

The women executed in Singapore 1973 to 2004.

"I am sending you to a better place than this."

With these words Darshan Singh, Singapore's hangman throughout this period would release the trap doors of the gallows in Changi prison, plummeting the condemned to their death. 16 women would hear these fateful words and their stories are told below. Seven were to hang for murder and nine for drug trafficking.

In April 1978 *The Straits Times* newspaper gained access to death row and described it as follows:

24 cells are arranged in a horse-shoe pattern around a central exercise yard. This has a mesh roof to prevent attempts at helicopter rescue. Condemned inmates are supervised constantly. During their last week inmates are allowed daily visits from family and friends. These are limited to 30 minutes and are no contact, the inmate sits a metre away behind two mesh screens. A last meal can be requested. Condemned inmates wear white uniforms (scrubs). Around 5 a.m. on the Friday of their execution the inmate dresses in prison uniform. A priest will perform the last rites and then the inmate's wrists are handcuffed behind their backs and black hoods drawn over their heads. They are then led the 20 metres to the execution chamber where they ascend a few steps onto the gallows. In the room are the prison's Superintendent, his assistant, another senior officer, the prison doctor and the State Coroner. At 6.00 a.m. the hangman pushes the lever to release the trap doors. Death is confirmed by the doctor and the Coroner certifies that death was by judicial hanging. The 1913 British drop table is used and it is thought that the leather covered eyelet noose is also utilised.

Singapore became an independent state on the 9 of August 1965, but it would be eight years before it executed a woman.

Mimi Wong Weng Siu.

Mimi was a former cabaret star and dance hostess who became the first woman to be sentenced to death. She and her estranged husband, Sim Woh Kum were also the first couple to be hanged together.

They were convicted of the murder of Mimi's lover Hiroshi Watanabe's wife, 33 year old Ayako. Mimi had fallen for Hiroshi who was Japanese engineer working on a land reclamation project in Bedok in Singapore. She was, according to the prosecution, "Overwhelmed by a consuming jealousy"

Mimi recruited her estranged husband to help her in the murder on the promise of money. At around 9.30 on the evening of the 6th of January, 1968, the two broke into the Watanabe's home, a Jalan Sea View apartment, where Ayako was alone. Sim threw bleach into her eyes, while Mimi stabbed her in the neck and abdomen with a knife.

They were tried in the High Court before Justices Tan Ah and Choor Singh, the proceedings lasting 26 days and culminating in guilty verdicts and death sentences for both on the 7th of December 1970. The prosecution's key witness was Ayako's nine year old daughter, Chieko, who was in the apartment at the time of the murder. Lurid details of the affair between Mimi and Hiroshi were also revealed. Both husband and wife blamed the other and both had collapsed in court during the trial, which attracted huge media interest. Their death sentences were front page news, the following day.

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The star witness

By T.F. KWANG, Singapore, Monday

DANCE hostess Mimi Wong Wang, 31, and her estranged husband were sentenced to death today for the murder of her Japanese engineer

Photo

Mimi's first appeal was set for April the 3rd 1972. This was dismissed as were her appeals to the Privy Council in London and to Singapore's President for clemency.

The executions were carried out at dawn on Friday the 27th of July 1973. By now 34 year old Mimi and 40 year old Sim Woh Kum were hanged together with 34 year old Osman bin Ali who was to die for a double murder committed at Leedon Park on November the 1st 1970. It was reported that a priest blessed the couple just before the 6.00 am hanging, and that Mimi's daughter sent a wreath with the message "To my beloved mother".

All three were hanged simultaneously by Darshan Singh, who was the only person who seemed to be able to control Mimi in Changi prison. According to an October 2013 AsiaOne profile, Singh had an unusually close relationship with her. She was a difficult inmate who would at times strip naked and refuse to wear her uniform. She also threw urine at the wardens. Singh would say "Mimi, wear the blanket and cover yourself. Don't do this or you won't be beautiful any more", and apparently she would listen to him. The two forged an unlikely friendship and other prison officers even joked that Mimi was his girlfriend. Singh never minded. Before her execution, Mimi told Singh they should be lovers in the next life and she wanted to take him with her. After he hanged Mimi Wong, Singh was off sick for a month and had to be admitted to Toa Payoh Hospital for more than two weeks, his wife said.

