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THE HIDDEN GEMS IN PERPUSTAKAAN NEGARA MALAYSIA

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Abstract:

Rare books are special collections that hold historical, cultural, and intellectual value. This national intellectual heritage remains intricate in any institution and prohibits collections from accessing rather than other general collections. But the evolution of digital technology has made this collection available throughout the world 24/7. Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia carefully shifted to a broad perspective by moving forward on a challenging path from time to time. It includes strategic planning in the acquisition, preservation and conservation, digitisation, and promotion of the collections so they can provide information and materials to the patrons without any hassle. There are three objectives of establishing the Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia: making available for the use of present and future generations a national collection of library resources, facilitating nationwide access to library resources available within the country and abroad, and lastly, providing leadership on matters of libraries. "Koleksi Nadir" is referred to rare collections, and these collections have been classified as one of the special collections in the Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia. The values of these collections are beyond dollars and cents. It is proof of the Malaysian heritage and provides the society with knowledge and information that are beyond what is already known by the public. The collections are precious and access to this information can broaden new perspectives from many angles.

Keywords:

Rare Collections, Special Collections, Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, Collection Management, Preservation, Digitization

Introduction

The Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia (PNM) also known as National Library of Malaysia (NLM), is one of the largest repositories for national intellectual heritage. Their goal is to provide intellectual access to materials and services to their respective community. According to the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) (1997), national libraries are perceived as the “*custodian of the nation’s intellectual heritage, thus providing organisation, access to and preservation of the national imprint in all media*”. The purpose of its existence also has emerged from performing an essential traditional role of acquiring, storing, and preserving the national heritage to a greater dimension—the importance of disseminating information without any barriers.

Written manuscripts normally existed in a single copy. Immersion (2002) states, “unlike the books, journals and other resources typically collected by libraries, archives and manuscripts typically do not exist in multiple copies”. It requires special techniques based on their distinctive nature. Managing manuscripts are crucial in the development of a new era nowadays. Keeping up on the right track to ensure that the manuscripts are safely kept and being preserved is such a big deal. With the rapid changes in technology, manuscripts are left so far behind. Though manuscripts are known as a valuable heritage, some parties failed to see manuscripts as important as other records that they had today. It is also known as inactive records that are no longer needed, yet, manuscripts still have the historical value that needs to be protected for as long as it still valuable (Sabariah et al. 2011)

Manuscript and archives are the terms that are often used interchangeably. However, manuscript requires special handling due to their rare condition. Even though many people could not see manuscripts as a valuable heritage, the longevity of those manuscripts depends on the person who does the preservation or manages those manuscripts. One of the important aspects to consider while managing those manuscripts is their storage condition (Sabariah et al. 2011). According to Jimerson (2003), saving manuscripts and archives commits a repository to many years of management and storage, including arrangement, description, preservation, reference, and access.

Rare Collections

A rare book is defined as a book distinguished by its early printing date, its limited issue, the special character of the edition or binding, or its historical interest. Books and other types of rare collections are rare because they are unique or irreplaceable, including limited editions, works valuable because of the content and private press books, important association copies, and important works autographed by their authors, illustrators, or printers that are significant first editions and editions of special note from the coloniser and merchant and also books of high monetary value or high-quality facsimile editions of important books (Nordiana, Norhidayah & Faddliza, 2016).

PNM has started acquiring rare books since the 1970s, and the number of its collections is growing like an avalanche. It was first built through materials donated by Dorothy Nixon, a former Kuala Lumpur Book Club Librarian. Among other institutions that also contributed to collections were the Melaka State Public Library Corporation, Henry Gurney Memorial Library, and the Johor Bahru Corporation Library. In June 1982, YBhg. Dato’ Hashim Sam Abdul Latiff, the Director-General of the National Library of Malaysia, had brought back

1,652 copies from the Malaysian Embassy in London, most of which were the rare Malaysian collections (Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, 2000).

Rare collections exist to serve the needs of its patrons, especially the respected researchers. Demand for old and rare books is small but infinitesimal. The way it meets those needs is rarely self-evident, where it must be constantly demonstrated. The interest of the patrons may vary from the topic itself, contents, maps and illustrations, the paper used in printing books, and the language used. The great majority of rare books are not association copies or incunabula but instead are valued because they contain the earliest printing of important texts, such as a valued literary work.

