

East is East and West is West, But That's Just True on Maps

“My name is Ching Hock Siow. Born in Malaysia, I am the younger brother of Mo-Li, who is just two years my senior. Looking back, I always remember the happy childhood days in Sua Betong, a remote Malaysian village surrounded by endless rubber trees. It was here that Mo-Li and I had the bond of playing together and sharing various outdoor activities.

At dawn in Sua Betong you could be awoken by echoing tunes of the cockerels, or after, our lovely and frisky dogs would be at your bedside to rouse you from a deep sleep by licking your face. My early morning excitement with Mo-Li was to search and collect fresh organic eggs laid by our happy hens, ducks and geese. During the day we would feed them and played with the baby ducks in puddles.

At the rear garden of our house and close to a pomelo tree was our little sugar cane plantation. Immediately after chopping down the ripe sugar canes, we would use our sharp front teeth to peel them and then refreshing ourselves by chewing and sucking in the succulent juice. We also enjoyed climbing the guava tree and swinging on the strong woody stems of our giant hibiscus.

On 11 September 1971, I left Malaysia for England. After having completed successfully my three-year studies in graphic design and marketing in Newcastle Upon Tyne, I switched to accountancy. Since leaving my last job with a firm of accountants, I was on the dole for a short period. I still remember once a fortnight I had to join a long queue at a local government office to sign up for a petty benefit payment. Indirectly, this was like a street beggar. As I was the only Chinese in the queue, I always felt uneasy in front of all the white people. Surprisingly, some of the Geordies always gave me friendly smiles, as though they were welcoming me to join their Unemployment Club.

Later, I started my own business as an accountant by using part of my apartment as an office. While doing subcontract work for other firms, I had to canvass for my own clients. My main targets were mostly the small traders on catering businesses. One day when I was in the city of Leeds I spotted a newly opened kebab restaurant. As soon as I stepped into the restaurant, I introduced myself to the owner called Ozen from Istanbul who was very delighted to meet me. This was what he said, “You came at the right time, I am looking for a new accountant.” Just half an hour later, he brought all his business records and said, “You can take it back to Newcastle

and prepare my accounts.” That was years ago. Today, Ozen stayed as my client. It was so easy then to get clients, like picking cherries.

It would be very difficult to seek for a female companion when you are busy running a business. The quickest way was to advertise myself in a personal column of a local newspaper. The response to my advertisement was good. But I did not find the right partner. However, one young lady I met had appointed me as her accountant for her business on sports gear. Another lady introduced me her sister who had a minibus travel business, became a client too. Instead of love, I found more business.

After having joined a professional leisure club for a year I became a committee member. I was responsible to welcome new guests and to ensure they become members of the club. One evening I spotted a well-groomed young attractive blonde sitting alone. The beauty and radiance of her smile enticed me to chat her up right away. I could feel her warm heated voice signaling her desire to be close to me. Since then she always accompanied me whenever I joined any outings by the club. This English rose was indeed to become my wife, Julie.”

Julie tells it herself: “One evening in the year 1989, I decided to go to a social evening. This was about to change my life. Across a crowded room I saw a gentleman with lovely dark hair, smiling at me. I was instantly attracted to him (just like the movies). We both hit it off straight away. From then on we would see each other nearly every night. The following year we were engaged and on April 20th, 1991 we were married. Mo-Li and Claude kindly came to our wedding. But unfortunately, other members of Ching Hock’s family could not attend, due to it not being safe to fly because of the Gulf war. I was happy and so grateful Mo-LI and Claude were able to attend and give Ching Hock the support he needed on our special day.



My parents, Muriel and Alan gave us a fairy tale wedding. It was held at a castle and was and is the happiest day of my life. The only down side was the weather. Snow, hail and rain, not to be expected at that time of year. In the evening, or close family and a few friends, Mo-Li and Claude kindly booked and arrange our evening reception at a well-known Chinese restaurant. The meal was superb. Everyone enjoyed this so much. (Even talked about to this day.) At the time I was working for local government in business information.

