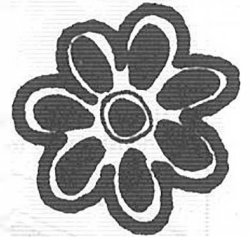


IDIOMS & SLANG

'THE MALAYSIAN VERSION'



Adapted from 'The English Of Singapore And Malalysia' by R.K. Tongue .

M·RANI

IDIOMS: DIRECT TRANSLATION



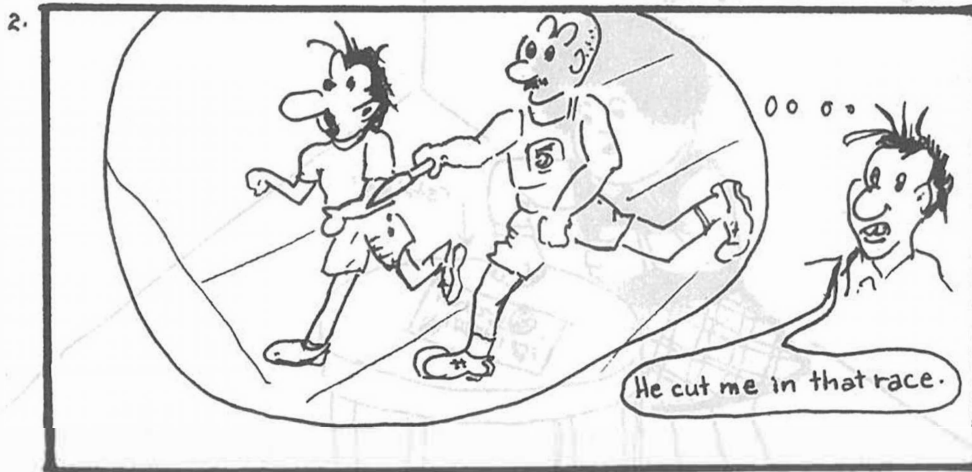
'Look at you! Shaking legs and having a good time.'

'Stop shaking legs and do some work for a change.'

A very interesting idiom in Malaysia is 'to shake legs' (in the plural) which means 'to be idle.' It is a translation of the Malay idiom, 'goyang kaki.'

In Britain, 'to shake a leg' means 'to dance (in a lively manner, perhaps).'

In American English it usually means 'to hurry': "We'd better shake a leg or we'll miss the train."

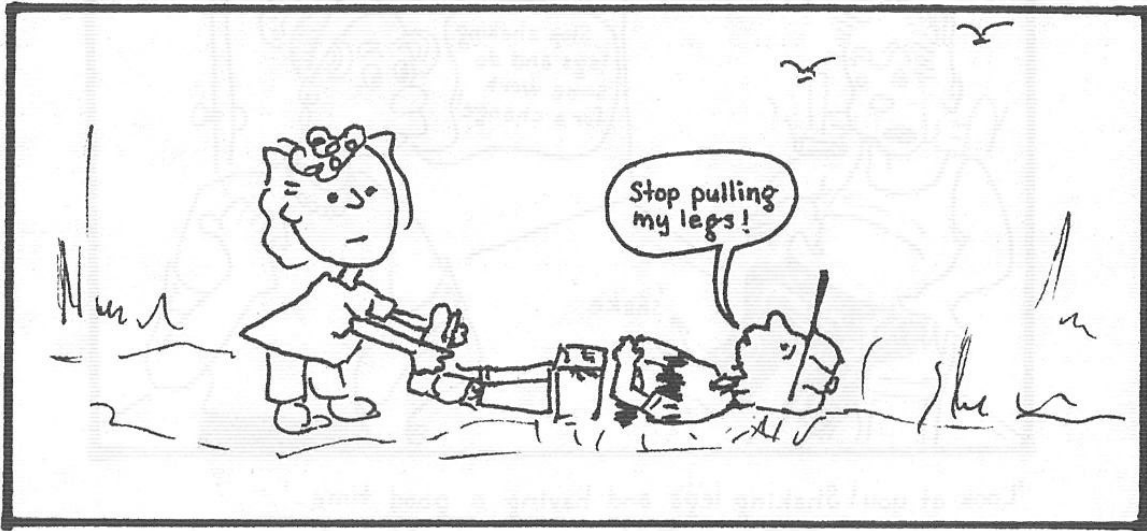


The use of 'to cut' in the sense of overtaking and cutting in on another car.

'His car cut mine,' 'He cut me in this race' and 'Can I cut you?'

It's clearly an English translation of either the Malay 'potong' (to cut) or its equivalent in Chinese.

SLIGHT CHANGES OF FORM OR OF WORDING.