Definition of Rare Collections

According to Kilmarx (2020), the term rare books is quite complex to be defined. It depends on how the institution determines whether a book is rare due to its rarity, uniqueness, condition, age, and format. As in PNM, rare books can be defined as *'collections comprise material published on/before the 1950s, and/or difficult to find, the issue runs out of print or no longer available in the market. The heritage of knowledge loads important information relating to the history of early socio-cultural, economic, language, religion, belief, political in Malay Land covering Malay Word, the Straits Settlements, Federation of Malaya and the Malay Archipelago'* (PNM, 2017). It can be said that rare books in PNM focus on the history of the Malay Peninsula, the king and sultanate of Malay decedents, language, geography, literature, religion, and many more.

While the National Library of Australia has developed rare materials from the United Kingdom and Europe since the 18th century, the library focuses on materials from Australia and Asia. Today, about 55,000 of their rare materials were published before 1801. (Haddad, 2000).

While on the other hand, Torre (2008) said that even if the rare books are priceless, they would not be valuable and profitable until it is treasured and used by the patrons. It means that rare books must be held, referred and known by the community. And this is what PNM is doing, even though there are still many challenges that need to be overcome from time to time. As this collection is identified as one of the national intellectual heritages that need to be preserved and conserved, it is a big responsibility for PNM to embrace the future and preserve our history.

The Hidden Gems

These hidden gems are placed under Special Collections, Malaysiana Reference Center, PNM. It is managed separately due to the preservation needs and accesses the collections are different from the general collections. Until December 2022, PNM holds more than 4,883 titles written in Malay, English, Arabic, Jawi, Latin, Mandarin, Hokkien, and Japanese. Below is the total number of rare collections categorised by subject:

Table 1: Total Number Of Rare Collections Categorized By Subjects

Subject	Titles
General	100
Philosophy and Psychology	19
Religion	366
Social Sciences	1,116
Language	689
Science	184
Technology	223
Arts and Recreation	105
Literature	890
History and Geography	1,191
Total	4,883

Rare collections in PNM come in various sources such as in the form of books, maps, journals, reports, letters, acts, magazines, newspaper cuttings, photographs, and others. These forms of knowledge are very valuable and difficult to obtain in the market, and it is sold at a high price because of their uniqueness and rarity. Usually, PNM obtained this rare collection through purchasing or gifts, and it covers a wide range of fields, for example:

History

'The golden chersonese and the way thither by Isabella L. Bird was published in London in 1883. The size of this book is 21 cm x 13.5 cm, and it contains 436 pages. This book tells the story of the last expedition of Isabella Bird (1831–1904) to the East. She was one of the famous British women travellers. She was also the first woman admitted to the Royal Geographical Society. It gives a detailed description of her travels and adventures in Malaya. It described stores of culture, population, geography, and wildlife. There are also pictorial illustrations and a map of Malaya.

Language

The oldest collection that PNM has is 'Dictionarivm Malaico-Latinvm & Latino-Malaicvm' compiled by Davidis Haex. It was published in 1631 in Rome by Typis & impensis Sac. Congr. de Propag. Fide. The size of this bilingual dictionary is 21 cm x 15.5 cm, and it contains 77 pages. It is among the earliest bilingual dictionaries containing Malay to Latin and Latin translations to Malay. The publication of this dictionary sparked from the experience of foreigners who sailed to the Nusantara region centuries ago. It is also shown that the Malay language was used as the lingua franca during the 16th century.

Literature

While another popular collection and demand by researchers is the book entitled 'Malay sonnets = pantun Melayu', which is an English version by A. W. Hamilton published in 1932 at Singapore. Pantun naturally suited the way of thinking of the Malays, and this uniqueness has caught the imagination of many scholars, translators, and historians, especially in literature, and A.W. Hamilton is one of them. The size of this book is 17 cm x 11.5 cm, and it contains 33 pages.

Ethnography

‘Exploration of Mount Kina Balu, North Borneo’ published in London in 1893 is a book written by John Whitehead. The writer is an English explorer, naturalist, and collector of bird specimens. He has spent nearly four years in Mount Kinabalu to collect new species of mammals, birds, reptiles, and insects. Besides visiting North Borneo, he also stayed for a while in Java and Palawan and made an expedition to the state of Melaka from 1885 to 1888. The book also contains a variety of colourful illustrations of the diversity of bird species, places, and local communities that he had encountered. The size of this book is 36 cm x 26 cm, and it contains 320 pages.