In 1973 Singapore passed the Misuse of Drugs Act, which was amended in December 1975 to include the mandatory death penalty for anyone found guilty of importing, exporting or trafficking in more than 500 grams of cannabis, 200 grams of cannabis resin or more than 1,000 grams of cannabis mixture; trafficking in more than 30 grams of cocaine; trafficking in more than 15 grams of pure heroin; and trafficking in excess of 250 grams of methamphetamine. Teh Sin Tong (male) was the first to die under the 1975 Amendment. He was hanged at dawn on Friday, April 28th, 1978.

Executions of women for drug offences were recorded by the Singaporean press, but usually only a brief article would only appear on an inside page and little detail was given.

Loh Han Eng.

35 year old Loh Han Eng became the first woman to be hanged under the amended act. She was put to death on Friday October 9th 1981.

The Toa Payoh ritual murders.

It is not hard to imagine the public's shock, followed by fascination with the gruesome murders of two small children in 1981 that would send three people to the gallows seven years later.

The trio comprised Adrian Lim, 46, his wife Catherine Tan Mui Choo 34, and mistress Hoe Kah Hong 33. (ages at time of execution).



Here is a photo of the three, from left to right, Lim, Tan & Hoe.

Adrian Lim was born on the 6th of January 1942, the eldest of three children. He attended the Anglo-Chinese School, but dropped out in his later teens. After leaving school he worked for a few months as an Internal Security Department informer, later joining the Rediffusion television company where he would spend the next 14 years, working as a bill collector. He married and had two children with his first wife, who divorced him in 1976 for having an affair with Catherine Tan Mui Choo. Lim and Tan married in 1977. Lim became interested in becoming a medium and was given training by a local bomoh known as "Uncle Willie". A bomoh is a spiritualist and faith healer. Lim appears to have been very successful in luring wealthy clients into his web and was able to give up the day job with Rediffusion and live off his earnings.

Catherine Tan Mui Choo was 24 years old when she met Lim, having been referred to him by a fellow bar girl. She was the eldest of four children. Like Lim she was not a great student and as a teenager had been sent to the Catholic charity Marymount Vocational Centre (then a home for troubled juveniles). Tan was largely rejected by her parents and suffered from depression. At the time of their meeting she was grieving the death of her granddad. She loved the attention Lim gave her, even though he mistreated her, was regularly unfaithful and even prostituted her out.

Hoe Kah Hong was born on the 10th of September 1955, the third of six children who had lost her father when she was eight years old. Due to financial difficulties she was sent to live with an aunt in Penang in Malaysia. She returned to the family when she was 15 years of age and later worked as a seamstress, factory-hand and a production operator for Hewlett Packard. In 1978 she married Benson Loh Ngak Hua. She met Lim when her mother brought her to him to try and cure her of her bad-temper and constant headaches. Hoe believed in Lim's "powers" and allowed

him to give her electric shock "treatment". He also administered shocks to her husband, with fatal results. Lim got away with this, claiming that Benson's death was an accident due to his switching on a faulty fan. Hoe fell into a deep depression as a result of her husband's death and attended Woodbridge Hospital for treatment. She would later claim that Adrian Lim had told her that she was possessed and had given her electric shocks to drive out the devil. She would become Lim's "holy" wife (always referred to as his mistress by the Singaporean press). Lucy Lau sold cosmetics door to door and visited Lim and Tan's Toa Payoh apartment in the October of 1980. Lim obviously fancied her and tried to persuade her that she was possessed, offering to cure her with a sex based ritual. Lucy didn't fall for this but Lim got his way by mixing a sedative into a glass of milk that he gave her. Lucy reported the rape to the police and Lim was charged with it, Tan was charged with aiding and abetting. Both were released on bail. Lim persuaded Hoe to say she had been present in the apartment and that no rape had taken place. Lim was a member of a religious cult that worshipped the Hindu Goddess Kali. He believed that sacrificing children to her would bring him good luck and get him off the rape charge. In Singapore rape is typically punished by a lengthy term of imprisonment and caning so it is not hard to see why Lim wanted to avoid a conviction. Hoe was commissioned by Lim to find suitable victims.

The body of Chinese born nine year old Agnes Ng Siew Heok was discovered on the 25th of January 1981 stuffed into a suitcase beside a lift in apartment block 11 at Toa Payoh Lorong 7. Hoe had met the little girl in churchyard on the 24th of January and persuaded her to come to Lim's apartment. Once there she was drugged, sexually abused by Lim and then smothered with a pillow. Her blood had been drunk by the three of them and smeared over a picture of Kali. On the 7th of February 1981 a second body was discovered between blocks 10 and 11 at Toa Payoh. It was that of Malaysian born, ten year old Ghazali bin Marzuki. Again the child had been procured by Hoe and brought to the apartment where he was drowned (in the bath tub), subjected to electric shocks and stabbed. Lim and Hoe had tried to clean up the blood but had done so very inefficiently, allowing the police to follow the trail of blood straight to the doorway of Lim's apartment in Block 12 of the flats. Lim, Tan and Hoe were inside when the police entered and they found blood stains on the kitchen floor. All three were arrested at the scene and charged two days later with both murders. A full search of the apartment turned up more forensic evidence and various religious artefacts.



