

# PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE 1950s


*Marjorie Doggett's Singapore Lee Fook Chee's Hong Kong*



Organised by

NG TENG FONG  
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION  
黃廷方慈善基金

 PHOTO HERITAGE  
The Photographic Heritage Foundation

 SINO GROUP  
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 五十周年  
ANNIVERSARY

Supported by

  
CONSULATE-GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE  
HONG KONG

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Ng Teng Fong Charitable Foundation and The Photographic Heritage Foundation are pleased to present this exhibition of photographs from the 1950s. The photos were taken by Marjorie Doggett in Singapore and by Lee Fook Chee in Hong Kong.

The exhibition links Singapore and Hong Kong – two of Asia's greatest port cities. In both places the 1950s were a crucible decade. For viewers today Marjorie Doggett's and Lee Fook Chee's photographs, taken over half a century ago, present vivid portraits of Singapore and Hong Kong then. We hope that you enjoy their images.





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Cover photo left:  
The Fullerton Building,  
seen from Clifford Pier  
in 1957.

Cover photo right:  
Quintessential Hong Kong  
in 1958.

This page left:  
Looking over Singapore's  
city and colonial precincts,  
with the Fullerton Building's  
roof in the middle right.

This page right:  
Central District in the mid-  
1950s, seen from above  
Magazine Gap Road and  
looking northwards across  
the harbour.



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## MARJORIE DOGGETT

BORN *in* ENGLAND  
PHOTOGRAPHER *of* SINGAPORE  
1921 – 2010

From 1952 to 1957, camera in hand, Marjorie Doggett roamed Singapore capturing for posterity the then colony's cityscapes and buildings with striking images and historical texts. Doggett's later book, *Characters of Light*, vividly captured 1950s Singapore, then on the cusp of great change. Marjorie Doggett saw the plans for that progress posed for the city's buildings, and thus recorded them in her photographs. Her 1957 publication is a classic photo book on Singapore – as this exhibition's images suggest.

Marjorie Doggett photos:  
© National Archives of Singapore





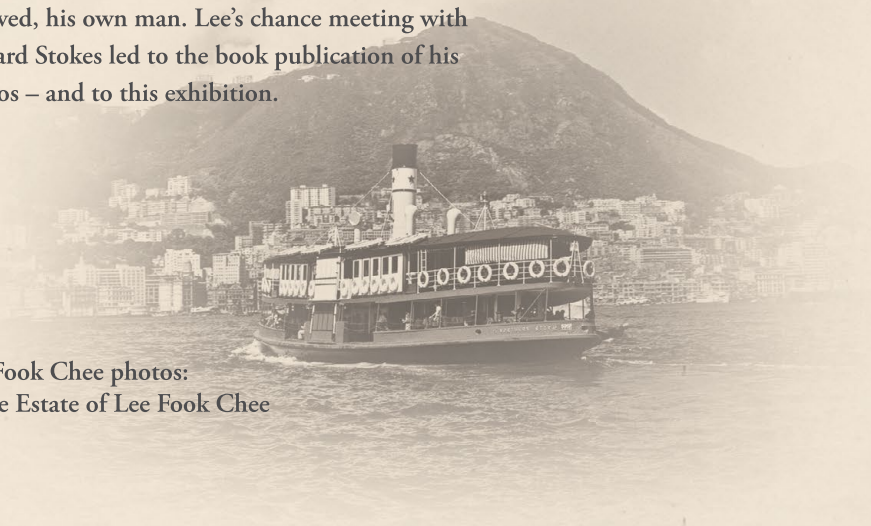
Lee Fook Chee's photos portray Hong Kong in the 1950s. His images, taken while he earned a tough living selling photographs to tourists, were almost all captured between 1954 and 1960. They form a time-capsule of that decade of great change. Throughout those years Lee Fook Chee, self-taught immigrant photographer, roamed Hong Kong, independent, resolved, his own man. Lee's chance meeting with Edward Stokes led to the book publication of his photos – and to this exhibition.

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## LEE FOOK CHEE

BORN *in* SINGAPORE  
PHOTOGRAPHER *of* HONG KONG  
1927 – 2012

Lee Fook Chee photos:  
©The Estate of Lee Fook Chee



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## TWO PHOTOGRAPHERS – TWO CITIES PARALLELS AND CONTRASTS

The exhibition's photographs are linked by their period, the 1950s. They were taken by two photographers, Marjorie Doggett and Lee Fook Chee. The two had some life parallels. As the books shown opposite note, their photos portrayed two cities with some similarities, Singapore and Hong Kong. Yet for both photographers and cities there were great contrasts.