Religious

The book entitled ‘India and Malaysia’ was published in Cincinnati in 1892. The writer J. M. Thoburn (1836-1922) is the first Methodist preacher who went to India in 1856 and Malaysia around 1888. He recounts his experience of preaching for 30 years in India and Malaysia in detail in this book. His writings also touch on aspects of geography, culture, religion, and language of the local community. The size of this book is 23 cm x 16.5 cm, and it contains 562 pages. It also includes pictures of the local community he found during his stay in India, Burma, and Malaysia. It is one of the earliest books published around the 18th century that has stated the name of ‘Malaysia’ in the book.

Hikayat

Hikayat is created from ancient literature, and usually, it comes without the author’s name and the date it was written. The story includes myths and legends. For example, one of the *hikayat* stories available in NLM entitled ‘De pelandoek djinaka of het guitige dwerghert: naar een ander Maleisch handschrift voor de pers bewerkt’ published in Leiden on 1893. This book is written in Jawi and introduced in Dutch. *Hikajat Pelandoek Djinaka*, also known as *Cerita Sang Kancil*, is one of the oldest Malay *hikayat* and known since the 18th century. It is a story where a moth is the main character, and it shows how it uses wisdom and tricks to gain strength to defeat all the beasts so he will be able to be a chief in the woods. The size of this book is 20 cm x 13.5 cm, and it contains 94 pages.

Selection And Acquisition

To select, build and manage rare collections must follow the institution’s mission and interest, budget allocation, history of the collections, and patrons’ needs. According to Elder, N.J., et al. (1990), any collection department is the systematic intellectual exercise of defining what a library will acquire library materials to fulfil its mission or strategic planning. Collection Development Division is responsible for selecting and acquiring any forms of materials for rare collections in PNM, including rarity, scarcity, format, physical condition, age, market value, historical and cultural significance, outreach, and research value. The procurement and assessment process for rare collection must go through several difficult phases as it is more focused on tracking, which involves researching and reviewing catalogues of publishers or suppliers of antiquarian books, auction agencies, private individuals, web archiving activities, donations by individuals or institutions as well as the procurement of microscopies from institutions identified as having Malaysian collections such as the British Library.

Once the materials have been selected, the Evaluation Committee will further discuss which materials should be obtained or meet the criteria. Those materials will be carefully reviewed by the committee for approval and can be returned if it is not sufficient in terms of quality or does not meet any subject interest for the library. The selection and price of rare materials are based on rarity, uniqueness, age, historical value, and physical conditions.

Preservation And Conservation

Paper has been produced for more than 2,000 years. It started with writing on the cave walls, papyrus, vellum, and tree bark. According to Cantavalle, S. (2019):

“The history of paper has mirrored the evolution of human society over the centuries: from the dissemination of scientific and philosophical knowledge to the spread of education right up to the creation of the kind of political and historical consciousness which gave birth of the modern nation-state”.

Imagine the age of the paper itself in the rare collection is almost 400 years, and hence, it is essential to give great care to the collections. The problems that these collections usually face is torn, brittle, acidity, and discolour. The Preservation Department is responsible for conserving PNM’s collections through preservation, binding, and repair (Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, 2019). The staff is often called ‘Dr. Buku’, where they are all are well-trained in preserving the collections. The preservation and conservation are all done in-house by following international standard practices.

The preservation process will go through a few methods which incorporate preservatives and elimination. The preservative method utilises specialised techniques while restoring the materials close to their original form. At the same time, elimination is the method of raising the alkali value of a paper to a minimum level of 7.0pH to help its preservation. Besides that, the fumigation process will also be done every year to prevent any destructive agents.

On the other hand, to ensure the collection is maintained and long-lasting is by monitor the temperature and humidity of the stack room regularly. High temperature and low humidity lead to mould, while low humidity can cause the paper to become brittle. The room is equipped with a dehumidifier to control the humidity using thermohygrograph. It controls the temperature and humidity, while an air purifier or ioniser is used to trap dust. The silica gels are also placed on each rack to prevent the formation of moisture excess. Hence, it is important to maintain the stack room with an ideal temperature between 18 °C - 23 °C and humidity control between 50% RH - 55% RH. (RH – relative humidity).

Overall, long-term preservation for this collection is obligatory due to its fragility. The librarian is responsible for closely monitoring and maintaining their collections for a long-term period regardless of any format. Understanding the issues and management practices that indicate preservation in decision-making is crucial to running effective library preservation and conservation process in any institution.