In this newspaper photo, Agnes is on the left, Ghazali is on the right.

A preliminary hearing in the Subordinate Court was held on the 16th and 17th of September 1982. Lim entered a guilty plea and insisted that he alone was responsible for the crime. Tan and Hoe both pleaded not guilty. In view of the evidence against the two women, all three were committed for trial at the Supreme Court on the 25th of March 1983. This took place before Justices T. S. Sinnathuray and F. A. Chua who sat without a jury as is normal practice in Singapore.

Deputy Public Prosecutor, Glenn Knight, led the prosecution while Howard Cashin, J. B. Jeyaretnam, and Nathan Isaac defended Lim, Tan and Hoe respectively. Lim's guilty plea was not accepted by the court. The trial lasted 41 days, the second longest in Singaporean history. Lim refused to cooperate with his defence counsel.

Tan and Hoe both mounted a defence of diminished responsibility by virtue of being under Lim's total control. Psychiatrists were called by both sides to support and rebut this defence. Cashin also called a psychiatrist, Dr Wong Yip Chong, to testify that Lim was mentally ill. The trial ended on the 25th of May. Justice Sinnathuray spent just 15 minutes delivering the guilty verdicts. He described Lim as being "abominable and depraved", Tan as "artful and wicked" and Hoe to be "simple and easily influenced". Each defendant was then sentenced to death by hanging. Lim smiled and thanked the judge, Tan and Hoe showed little reaction. Although Lim didn't appeal, Tan and Hoe went through the entire appeals process permitted under Singaporean law. Their first stage was the Appeals Court where the case was heard before three judges, Lai Kew Chai, Wee Chong Jin, and LP Thean. They dismissed the appeal on the 4th of August 1986. Their findings were as follows :

In Tan's case "We find that there is evidence that when she lived with (Adrian Lim), there were occasions when she suffered from depression. But, on a balance of probabilities, we find that at the time, when (she) took part in the two murders, she was not suffering from reactive depressive psychosis. That which weighs heavy in our minds is that we had the benefit of hearing and seeing her give evidence in the witness box. The opinion we have of her is that she is an artful and wicked person. In conspiracy with (Adrian Lim), she was at all times a willing party to his loathsome and nefarious acts. We have also considered her case on the footing that she was suffering from mental disease postulated by Dr Nagulendran. Even if she was suffering from abnormality of mind, we find that the abnormality was not such as substantially impaired her mental responsibility for her acts in the two killings."

In the case of the first appellant (Tan) we are of the opinion that, having regard to all the evidence adduced at the trial, the learned trial judges were entitled to conclude that on a balance of probabilities the plea of diminished responsibility had not been established.

We now turn to consider the case of the second appellant, Hoe : "In contrast to the first appellant the second appellant is a simple person who can be easily influenced. It is claimed that (she) is suffering from schizophrenia. Admittedly, there is a history of schizophrenia in her family. There is also evidence that she was in Woodbridge Hospital from about the end of May to the first week of July 1980. That diagnosis is in issue between the psychiatrists. On the evidence before us, it appears that there are grounds for disagreement. However, what comes out clearly in the evidence is that since her discharge from the hospital, some six months before the commission of the offences, she was thereafter at all times in a state of remission. We accordingly have no difficulty in finding that even if the (second appellant) had suffered from schizophrenia, at the time of the commission of the offences she was not suffering from abnormality of mind as substantially impaired her mental responsibility for the two killings.

Tan and Hoe next appealed to the Privy Council in London, who similarly rejected them. Their last hope was to request clemency from President Wee Kim Wee which was denied.

On death row in Changi jail all three were counselled and comforted by Catholic priests and nuns. Father Brian Doro looked after Lim's spiritual well being and found him to be a "rather friendly person". Tan and Hoe were tended by Sister Gerard Fernandez. According to the Straits Times newspaper, all three took Holy Communion before their execution and on the eve of their hangings were allowed to bathe and then have cakes and drinks of their choice.