Soon after our wedding, Ching Hock asked if I would like to work with him. I agreed and have not looked back since.”

“As Julie and I do not have a family,” Ching Hock continues, “we travel extensively. One evening in Istanbul we joined a special dinner at a leading club that featured belly dancers

. The guests were mainly tourists from all over the world. As soon as we arrived we were ushered to our table with Malaysian and Turkish flags. This was because in my reservation I mentioned we came from Malaysia. Right in the middle of the show, the flamboyant Turkish compeer came close to us and announced, “Please welcome the only couple from Malaysia” and immediately



to my surprise he sang, “Rasa-sayang, hay, rasa-sayang — a very popular Malay song — and he expected me to continue singing. I really looked embarrassed when I couldn’t sing it.

During our one week stay in Kota Kinabalu, capital of Sabah in East Malaysia, we took an early morning return flight to Sandakan in order to join a trip to Sepilok, a sanctuary for the orangutans. On the same coach we were travelling was another party of monkey enthusiasts heading to see the proboscis (big nose) monkeys. We just could not believe what we saw! Both an elderly white man and his son had massive and unusually shaped noses — the biggest we have ever seen! It was very strange and coincidental that they were on the way to see the big-nosed monkeys. They could be here doing research in primates. It was a heavy raining day. By the time we arrived Sepilok, we were soaked and could only see a few orangutans during feeding time. We were also disappointed that we did not have a view of Rafflesia, the biggest flower in the world (three feet wide. You need to go deep into Borneo jungle to find it.)

From Kota Kinabalu we flew to Kuala Lumpur. I suggested to Julie that we should be able to see more orangutans at the K.L. zoo. We were pleased to see many here. While we were standing and watching, a young Malay keeper was trying without any success to separate two young orangutans clinging to each other. We did not know why the keeper was doing it. Just minutes after he left, we were shocked and bewildered to see these playful monkeys performing sex — the male aroused by the female! This explained why the keeper tried to separate them. Probably he took the view that it was a taboo to see these erotic apes in a Muslim country.

Since the 11 of September we are more cautious on our travelling. The Canary Islands are our favorite haunts. There is not jet lag flying there where we can enjoy the superb warm weather all year round. We hope we will continue exploring other exotic islands i.e. Tahiti and Bora Bora.

We are very fortunate to have traveled so much and so far which we both enjoy. There are so many places yet to see. One of which is not too far and that is Venice. So, Ching Hock, how about it?

The things that are important to me are good manners and behavior to all persons, respect and a sense of humor. I have been fortunate to have been part of a loving, caring and supportive family and look forward to continuous health, happiness, love and support with my husband Ching Hock.”



“I am Mary Wong, born in the town of Kuantan in Malaysia. After my secondary school I left for Kuala Lumpur to pursue my education at the Univ. of Malaya where I met Mo-Li Siow, now Mo-Li Bamberger. Mo-Li and I became bosom pals. We were roommates and college mates for three years and this was the start of a wonderful friendship that has endured to this day.

In 1970 after graduation, I met Chew Swee Wong whom I married after a wonderful courtship of 14 months. We have two children: a daughter, now a doctor, and a son a dentist. We’ve had a great life. Chew Swee worked in the corporate sector, more like a high flying executive, making deals for the company he worked for, all over the world till 1987. I was a teacher for 25 long years. A very trying and rather stressful job. Would have liked something else, but what?

A new life began for us when we moved to New Zealand in 1987. Chew Swee went into the supermarket business, which has become very successful and fulfilling for us.



Together as a family we have traveled to many parts of the world and done many things. Now that our children have left home, we spend a great deal of our time playing golf. We are not great golfers but we are nuts about the great game. We have played in more courses in four years than most people have in a lifetime. We have golfed in New Zealand, Australia, Malaysia and the USA. The high point of our golfing career? Seeing Tiger Woods in the flesh in the New Zealand Open in January 2002.

In life we seek contentment, health and peace of mind. We strongly believe that money alone cannot make the world go round.

