ilmu peladang
- iv. A history of the British Empire
- v. Ten years in Sarawak
- vi. The oil palm in Malaya
- vii. Cherita lakunan III
- viii. The Malay States
- ix. Malay Island
- x. On the equator
- xi. Dewan perempuan
- xii. Journey to the Far Pacific
- xiii. Malaya: an account of its people, flora and fauna
- xiv. A Geography and South East Asia
- xv. The government services in British Malaya
- xvi. The magic of Malaya
- xvii. Sinar Baru (buku kelima
- xviii. Inilah syair unggas adanya
- xix. Kuala Lumpur: 100 years
- xx. At home and abroad
- xxi. An introduction to Malaysian birds

- xxii. Grim glory
- xxiii. Manual of the international list of causes of death
- xxiv. Manusia dan ilmu ghaib
- xxv. Sketches of our life at Sarawak
- xxvi. How Malaya is governed
- xxvii. Malay dialogues with colloquial grammar
- xxviii. A practical guide to coconut planting
- xxix. Sketch of the Malayan Peninsula
- xxx. Pelbagai chetera Melayu

## **POLICIES OR ACTS THAT RELATE TO RARE MATERIALS COLLECTION**

PNM have own acts and rules based on Laws of Malaysia towards its collections. These acts and rules of PNM are National Library Act 1972 (Incorporating all amendments up to 1 January 2006) (Act 80), Library Material Act 1986 (Act 331), Rules of National Library 1977 P.U (A) 365, Rules of National Library (Amendment) 1993 P.U (A) 294, Rules of National Library(Payment and Fine) 1993 P.U (A) 295, Dasar National for Library and Information Service, and National Library of Malaysia Policies and Procedure.

The policy that very common to the rare collections in PNM is Regulation of the Special Collections National Library of Malaysia. The other policies and procedures that relate to the rare collections such as Digitalized Library Collection Guideline, Regulation of Conservation Library Sources, Regulation of Malaysiana, Regulation of Acquisition and Documentation Monograph Materials and other Printed Materials, and etc (National Library of Malaysia, 2010).

### **(i) Regulation of the Special Collections in National Library of Malaysia**

This regulation established for fulfil the functions of National Library based on Act 80 [National Library Act 1972 (Reprint – 2006) (Incorporating all amendments up to 1 January 2006), Part II, Section 3] and Nation Regulation for Library and Information Service in giving an effective contribution to the country development as well as plays the role as excellent information centre of Malaysia and international reference centre. This regulation used to manages and provide reference service of special collections for research and preservation purposes. This special collections regulation include all activities that relating to management and services of Special Collections in National Library of Malaysia such as identifying, appraisal, selection, acquisition, documentation, services, maintenance, conservation, and promotion (National Library of Malaysia, 2010).

### **(ii) Digitization of Library Collection Guideline**

Purpose of this guideline is to provide an instruction related to the digitization that can be used by all libraries in the world as well as creating uniformity in terms of standards that often use at national and international level (Bahagian Pembangunan Kandungan, 2009). Thus, digitization of the library resources introduces new modes of use, enables much wider potential users and gives new means of viewing our cultural heritage with a higher degree of clarity and in a much more compact structure (Byamugisha, 2009).

Section	Description
<b>Section 4</b>	<p><b>Selection of materials for digitization:</b></p> <p>Criteria of selection materials for digitizing process including books, manuscripts, rare collection, newspapers, journals, audio and video recording, photos/pictures, organization publications and other materials that support on services and development of digital content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Materials that have historical, heritage and cultural values.</li> <li>b) Materials special collection.</li> <li>c) Materials that have high demand.</li> <li>d) Materials that selected for publication or exhibition activity.</li> <li>e) Materials that had expired date copyright or get written permission for digitalized.</li> <li>f) Materials that limit due of old physical condition, high values and difficult acquire.</li> <li>g) Materials that did not know their existence or not used can digitalized by library as promotion means for increasing the users use it.</li> </ul>

**Table 1:** The section that relate to the Rare Collections in Digitization of Library Collections Guideline

**(iii) Regulation of Conservation of Library Sources**

This regulation for ensuring the conservation of library sources in optimum level due of it's reflect to national treasury of intellectual heritage, literature, and cultural.

