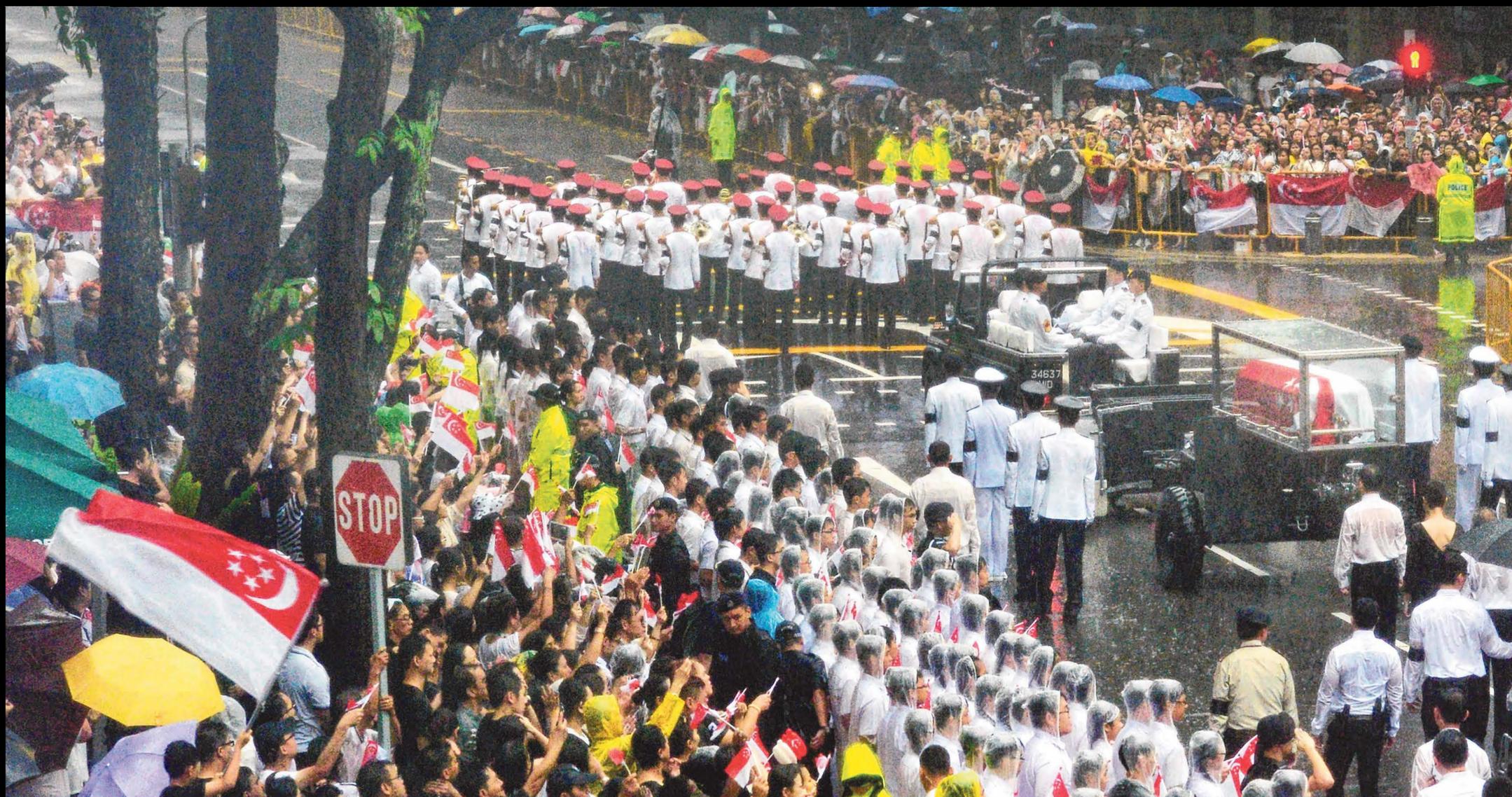


Goodbye, Mr Lee

Thank you, Mr Lee



KEEPING THE FLAME ALIVE

"The light that has guided us all these years has been extinguished.

We have lost our founding father Mr Lee Kuan Yew, who lived and breathed Singapore all his life.

He and his team led our pioneer generation to create this island nation, Singapore...

We have all lost a father. We grieve as one people, one nation. But in our grief, we've displayed the best of Singapore. Ordinary people going to great lengths to distribute refreshments and umbrellas to the crowd and help one another in the queue late into the night. Citizen soldiers, Home Team officers, cleaners, all working tirelessly round the clock. Our shared sorrow has brought us together and made us stronger and more resolute.

We come together not only to mourn, we come together also to rejoice in Mr Lee Kuan Yew's long and full life and what he has achieved with us, his people in Singapore. We come together to pledge ourselves to continue building this exceptional country. Let us shape this island nation into one of the great cities in the world reflecting the ideals he stood for, realising the dreams he inspired and worthy of the people who have made Singapore our home and nation."

— Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, in his eulogy at the state funeral for Mr Lee Kuan Yew

COVER PHOTO: ALPHONSUS CHERN. The state funeral procession leaving Parliament House early yesterday afternoon amid a torrential downpour. More than 100,000 people lined the 15.4km route of Singapore's founding father and first Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's journey to the University Cultural Centre for the state funeral service.

REPORTS & PICTURES: PAGES 2-28

86 PAGES IN FIVE PARTS
TO SUBSCRIBE: 6388-3838
www.sphsubscription.com.sg
90 cents
A Singapore Press Holdings publication
MCI (P) 032/02/2015 ★ ★



People standing several deep along Commonwealth Avenue West paying their last respects to Mr Lee as the cortege drove past. More than 100,000 people stood in pouring rain along the procession's 15.4km

route, which included the NTUC Centre and Trade Union House, the Port of Singapore and his Tanjong Pagar constituency, as well as Bukit Merah, Queenstown and Commonwealth housing estates.

ST PHOTO: TREVOR TAN

A grateful nation says: 'Thank you, Mr Lee!'

In pouring rain along the streets or glued to the TV, at home and abroad, Singaporeans bid a final farewell

By WARREN FERNANDEZ
EDITOR

IN THE end, it all boiled down to four simple words: "Thank you, Mr Lee."

After nearly 2½ hours of heartfelt eulogies at a moving state funeral service at the University Cultural Centre (UCC), those four words summed up the thoughts of the 10 speakers, at times personal, poignant or profound.

The more than 100,000 people who stood drenched in pouring rain all along the 15.4km route for Mr Lee Kuan Yew's hour-long final journey through Singapore, from Parliament House to Kent Ridge, called out his name perhaps because it seemed the best way to say: "Thank you, Mr Lee."

Indeed, that sentiment was evident over the past week of national mourning. In scenes never seen before or likely to be repeated, nearly 454,700 people had queued for up to 10 hours through the day and night to attend his lying in state at Parliament House. Another 1.2 million went to 18 condolence centres around the island to pay their respects, leave flowers, messages and gifts.

Mr Lee, who died aged 91 last Monday, had been a father figure to the country he helped found and forge over the decades, constantly worrying about the future of his charges, pushing them to work harder, behave better, think longer term, and even have more babies because the nation needed it.

Despite - or perhaps because of - his tough love and tough-minded policies, he won the people's trust when he delivered on his promises of a better life, building a metropolis where once there were mudflats.

Little wonder then that many had hoped he would recover from

his illness and attend the celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of the nation he played so critical a role in shaping. But, alas, that was not to be.

Yet in death, as he so often did over his long years in office, he managed to rally his people in what might well be the ultimate SG50 commemoration event.

Yesterday, the crowds made clear that they knew, or had not forgotten, what Mr Lee had done over those five decades.

Mr David Hong, 58, who had watched the 1968 National Day Parade at the Padang in the rain, braved a downpour again to send off Mr Lee.

"It's a test of our spirit and determination," he said. "Why should we be afraid of rain when Mr Lee Kuan Yew has gone through a lot more storms?"

Facility officer Sim Lye Hock, 58, who waited along Clementi Road from 10.30am, said: "It's my last chance to say goodbye... I could go to school because he pushed for it. If not for him, I don't know where I'd be now."

For over an hour, the gun carriage carrying Mr Lee's flag-draped coffin wove its way through Singapore, passing several defining landmarks.

These included the NTUC Centre and Trade Union House in Shenton Way, which reflect his beginnings as a lawyer defending workers, the Port of Singapore and his Tanjong Pagar constituency, as well as Bukit Merah, Queenstown and Commonwealth housing estates, before heading for the UCC.

There, top representatives of more than 20 countries including India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Malaysia's King Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah, Brunei's Sultan Hassanah Bolkiyah,



ABOVE: People waving national flags as Mr Lee's cortege passed near the junction of Jalan Bukit Merah and Slat Road. ST PHOTO: LIM SIN THIA

RIGHT: The guard of honour contingents marching into position before the cortege left Parliament House. ST PHOTO: ALPHONSUS CHERN

Indonesian President Joko Widodo, and former United States president Bill Clinton joined more than 2,000 guests for the state funeral.

The solemn day was also marked by Singaporeans glued to their television sets or computers at home and abroad, as well as others in India and New Zealand, where state flags flew at half-mast.

In an hour-long tribute to his father, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said "the light that has guided us all these years has been extinguished".

"We have lost our founding fa-

ther Mr Lee Kuan Yew, who lived his cause. Because he never wavered, we didn't falter. Because he fought, we took courage and fought with him, and prevailed.

Thus Mr Lee took Singapore from Third World to First."

He went on to recall Mr Lee's tireless quest to help Singapore attain self-sufficiency in its water needs, from cleaning up rivers, building reservoirs, desalination plants and the Marina Barrage, fighting back tears as he said: "So perhaps it's appropriate that today for his state funeral the heavens opened and cried for him."

He also remembered Mr Lee as



father, who although not demonstrative or "touchy-feely", cared deeply about him and his siblings.

