

A Walk Down Changi Museum

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I had the chance to visit the Changi Museum as part of my secondary school Social Studies curriculum and the trip left a lasting impression. I remember vividly the intricate and inspiring murals drawn by the prisoners of war (POWs) during the Japanese Occupation in World War II (WWII). The many worn-out black and white photographs and torn yellowed letters tell the heart-rending stories of Changi Prison and its occupants, many of whom did not live to enjoy the days of peace.

More than a decade has gone by and I recently decided to revisit the site with my family. The serenity and tranquillity of the Changi chapel – a source of strength for the POWs in the dark days – is a stark contrast to the dreary Changi cell which held its occupants in a dark crowded space with little sustenance and poor sanitation.

For those interested in delving into the history of Singapore and WWII, the Changi Museum is a must-go. Let's not forget the sufferings of war and take for granted the peace and prosperity that we are enjoying now.

As the dreary dawn quietly breaks
POWs shuffled painfully in shackled legs
Things swirling around them dark and vague
Minds pondering how long it would take
For a divine being to come to their aid
And to leave behind all the suffering and aches

Under the sweltering hot sun they toiled
Their clothes all fully soiled
Enemies humiliating them so much till blood boiled
Hoping all their hideous plans get foiled
Why in the world should they get embroiled?
Their bright futures bleak and destroyed

Living quarters swarming with flies
Labouring day in and out like little mice
Stricken with diseases, they had no choice
This was certainly not blessing in disguise
Waking up to constant horrific cries
Life had sadly become a game of dice

In the little chapel they silently pray
Trying to regain their trust and faith
Waiting despondently for that fateful day
Where fear and desperation can be kept at bay
Reading letters from loved ones made their day
Yearning to go home come what may

Whoever doesn't want peace and harmony?
Too painful to recall the days of agony
Now we stand together in unity
Proud to forge a common identity
Let's not forget the past atrocities
And strive bravely for the betterment of humanity ♦

