

YANG YIN SAGA

Former China tour guide Yang Yin was convicted last week of 120 charges of falsifying receipts and company accounts, and duping the authorities into granting him permanent residency and his wife a long-term visit pass. Court papers named several people whom he came into contact with in Singapore – a former business partner, an accountant and a form writer. **The Sunday Times** tracks down two of them.

The form writer

Toh Yong Chuan

It has been nearly five years since Mr Aik Nam San first met former China tour guide Yang Yin, but the form writer remembers the meeting vividly.

"He came to see me at around 11am to noon and I was very busy," said the 69-year-old. "When it came to his turn, the first thing he said was, 'Uncle, go for lunch first if you are hungry'.

"He was very polite. Other people would have said, 'Fill in my form first'," Mr Aik told *The Sunday Times*. "And the way he called me Uncle, dragging out the 'cle' – it was so seductive."

According to court papers, Yang sought Mr Aik's help on or before Sept 1, 2011 to fill in an application form for permanent residency (PR). It was his second try.

A year earlier, Yang had applied for PR through consultancy company Rikvin but the application was rejected by the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA).

Speaking at his office in Kitchener Complex last week, Mr Aik said he was not aware of how Yang came to know of his form filling service.

At that time, he was renting space at the Jalan Besar Community Club for \$500 a month where he ran a form filling service using a table and two chairs. "I spent about 40 minutes with him and charged him \$30," said Mr Aik.

He recalled that Yang had all the proper paperwork, including a payslip. Besides the PR application

form, Mr Aik also helped Yang fill in an annex to the form which the PR applicant's boss had to complete.

"He told me he was applying for PR and he was also the boss of the company, so I can help him fill up that part of the form," Mr Aik said.

In the PR application, Yang falsely declared that his company had a turnover of \$75,080 in 2009 and \$135,952 in 2010.

When asked if he suspected at that time the information Yang provided was fake, the veteran form writer of 14 years replied: "No."

After that PR application was submitted and approved, Mr Aik saw Yang two more times – in August 2013 when Yang sought his help again to apply for a long-term visit pass (LTVP) for his wife Weng Yandan, and a year later when the LTVP was up for renewal.

"I can't remember how much I charged him the second and third time," Mr Aik said. "It should be \$30 each time. But I remember that he was always carrying a slingbag strapped across his shoulder."

Mr Aik was one of the 11 witnesses the prosecution had lined up last week when Yang's trial started.

"The ICA asked me to stand by," he said. But he was not called because Yang pleaded guilty to 120 charges.

Mr Aik's nondescript office has a sign that says he is a "former ICA form writer". He said: "I helped people fill in forms at ICA from 2002 to 2008. There were seven of us."

In 2008, the ICA stopped having form writers at its premises and Mr Aik moved to the Jalan Besar CC. He



Mr Aik (left) helped Yang Yin fill in an application form for PR. PHOTO: ALICIA CHAN FOR THE SUNDAY TIMES

moved to a small office about the size of a parking space in Kitchener Complex last year.

Mr Aik was previously a civil servant at the Environment Ministry and an assistant manager at Sembcorp, before becoming a form writer in 2002. He helps mostly foreigners and locals who married foreign spouses with their forms. "They do not know how to fill in the forms because they are in English."

He gets about one or two clients a day and charges them about \$30

each, but work is not regular.

Mr Aik was unable to estimate the number of forms he had filled in over the past 14 years. "Must be in the thousands," he said, adding that he hopes to retire in one or two years.

He has not followed the Yang Yin saga in the media, but he said he recognised him immediately after the news of the case broke in September 2014.

tohyc@sph.com.sg