Section	Description
<p><b>Section 6</b>  <b>Section 6.6</b>  <b>Section 6.6.1(a) (c)</b></p>	<p><b>Activity:</b>  <b>Storage:</b>  <b>Environment:</b>                      Storage area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Determine the environment of humidity and temperature in consistently based on suitable for the types of materials.</li> <li>(ii) Provide air-conditioner for 24 hours especially in manuscripts room, rare collection, national collection, and audio-visual.</li> <li>(iii) Prevent from dust, food, drink, and other pollution.</li> <li>(iv) Provide good location for store materials such as keep away from sunlight, magnetic, and electric.</li> <li>(v) Provide storage place that made from wood or non-magnetic for electronic materials.</li> <li>(vi) Use right shelve for the materials</li> <li>(vii) Master microfilm collection should store at outside building National Library of Malaysia.</li> </ul> <p>Lighting:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Determine the use of lamp light that not hot and free from ultraviolet.</li> <li>(ii) Determine the low and uniform warm including not damage to the materials.</li> <li>(iii) The storage space of manuscripts, rare collection, National Collection, and audio-visual should be dark when not use it.</li> </ul>
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**Table 2:** The section that relate to the Rare Collections in Regulation of Conservation of Library Sources

**(iv) Regulation of Malaysiana**

This regulation is to fulfil the purpose of PNM based on National Library Act (Amendment) 1987, Part II, Section 3 and fulfil the objective of National Regulation for Library and Information Service in giving an excellent contribution to the country development, to make PNM as a centre of information system, and function as a Centre of Malaysiana Outstanding Information as well as run along with the needs of Submission Library Material Act 1986 (Act 331), Section 3(1).

Section	Description
<b>Appendix E 4</b>	<p><b>Definition:</b> <b>Special Collection</b></p> <p>Special Collection is collection of library source which include rare material, classified material (banned, confidential, etc.), personal collection, (brochure, stamp, first day correspondence, postcard, badge, etc.), Archive PNM collection and other forms collection from time to time by Chief Director.</p>
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Closed access collection</b></p> <p>Collection that stored in special room and the user need get permission for refer it in the special room that already provided. These collections include of rare collection, individual collection, archive PNM and classified collection (limited, confidential and banned).</p>

**Table 3:** The section that relate to the Rare Collections in Regulation of Malaysiana

**(v) Regulation of Acquisition and Documentation Monograph Materials and Other Printed Materials**

Section	Definition
<b>Section 5 Section 5.4</b>	<p><b>Definition</b></p> <p>Information source in form of valuable book, pamphlet, picture, and etc. and difficult to acquire in the market and difficult to find. Usually when finally find the material, to acquire them are with very high price.</p> <p>The category of Malaysiana rare including of one of or all matter:</p> <p>(a) Materials published before 1930 and/or which are difficult to acquire in</p>

	<p>the country.</p> <p>(b) Publications relating to Malaysia (include Straits Settlements, Malaya, Federated Malay States, Kepulauan Melayu and Alam Melayu).</p> <p>(c) Publications no longer available.</p> <p>(d) Publications written by Malaysians or Malay researchers.</p> <p>(e) Publications about Malaysia written in various languages by writers and researchers who staying at overseas.</p>
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**Table 4:** The section that relate to the Rare Collections in Regulation of Acquisition and Documentation Monograph Materials and Other Printed Materials

## ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Rare collections are no longer available in the market and difficult to find or get this kind of rare collections in over the world. Thus, it is difficult for PNM to search and acquires the rare collections whether in the country or other countries. The majority of the challenges or problems that PNM often faced in acquiring the rare collections are the means of acquiring the rare collections, budget which involved in acquiring the rare collections as well as time and workforce in acquiring this material.

### (i) **The means of acquiring the rare materials.**

PNM should identify the owner of the materials whether an individual, organization, institution, or etc. PNM needs to identify by doing research and survey totally. This is due to the materials often not available in market value. The authors of rare collections regarding Malay Peninsula are usually done by Western researchers. The rare collections are written based on educational of Malay Peninsula since they stayed in a long period in Malay Peninsula. Some of rare collections were published in the overseas such as London and most of these materials are kept in British Library. After Malaysia was released from British's army (after Independent Day), British people return to their homeland bring together all the materials with them. That is why some of the collections available in overseas such Britain, British, and London. The difficulties here when the PNM representatives to collect back the materials at these countries and they are refused to share even to sell it.

### (ii) **Cost.**

The materials involved lots of budget in finding the rare materials whether in the country or overseas. Usually, PNM finds the rare materials in Indonesia: Jakarta, Medan, Aceh, and other places. This is because Indonesia has lots of rare materials. The value or price of the collection should base on certain criteria such the ages, physical, content, context, and uniqueness and so on. Libraries often document the full costs of acquiring a book; in many cases the ancillary costs equal or exceed the purchase price. Processing and preservation costs routinely are taken into consideration in determining whether to purchase or accept gifts of books (Association of Research Libraries, 2009).

### (iii) **Time.**

It also involves time and work force since these kinds of materials are no longer available in the market. Thus, it is difficult for PNM to find or acquire it maybe from other country.