Changi Women's Prison/Drug Rehabilitation Centre was completed in early 1994 as a solution to overcrowding in the old Female Prison near Moon Crescent. It had five four storey blocks, which could house up to 637 women in 44 dormitories and 177 cells. It is assumed that condemned females were housed here until they were transferred to the male prison for execution.

Cheuk Mei-mei.

At 6 a.m. on the 4th March 1994, 29 year old Cheuk Mei-mei was hanged alongside her boyfriend 32 year old Nathan Tse Po-chung together with 22-year-old Fung Yuk-shing. All three were Hong Kong nationals who had been convicted of drug trafficking.

Cheuk and Tse had flown into Singapore from Phuket in February 1989 and were arrested in the transit lounge of Changi airport. They were booked to fly on to Amsterdam. Tse was in possession of 2.18 kilograms of the drug and Cheuk was carrying 2.19 kilograms. The heroin was strapped to their legs. Tse said he had agreed to take "something" to The Netherlands for a moneylender to whom he owed \$30,000. He was understood to have been a heavy gambler on the horses. Cheuk said she thought she was carrying gold jewellery for Tse.

Lawyers for the couple had argued unsuccessfully that the pair had not imported the heroin because they were in the transit lounge and had not crossed the customs barrier. An informed source said Cheuk was "at peace with the world" before she walked to the gallows, after receiving counselling from the prison's Christian chaplain, Henry Kooh. She was reportedly holding up so well that she was able to give a visitor a smile as they talked on the eve of her execution. Relatives of the three visited them on the eve of their executions and claimed the bodies afterwards. All three were cremated in the presence of a representative of the British High Commission.

Cheuk was the first foreign woman convicted of a drug offence in Singapore to be hanged.

Elke Tsang Kai-mong.

Nine months later another female drug trafficker from Hong Kong would be executed. 29 year old merchandiser Elke Tsang Kai-mong was hanged on Friday 16th December 1994 after customs officers recovered 22 packets of heroin weighing 9 pounds concealed in two winter jackets. She had been arrested on the 26th of July at Changi airport where she was intending to catch a flight to Hong Kong.

She was tried and condemned on the 19th of October 1993 and her appeal was dismissed on the 26th of January 1994.

Tsang's family was notified of the scheduled execution less than a week before its date and visited her in Changi.

Tsang seemed to accept her fate quite well. "She was quiet," said the source. "She is a Buddhist, and is now being counselled by a Buddhist nun."

Tsang's parents asked Amnesty International to lodge a worldwide appeal for her life to be spared.

Two Thai men, Vinit Sapon and Pairoj Bunsom, were hanged with her, also for drug trafficking.

Angel Mou Pui- Peng.

25 year old Angel Mou Pui- Peng, an unmarried mother from Macau Hong Kong, went to the gallows on Friday 6th January 1995. She became the 95th person and 4th woman to hang for drug trafficking.

Angel was arrested at Singapore's Changi airport on August the 29th, 1991, after arriving from Bangkok, with a suitcase containing 20 packets totaling over 4.1 kg of heroin according to The Central Narcotics Bureau. At her trial, she claimed she did not know the false-bottom suitcase contained heroin and thought she was carrying contraband watches instead. She was found guilty and sentenced to death in 1993 and as usual in Singapore, both her appeals were rejected. However, she was granted a temporary stay of execution on the 22nd of December 1994, apparently to allow her family to visit her over Christmas, after a plea by her mother and nine year old son, having been originally scheduled to hang on Friday the 23rd of December with two Singaporean drug traffickers. On the eve of her execution, her lawyer, Peter Yap, said that she was "normal and calm" when he saw her. He said she "was emotionally stable and prepared to die. Spiritually she was very strong." He also said Angel was comforted by the settlement of guardianship for her son.



Unusually, Angel was executed on her own (due to the stay.) After the hanging, the body was returned to relatives and she was cremated in the early evening at Mount Vernon crematorium after a short service attended by her family and friends.

"Our sister Angel has now been taken to heaven - a place we will go and we shall hope to see her there one day," an elderly pastor, speaking in Cantonese, told the congregation of some 25 people.

"When are you coming back to Hong Kong?" a young woman cried in Cantonese as she, Angel's sister, Cecilia, and a few others watched the coffin, covered in black velvet, disappear into the furnace.

Her father, reportedly reconciled with his daughter during her brief stay of execution, broke down uncontrollably after the cremation.

Macau was a Portuguese colony and the President of Portugal, Mario Soares and the Portuguese government appealed for clemency on the grounds of Angel's youth and the fact that she was only a carrier. But according to Portuguese officials, Singapore said it could not differentiate between foreigners and its own people.