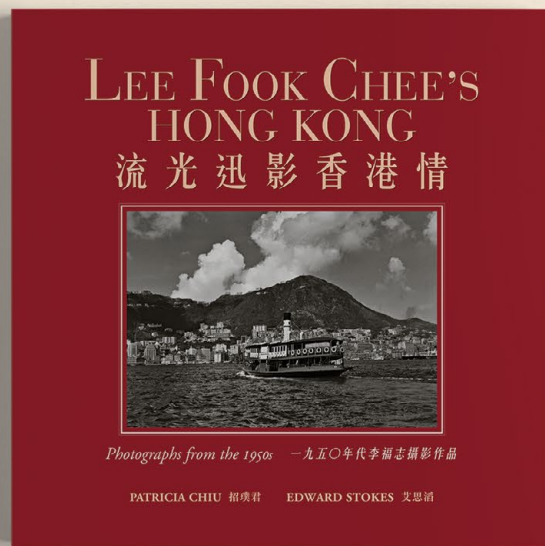
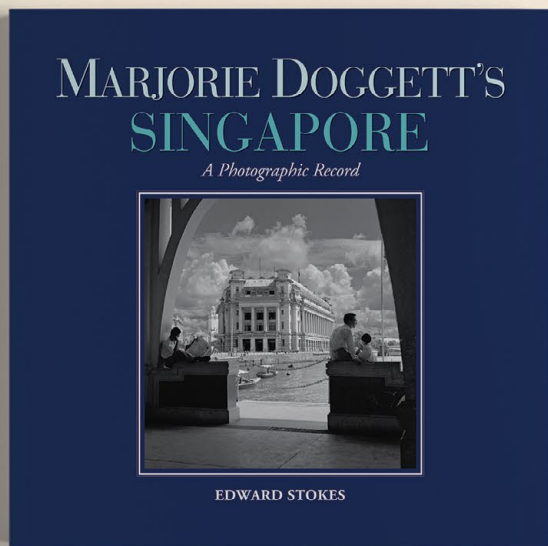
Marjorie Doggett and Lee Fook Chee had different aims. Although not art or documentary photographers, each created vivid records of Singapore and Hong Kong over six decades ago. In 1947, as young adults, they left their homelands. They lived out their entire lives in the cities they arrived in, Singapore and Hong Kong.

Yet their origins and futures were vastly different. The 1950s were a crucible decade for the cities. Singapore was moving towards a locally inspired and led future. Hong Kong was to see enormous economic transformation.

The exhibition team hope that the photos will spark visitors' interest in the cities today. Doggett and Lee captured the places they called home on the cusp of enormous change. How do their photographs resonate today? Where have we come from? What do their photos and their characters reflect – about each city, and perhaps about ourselves?

Edward Stokes  
Exhibition Curator  
The Photographic Heritage Foundation

Brochure Text:  
© The Photographic Heritage Foundation



The exhibition is based on the two books above.  
The books can be purchased at “QRs”



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**MARJORIE  
DOGGETT'S**  
*Singapore*

Lined with shophouses, the intersection of Cross and Amoy streets is seen here on a bright day. There are two and three storey shophouses. A Cantonese “black and white” amah walks to market and, along Amoy Street, hawkers have varied stalls. SUM BEE TAILOR announces, on its columns, “fashionable cut with fine workmanship”.





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## LEE FOOK CHEE'S *Hong Kong*

Des Voeux Road just west of Pedder Street. It is a summer midday, heat bouncing off the bitumen. A delivery man carries a lunch tray; rickshaws ply for trade; trams clatter past; and a tram inspector in “summer whites” looks past a large saloon. The Siberian Fur Store is on the right.

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**MARJORIE  
DOGGETT'S**  
*Singapore*

The octagonal Telok Ayer Market, or Lau Pa Sat, stands amidst the low, surrounding shophouses. The market – built on reclaimed land in Telok Ayer Bay and competed in 1894 with cast iron columns from Glasgow – replaced an earlier structure. This view was taken from the newly completed Asia Insurance Building.





