

Withstanding Time, Connecting Cultures: The Elgin Bridge in Singapore**Li Jianmin (Jorynn)****National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore****Abstract**

Spanning the Singapore River, the Elgin Bridge was named after a former Governor-General of British India. Its significance in Singapore's history remains largely unexplored. This paper proposes to examine the history and significance of Elgin Bridge from three perspectives: as a connector between the Chinese and Indian migrants in colonial Singapore; as a link in the development of Singapore from a colonial entrepôt port-city to a modern nation-state; and as a metaphorical bridge between Singapore's past and present. The present Elgin Bridge is the result of four major reconstructions over two centuries. Through a study of pictorial and documentary evidence, this paper argues that the significance of the bridge lies in its role as the main connection between the culturally disparate worlds of the Indian trader and the Chinese middleman in the 19th century entrepôt port-city. Architectural analysis will further illuminate the fact that as the entrepôt port-city grew, reconstructions of the bridge that paralleled Singapore's development were necessitated by social and economic changes. Today, the Elgin Bridge stands as a metaphorical bridge between Singapore's past and present, providing a physical reminder of Singapore's history as a British colony, and yet at the same time embellished with symbols of Singapore's identity as the Lion City.