Contesting Space in Colonial Singapore

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*Contesting Space in Colonial Singapore: Power Relations and the Urban Built Environment.*


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Some things do not change. I wish to re-dedicate the book to my husband Andrew for always being there for me.

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When Thomas Stanford Raffles planned to develop town at Singapore, he had to separate town into two parts, European quarter and Asian quarter. European population in Asian colonies was in ruling side, but was always minority, and so needed Asian neighbours to maintain their life and business. Raffles designed both quarters, European one followed ordinary colonial town planning of central government area in grid settlement pattern, while Asian one consisting of ethnic origins. In the British colonial city of Singapore, municipal authorities and Asian communities faced off over numerous issue. As the city expanded, disputes arose in connection with sanitation, housing, street names, control over pedestrian 'five-foot-ways', and sacred spaces such as burial grounds. The two perceptions of the city frequently clashed, and the author reads the cityscape of Singapore as the result of this contest between discipline and resistance. Drawing on meticulous research and a theoretically sophisticated use of cultural and social geography, post-colonial historical discourse, and social theory, the author offers a compelling picture of a critical stage in Singapore's past.