It's about attitude, positive attitude. You are what you believe you can do and achieve. Mo-Li and Claude were married for a very long time. So were we, and we are very happy. Happy marriages are not made in heaven. We believe in working hard to attain happiness and stability in a relationship, otherwise everything falls apart. We ask for simple things in life, love, friendship, good health and happiness."

"We have known Claude for almost 40 years. This friendship thrived despite the great distance that separated us. We are greatly saddened at Claude's passing and wish to join Moli in remembering him and celebrate a life well lived.

Through the many postcards, letters and articles written by Claude, for he was a prolific writer, and the precious times we spent together we have a vivid picture of a man who lived life to the full. He worked hard. He was energetic, vibrant and adventurous and he had done more things, seen more places and had more experiences than most people had in their lifetime.

Everyone can see he loved life despite its trials and tribulations. He might have tried to reach for the sky but he also clearly enjoyed the simple things in life.

We remember him happily sunning, with Moli, in our courtyard in cold and windy Wellington. We remember him enjoying a simple but delicious plate of Chinese noodle in a New York restaurant. We remember him in beautiful Queenstown in New Zealand, where, as Moli said, the stars seem bigger and brighter than anywhere else in the world and Claude was happily walking and talking with us under the beautiful Southern Skies in 1998. He obviously enjoyed this simple pleasure.

I (Mary) remember him happily driving a battered old Morris Minor with no air-conditioning in 1968 in Kuala Lumpur in temperatures soaring towards 100F, with the windows wound down and his shirt buttons off, with Moli his girlfriend by his side, and me in the backseat. Claude was then about 48.

We will remember many things but most of all the memory of you, Claude, you who embraced us warmly as your own friends although we were Moli's friends.

We value your friendship and we were privileged to have known you.

Chew Swee and Mary



Eddie Siow grew up in Sua Betong, a rubber estate in Malaysia managed by Guthrie & Co.



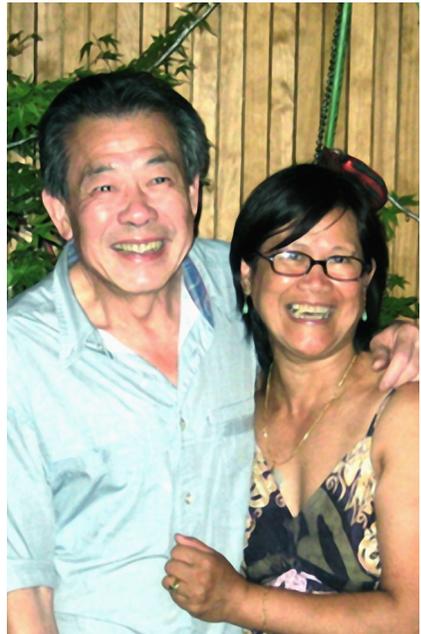
Eddie's father contributed to the development of this rubber estate by organizing locals to clear acres and acres of jungle so that the rubber trees could be planted. He quickly realized that rubber tree cultivation would become the future of the Malayan economy and began to buy up parcels of land to establish his own rubber estate and hired workers to tap the trees and built a factory to process the latex. The latex was treated with hydrochloric acid and then pressed through a mill to be made into sheets which were later put in a special "smoke house" to be smoked. Eventually palm oil would become the focus of Sua Betong's production.

Schools were not available in the estate proper, so Eddie and his siblings would stay in Seremban, the state capital, for the school week, and return weekends to home.

But let Eddie tell the tale: "After completing primary and secondary school in 1956, I worked temporarily as a school teacher for two years to earn some money for a journey to Australia. In 1959, I arrived in Melbourne to begin a Civil Engineering course at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. On completion, I obtained a structural engineering position with Public Works Department of Victoria in Melbourne. I stayed with this Department for six years and gained valuable experience and knowledge. But the remuneration was not very attractive and chances of advancement remote and decided it was time to seek new pastures.