Digitisation

The growing of paperless documents nowadays requires each of the national treasures to be kept in digital formats to make them available for storage and retrieval. Digitisation is one of the methods of conversion into any form, whether into text photographs with electronic

devices such as a scanner to process, store and transmit the information to make them available through digital circuits or networks. Zuraidah (2007) stated that digitisation initiatives focus on selecting, collecting, transforming from analogue to digital, storage and organisation of information in digital form, and making it available for searching, retrieval, and processing via communication networks.

Lee (2001) stated that digitisation is the conversion of an analogue signal or code into digital signal or code". He further defined digitisation as the "conversion of analogue media to digital form". At the same time, Nasr (2002) defines digitisation as electronically scanning and converting a physical object into a digital image. An image of a photograph, a letter, an oral transcript, or any other unique physical item is converted into a digital format that a computer can read. Once digitised, these images can be manipulated, sized, and enriched by a computer with software specific to this purpose and made ready for printing or mounting alone.

The advent of information technology today introduces new preservation requirements. Electronic information is the easiest way to transfer and preserve the information contained in the artefact without any loss or damage. The ultimate goal of digitisation is to make information can be accessed and ensure its long-term survival and also be able to reach a worldwide audience. Thus, it is important for the institution to strategically plan on identifying, collecting, preserving, and exposing their materials. It ensures the collections are well preserved for current and future use.

It proves that digitisation carries a lot of interest and opportunities to the institutions, including claiming the ownership of content and the increasing number of debated explanations (Prochasha, A., 2009). Exposing this hidden gem is one of the PNM initiatives to ensure the collections meet the patrons' needs globally 24/7. It includes national collections, rare collections, personal collections, Malay manuscripts, newspapers, magazines, microfilms, and department publications' collections. Digital Content Division handles the digitisation in PNM, where patrons can access these collections through PNM MyRepositori's website. Below is the main web page for PNM MyRepositori.

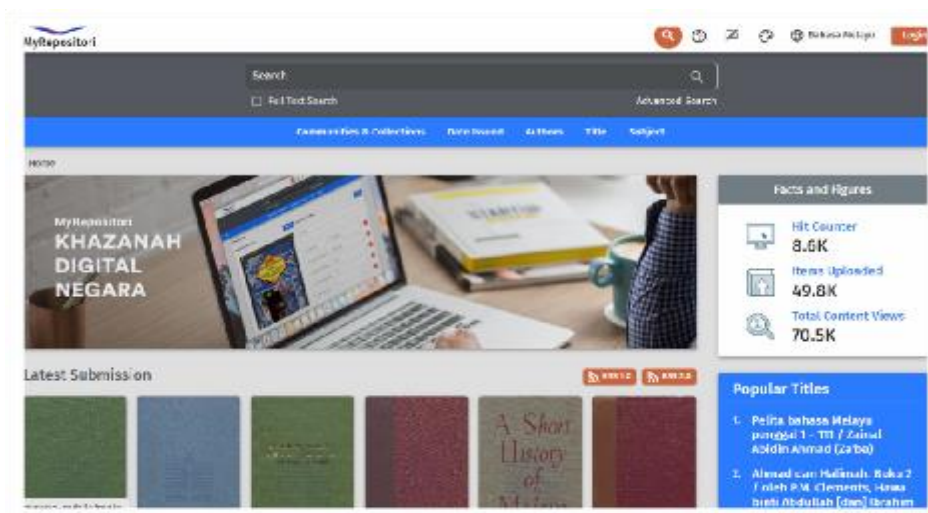


Figure 1: The Main Web Page For PNM MyRepositori

The digitisation project for rare collections was started in 2002, and until December 2021, the rare cumulative collections that have been digitised are 3,350 titles. It includes books, photographs, maps, journals, magazines, and newspapers. This project is included in-house and outsourced. For in-house, around 100 to 130 titles of rare collections will be sent to Digital Content Division to digitise each year. While outsourcing depends on the budget allocated for each project.

U-Pustaka Development Project as a National Information Hub

PNM has developed MyRepositori under the 11th Malaysia Plan, and the project implementation is from December 14, 2017, until December 13, 2019. This project aims to create a knowledgeable society-based economy using digital library services. Hence, patrons will be able to receive digital library services through one information portal without boundaries of time and place. Among the digitisation policies and guidelines are:

- a) Collections that have historical, heritage, and cultural value;
- b) High demand collections;
- c) Limited collections due to physical condition, high value or difficult to obtain; and
- d) Selected titles for exhibitions purpose.

