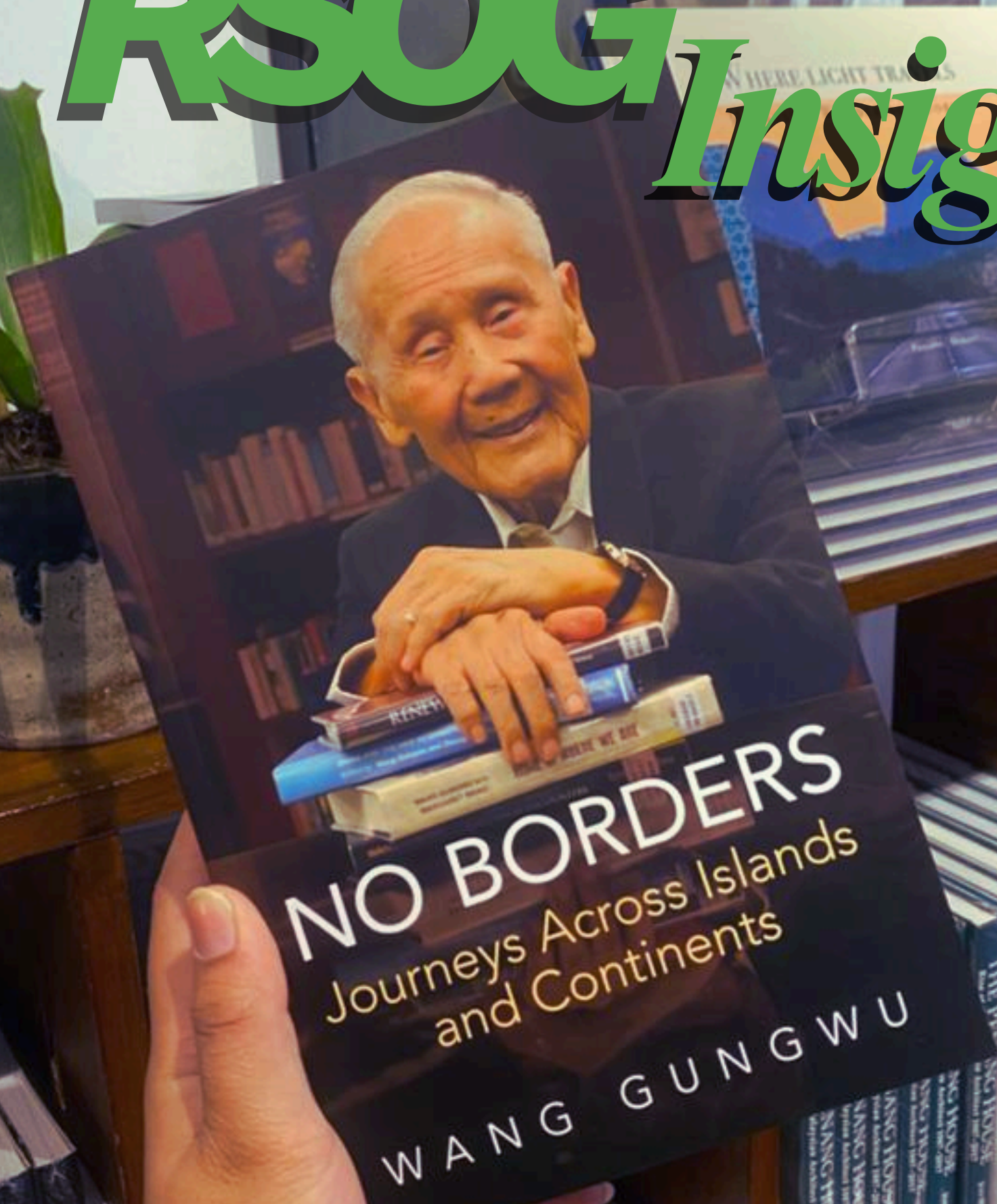


RSOOG *Insight*



NO BORDERS - NATIONAL

Professor Wang Gungwu was born in 1930 in Surabaya, Indonesia (then the Dutch East Indies). His father, a teacher, and his mother, a housewife, were both from the Republic of China. In 1931, the family moved to Ipoh in Malaysia (then the Federated Malay States), where he grew up and attended the Andersen School. After World War II, they returned to China, and he studied at the National Central University in Nanjing between 1947 and 1948. Political disorder cut short their stay, and the family returned to Ipoh.

Professor Wang Gungwu worked as a part-time teacher before moving to Singapore to attend the University of Malaya. He later pursued further studies in London at the School of Oriental and African Studies, returning in 1957 just as Malaya was born. He joined the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, raising his young family, and was excited about the future of the new nation. His research drew international attention, and in 1968 he moved to Australia to join the Australian National University. The “border-shift” to international recognition followed soon after.

NO BORDERS - INTERNATIONAL

Professor Wang Gungwu's prior international and Australian connections eased his transition to Canberra. At the newly established Australian National University, where scholars had recently gathered from across the country (sounds like Putrajaya, but minus the foreign missions), he quickly observed a strong presence of sinologists but few modern historians of China.

The university's academic freedom and collegial atmosphere accelerated his research, expanding his expertise and leading to administrative responsibilities. He served on grants committees, regional advisory councils, and chaired the Australian-China Council.

In 1986, two years after Britain announced Hong Kong's return to China, he accepted the role of Vice Chancellor at the University of Hong Kong.

NO BORDERS - GLOBAL

Generally, international refers to interactions between two or more specific countries, while global connects with the entire world. Professor Wang Gungwu was warmly received upon his arrival in Hong Kong, where questions centered on change.

He quickly sensed the complexities of Hong Kong's system and society. To address them, he looked beyond the campus, actively engaging various stakeholders, especially in the mainland. On the island, he served on high-level committees, including the Executive Council of the Hong Kong Government. Observing China's global presence today, Professor Wang Gungwu appears to have certain foresight about the future.

After ten action-packed years in Hong Kong, Professor Wang Gungwu assumed a more advisory role in Singapore and, as a key maritime center in a contested region, it provided fertile ground for his insights. He devoted more time sharing his experience and was recognised with numerous awards. It was a full circle for Wang Gungwu, who had once studied there and met his wife, Margaret.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE
FOR YOU TO STEP
BEYOND A CERTAIN
BORDER?