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## LEE FOOK CHEE'S *Hong Kong*

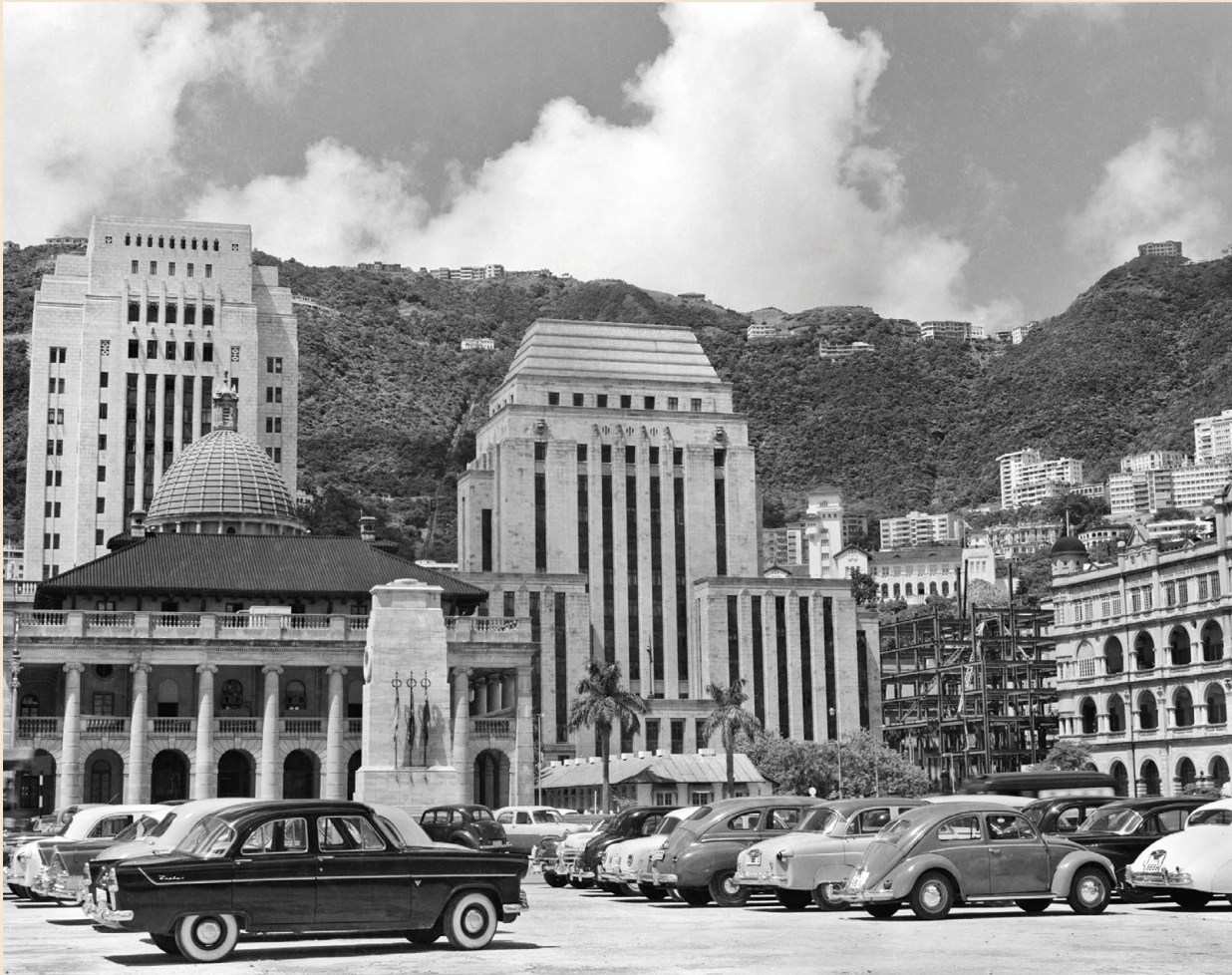
Hennessy Road and Johnston Road, beside the triangular Chinese Methodist Church. A Wan Chai landmark, it was completed in 1936 in the style of the Chinese Republican period, with Western and Chinese features. Trams had two classes: the top deck and breezes for First – and the bottom, crowded with people, for Second.

