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Heritage, Tourism and Engineering Legacy

By: Engr. Mah Soo, F.I.E.M., P.Eng.

Aged things of yesteryears could mean very much different to different people. Some could not wait to make them disappear at the end of their use-by dates, while others would treasure them as antique and heritage. Would Melaka remain as Malaysian's 'Bandaraya Bersejarah' if there are no more artifacts such as the A' Famosa fortress, the Red Stadthuys and the Proclamation of Independence Memorial? The legends of Hang Tuah and the other Hang brothers would also add mystery to attract tourists' attention.

Heritage is anything, inclusive of objects, structures, culture or values, which has been passed down over the years, either within families, social groups or nations and is meant as belongings to all. Hence, Badan Warisan Malaysia has a heavy responsibility to ensure our heritage is preserved to remind the future generations on the various stages in history that have evolved up to the stage of the beholder.

Similarities of overseas tourist attractions such as the Empire State Building in New York, Leaning Tower of Pisa, Sydney's Opera House, the Tower of London and theme parks such as Disneyland could also be found in Malaysia with the Petronas Twin Towers, Leaning Tower in Teluk Intan, Putrajaya International Convention Centre, the historical buildings in Melaka and Kuala Lumpur, Sunway Lagoon Theme Park and the 'City of Entertainment' at Genting Highlands. It is up to us how to market such jewels to the world at large.

The year of 2007 is just one month away and has been chosen as 'Visit Malaysia Year 2007'. To attract visitors from all over the world, we must be able to anticipate what could be their expectations. We could get some answers by asking ourselves on how we all got bitten by the travel bug. Armed with such insights, definite strategies could then be planned and implemented.

IEM could make inroads to the Ministry of Tourism and the Badan Warisan Malaysia through Y.B. Datuk' Donald Lim Siang Chai, Academician Dato' Lee Yee Cheong and Dato' Mohd. Annas bin Hj. Mohd. Nor to put in engineering facts on the above places of interests to make them more presentable, informative and appealing.

IEM has been embarking on the book project of 'Engineering Heritage in Malaysia' to record engineering feats and achievements, outstanding stewards in the engineering disciplines as well as the history of the IEM. Members of the IEM could make this book a success and legacy to the engineering profession by contributing anecdotes, photographs and other peripheries of interest pertaining to the engineering profession.

May I conclude by wishing all our Christian friends "Merry Christmas" and all our friends "Happy New Year". ■