This digitisation project involves personal collections, rare collections, Malay manuscripts, national collections, department publications' collections, and microfilm (newspaper). Below is the number of titles that have been digitised for each collection under this project until December 2022:

Table 2: Cumulative Statistics Of Digitised Collections

No.	Collections	No. of Titles
1	Personal collections	5,376
2	Rare collections	3,713
3	Malay manuscripts	3,718
4	National collections	5,749
5	Microfilm (newspaper)	13,920 rolls
Total		32,476

Policies Or Acts That Related To Rare Collection

PNM has its acts and rules based on the Laws of Malaysia towards its collections (Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, 2020). These acts and rules of PNM are:

- (a) Act 80 - National Library Act 1972 (Incorporating all amendments up to January 1 2006)
- (b) Act 331 - Deposit of Library Material Act 1986
- (c) P.U. (A) 222 - National Library (Fees and Fines) (Amendment) Regulations 2015
- (d) P.U. (A) 294 - Rules of National Library (Amendment) 1993
- (e) P.U. (A) 365 - Rules of National Library 1997

While the policy that is very common to the rare collections in PNM are:

PNM/DS/19 - Special Collections Policy

This policy is to fulfill the purpose of PNM based on National Library Act (Amendment) 1987, Part II, Section 3 and fulfill the objective of National Regulation for Library and Information Service in giving an excellent contribution to the country's development, to make PNM as a center of information system, and function as Malaysiana Information Centre of Excellence.

According to PNM/DS/01 - Malaysiana Policy (Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, 2020), a special collection is a collection of library sources which include rare collections, personal collections, ephemeral collections (brochure, stamp, first-day correspondence, postcard, badge, etc.), PNM archive's collection and other collections of materials as determined by the Director-General.

Due to its value and rarity, the special collections are kept as a closed access collection. The collections are stored in a special room and the user needs to get permission to refer them by filling out a request form obtained from the duty officer. These collections include rare collection, individual collection, PNM's archive collection, and Classified Collections (Illegal/Restricted/Confidential).

PNM/DS/08 - Conservation And Preservation Of Library Collection Policy

This policy ensures the conservation and preservation of the library sources at an optimum level due since it reflects the national treasury of intellectual heritage, literature, and culture.

The activities that relate to the conservation and preservation of library collections are as below:

Table 3: Activities That Relate To The Conservation And Preservation Of Library Collections

a) Maintenance and security of library resources	Precautionary measures should be taken so that library resources are not easily damaged. This activity involves monitoring the security and care of library resources as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that the equipment used to preserve the library collections is monitored and maintained in an organised manner. - Ensure the equipment/materials used to clean the storage shelves will not harm the library collections. - Ensure that maintenance and periodic inspections are carried out 4 times a year for printed materials and 6 times a year for non-printed materials. - Prepare an inspection report of scheduled visits for actions to improve the preservation of library collections.
a) Exhibition	A security control measures of library collections from damage when used for exhibitions in terms of:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that the library collections on display are handled with care. - Ensure the materials are used to display the library collections such as board, tape, the paper using high quality and acid-free equipment. - Ensure the environmental conditions of the exhibition space have appropriate air-conditioning and air circulation. - Minimise exposure of exhibits to light and illumination (light reflection).
b) Security and disaster	<p>The collection control security measures are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide a security control system for library collections from loss or theft. - Provide appropriate adequate fire prevention equipment in the storage space.
c) Preservatives	<p>The preservative process involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carry out fumigation process before the library collection is repaired. - Use appropriate treatment techniques that will not affect the original form of the materials. - Carry out an extinction process for collections with high acid content. - Use acid-free materials for preservation.
d) Binding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using an appropriate technique and quality binding - Maintain the original form of binding. - Retain the original page, especially rare collection. - Standardise the colour and original material. - Using a high standard of binding.
e) Digital Collection Management	<p>Digital collection management is divided into two (2), which are:</p> <p>i. Physical method</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The collections will be centralised for the purpose of temperature and humidity control so that it is always in good condition as well as regular monitoring. <p>ii. Digital method</p> <p>Stored in digital storage with the standardised format and ensured access control and security are considered. Data storage uses the following formats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Image data - Tagg Image Format File (.tiff) - Document Data - Portable Document Format (.pdf) - Audio Data - Wave Audio File Format (.wav) - Data Video - Accelerated Mobile Page (.amp)