The Governor of Macau expressed deep sorrow and called the execution "revolting," the Portuguese news agency Lusa reported. "For someone like me who is a citizen of a country that takes a pride in being one of the first that abolished capital punishment, the loss of human life is something that is incomprehensible and even revolting," Lusa quoted Governor, Rocha Vieira Vasco as saying in a message to Angel's mother. Chris Patten, who was at the time the Hong Kong Governor, said the British colony had supported a plea for clemency put forward by Britain and the European Union.

Flor Contemplacion.

Flor Contemplacion, a 42 year old Filipina maid, was convicted by a Singaporean court of killing another Filipina maid, Delia Maga and Nicholas Huang, the three year old Singaporean son of Delia's employer on May 4th, 1991.



She had originally confessed to the murders. It was, however, later claimed that she made the confession under duress, and it has also been claimed that she was of doubtful sanity at the time they were committed, although this seems unlikely.

She was hanged by Darshan Singh, at 6.00 a.m. on Friday, the 17th of March 1995 together with three male drug traffickers, amidst scenes of unusually tight security. Eight policemen, including two armed with machine guns and wearing flak jackets, stood outside the prison gates with two dogs. Police cars and motorcycles patrolled the street continuously, apparently to deter protests by the estimated 75,000 Filipinos working in Singapore.

Anger swept the Philippines as the news of the execution broke. Leftist and feminist groups, human rights activists and the media denounced Singapore as a barbaric, tyrannical and totalitarian state with no respect for human rights. The Roman Catholic Church called Singapore a state without mercy. The execution caused a major diplomatic row between Singapore and the Philippines, after Singapore rejected an appeal from the Philippines

President, Fidel Ramos. There were protests outside the Singapore Embassy in Manila.

Flor had said, on the eve of her execution, that she was ready to die after final pleas for clemency and a new trial had been rejected. The Philippine Foreign Secretary said that she had thanked Filipinos for their efforts in trying to save her, but had said that if the stay of execution will only delay the carrying out of her sentence, she preferred to have an early end to everyone's suffering instead.

Flor was visited in Changi prison daily by her children, a 21-year-old son, a 17 year old daughter and 15-year-old twin boys who had last seen their mother in 1989, but her husband Efren didn't visit her because, "I could not bear to see her and not be able to touch her or embrace her after seven years." He had made an emotional appeal a week earlier for help in saving his wife. She was informed of the date and the time of the hanging on the Tuesday (14th March) before the execution, as is customary in Singapore and apparently took the news calmly. "She was resigned to her fate and she tried to be strong and told the children to be strong and love one another."

The Philippine government had requested a stay of execution. Solicitor-General Raul Goco, in a letter to the Singapore government, asked for this "to put all doubts to rest before the case of Mrs. Contemplacion comes to a final conclusion." He had urged Singapore to defer the hanging "on humanitarian considerations."

Philippine President Fidel Ramos had personally asked Singapore to postpone the execution until new evidence, testimony from another Filipino maid had been evaluated. But the Singapore government said it "carefully investigated this new evidence and found it to be untrue." Therefore, the Singaporean President, Ong Teng Cheong, found there was no basis to justify a stay of execution.

At least two maids came forward during the week prior to the hanging to suggest that the little boy drowned during an epileptic fit in a bathtub and his father killed Mrs. Maga and framed Flor in a fit of rage.

One, Virginie Parumog, said in an affidavit she had shared a cell with Flor and had evidence of her innocence. In her affidavit, Parumog said Flor told her that, "Della immediately phoned her employer about the incident. Her male employer immediately rushed home. Very angry, the employer strangled Della's neck." Then the employer called the police and implicated Flor in the

double murder. "These claims are pure fabrication," a Singaporean Home Affairs Ministry statement said. "The wild and baseless allegations of Virginie Parumog are yet another attempt to stir up controversy over the Flor Contemplacion case, without any regard for the truth."

The Home Ministry said Parumog claimed Contemplacion told her that when visiting Della Maga, the two maids had discovered Nicholas had drowned. According to the Ministry, when the police arrived, Contemplacion was not at the house. She was traced later through entries made in Della Maga's diary. In addition, it was not the boy's father who phoned police, it was the mother. The Ministry statement also dismissed other claims made by Parumog, including that Flor had undergone electric shock treatment while awaiting trial and had been drugged. They said she was given two electro-encephalogram (EEG) tests, one of which was ordered by her own defence psychiatrist and was given medication only for headaches and a sore throat.