## ACQUISITION OF RARE COLLECTIONS

There have two methods of acquisition processes involve for finding rare collections at National Library of Malaysia (PNM) which are gift or donation, exchange and purchase.

### (i) Gift or donation

PNM receive gift or donation of rare collections from individuals such as lecturer, researcher, student and foreigner. Most of the rare collections that available in PNM comes from foreigner. It is because they realize the value of information. Unlike people in Malaysia that unaware the value of these collections. If individual want to donate their collection to PNM, they need to follow the procedure from PNM. There is procedure that they need to follow:

*“PNM will refer to special officer which involving evaluation committee. This committee is leading by director and deputy director of PNM. They act as evaluator in evaluating the collection. It is because they want to recognize the value of information that contains in the collection. After they know the value, they will decide either to accept the collection or not. If they accept the collection, PNM party will give token to donator as appreciation for them”*

### (ii) Exchange

Exchange method will apply when PNM organize any programme or exhibition and do not have the collection relate to that programme. PNM will not get the original material but only a copy. The owner of these rare and personal materials will give or share the copy of these materials on specific time frame.

### (iii) Purchase

PNM will purchase the collections from individuals or institutions. They search the collection around Malaysia involve each state and overseas such as United Kingdom, China, Iran, Indonesia, and New Zealand and willing to buy it from these countries.

## PROMOTING THE RARE COLLECTIONS TO PUBLIC

### (i) In-house programme

#### In-House Exhibition

Exhibitions are an excellent means for promoting public access to collections. To risk stating the obvious, the public promotion of collections is an essential professional tool (Association of Research Libraries, 2009). PNM provide space in their building to do the exhibition of rare collections. People can come to PNM to see the collection in physically.

**(ii) Outreach programme****Exhibition around Malaysia**

PNM will bring the collections around Malaysia every two months. It means they will go to different places every two months in order to promote the rare collections. Besides that, they collaborate with other organization in introducing the collections to the public. For example, PNM collaborate with UiTM Kelantan Branch, Machang Campus for exhibition in the campus. Special collections is a powerful way for undergraduates to engage with the material culture of the past. It provides the means for them to develop their own historical imagination (Bond & Butler, 2009).

**(iii) Publish materials**

PNM takes initiative to publish catalog and postcard to attract the public.

**a. Catalog**

The design of the catalog is full with picture of rare collections and also has brief explanation on the collections. So, it facilitates people to understand the information that have in the collections. This catalog is full with colours.

**b. Postcard**

PNM published ten postcards with different picture as background. The entire picture is comes from picture that exist in rare collections. This postcard will act as memorable souvenir to people they cannot get it at any place.

**USERS ACCESS**

To encourage users ease and fast access to various library collections in anytime and anywhere, PNM also provides the library's rare collections available in online form to ensure improving local digital contents (national cultural heritage, Malaysian historic) for reference and research purposes support research and the library's education, publishing and exhibition programs. Most of the selected rare collection already digitized to preserve rare, fragile, and deteriorate collections, besides to conserve its contents and also improving access to their content by providing digital surrogates of the items for use (Nurhidayah & Nordiana, 2015). Users also may access to all rare collections at Unit Koleksi Nadir, Pusat Maklumat Malaysiana, Level 10, National Library of Malaysia.

**DISCUSSION**

As a whole, the process as mentioned above is very complicated and occurs in long time frame. PNM need to do some research in the early stage start from of the process to gather the information of the collection, appraise, preserving and maintain the materials. It is to ensure that the collection exists is the original one. A proper guide is needed and continuous training to all level of staff at all branches of libraries needs to be implemented as well. In carrying out this effort, a clear policy on collecting, appraising, maintaining and preserving should be addressed by the institutions. The policy or guidelines should be written clearly in line with the copyright laws in ensuring all citizens understand and that it



should comply with the government's legislation. The policy should cover infrastructure, policy making, implementation; supervision from various aspects. In order to preserve and maintains the collections for long-term, PNM may pursued for digitizing as this can protect the documents that is fragile. Furthermore, it have been discussed, PNM promotes their rare collections by in-house exhibition, outreach programme and published postcards and catalogs. It is recommended, in order to make the collections widely accessible, online exhibits may be used as one of the methods to gain public awareness with efforts on digitizing the collections. In all contexts, an online version of the exhibit is strongly recommended as a means of ensuring that a record is kept and the institution obtains maximum benefit from all the work involved in creating the exhibit in the first place (Association of Research Libraries, 2009). The easiness to access and use world of WWW/Internet resources presents itself as authoritative, transparent and satisfactory (Joint, 2006).

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