f) Microfilm	This process involves: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A quality copying technique. - Determine an adequate number of copies. - Using high-quality film.
g) Storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prevent dust, food, drink, and other pollution. - Provide a good location for storing materials. such as keep away from sunlight, magnetic, and electricity. - Provide storage place that is made from wood or non-magnetic forelectronic materials. - Use the right shelf for the materials. - Master microfilm collection should store outside.
h) Reading room	An open space for users to access and refer to library resources. The space must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Temperature of the space between 18 °C - 23 °C. and humidity 50% RH - 55% RH. - The space must always clean.
i) Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determine the use of lamplight that is not hot and free from ultraviolet. - Determine the low and uniform warmth, including no damage to the materials. - The storage space of manuscripts, rare collections, National collections, and audio-visuals should be dark when not in use.
j) Pest agents	Ensure the environment is free from pest agents as follow: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Termites, moths, cockroaches, mice, etc. - Spores, mould, mildew.

PNM/DS/19 - Special Collections Policy

This policy was established for fulfilling the functions of the National Library based on Act 80 - National Library Act 1972 (Incorporating all amendments up to 1 January 2006) Part II, Section 3 which are to provide library resources for today and tomorrow's generation at the national level, to facilitate library resources to nationwide, and provide leadership related with the library. This regulation is used to manage and provide reference services of special collections for research and preservation purposes. These special collections policies include all activities relating to management and services of Special Collections in the National Library of Malaysia such as identifying, appraisal, selection, acquisition, documentation, services, maintenance, conservation, and promotion (National Library of Malaysia, 2010).

PNM/DS/24 - Digitisation Of Library Collection Policy

This policy is in line with PNM's mission which is to improve the delivery of library services through ICT. It also ensures all digital content can be accessed and preserved as a national heritage collection. (Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, 2020. Thus,

digitisation of the library resources introduces new modes of use, enables much wider potential users, and gives new means of viewing our cultural heritage with a higher degree of clarity and in a much more compact structure (Byamugisha, 2009).

This policy also stated that the library must have a strategic plan to digitise the library collection each year. Criteria of selection materials for digitising process including books, manuscripts, rare collection, newspapers, journals, audio and video recording, photos/pictures, organisation publications, and other materials that support on services and development of digital content:

- a) Materials that have historical, heritage, and cultural values.
- b) Materials special collection.
- c) Materials that have high demand.
- d) Materials that are selected for publication or exhibition activity.
- e) Materials that had expired date copyright or got written permission for digitalisation.
- f) Materials that are limited due to old physical condition, high values, and difficulty to acquire.
- g) Materials that did not know their existence or were not used can be digitalized by the library as a promotional means of increasing the users' use it.

PNM/DS/25 - Collection Development Policy

This policy covers procurement, documentation, and maintenance of various reading materials whether in the form of knowledge, literature, and creative works published or unpublished, in various formats according to the latest update (Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, 2020).

According to this policy, rare collections are:

- i. Malaysian printed materials over 50 years that is related with Malaysia including Straits Settlements, Malaya, Federation of Malaya, Malay Archipelago, and the Malay world;
- ii. Material which no longer published, cannot be found or is hard to find on the market and offered for sale at a high price; and
- iii. Old publications related to Malaysiana by the author and local or foreign researchers either published locally or abroad in various languages.

Promotion

Rare collections are often seen as a terrifying place, where there are a lot of rules and regulations that need to be bound with. Accessing the collections are also quite a hurdle. The collections are kept in the stack room so that if the patrons want to access the book, they need to search in the Web OPAC and fill-up the form. Therefore, marketing is crucial to promote the collections and services effectively.

The value of these collections depends on how the institutions can demonstrate and connect their users. Once the organisation fulfills its patron's demand, these collections will shift

from ‘special’ to ‘valuable’ (Carter, 2012). There are a few approaches on how PNM promote their hidden gems, which are:

‘Kiosk Digital’

PNM has taken the initiative to include most of the digitised collections in the ‘Kiosk Digital’ machine. The patrons can browse the collections through the machine as they search for the books on the shelves and hold the books. When there is an outreach program, this machine will be brought together so they will not have to bring along the original/replica of the book, especially for rare collections.