The statement also pointed out that Flor had had ample opportunity to protest her innocence while in jail and had chosen not to do so. "During her imprisonment Flor Contemplacion had nine visits by Philippine embassy officials. The government did not receive any representations regarding complaints of ill treatment or claims to Contemplacion's innocence," the ministry said. "Are we to believe that if Flor Contemplacion felt that she was innocent she would chose to say so only to a prostitute in prison," it added.

According to the Home Ministry, Parumog had been arrested in Singapore on June the 25th, 1992, and had signed a statement saying that she had come to the island republic for prostitution and "was charging Singaporeans \$100 (\$70) per sexual entertainment."

Flor Contemplacion's body was released and flown back to Manila and was greeted by the President's wife, Amelita, at the airport. Perhaps, extraordinarily for a country that was actively trying to restore the death penalty itself at the time, President Ramos and the Philippine people saw Contemplacion as a heroine. Some mourners waved white handkerchiefs and others clenched their fists and carried placards saying "Justice for Flor Contemplacion" as her funeral cortege passed through Manila's streets.

Thousands jammed into the small town of San Pablo where she had lived to pay their last respects to Flor. More than 5,000 town residents and supporters from Manila and nearby areas flocked round her one-room house to try to catch a glimpse of her body in its open white coffin. Roman Catholic Bishop Teodoro Bacani held a requiem mass in the town's crowded cathedral for her. He told the congregation - "She is a symbol of millions of Filipinos driven by poverty to take their chances abroad," "Their lot is pathetic. Their own government neglects them," he added, evoking applause from the congregation.

Tong Ching-man and Poon Yuen-chung.

Two girls from Hong Kong who were both 18 years old at the time of their arrests were among five prisoners to be hanged on the 21st of April 1995. With them on the gallows were Tong's boyfriend, 25 year old Lam Cheuk-wang, Nigerian businessman, Chris Chinenye Ubaka, 32, and an unemployed Singaporean, Yeo Hee Seng, 34.

Tong, an unemployed waitress, was in transit at Singapore airport, on her way from Hong Kong to Brussels in December, 1988, when she was caught wearing a specially made vest with pockets containing 1.47 kg (3.24 lb) of heroin. Lam was arrested beside her wearing a vest containing 1.67 kg (3.68 lb) of heroin. Tong Ching-man was 24 years old at the time of her execution. Members of her family visited her on death row and her aunt told reporters that "She is calm and she has accepted it." She said ten family members, including her parents, had flown from Hong Kong to see her for the last time.

Poon Yuen-chung, a shop assistant from Hong Kong, and her 17 year old friend, Lam Hoi-ka, were arrested at Changi Airport, Singapore in 1991. Poon and Lam Hoi-ka were found to be in possession of 3.0 kg (6.6 lb) of heroin.

The girls had gone on holiday to Bangkok, telling their parents they were going on a local camping trip. Airport officials found heroin hidden in a secret compartment in their luggage. Both

girls denied prior knowledge of the drugs and said they had been befriended by a Chinese couple in Bangkok who had taken them out to dinner and later bought the new suitcases for them. Lam Hoi-ka was sentenced to life imprisonment as she was under 18 at the time of the offence.

Poon had written more than 40 letters during her last days to her parents, brother, sister and friends, to tell them she had accepted her fate with calm and that she hoped to see them in the after-life," her pastor said.

Poon's relatives visited her in the days leading up to the execution. A family member told reporters that they had no hope of a last-minute reprieve. "No, we don't think so. Even (Philippine President Fidel) Ramos could do nothing to save (Filipina maid) Flor Contemplacion. What about us lesser beings?" she said. "We have only one thing to say, Singapore should give another chance to teenagers, who may not know the seriousness of such a thing - lock them up for 10, 20 years, and they still have another chance at life."

Tong Ching-man and Poon Yuen-chung, were cremated after a sombre funeral service attended by their relatives and friends. The Christian pastor who conducted the service said the two women had become close friends in prison and had prayed and fasted together during their last days.

The scheduled execution of the three Hong Kong nationals sparked the now familiar battle between the Singapore government and death penalty opponents. The governments of Britain and Hong Kong, then a British colony, asked Singapore to spare them. Amnesty International also appealed to the Singapore government for clemency. As usual Singapore did not yield to these pleas.

Among Singaporeans, "there doesn't seem to be a lot of hue and cry about our so-called strict laws," Member of Parliament Kanwaljit Soin told Reuters. "There is an ethos passed down that we are a disciplined society, and if we break the laws, we have to be punished."

