

## ■ Quotes

# Merdeka speak

Malaysians share with us what 31 August means to them and how they plan to mark the day.

COMPILED BY ELAINE TAN

“When I was younger, Merdeka used to be just another holiday, a reason not to attend school! These days though, because of the nature of my work and the things I’ve discovered over the year, Merdeka means a reflection of where we are right now and the direction we are moving forward. Sure, there is reason to celebrate but there is also a long way to go before the meaning of the word Merdeka is realised”

**Mark Beau de Silva, resident playwright/director of Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre (KLPac)**

“I started Helping Angels on the eve of Merdeka two years ago. Ever since that fateful Merdeka, Helping Angels has been running welfare activities every single week and has grown into a global movement! So in the spirit of the group’s objectives of helping others, I will be volunteering my support for another good cause – the ‘No Plastic Bags’ awareness campaign and bazaar”

**Poesy Liang, founder of Helping Angels, a global Facebook group that gathers volunteers for welfare work**

‘No Plastic Bags’ bazaar will be held on 31 August (12noon-6pm) at Noble Banquet, 235 Jalan Bukit Bintang, KL

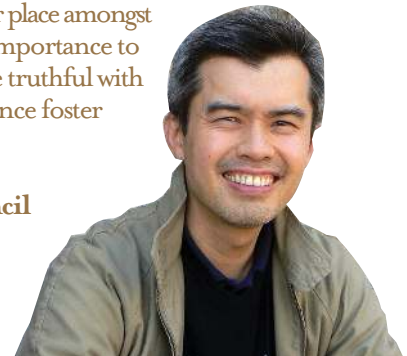


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“Working with our past has deepened my understanding of our shared heritage as well as our individual stories, but experience has also led me to question how we value these. Merdeka, for me, would seem an appropriate time to ask ourselves: Have we each found our place amongst our fellow Malaysians; do we give enough importance to the different chapters of our history; are we truthful with our past; and does our spirit of Independence foster inclusiveness, trust and respect?”

**Lim Huck Chin, co-author of *Malacca: Voices from the Street* and former Council Member of Heritage of Malaysia Trust**

He was also was part of a team which restored the Dutch-period shop house, 8 Hereen Street in Melaka, for use as a heritage resource centre



Long before the Petronas Twin Towers, Malaysia’s original skyscraper was the 26-storey International Centre on Jalan Suleiman, which housed a bank, shopping arcade, offices, art centres and restaurants.

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“Since we opened the Royal Selangor Visitor Centre, I have enjoyed meeting and sharing with visitors the history of Royal Selangor and how my grandfather and then my parents built up the company. One of my favourite stories is about how the melon teapot made by my grandfather found its way back to us. This Merdeka will see me sharing this tale with visitors at the centre. As it dates back to World War II when the Japanese were invading Malaya, it would be even more meaningful to tell it on the day Malaysians commemorate independence.”

**Datin Paduka Chen Mun Kuen, Director of Royal Selangor**

To view the melon-shaped pewter teapot, visit the Pewter Museum at the Royal Selangor Visitor Centre [www.royalselangor.com](http://www.royalselangor.com)



“Last year, we had so much fun watching the parade at Dataran Merdeka! But since Merdeka is during the fasting month this year, we are going to spend it at home. We are planning to invite our friends Jarjit, Mei Mei, Fizi, Ehsan, Mail, Izat and Zul to break fast together. Opah (Granny) has also bought us a large Malaysian flag, which we will hang by the window.”

**Upin and Ipin, five-year old twins from the Malaysian animation series *Upin & Ipin*, currently showing on our inflight entertainment**

“To us, Merdeka should be viewed as a time to recollect the great moments when independence was first achieved, to be grateful to those who have sacrificed in the past, and to stand united for a better tomorrow. Our way of celebrating is by introducing Malaysia to the world through fashion, a mission that is best encapsulated in our motto ‘Malaysia *batik*, crafted for the world’. As it happens, Von Jolly Couture will be making its debut in Europe this season, right around Merdeka.”

**Aaron G Von Jolly and Raymond V Jolly, designers of Von Jolly Couture, a luxury *batik* label**

“I used to go out for dinner with my parents (to celebrate), so August 31 inevitably brings back memories of family and Malaysian food – both of which I would miss terribly this year as I have to be back in France for pre-season training.”

**Titus James, Midfielder for FC Nanteuil based in France**



“There is no meaningful celebration without true understanding of the significance of Merdeka. My dream is for the Orang Asli community to know their rights as citizens of an independent nation and to be free in their minds from subjugating influences.”

**Mahat Anak China, radio DJ and producer, writer and poet**



“We only have one life to live, and we have decided to live ours to the fullest. This is a journey of the heart and we hope it will inspire other Malaysians to live their dreams. Being in different countries has reinforced our gratefulness for Malaysia as a peaceful, multi-racial country. We deeply appreciate our *tanah air* (homeland)... and we miss Malaysian food so much!”

**Jonathan Ng and Kelvin Sim, Malaysian duo who are on a 500-day journey around the world themed ‘Journey of Hope’ to inspire generosity**

Journey of Hope is a self-funded initiative; to track their journey or make a contribution to their cause, visit [www.we-deed-it.com](http://www.we-deed-it.com)



**Sprinter Rabuan Pit became the fastest man in Asia when he won the 100 metre race at the Asian Games in New Delhi on 29 November 1982 – despite a foot injury.**