The Malaysian English idiom 'stop pulling my legs meaning 'stop teasing me,' would have a literal meaning if it occurred in British English where in teasing someone, only one leg is pulled.



An Englishman will say 'he has struck lucky' if he wins a lottery.

Speakers of English in Malaysia refer to 'striking the lottery.'

MISCELLANEOUS

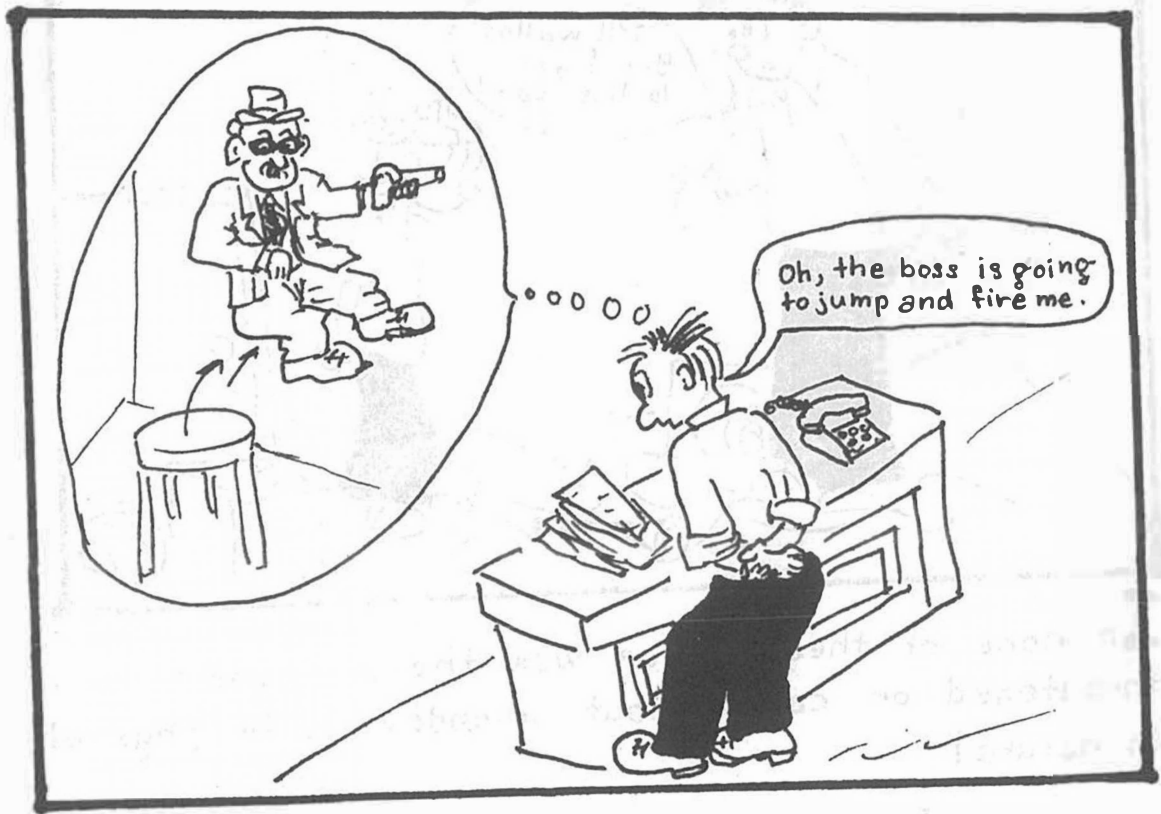
1. **W**hen British speakers say, 'Let's go fifty-fifty' they mean 'let us pay equal shares.'

Malaysians usually say 'half-half' in such situations.

2. **A**n English speaking Malaysian office worker conscious of some dereliction of office duty, may express concern about what will happen when the fault is discovered by saying: 'Oh, the boss will jump!' After jumping the boss may then 'fire' the miscreant.

'To fire' is 'to dismiss from employment', but many speakers of English in Malaysia use this to mean 'to scold,' 'to rebuke', 'to tell off.'

For example, 'I rang and fired him,' and 'I got a good firing from him.'



VERY COMMON TOO ARE :



In none of these cases was the punishment threatened or carried out intended to be physical in nature!



The above three are just some of the colourful expressions used in Malaysia.