Law Professor Walter Woon said "nobody really knows" if the death penalty deters drug trafficking.

"But we don't have an obvious drug problem, and I don't think anyone wants to try to tinker with the system, just in case it makes it worse," he said. "The worst thing that anyone who wants reform in Singapore can have is the support of Western human-rights groups. They are suspect in the eyes of the authorities and in the eyes of the population in general," he added.

Referring to criticism of Singapore's tough laws, Arthur Beng, the chairman of the country's Group Parliamentary Committee for Home Affairs and Law, was quoted in a newspaper as saying in a Thursday speech: "As a sovereign nation, there should be no double standards in the application of the law. "We can stand tall and proud that we have not done anything to be ashamed of because due justice was done."

The executions brought to 111 the number of people hanged for drug offences since 1975.

Indra Wijaya Ibrahim.

Indra Ibrahim, age 23, was hanged on Friday 29th September 1995 for drug trafficking, together with a male murderer. No other information is available on her case.

Teo Kim Hong.

Teo Kim Hong was convicted of the murder of another prostitute, Ms Ching Bee Ing, 26, who was from Sarawak, Malaysia on the 8th of August 1995. Both women worked in the same brothel at Teck Lim Road in Chinatown.

Teo Kim Hong accused Ms Ching, also known as Toto, of sleeping with her boyfriend and saying bad things about him. She assaulted Ms. Ching on the 2nd of August 1995 and six days later, she entered her room in the brothel and stabbed her seven times in the chest with a diver's knife that she had bought earlier. She had to be subdued by a male customer and was arrested at the scene.

On the 24th of January 1996, Justice Choo found her guilty after a five-day trial. He said that of the seven stab wounds on Ms. Ching's body, four were fatal. Kim Hong's defence was that she did not intend to hurt Ms. Ching with the knife and that she had been provoked. But the judge said she had taken her handbag into the room, knowing that she had the knife in it and knowing Ms. Ching was unarmed.

Kim Hong lost her appeal against the conviction on the 26th of March 1996. She was hanged five months later on Friday September the 6th, 1996. Two other murderers and a drug trafficker were executed alongside her. They were Jeerasak Densakul, 24, a Thai farmer, who was sentenced to death on October 12th, 1995 for trafficking in more than 2 kg of cannabis. Thongbai Naklangdon, 28, killed a fellow Thai worker, Suk Malasri, 23, on the 17th of June, 1995. Zainal Abidin Abdul Malik, 29, was convicted of murdering a police officer, Station Inspector Boo Tiang Huat, on July 15th, 1995. Boo and another officer were on their rounds in Newton Road when they saw Zainal, who struck Boo on the head with an axe. His appeal was dismissed on January 8th 1996.

Navarat Maykha.

Navarat Maykha, a 32 year old Thai national and mother of two, was found guilty of trafficking 3.182 kg of morphine.

Navarat had met a man called "Sunny", whom she said was Nigerian, during her work as a receptionist in 1992. They bumped into each other again in 1993, and Sunny invited her for a cup of tea. Over their meeting, he asked Navarat if she would agree to help him deliver a bag of clothes to his friend in Singapore and to purchase a few items (a Nikon or Canon camera with zoom lens, a Panasonic telephone with recording facilities and a perfume called "Eternity"). In return, he would give Navarat US\$2000 to buy all the items and that Navarat could keep the change.

Navarat considered the proposal for a few days before agreeing to it. She calculated that she could earn about 5000 baht from the trip, which she could use to pay her son's medical bills and send some money to her mother.

The morning before her flight, Sunny met up with Navarat to pass her a leather bag filled with clothes. On arrival at Changi airport the inner lining of the bag was found to contain morphine. Navarat Maykha was hanged on the 28th of September 1996.

Gerardine Andrew.

On Friday the 26th of February 1999, Gerardine Andrew and two men were hanged for the 1997 murder by stabbing of the Gerardine's landlady, 53 year old Mrs. Sivapackiam Veerappan Rengasamy in March 1997 in a flat in Block 804, King George's Avenue..

Gerardine, alias Maria, a 36 year old prostitute who prosecutors say persuaded the two men to kill her landlady over a dispute. The two men were Nazar Mohamed Kassim, 28, a coffee shop assistant and 23 year old unemployed Mansoor Abdullah.

