

Leader-Visionary LKY Gratefully Remembered
Jimmy Teo



LEE KUAN YEW
1923-2015

Courtesy: <http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2011/10/03/overturning-lee-kuan-yews-legacy-in-singapore/>

I must write about Mr. Lee Kuan Yew (fondly referred to as LKY) the Founder, Father & the 1st Prime Minister of Singapore:

1 When I was 9 years old, at Lorong Limau, Singapore, I heard from my parents that PAP leaders were coming to our place (an area famed for gangsterism) for an open air election campaign. I was there at about 5pm right in the front observing LKY, Dr. Toh Chin Chye & others seated on the lorry (which acted as a platform complete with loud speakers). When LKY shouted: 'Merdeka' (which means 'Independence'), I shouted the loudest I could. All others did the same. The whole atmosphere was electrified. We were all mesmerized by his charisma & presence – that fearless presence, infused with total dedication & passion to & for his country – Singapore.

2 On Sept 9th 1963 (I was then 13 years old), LKY shook my hand. There were thousands at Towner Road. He came by to garner support for a snap National election. His hand was very warm (I reasoned that he shook so many hands that day & the friction must have produced the heat). My home at Lorong Limau was about 5 minutes' walk from Towner Road.

3 On that same 9.9.63's evening, I followed him with the crowd until about reaching the end of Towner Road (nearing Balestier Road). I was there when he was pushed into the monsoon drain. Someone give him a hand & quickly pulled him up. The drain was quite shallow & about 6 feet wide. The person who pushed him, a middle age Chinese person, was Mr. Foo (from the Singapore Business Houses Employees Union/Singapore School Canteen Vendors Association whose office was fronting the drain). It all happened so fast. LKY was athletic & agile. He was unhurt.

4 About 40 years ago, I asked the late Mr. Lee Chin Koon, father of LKY (we were members of the same club - Singapore Swimming Club) that some people told me that he & LKY were not in good terms. Mr. Lee Chin Koon looked at me firmly & said: 'What does people know about us? Every morning without fail, he serves me drink* with both hands.' At that moment, I was very touched to know that LKY was such a filial son. I wonder how many of us do that for our parents. (*I could not remember the drink he mentioned but most likely milo, tea or coffee).

5 Despite being mildly dyslexic, LKY also had a shorter tongue. He had to make special efforts to speak. Yet, he was an Orator Par Excellence. Over at a dinner party at the American Embassy in Singapore (about 1979), the Ambassador came to me & said: 'Jimmy, your Singapore is a tiny nation. But when Lee Kuan Yew speaks, the world listens'. I was so proud of Singapore.

6 When I was at the Istana/Sri Temasek where LKY & family would spent their day & most evenings, I was so surprised to see his exercising shed. It was very simple, wooden planked painted white & aerated by chicken wire at the upper end. There were about 4 machines (2 rowers & 2 Tunturi cycling machines – all manual, basic, old but workable). The chicken wires reminded me of the old Kampung days. It was so simple, so archaic, so revealing of its user.

7 About 16 years ago, I was pleasantly surprised to receive an email from the Prime Minister Office. It was in response to my letter to him to tell him that I am his ardent follower to the core. I stopped at 2 kids as per his suggestion. That email was from LKY. As we all know, LKY was very frugal with his words. For me, he wrote 3 sentences. I memorized them & could repeat them verbatim:

'Dear Jimmy.

Thank you for your warm words.

This is to wish you, your family & your 2 sons, the best.

Lee Kuan Yew'

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LEE KUAN YEW - Gratefully Remembered

Singaporeans
Must be grateful & thankful
To
Lee Kuan Yew & his team.

We cannot take our current success, prosperity & peace for granted.

We must aspire to be the best, and better all the time.

Continuing the Legacy of LKY

And

Be the best.



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