Figure 2: ‘Kiosk Digital’ Machine

Social Media

Social media is the best platform to share information and build awareness among the community. According to MacCallum (2015), 70% of libraries worldwide use social media platforms to promote their services and collections. There is a study where social media platforms have a large effect on the business interacting with their target customers and marketing their services and products (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010)—promoting rare collections through social media’s PNM such as in Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and Tik Tok is one of the best marketing strategies for how a library can move forward and gain engagement from the community and vice versa. Even though there is a concern about this strategy, this is also the best approach to offer and get to know the demand of the patrons.

Annotated Catalogue

Another method to attract patrons to know the collections is publishing a catalogue. PNM has been published personal and rare collections annotated catalogue since 2006. It consists of selected resources with a short abstract of the collections. It is printed in colour with illustrations to attract the patrons to read. Hence, this will gain the patron’s attention, allowing them to choose over the competing services effectively.

Outreach programs

Outreach programs to other institutions can be useful too. This kind of promotion must be done strategically as this is one of the best methods that can bring prominence to the collections. Long before COVID-19 hits us, PNM has been actively promoting its collections and services every month to the community throughout Malaysia and internationally. The exhibition has been done at conferences or events in universities, colleges, schools, or government/private agencies. For example, every year, PNM will be participating in Kuala Lumpur International Book Fair (KLIBF) at Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC). Other programs or exhibitions that PNM has participated in are the 84th World Library and Information Congress in Kuala Lumpur (2018), Putrajaya International Islamic Arts & Culture Festival (2019), 9th A-LIEP Conference (2019), Library Attack (2020), and many more. It is one of the biggest opportunities for PNM to promote these hidden gems so that the community knows the existence of these collections.

Rare Collections Statistics

Sometimes the special collections division serves as a miniature representation of the full library. It typically has a reading room and service station in addition to a collection of published literature and historical documents. Although the special collections area may be quiet or solemn in appearance, it is also a source of pride and enjoyment because it houses the library's treasures and requires a great lot of specialised knowledge and care. Special collections maintain many criteria that are common to other libraries and archives, but they are also where unique collections can be found. It holds specific book and resource collections, as well as archives that are "special" to one institution. Some are special, some are uncommon, and all are kept for reasons specific to a particular library or institutions.

Same goes with the patrons who wants to refer those collections where this kind of collections have their own patrons or customers. All this is due to the historical value and the uniqueness that those collections hold. Normally, the patrons such as researcher, lecturers, students, lawyers, curators, film maker, and writers who studied on history will come and read those books. Unlike with the open collections where different ages and different background will come and refer those collections.

Below are the cumulative number of rare books referred by the patrons from 2018 until 2022 at NLM.

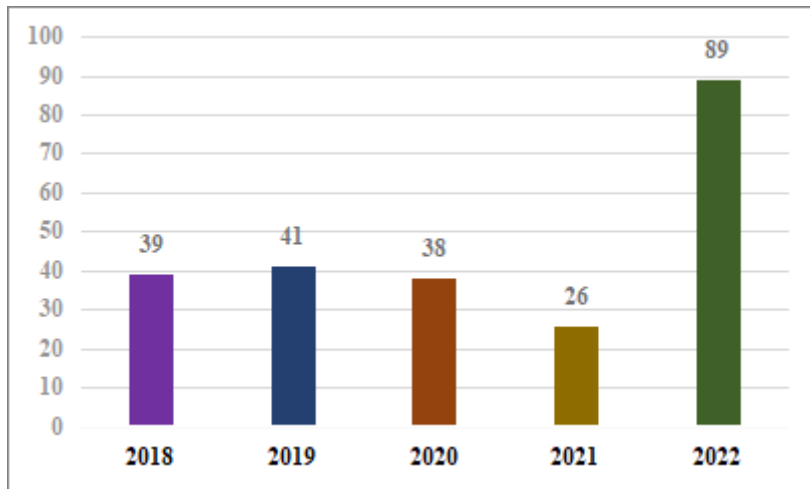


Figure 3: Cumulative Number Of Rare Books Referred

Data Analysis

During extracted the statistics, the terms Malaya, Malay, and Peninsula were found interchangeably. A word cloud was illustrated from each year where it represents the variety of words from the materials’ referred statistic.



