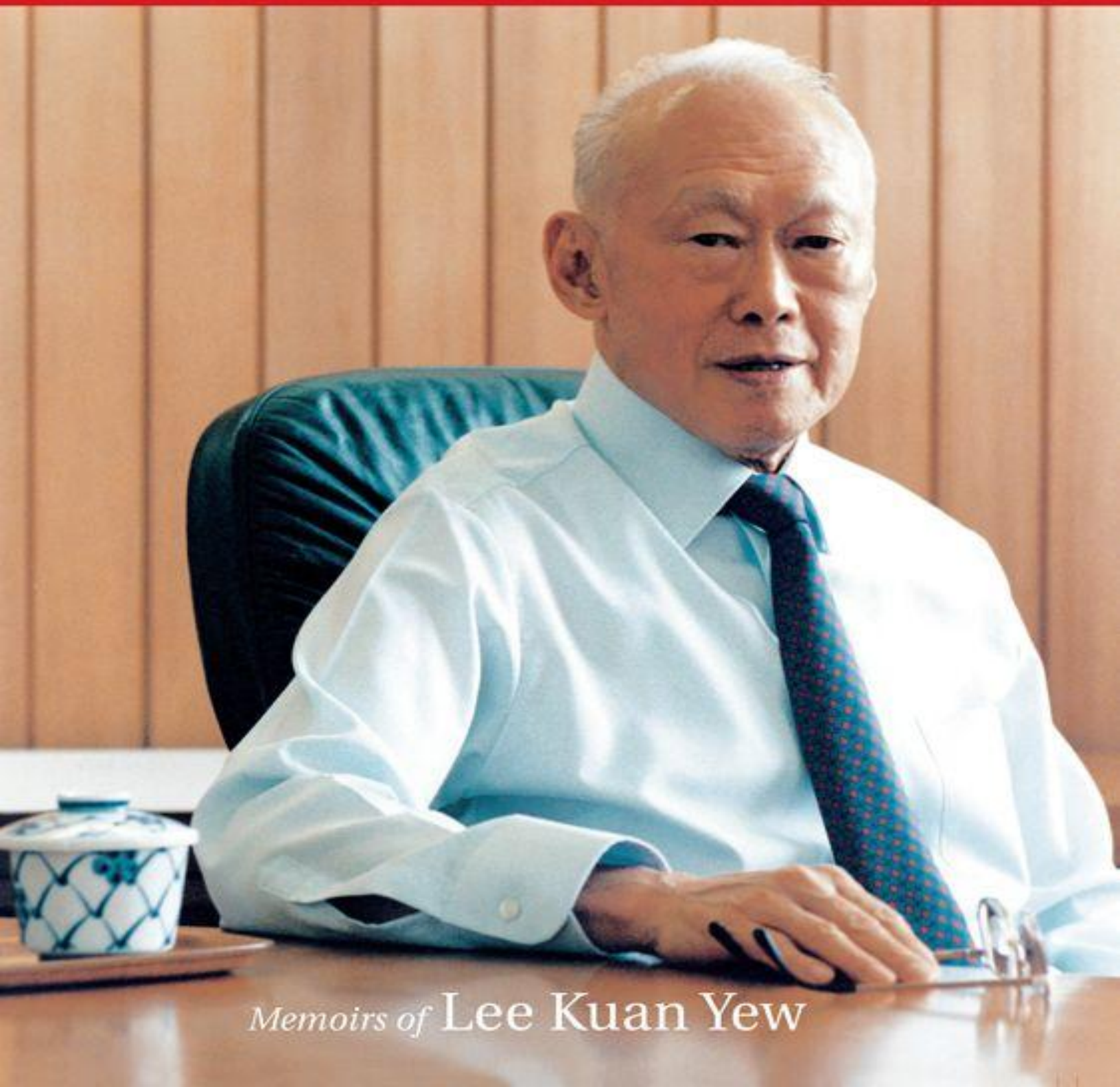


THE
SINGAPORE
STORY



Memoirs of Lee Kuan Yew

Author's Note to the eBook Edition

I wrote my Memoirs for a younger generation of Singaporeans to know the story of the Singapore I grew up in. (*The Singapore Story* was published in 1999 and *From Third World to First* in 2000.) It was to give them an understanding of the difficulties Singapore faced then in its struggle to survive in the midst of larger, newly independent nations pursuing nationalistic policies.

It is a different world and a different Singapore today, a world vastly changed by globalization and technology but the threats remain and the challenge to national survival is grave.

It is my hope that the experiences of my generation find relevance with a generation that grew up with digital literacy and technology. I look forward to this digital version reaching out to that generation of online readers.