SLANG



1. frus (frustrated)

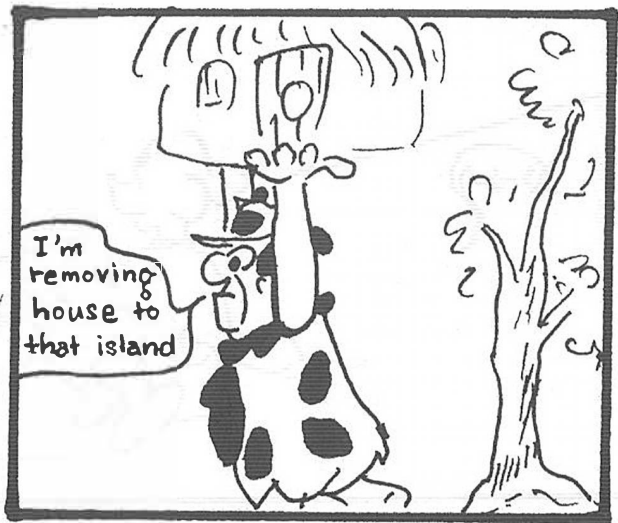
This is extremely common, and seems to have the meaning less of frustrated than exasperated or fed up. It occurs in such expressions as the following:- 'I really frus,' 'Frus only, man,' 'He frus, man,' and 'He's a frus case.'



2. 'I don't want to be a lamp post,' is to be an unwanted third party in the company of a couple (to play gooseberry).



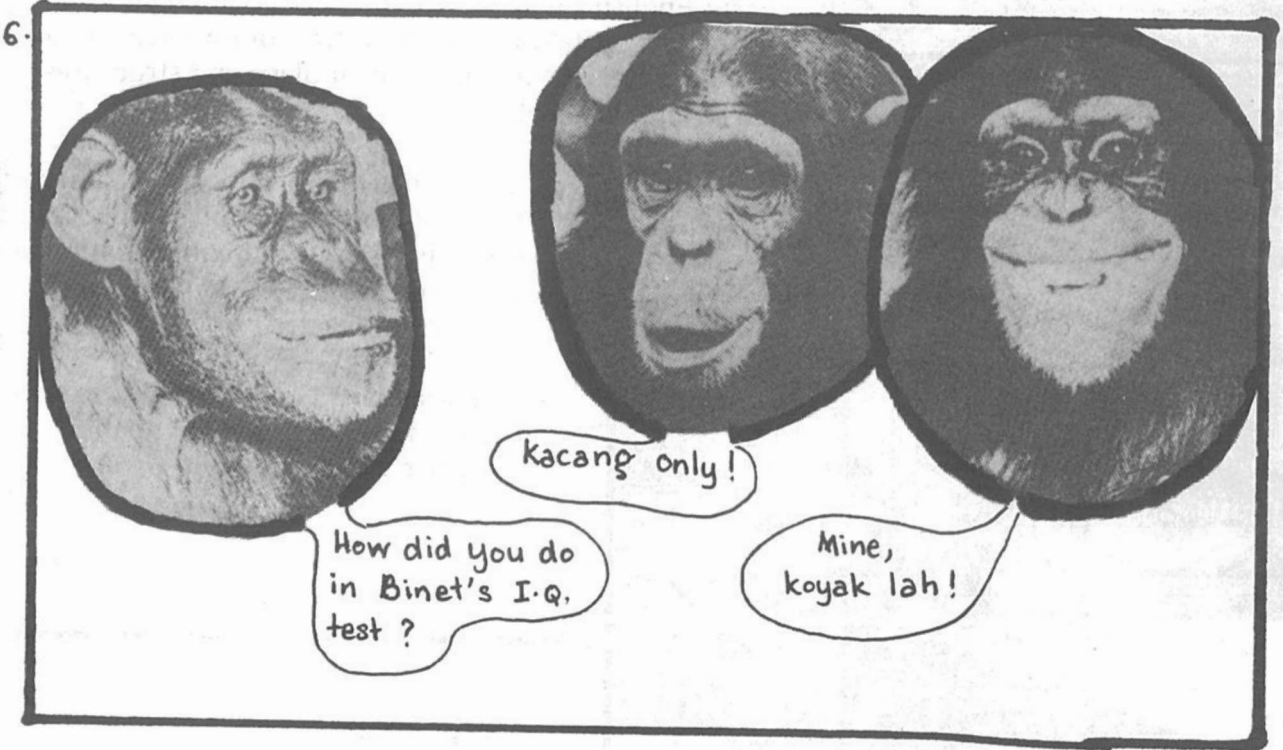
3. 'Don't act, ah' (= Don't put on airs)



4. Some say 'remove house' instead of 'move house.'



5. 'She's trying to carry big leg.' From the Chinese expression meaning 'she's trying to win favour.'



- a) 'How did you do in your exam?'
 'Koyak, lah!' meaning 'I'm sure to fail.'
 (koyak = torn)
- b) 'How was your English paper?'
 'Kacang only!' meaning 'easy.'
 (Kacang = (pea)nuts)