

INTERVIEWS

Q: What made you choose to join Shook Lin & Bok?

A: Actually it was my ambition to become a lawyer. My brother's friend, who was Mr. Jacob's, our translator's, neighbour, got news that there was an opening in Shook Lin & Bok. My brother was informed of this and my brother asked me to try it out. The teaching job that I was in required me to go in early in the morning and I even had to teach evening classes.

So the whole day was spent at the institute. So I was getting a bit fed up with having to go in so early and come back so late in the night. So my elder brother suggested that I get a good 9 to 5 job and to also pursue a legal career. So I came for the interview in Shook Lin & Bok in July or August and I was supposed to report for duty on the 1st of September. The letter came to me but I was still not sure whether to leave the teaching job I was in. This was partly because when I came for the interview, Mrs. Lee, who was the office manager at the time, made me type out some legal documents. My typing wasn't very good at the time. So I thought you needed to be a typist whilst at the firm and so I wasn't very keen on joining at the time. So when the 1st of September came, I didn't show up for the job. I carried on with the teaching job.

Then, at the end of September, I wasn't feeling very well and I didn't go for work and was at home. I received a call from Mrs. Lee in my house. Apparently she had been trying to reach me at home for the past month! "Clive, where are you? Why haven't you come in for work?" Mrs. Lee said to me on the phone. I responded by saying that I wasn't very sure whether I'd like the job or not. "No, no, no. Mr. Das says you must come in to at least try the job first." Mrs. Lee replied.

So I had to give a 24-hour notice at the other job. I joined the firm on the 1st of October 1991.

Q: *Have you any regrets in joining the firm?*

A: No, not at all. After joining the firm, I realized that I developed a greater interest in pursuing a legal career.

Q: *What do you like the most about your work at the firm?*

A: I like the people who are around me. When I joined, the Partners in particular were very friendly. At the time I joined it was Dato' Param who was the Managing Partner. And I really enjoyed the atmosphere in the firm. I felt like there was this family kind of relationship. I felt at home. It's a fantastic place to be in.

Q: *Now, it cannot be disputed that Shook Lin & Bok has one of the best law libraries a law firm in Malaysia can offer. What would you say is the secret behind the quality of our library?*

A: I don't know what the quality of the library was before I joined. But when I joined, Dato' Das was the boss of the library. I think he did a fantastic job upgrading the library and keeping it up to date with the latest books and the latest reports. At that time everything was done manually and we didn't have the online research portals we have today. Dato was making sure that everything was there for the lawyers to do their research.

Also, comparing the library that we have now with the one we had in the old building in MPL, the size of the present library is much bigger than the one we had before. The size of the library in the MPL office was only a quarter of the size of the present library.

Those days, other law firms and lawyers would call the firm to ask for copies of cases in some of the Indian law reports. But we would always have to get permission from the bosses to see if we could assist these law firms for conflict reasons.

Q: *Why would you say a well-stocked library is important for a law firm?*

A: The law is developing every year. You have to have all the resources you need. Having good lawyers in a firm would serve no purpose if they do not have the resources they need to do the job. We have almost every law report there is, from the English and Australian reports to the Indian, Pakistani and Sri Lankan law reports.