Lee Kuan Yew

August 2014

About the author and his memoirs

“Lee Kuan Yew is one of the brightest, ablest men I have ever met. *The Singapore Story* is a must read for people interested in a true Asian success story. From this book we also learn a lot about the thinking of one of this century’s truly visionary statesmen.” — **George Bush**, *US President, 1989–93*

“In office, I read and analysed every speech of Harry’s. He had a way of penetrating the fog of propaganda and expressing with unique clarity the issues of our times and the way to tackle them. He was never wrong ...”

— **Margaret Thatcher**, *British Prime Minister, 1979–90*

“Lee Kuan Yew is one of the seminal figures of Asia, and this book does justice to his extraordinary accomplishments. Describing the motivations and concepts that have animated his conduct and explaining specific actions, he will undoubtedly raise many controversies. But whether one agrees or not, one will learn a great deal.”

— **Dr Henry A. Kissinger**, *US Secretary of State, 1973–77*

“Candid, informed, forceful, brilliant: these attributes explain why leaders throughout the world have sought out Lee Kuan Yew – and the words apply to his great memoir. You can learn the fascinating story of Singapore from this book, (and) how to think about power and politics in the world, how to analyse intricate problems, how to lead a people. A powerful book written by an extraordinary man.” — **George P. Shultz**, *US Secretary of State, 1982–89*

“Your memoirs strike me as excellent stuff, far better than the normal run of autobiographies, which are usually full of post hoc justifications. The treatment of events is refreshing. No one can accuse you of unfairness to your adversaries. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it.”

— **Dr Goh Keng Swee**, *Singapore Deputy Prime Minister, 1973–84*

“In the many years I have known him, Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew has become a valued friend and counsellor. His resoluteness, energy and vision have left a deep impression on Singapore, making it a political and economic powerhouse whose influence extends far beyond its own region.

“Lee Kuan Yew is not only a remarkable political figure but a challenging thinker. He has much of moment to say to us as we steer our course into the future. I hope his memoirs and ideas will find a wide and receptive public.” — **Helmut Kohl**, *German Chancellor since 1992*

“Lee Kuan Yew is a statesman who created a successful nation. He has known everybody. He has achieved impossible things and his memoirs tell the truth.” — **William Rees-Mogg**, *Editor of The Times of London, 1967–81*

“Lee Kuan Yew is fascinating due to his grasp of the world’s political and economic fabric. Many American and European leaders have profited from his wisdom, particularly by his evaluation of China as a world power and by his analysis and explanation of Asian values.”

— **Helmut Schmidt**, *German Chancellor, 1974–82*

“For a country to rise from the threshold of subsistence to one of the highest living standards in the world in 30 years is no common achievement. At the root of this success lies the genius of one man, Mr Lee Kuan Yew. ... He has turned a city into a state. ... Mr Lee has gathered around himself the most brilliant minds, transforming the most exacting standards into a system of government. Under his leadership, the primacy of the general interest, the cult of education, work and saving, the capacity to foresee the needs of the city have enabled Singapore to take what I call ‘shortcuts to progress’.

“... Through these memoirs, the reader will gain deep insight into the highly singular character of Singapore. He will discover the most perfect possible encounter between East and West, between Europe and Asia.

“Enabling individuals to develop the peculiar genius of each of the cultures of Singapore: Chinese, Malay, Indian and European, is surely one of the challenges facing us on a worldwide scale ... Does not development and peace among nations develop upon the success of this undertaking?”

— **Jacques Chirac**, *French President since 1995*

“Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew is one of the pivotal figures in the modern history of Southeast Asia. His actions have shaped the course of events in this region. His vision and ideas continue to enrich intellectual debate and influence policy-makers worldwide. This seminal work is an invaluable account of the history of Singapore and the region.”

— **Prem Tinsulanonda**, *Thai Prime Minister, 1980–88*

“This is a personal history of a man who, almost single-handedly, built a great nation from a small island ... this is the first textbook in the world on how to build a nation. Mr Lee has also been a great friend and often an astute observer of Japan. Japanese readers will learn in this book not only about their present image but also about their future portrait as seen through the penetrating eyes of this great political leader.” — **Kiichi Miyazawa**, *Japanese Prime Minister, 1991–93 and Finance Minister since July 1998*

“These memoirs provide a unique insight into the history of modern Singapore and the thinking of one of the great Asian leaders of the 20th century. I am sure everyone who reads them will enjoy them immensely.”