In 1970, I ventured some 3,000 km north to Townsville in Queensland to work for a small Structural Engineering Consultant. Townsville, a small town, was initially quite a pleasant change from the hustle and bustle of Melbourne. It was also easily accessible to such wonderful holiday destinations like the Great Barrier Reef and the rainforest of the Atherton Tablelands. However, the novelty of the new place began to wear off after a couple of years. Being far away from the big cities like Sydney and Melbourne, I was feeling isolated both career-wise and socially. So when Cyclone Althea hit Townsville in 1971, it accelerated my decision to move back to Melbourne.

In 1975, I married Lita Augusto, originally from Baguio in the Philippines. We had twins, Lani and Justin. Lita is



a qualified nurse and midwife and worked in a Melbourne maternity hospital looking after premature and/or sick babies. This time around, in Melbourne, I joined the Commonwealth Department of Works, a government department responsible for the design and construction of all government facilities throughout Australia. I stayed with this department for the next 24 years, until my retirement in 1996. During this time, my career, as a structural engineer, progressed satisfactorily and for the last 17 years I held the position of Principal Structural Engineer. In this position, I managed a structural engineering group and was responsible for design and documentation of building projects such as governmental defense facilities, factories, aircraft test facilities, research laboratories, houses, flats, offices and stores.

I first met Claude in 1980, when he and Mo-Li visited us in Melbourne. Although I had learned from Mo-Li, and other family members, that Claude was a very nice guy, I still had the stereotyped image of him as a swaggering, globe-trotting American industrialist. So I was somewhat anxious as to how I should receive him when he and Mo-Li arrived to stay with us for a few days. Our house was quite modest and certainly unfit for someone perhaps more accustomed to the luxury of a five-star hotel accommodation. Furthermore, Lani and Justin were just two months old at the time and our house was, needless to say, chaotic. We did the best we could to make the place presentable and we even vacated our bedroom for them as it had the only decent bed in the house.

So when the day finally arrived for my first meeting with my American brother-in-law, I was relieved to find that he possessed none of the negative stereotyped image I had pictured earlier. Instead I found Claude to be a friendly, unassuming man, full of warmth and understanding, confirming others opinions of him as a nice guy.

There was nothing plastic about him, and he didn't even have an American accent!"

Friendship closes distances to let us see the real maps.



Danny Kwan writes. "I was born on 15 December 1935 in Singapore, the only child in the family. I was still a little boy when my parents moved to

Seremban, a little town in the State of Negri Sembilan, Malaya, some 300 kilometers north of Singapore. The earliest memory I had of my childhood was my first day in a little Chinese School, which also happened to be my last day in school since the first group of advanced Japanese soldiers landed in Malaya. During the 3 years and 8 months of Japanese occupation, I, like other children of my age attended a school where we learned to speak and write Japanese.

After the war, I found myself admitted into St. Paul's Institution, a missionary school which was established and run by the La Salle Christian Brothers. My admission was rather unusual — as if led by Divine help. One morning, I went to the school and walked into a classroom and sat on an unoccupied chair and desk at the back row in the classroom. By then, the class was already in session, and it was rather odd that the teacher did not even query my sudden presence. He must have thought that I had been duly registered and granted admission and assigned to his class and that happened to be late for class that morning I guessed that at the end of the day the teacher was having problem with his attendance record as he just could not account for that extra pupil in his class. How this problem was finally resolved is a mystery to me to this day! Anyway, it was in this school that I had my first taste of learning to read and write in English and where I remained till I completed my secondary education in 1954.

Due to financial constraint, I could not go for further study, and instead I opted to become a probationary school teacher in Singapore. After a year of that. I felt it rather routine and not challenging enough to my liking. Feeling restless, I happened to come across a Shell Company advertisement in the local newspaper for a position as a Sales Executive trainee. I went for an interview and got the job with a starting salary of 350 dollars a month!! I served the company for 33 years and held the position as Pan Malaysian Manager responsible for large companies accounts till I retired in 1988. Looking back it could be considered quite an accomplishment vis-a-vis my educational background, it could be considered quite an accomplishment vis-a-vis my educational background and having to compete with my fellow colleagues, almost all of them were degree holders.

