

THAM YEW CHIN, 58
LITERARY ARTS

Yew Chin is a prolific Chinese writer who wrote under pseudonym "You Jin". Her passion for writing came early in life. Already a voracious reader of Chinese literature as a child, she submitted her first literary work, *I Wish to Be a Fairy Tale Writer*, at the age of 11 to a Singapore Chinese-language newspaper, which published it.

Born in Ipoh, Malaysia, in 1950, she moved with her family to Singapore as a young girl and is now a Singapore citizen. After obtaining first-class honours for her Bachelor of Arts degree from Nanyang University's Chinese and Literature Department in 1973, she worked at the National Library for three years, before becoming a journalist and an editor at Nanyang Siang Bao, a Singapore Chinese-language daily newspaper.

In the 1980s, she embarked on a new career as a teacher in a secondary school and subsequently a junior college. She is presently a freelance writer and it is in literary arts where she achieved her greatest acclaim.

You Jin has gained immense popularity for her heart-warming travelogues, which are known for the humour and humanity they exude. Her vast body of works includes short stories, novels and essays. She has published around 140 books in Singapore, Malaysia, China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, and won many accolades.

In 1982 and 1991 respectively, her travelogue *The White House in the Desert* and her novel *The Burning Lion* won the Book Awards, which were given out by the National Book Development Council of Singapore.

In 1991, she was the first writer to receive the inaugural Singapore Chinese Literary Award from the Singapore Literature Society. She has also received the first Montblanc-NUS Centre for the Arts Literary Award in 1996.

In 2000, the You Jin Research Centre was set up by Sichuan Province's Chongqing University and You Jin was invited to the Chinese city of Chengdu for its inaugural writer-in-residence project in 2007. The resulting book, *The Colourful City*, was published in 2008 in both China and Singapore.

In the same year, her collection of stories, *Short Stories by You Jin*, was selected as one of the chosen titles for Read! Singapore, an annual reading campaign organised by National Library Board.

Every year, You Jin's literary works are studied in Singapore schools and used as a thesis subject at local and overseas universities.