

**Singapore HeritageFest 2009**  
**“Arte (factually) Speaking” Story-Writing Competition**  
**Shortlisted Entry (Lower Secondary Category)**



Contest ID: 164  
Name: Tan Ming Xia  
Gender: Female  
Age: 14-year-old  
NRIC: SXXXX464D  
Nationality: Singaporean  
School: Zhonghua Secondary School

Artefact: Traditional Games. Traditional Games Stamp Issue; Vanishing Trade - Batik Printing.  
Expo '86 Stamp Issue - Batik Printing

Museum: Singapore Philatelic Museum

Story of my Past

It was Racial Harmony Day and my children and grandchildren were at my house. I decided to show them the toys I played back then when I was a kid. They were toys that everyone, regardless of race, had fun playing. My grandchildren stared blankly at the toys. They thought that I had to be bored with no computers. Surprised by their thinking, I told them that these games taught me many valuable things. Many wondered what kind of life I led back then when I was a child just like them and so I began the story of my past...

When I was young, we lived in simple '*kampongs*'. Then, Singapore was slowly developing and progressing towards being a modern prosperous city. My father was a *batik* printer. He would make wonderful patterns on the *batik* which is like cloth. My mother was a housewife. As you can see, life was simple back then. We had no homework from school and quite a lot of spare time. With my parents being busy all the time, I spent most of my free time playing with my friends. We made toys and played them. The game of five stones was the most popular game amongst us children at that time. They were basically green beans in pyramid-shaped sewn bags. We would throw the five stones and see who could complete all the different levels of the game. It was played by randomly scattering the stones on the floor and throwing one stone up and catching it, before it falls, with the rest of the stones on the floor. It was an incredibly fun game and I was best at it. Other games like playing with marbles and spinning tops (*Gasing*) were fun as well. We also played *Chaptek*, which was something like a shuttlecock but with soft feathers, by kicking it into the air with our feet without letting it drop onto the ground.

These fun games were what kept our creativity alive and bonded all of us together. We had no electronic games and were still able to have fun. It taught us team spirit and tested our reflexes, coordination and agility. Anyone could play these games. Even though we were of different races, we all came together to play. We all shared a bond that developed through our games. The games became a part of us and we learned many things from them.

Life was simple back then, Singapore was not yet modern or high-tech, but the lives we led back then are experiences we will keep with us for a lifetime. And with that I ended my story. As my grandchildren looked at me with such wonder, I was filled with sweet happiness. They

got up, urging me to teach them the games we used to play. I smiled at them, and realised that the children now were not so different from the children then. All children from past or present are loving, energetic and ready to learn and play. All had the same eager look in their eyes and the beautiful soft smiles on their faces. Yes, the children are the country's king and one day, it will be their turn to take the lead. They will use their wonderful experiences and grow into fine adults, just like every generation does. It was time for me to share my joy with them so that they will blossom into great people and carry on these simple games that will shape them into what they will become.

(584 words)