Figure 3-1: Word Cloud Of The Most Referred Books In 2018

Table 4-1: Five Most Frequent Terms Of The Books Referred In 2018

Word	Count
Malay	8
Peninsula	6
Malaya	6
British	5
Government	4



Figure 3-2: Word Cloud Of The Most Referred Books In 2019

Table 4-2: Five Most Frequent Terms Of The Books Referred In 2019

Word	Count
Malay	9
States	5
Tin	4
Mining	4
Malayan	3



Figure 3-3: Word cloud of the most referred books in 2020

Table 4-3: Five Most Frequent Terms Of The Books Referred In 2020

Word	Count
Malaya	9
Malayan	7
Malay	7
Pictorial	4
Observer	4

Issues and Challenges

Rare collections are no longer available in the market, and it is difficult to find or get this kind of rare collection worldwide. Thus, it is difficult for PNM to search and acquire rare collections in the country or other countries. Most of the challenges or problems that PNM often faces in acquiring the rare collections are the means of acquiring the rare collections, the budget involved in acquiring the rare collections, and the time and workforce in acquiring this material.

The Means Of Acquiring Rare Materials

PNM should identify the owner of the materials, whether an individual, organisation, institution, etc. PNM needs to identify by doing research and survey. It is due to the materials often not being available at market value. Western researchers usually do the authors of rare collections regarding the Malay Peninsula. The rare collections are written based on the education of the Malay Peninsula since they stayed in a long period in the Malay Peninsula. Some of the rare collections were published overseas, such as in London, and most of these materials are kept in British Library. After Malaysia was released from the British army (after Independent Day), British people returned to their homeland, bringing together all the materials. That is why some collections are available overseas, such as in London. The difficulties here are when the PNM representatives insist on collecting the materials in these countries and refuse to share or even sell them.

Looking at another country, in June 2011, South Korea celebrated the return of nearly 300 volumes of Korean royal archives from the Joseon Dynasty that French forces had seized in a military campaign in 1866 and resided in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BnF) ever since. The return of the manuscripts is not legally permanent restitution, however, but rather a five-year renewable loan recently negotiated by France and South Korea (Cox, 2011). It is a great achievement because only the locals will appreciate the manuscripts, and we can do the same with our manuscripts and rare materials that are not in our country but stored in other libraries in the world.

Besides manuscripts, the Korean government also requested the return of a royal book that details the court protocol for royal ceremonies and rites. It also carries engravings that historians say could reveal much about the history, art, and handicraft of the Joseon Dynasty, which ruled Korea from 1392 to 1910 (Yoon, 2010).

Cost For Tracing Rare Materials

Finding rare materials involves lots of budgets, whether local or overseas. Usually, PNM finds rare materials in Indonesia (Medan, Aceh, Padang), Thailand, and others. The value or price of the collection should be based on certain criteria such as age, physical, content, context, uniqueness, etc. Libraries often document the full costs of acquiring a book. In many cases, the ancillary costs equal to or exceed the purchase price. Processing and preservation costs routinely are considered in determining whether to purchase or accept gifts of books (Association of Research Libraries, 2009). Additionally, exclusive materials can be acquired through auction houses such as Lyon & Turnbull in London. This dedicated team specializes in Rare Books, Manuscripts & Maps, garnering an international reputation for their auctions conducted both in the United Kingdom and through live online platforms. With expertise in books, manuscripts, and awareness of current market conditions, their specialists play a crucial role in the successful sale of fine antiquarian books, modern first editions, folios,

autographed letters, and significant archives. (Lyon & Turnbull, 2023).

Conclusions

The library is not a museum. Even the collections are expensive or rare, and they need to be able to hold, used, read, recognised, and valued by the patrons. PNM's responsibility is to provide intellectual access to the materials and information to their patrons throughout the networked world. PNM has adapted an online tool to transform this national intellectual heritage to a new level by making most of the collections and services to the widest audience possible. PNM has to develop many other strategies to ensure these rare collections are visible and valuable so that they will be able to contribute to research, teaching, and learning. As long as PNM can maintain its extensive acquisition, conservation, preservation, and enhancing promotion programs, these hidden gems can remain for a long, long time. This important and big responsibility of PNM can only be excelled with the support from the government and private sectors and non-government organisations (NGO). The support is strengthening the policy, providing funding for tracing studies, collaborating with other libraries globally, bringing back our rare materials abroad, and exchanging staff to have training and exposure in libraries abroad. The smart partnership will enable PNM to do more in terms of services and share best practices and knowledge with other libraries in the world. Consortium on rare materials for Southeast Asia also is a good initiative for sharing resources and making them available free to the patrons. Digitisation of rare materials is a necessity nowadays. In the globalised world, all information can be accessed online. Same goes for rare materials where this valuable item should be accessed online because its value is when it can be seen, accessed, and researched by the researcher or to those interested in the items.

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