

For More Information:

Contact: Philip Tatham, Monsoon Books

T: +65 6476 3955

F: +65 6476 8513

E: sales@monsoonbooks.com.sg

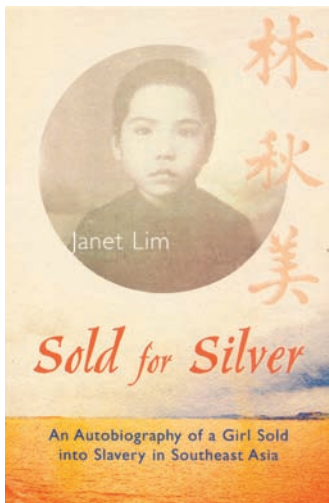
W: www.monsoonbooks.com.sg



Be humbled by a true heroine as she recounts her life as a slave girl then as a prisoner and comfort woman under the Japanese.

## **SOLD FOR SILVER**

**An autobiography of a girl sold into slavery in Southeast Asia**



SINGAPORE, 20 NOVEMBER 2004—"She would be worth more if her nose was not so flat," were among the first words welcoming eight-year-old Lim Chiu Mei to Singapore after her long voyage from China. The horrific realisation quickly sank in that this was part of a bargaining process in which she had just been sold for \$250. So begins the fascinating tale of a girl whose resolute fight for human dignity—hers, her friends and strangers alike – more than once very nearly resulted in her death, but ultimately enabled her to triumph.

*Sold for Silver* is the autobiography of a young China girl who's real-life adventure takes her from a harsh but loving environment of a rural Chinese village into a horrific life of slavery and servitude at the hands of a rich Singapore Chinese landowner as a *mui tsai* or slave girl in 1930s. With the onset of WWII and the capture of Singapore, Ms Lim flees the island only to have her ship bombed and sunk. Rescued by Indonesian fisherman after drifting for days off the Sumatran coastline she later narrowly escapes sexual slavery and death under the Japanese military in Indonesia. This fascinating and compelling book, republished by Singapore publisher Monsoon Books, with historical photographs from the author and from National Archives of Singapore, chronicles the incredible life of Lim Chiu Mei, who later adopted the given name Janet.

In *Sold for Silver* the reader is taken on a humbling journey of desperate hardship punctuated far too infrequently, but always before tumbling over the precipice, by seemingly impossible acts of mercy, kindness and redemption. Aside from being an inspirational read, this gem of a re-discovered book offers much for readers—from a fascinating historical perspective on not only life in village-China during the 1930s, but the early socioeconomic development of Southeast Asia through the colonial and second world war period. In particular it gives a vivid portrayal of aspects of colonial life in Singapore not often illuminated. It is an eye-opener and an excellent reality check for affluent, modern Singapore whose very existence has been so keenly coloured by a troubled and not so distant, albeit largely forgotten, past.

The trials and tribulations of this tenacious young woman are nothing less than inspirational as she overcomes, one-by-one, obstacles that would easily defeat most of us. Relating her recovery following the bombing of her evacuation ship from Singapore she writes: "It was a busy place; groans, cries, delirious shouts and death rattles filled the fetid air. A patient died, and was quickly removed to make the bed available for another. Death walked swiftly, silently, continuously and I waited for him to pause at my bed. But the hours dragged on I was still only his witness."

Eventually she became the first-ever Asian Matron in Singapore at St Andrew's Mission Hospital. Today Ms Lim enjoys the love and happiness of her children and grandchildren in Australia. It is also a journey of cultural awareness as the young girl is uprooted from the parochial environs of her Chinese village to get an eye-opening exposure to the greater Chinese cultural diaspora found throughout SE Asia, to the Western missionaries and soldiers, and later the Indonesian Malays and Chinese and finally the Japanese who shocked her with their contradictory brutality and kindness.

What makes this book a particularly enjoyable and interesting read is the understated style of Ms Lim's observations: the

hardship, pain and suffering is portrayed in a neutral, almost matter of fact manner, devoid either moral judgment or blame leaving the readers emotions to bring on the moral edge. "I had experienced the bitterness and brutality of war, yet my chief memory at that moment was not of this, but of the acts of kindness and sympathy I had received from both enemies and friends. These I shall never forget." A must-read for all Singaporeans and those interested in the not so distant history of this region.

### About the Publisher

Monsoon Books is a Singapore-based independent publisher dedicated to publishing classic and contemporary crime, literary and pulp fiction, humour, and narrative nonfiction, with distribution throughout Asia, the United States, Canada, the UK, Australia and New Zealand. We publish quality books from outstanding writers such as Gerrie Lim, Stephen Leather, Stu Lloyd, Warren Olson, Erich R. Sysak, D. Devika Bai, Ee Lin See, Alison Lester, Andrew Hicks, Peter Neville, Janet Lim and Moammar Emka.

Through sublicenses with our colleagues overseas, Monsoon's titles are translated into and published in various languages around the world. Under the direction of publisher Philip Tatham, Monsoon represents an exciting, innovative and distinctive alternative to commercial publishing; our mission is to be unique—to find new talent and put publishing in Asia at the heart of the literary world.

### SOLD FOR SILVER

By Janet Lim

ISBN: 981-05-1728-9

Publication Date: 20 Nov 2004

Price: S\$24.95

Format: Paperback

Pages: 240pp + 8pp photographs

Other titles by Monsoon Books  
([www.monsoonbooks.com.sg](http://www.monsoonbooks.com.sg))