I married Siow Su Lan, also known as Kim Lan, in July 1962 in Seremban. She came from a large family of nine — 5 daughters and 4 sons, and is number five among the siblings. She was born in Sua Belong, little village in close proximity to the resort town of Port Dickson. She studied in a Chinese School and later moved to Convent School in Seremban. After her marriage she wanted something to do to keep herself occupied. She took floristry courses and decided to open a florist shop in Penang. She stayed with that for 30 years before retirement.



Kim Lan, second from right, with some of her many siblings l. to r.: FangLan, the oldest, Lily, Mo-Li and Ching Hock.

We have a son, Tze-Liang, who was born on 30 March 1972. After his secondary education, he went to the United States in 1993 to further his study at the University of Rochester, where he obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in Mathematics and Economics. After this, his interest in taxation led him to study this subject and eventually received his degree of Master of Science in taxation from Fairleigh Dickinson University in 1998.

After working at Bloomberg in New York City for a year, he moved to Vancouver, Canada where he became a Senior Manager with Deloitte & Touche based in Vancouver.”



Looking back, Kim Lan and I can still remember vividly our first meeting with Claude, “A red-haired devil” (local terminology commonly used to describe Whites). Kim Lan also wondered why Mo-Li would be drawn to someone not of her race or age. She concluded that Claude must be a good man, and after many years of contact she began to find him a Gun Qin — a Chinese who can touch the heart and the feeling of another.

We always had a good laugh on the many incidents which he related to us about himself. Like an incident when he was travelling with a group of Japanese tourists on a coach tour. On the way, the tour bus made a short stop at the tourist spot. Instructions were given in Japanese when to come back to the coach to continue. Obviously Claude's Japanese was rusty! When he tried to locate the coach, it was no longer there. It had left with the rest of the Japanese, leaving Claude all alone in a strange country. How he eventually caught up with the run-away coach and retrieved his belongings could be entered in the Book of Records as a mini-miracle!

Another amusing incident he told us about was his active participation in aerobic class. We were told that when the class had dismissed and everyone had left, except Claude, lying on the floor, enjoying his early morning siesta, in the world of his own!



Now, on a more serious note, Kim Lan and I know that we could always count on his support, understanding and friendship, which we deeply appreciated and valued. We were extremely grateful for his personal help in getting Tze-Liang admitted into University of Rochester, and looked after him with visits and gifts during his stay in the States.

Claude was always a source of inspiration to us. There were times when we felt sad and mentally and emotionally distressful, Claude never failed to contact us by phone and letters to console us with his kind words of comfort and encouragement. He brought back some smiles into our hearts and helped us to heal our wounds and gave us the strength to carry on and enjoy our retirement as best as we can."



My name is Lubna, the wife of Mustafa Jumabhoy. Because Mo-Li is the sister of my very good friend Liza (Kim Lan), we'd see her a few times when she came to Penang. One time she showed up with Claude. The first time we met him was when they came to our house for dinner. Claude enjoyed the Pakistani food I had prepared, we enjoyed having them over, he was a gentle and very intelligent man.



Mustafa is a Dato, the Malaysian equivalent of knighthood. Lubna is a Datin.

His service to the government, merchants, tourism, education, manufacturing, vocational training, commerce and industry, his work with the Chamber of Commerce, the Rotary Club, and his many contributions to his charitable causes, etc. are just too mind-boggling to detail!!

Lubna served as Hon. Consul/Consul General of the Republic of France in Penang for over 24 years, and was given the title Chevalier de L'Ordre du Merite by the President of the Republic of France in 1992 .

to leave Arman wanted to go with them. *Babies seem to know the good people!*— Arman actually howled when Claude and MoLi left.

Claude used to send us his writings and we enjoyed reading them. I in turn sent him a poem that expressed my feelings in his regard. It's called *Friends Forever*:

When I went to New York in 1997, Claude and Mo-Li took me, with my son Saleem and his wife Dini, out to a lovely restaurant for dinner. We got to know Claude better, and really appreciate what a wonderful man he was. Mo-Li invited us for brunch to their lovely home in Tenafly; she had cooked a great meal, and even gave me the recipes. Claude took my daughter-in-law Dini, who had just graduated from the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan, around the house to show her his art collection and she was awed.