— **Tony Blair**, *British Prime Minister since 1997*

“He always commands an attentive audience amongst Western leaders. This book shows why.” — **James Callaghan**, *British Prime Minister, 1976–79*

“Harry Lee has been and remains one of the most distinguished leaders of the last half century. He was fortunate in being supported by a group of ministers of extraordinary ability who would have graced the cabinet room of any major country.

“As a current history, *The Singapore Story* is without equal. ... It was impossible to put the book down. It is a commanding story of a man and a country.” — **Malcolm Fraser**, *Australian Prime Minister, 1975–83*

“This is a remarkable autobiography by any standards ... distinguished by its clarity, thought and expression as well as by the breadth of its coverage.

“His judgments of those in high places with whom he had to deal during his long period in office, in particular with British Prime Ministers and

American Presidents, are fascinating. Equally so, is his account of his first contacts with China.” — **Edward Heath**, *British Prime Minister, 1970–74*

“Lee’s vision, astute political judgement and strategy turned Singapore from a trading post into the successful thriving nation that it is today, respected by others. For those interested in politics and economic development, his memoirs should be required reading.” — **Tun Daim Zainuddin**, *Malaysian Finance Minister, 1984–91 and Special Functions Minister since June 1998*

“His memoirs are more than the story of his own career, fascinating though that is ... They are the reflections on the international scene of one of the clearest political minds of our time.” — **Percy Cradock**, *Foreign Policy Adviser to the British Prime Minister, 1984–92*

“Combining what is best in the Chinese and British traditions, his penetrating intellect gives political pragmatism a unique edge which has made the city state of Singapore a model far beyond Asia. The memoirs provide a mine of wisdom and information which politicians would be wise to quarry.”

— **Denis Healey**, *British Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1974–79*

“This is the story of a man and his country. He returned to it when it was the rump of empire. He and it are now critical geopolitical pivots. They are now indivisible because of his unique ability to draw on the best of eastern and western cultures, to yield to objectivity rather than populism, to create a nation in his own image and having done so to be revered rather than despised. ... I am lost in awe of the man and his works. These writings are as economic, modest and understated as he is. He learned from history how to make it. It is good that he shares the way with us.”

— **David Lange**, *New Zealand Prime Minister, 1984–89*

“How to turn a crisis into positive benefit distinguishes an able statesman from the ordinary. *The Singapore Story* reflects this great leader’s life and vision. Everyone can learn from these most interesting memoirs.” — **Siddhi Savetsila**, *Thai Foreign Minister, 1980–90*

“For more than half a century Lee Kuan Yew has helped shape not only Singapore’s history but that of all of us who live in this region. This is a work every bit as insightful, astringent, opinionated and intelligent as we would have hoped for from its distinguished author.”

— **Paul Keating**, *Australian Prime Minister, 1991–96*

“Lee Kuan Yew, one of the Pacific Basin’s great statesmen, has written a challenging and fascinating memoir. Great reading for both proponents and those in disagreement.” — **Gerald R. Ford**, *US President, 1974–77*

“Anyone wishing to understand Singapore and Asia must read Lee Kuan Yew’s memoirs. He rightly makes the point that there is no book on ‘how to build a nation state’ but his own story sets out how he fashioned a new nation on the tiny island of Singapore. The writing is rich with insights about the author himself and the other world leaders who have sought his counsel on the great questions of the day.”

— **James Bolger**, *New Zealand Prime Minister, 1990–97*

“Whether one agrees with all the attitudes, decisions and analyses of Lee Kuan Yew, this book is a must for anyone who wants to understand the mind-set of Asia.” — **Bob Hawke**, *Australian Prime Minister, 1983–91*

“He and Dr Kissinger are probably the only two world statesmen who, after leaving office, find an open door to every head of state and government anywhere in the world.

“His memoirs cover a life full of incident and achievement from the fall of Singapore in 1942 to the problems of the very different world of today. A fascinating life by a fascinating man.” — **Lord Carrington**, *British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 1979–82*

“... his memoirs, replete with examples of his sagacity and wisdom, are a critical component of the unfolding history of this unique and important nation. A must read for any student of international affairs.”

— **James A. Baker, III**, *US Secretary of State, 1989–92*

“Lee Kuan Yew is one of the outstanding politicians of our time. He won a notable victory over the communists in Singapore and has created the most

remarkable city state since Athens.”

— **Philip Moore**, *Deputy British High Commissioner to Singapore, 1963–65*

“... his story of a turbulent half-century in Asia ... are chronicled in the trenchant style which is his hallmark, and many of his judgments will be controversial, even explosive.”

— **Charles Powell**, *Private Secretary to the British Prime Minister, 1984–91*

THE
SINGAPORE
STORY



Memoirs of
LEE KUAN YEW



At work on my drafts on home PC (Oxley Road).