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**MARJORIE  
DOGGETT'S**  
*Singapore*

Taken from the Victoria Concert Hall this photo looks past the Dalhousie Obelisk to the colonnaded Fullerton Building. The same view today shows that Doggett was on the upper story of the Victoria Concert Hall. The scene takes in the Singapore River, the Fullerton Building and, at the right, the Bank of China Building.





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## LEE FOOK CHEE'S *Hong Kong*

Vehicles on the Central Reclamation, with the Chartered Bank (right background) seen under redevelopment. The middle and later 1950s saw rapid urban development.

Using vacant space while the landfill settles, cars are parked on this reclamation completed in 1957. Lee Fook Chee was standing near the site of the future City Hall High Block.

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## MARJORIE DOGGETT'S *Singapore*

One of the most charming buildings in the colonial precinct, St Joseph's Institution is seen here under overcast light. Originating from the nineteenth century, St Joseph's was one of Singapore's leading schools. By the 1985 reissue of Marjorie Doggett's *Characters of Light*, St Joseph's was the only remaining school in the area.





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## LEE FOOK CHEE'S *Hong Kong*

The Tsim Sha Tsui bus station between the Star Ferry Pier and the “KCR” terminus. The clock says it is 6.25. It must be the late afternoon and in summer – since the shadows point eastwards and it is still light. Behind the “KMB” buses stands the red-brick, neo-classical railway terminus.

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**MARJORIE  
DOGGETT'S**  
*Singapore*

Clifford Pier seen from  
the Asia Insurance Building.  
Towering cumulonimbus  
clouds rise over Singapore's  
south-eastern coast.  
Completed in 1933,  
Clifford Pier is seen in the  
foreground with small boats  
and launches. Other craft  
are moored just offshore  
to the right. Its counterpart  
central harbour pier in  
Hong Kong was Blake's Pier.





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## LEE FOOK CHEE'S *Hong Kong*

A cargo junk crosses the western harbour, a stiff late-afternoon breeze filling its reefed sail. Lee Fook Chee generally photographed in midday light. But here, looking west into late afternoon light, he captured this junk framed by the backlight. The junk is perhaps heading to Sheung Wan, where many cargo junks tied up.

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MARJORIE  
DOGGETT'S  
*Singapore*

At Robertson Quay a *tongkang* – or large wooden lighter – waits to depart for the inner harbour or, perhaps, to offload its cargo. Marjorie Doggett composed her photo from the side, to accentuate, beyond coiled rope, the “leading lines” of two poles and a plank. The background godowns were well-known landmarks.





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## LEE FOOK CHEE'S *Hong Kong*

Along the Western harbour rice is offloaded from sampans and junks, and local boys have some summer fun.

The photo was taken near Wing Lok Street. Then as now, rice importers and wholesalers dominated the area.

The swimming boys epitomize the simple pleasures of the times when consumer goods and recreational facilities were rare.

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**MARJORIE  
DOGGETT'S**  
*Singapore*

The inner roads – or anchorage – of Singapore's port, seen here with varied river, inshore or coastal craft and vessels. Long before the 1950s, the main port had been moved to docks to the west of the Singapore River. However, the inner roads, lying off Collyer Quay, remained an anchorage for small vessels.





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## LEE FOOK CHEE'S *Hong Kong*

This photo captures the details of a middle-sized fishing junk. The vessel is a Guangdong-style fishing junk with a high stern and low bow; well-balanced main, mizzen and fore sails, each with bamboo battens; a centreboard, raised here; deck winches for handling the sails and nets; and, in the squared-off bow, anchors.

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**MARJORIE  
DOGGETT'S**  
*Singapore*

A corner shop displays paper lanterns for worshipping Kai Kok, other deities and for thanksgiving rituals. The photo was taken at the intersection of Circular Road and South Bridge Road. Two hard-saddle, workaday bicycles stand in the foreground. The background shophouse's ramshackle rooftop structure speaks of Chinatown's then overcrowded dwellings.





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## LEE FOOK CHEE'S *Hong Kong*

Rickshaw men hauling rattan and wicker baskets with produce to market. As the long shadows indicate, Lee captured the rickshaw pullers in either the early morning or late afternoon. Rickshaw men, as here, balanced their loads so that their weight descended mostly through the axles. Nevertheless, it was gruelling work.



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Exhibition Period: 1 April – 30 May 2021 | 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Venue: Unit 305, Sino Plaza, Causeway Bay

**Free Admission**


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