Police said that the trio and an accomplice, Kamala Rani Balakrishnan, 22, who was also a prostitute, met at Albert Court on March 13th, 1997, to discuss Gerardine's problems with her landlady. They decided to "teach her a lesson" and Gerardine also told them that Mrs. Rengasamy kept a lot of money and jewellery in her flat. She then took them to a coffee shop nearby and waited for Mrs. Rengasamy's son to leave for work at about 8.20 am. Mansoor and Nazar then went to the flat and told the victim that they wanted to rent a room.

Mrs. Rengasamy invited them in and was showing them around when Mansoor took out a 30 inch long chain and tried to strangle her.

The victim screamed and struggled but was pulled into the bedroom and then stabbed several times by Nazar with a 12 inch knife.

Gerardine and Kamala Rani then entered the flat to search for money and jewellery, but did not find any. The four eventually left the flat empty handed.

On February 6th, 1998, Justice Kang Ting Chiu sentenced the two men to death. Gerardine was charged with manslaughter and sentenced to eight years' imprisonment.

On August 3rd, 1998, the appeals by the two men against their sentences were dismissed by the Court of Appeal. On the same day, the appeal by the prosecution against Gerardine's conviction for manslaughter was heard. Under the doctrine of common purpose, the conviction was up-rated to murder and she was sentenced to death on September 9th, 1998 by the Court of Appeal. The fourth member of the gang, Kamala Rani, pleaded guilty on October 20th, 1997, to conspiring to cause Mrs. Rengasamy's death for which she was sentenced to seven years in prison.

Julaiha Begum Maniam.

Julaiha Begum Maniam was a 52 year old Indian Muslim woman who lived in Singapore and had married police officer, T. Maniam in 1991. In 1993 they moved into a terrace house at 86 Phoenix Garden. Gradually their relationship deteriorated and Julaiha, who was an attractive woman, began an affair with 25 year old Loganatha Venkatesan. In October 1996 there was a scuffle between Maniam and Venkatesan which led to a court case and Maniam being fined \$500. Julaiha moved out of the matrimonial home and went to live with Venkatesan.

On the 21st of April 1999, just after 7.00am, T Maniam, by now a 55 year old retired inspector from the Criminal Investigation Department, went out to his car and was set upon and battered to death in the street outside his home. He died from four heavy blows to the head from wooden clubs. The attackers then fled in a pick-up truck. The driver was never found.

Julaiha and Loganatha were arrested three days later. Chandran was arrested a week after the murder. Loganatha Venkatesan and Chandran were Indian nationals, both aged 25.

Julaiha, then aged 51, was charged under section 302 read with section 109 of the Penal Code for abetting Venkatesan, Chandran and other unknown persons in the murder.

Julaiha's alleged motive for the killing was to inherit the house at Phoenix Garden, valued at \$1.15million.

The trio were tried before Judicial Commissioner Choo Han Teck and convicted on 14 March 2000 after a 37-day trial. Loganatha Venkatesan and Chandran were found guilty of the murder and Julaiha of abetting it, although it was accepted that she did not take an active part in the actual killing. Their appeal against the conviction was dismissed on July 24, 2000.

On February 16th, 2001, all three were hanged within Changi prison.



Sow Siow Yin.

Two convicted drug traffickers were executed at Changi Prison on Friday the 28th of July, 2000. Sow Siow Yin, 33, an unemployed Malaysian woman, and Tan Chwee Heng, 39, also unemployed, were arrested in a Central Narcotics Bureau drug raid in September 1998. They were caught with 139.3 grams of diamorphine. No other details of this case could be found.

Yen May Woen.

Singapore's last female hanging to date was carried out on Friday March 19th, 2004. This was the state's first execution of 2004 for drug offences, according to the Central Narcotics Bureau. 37 year old Singaporean hairdresser, Yen May Woen, 37, had been convicted of drug trafficking after she was arrested in May 2002 having been spotted putting a black briefcase containing 120 packets of heroin weighing 950 grams (33.5 ounces) into the trunk of a Mercedes-Benz taxi on May 8th in the car park of Block 178, Toa Payoh Central.

After analysis, the packets were found to contain only 30 grams (1.1 ounces) of diamorphine (pure heroin). Her trial was conducted between January and March 2003 over seven days. Yen's defence was that a friend had returned the bag to her earlier that day and she did not know that there were drugs in it. This could be shown to be a lie as she had made a written statement to Central Narcotics Bureau officers, admitting the bag was hers and that she knew what it contained. She was found guilty as charged and sentenced to death by Justice Woo Bih Li. The Court of Appeal dismissed her appeal in May 2003.