

FACULTY ANNOUNCEMENT

8 July 2010

Celebrating the 150th Birthday of Singapore's Penal Code

Singapore's Penal Code, which is essentially the Indian Penal Code of 1860 (IPC), reached a very special milestone this year. Largely the work of Thomas Babington Macaulay, it was the first codification of criminal law in the British Empire, and is the longest serving criminal code in the common law world. Following its enactment, the IPC was adopted in other British colonies in South Asia.

To mark the 150th anniversary of this significant achievement in criminal law reform, a three-day symposium was held from 9th to 11th of June 2010 at the Faculty of Law, NUS. Organised by Professors Stanley Yeo '76 and Chan Wing Cheong from NUS, and Professor Barry Wright from Carleton University, Canada, the theme of the symposium was "A Model Indian Penal Code adhering to the Philosophy of Macaulay". There were 16 sessions where experts presented papers on various aspects of the Indian Penal Code. The experts comprised six academic law staff of NUS and nine specially invited international researchers from Australia, Canada, India, Malaysia and the United Kingdom.

Ashgate, a leading UK law publisher, will be producing a selection of symposium papers in a book to be entitled "Macaulay's Legacy of Criminal Law Codification and Challenges to Reform". The book will serve as a permanent acknowledgement of worth of the IPC and will stand as a coherent scholarly examination of that code and its legacy, one that promises to hold wide international appeal. It is expected to be published in early 2011.

On a local note, the symposium brought together for the first time, the authors of the well loved "red book", *Criminal Law in Malaysia and Singapore* (1989). Emeritus Professor Koh Kheng Lian '61, and Professors Chris Clarkson (Leicester University) and Neil Morgan (University of Western Australia) were pleasantly surprised when informed that their book, despite its (relative) age, was still a best seller in Malaysia.