My next visit to New York was in 1999 when Claude and Mo-Li came over to my son's apartment to see our grand son Arman who was just over a year old. They played with him and when they were ready

Friends Forever

Written with a pen

Sealed with a kiss

If you are my friend,

Please answer this:

Are we friends or are we not?

You told me once, but I forgot.

So tell me now and tell me true,

So I can say, I am here for you.

Of all the friends I've ever met,

You're the one I won't forget.

And if I die before you do,

I'll go to Heaven

And wait for you.

Claude gave a revealing response to the poem: "As I grow older I begin to value friends even more than family. Family is tricky, — you have no choice — but with friends you have a choice and when it comes down to the bottom line you begin to realize that there are very few of them. If one is too critical, one ends up with a zero, so 'tolerance' is the solution if you do not wish to be isolated from human society.

We have numerous people in our 'circle' but we are aware of their weaknesses and shortcomings and while being aware of them we also accept them as part of the human condition. In my lifetime of experience I have found that when it comes to a test, very few friendships hold up, so it is better never to let it come to a test as one is in for disappointment and hurt.

But we are fortunate enough to have a few people in our life we trust implicitly and whom we can call indeed true friends, hoping that, if it came to a test, they will prove themselves." It seems that Claude's art was precisely never to let it come to a test.



My name is James Kwok Ho Mow (Miu). I was born in southern China in 1943. My family — my father, mother and an elder sister — migrated to Hong Kong in 1949. I have since been separated from my mother and sister when they returned to China in 1950 and were detained by the Communist government for being members of a property owning family.



I came to Australia in 1962 as a student. On completion of my nursing training, I worked as a nurse until 1972 when I ventured into the Chinese restaurant business. In 1984 I returned to nursing. A year later, whilst working full time, I studied psychology and gained my Masters degree in 1991.

In 1993 I was appointed by the Government Department of Community Services as Programme Director responsible for the psychology services such as counselling, assessment, behaviour management and training programmes for people with a developmental disability.

Upon completion of my degree in Master of Health Administration 1994, I was appointed by the Department of Community Services as Deputy Director of Nursing Service of Western Sydney Disability Services. Later, I was contracted to work as Chief Executive Officer of an institution for children with a developmental disability. In 1997 on completion of the above employment contract I returned to my former position as Deputy Director of Nursing Service.

I would regard my marriage to Lily as a wonderful accomplishment in my life. She is a mountain of strength and has given me immeasurable support, encouragement and solace during my student years and difficult times.



“I am Ashita Kampmark. I was Mo-li’s best friend all through high school. My husband, Karl, and I now live in Australia, so it was hard to keep up. But we will always remember Claude as a dynamic, amiable and extremely energetic personality, constantly engaged in some sort of project. Even if his innovative plastics business kept him very busy, he still

had time for traveling, writing, reading, swimming, skiing, etc., etc. His writings are an expressive testament to his great curiosity in other people and other cultures.



Claude had an extraordinary ability and talent to express himself both in writing and in speech and was blessed with a good sense of humour as well. Even the traumatic drowning incident he suffered did not affect the rhyming verses he wrote; his power of expression and a humorous take on life were still shining through these verses!

We remember getting letters from Mo-Li saying Claude had had a heart operation and now has “new blood flowing through his veins” (Claude’s words) or that he just had a hip replacement!, only to get news shortly after that that Claude and Mo-Li had just been on a skiing trip in the Alps! Then I would have this image in my mind of Claude skiing down the mountain slopes with his new body parts. Karl and I would marvel at his wonderful strength and courage! Claude was always game for an adventure, and we have many very fond memories of him.

Claude made the best *of* every moment in his life and he had a life enriched with many experiences. *We* remember him for his friendliness and magnanimity. May he rest in peace.

**Friendship is the Heart and
Soul of things.**

