Title

Negotiating, Debating and Imagining Tamil Identity through Print: The Vernacular Tamil Press in Malaya and Singapore: 1930-1940

Speaker

Mr Dinesh Sathisan

MA Candidate, Department of History
National University of Singapore

Day, Date, Time, Venue

Wednesday, 12 March 2008, 3 pm
HY/PS Lounge, AS1-0401

Abstract

Print culture took off in a big way in Southeast Asia in the 1930s. While much research has been done on Malay and Chinese press culture, little attention has been given to the Tamil press in Malaya and Singapore. Based on research done in London, India and Singapore, Dinesh hopes to fill this gap by analysing Tamil newspapers published in Malaya during the 1930s as polygeneric texts. Scrutinising news articles, advertisements, editorial messages, letters to the editors and pictures published, Dinesh will show that while similar visions of modernity were shared by editors of these newspapers in their imagining of Tamil identity in Malaya, there was a refusal to see eye-to-eye on several other issues. The presentation will show that Tamil identity, as imagined by the newspapers had multiple spheres; spheres which had their basis on certain political ideologies, religious beliefs and intellectual thoughts.

About the Speaker

Dinesh Sathisan is a second-year MA candidate in History at the National University of Singapore. His research interests are varied and include press culture, identity formation and art as identity negotiators in South and Southeast Asia. Dinesh currently holds the position of Secretary of the NUS History Alumni Association and he volunteers his free time as a weekend docent at the Asian Civilisations Museum and will soon guide at the Peranakan Museum as well.