He recounted how his father had urged him to take up meditation when his first wife Ming Yang died, and after he was diagnosed with lymphoma.

Mr Lee's biggest worry, he noted, was that younger Singapore-

would "lose the instinct for what made Singapore tick", which was why he was relentless in writing books right to his last days, to share his experiences with them.

PM Lee concluded with a rallying call, urging Singaporeans to build on what Mr Lee and the pioneer generation had achieved.

"We have all lost a father. We are all in grief. But in our grief, we have come together to display the best of Mr Lee's Singapore," he said, pointing to how people had gone out of their way to help and care for each other as they waited in line to pay their last respects.

"The grief we shared brought us all closer together, and made us stronger and more resolved. Together, we came not only to mourn. Together, we celebrate Mr Lee Kuan Yew's long and full life, and what he has achieved with us, his people."

"Let us continue building this exceptional country. Let us shape this island nation into one of the great cities in the world reflecting the ideals he stood for, realising the dreams he inspired and worthy of the people who have made Singapore our home and nation."

Nine other speakers delivered eulogies, including President

Tony Tan, Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong, former ministers as well as grassroots and union leaders.

Mr Lee's younger son, Mr Lee Hsien Yang, extended his family's deep appreciation to Singaporeans for the "outpouring of grief and affection" for his father. He gave a deep bow to the audience, joined by PM and Mrs Lee, to applause.

A young Singaporean, former Straits Times journalist and now civil servant Cassandra Chew, who had worked with Mr Lee on a book, said she was thankful to have been born in Singapore.

"We don't have everything, but we have more than most, because of your lifelong labour," she said. "On behalf of young Singaporeans everywhere, I'd like to say: thank you."

A bugler sounded the plaintive last post, followed by a solemn minute's silence in honour of Mr Lee, marked by those in the hall as well as many around the island.

After the national pledge was recited and the national anthem was sung, the funeral procession made its way to Mandai for a private cremation service. This was attended by family, close friends and Mr Lee's long-serving staff and medical assistants.

There, family members shared personal memories of the father and grandfather they knew and loved.

Mr Lee had once been asked by Straits Times editors how he would like to be remembered. Not often lost for words, he struggled for an answer, saying it was not something he thought about, nor did it matter much.

Then, he added: "This was the job I undertook. I did my best. And I could not do more."

Given the circumstances, there was no more he could do, he said, adding that he would have to leave it to people to make what they will of his efforts.

"It is of no great consequence. What is of consequence is I did my best. Full stop."

Indeed, as many recounted in tributes over the past week, Mr Lee worked relentlessly to secure Singapore's future. He did so doggedly, with discipline and determination to ensure that Singapore succeeded. His supporters knew it, his enemies and opponents knew it, and ultimately, the people whose lives he transformed knew it.

Which is why tens of thousands braved the downpour yesterday, holding up posters of him, bowing in respect, throwing flowers or waving national flags, calling out his name, and giving voice to their innermost thoughts: "Thank you, Mr Lee."

warren@sph.com.sg

SAYING GOODBYE

Mr Lee Kuan Yew
1923 - 2015

Flowers placed along Jalan Bukit Merah for people waiting to pay tribute to Mr Lee as his cortege passed through the area yesterday. Thousands braved the rain to travel the last mile with him, as his cortege made its way to the funeral service on a route that was itself a tribute to him, cutting across the key sites that marked his life and career. ST PHOTO: WANG HUI FEN

The life may have ebbed away, but the light will continue to show the way

Mr Lee will endure not just in the landmarks bearing his mark, but in the minds and lives of his people

By RAVI VELLOOR
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

SHORTLY after midnight on Saturday, streaks of lightning lit up the night sky over central and eastern Singapore as the heavens blazed forth.

As dawn broke, a misty haze hung over the city after days of clear skies. Business in the coffee shops seemed thinner as Singaporeans, normally eager to stumble to the nearest convenient outlet for their Sunday breakfast, seemed to tarry.

It was as though they were reluctant to meet this day when Mr Lee Kuan Yew, lionised leader of the Lion City, would pass into history.

Along Orchard Road, the city's most famous boulevard, a gusting wind flung laburnum and other flowers on the road, as though the "city in a garden" felt compelled to pay its own unique tribute.

Then, the heavens emptied, pouring moisture upon the earth. Perhaps Mr Lee would not have minded; one more opportunity to funnel every drop of water into one of the island's 17 reservoirs.

It had to happen some day, and so it has. This man who led Singaporeans to independence, not only from Britain, but from poverty, want, ignorance, diffidence - and water dependency - has made his final journey.

Yesterday, thousands braved rain and slush to travel the last mile with him, lining the road along which Mr Lee's cortege travelled to the state funeral service, wearing plastic ponchos and carrying umbrellas to protect themselves from the elements. Others used floor mats they had brought for the wait against the rain. In places, the crowd was ten- and fifteen-deep.

Elsewhere, hundreds of thousands more stayed in the shelter of homes in residential estates like Toa Payoh and Paya Lebar, mostly unaware that their districts got their names from Hokkien and Malay words for "big swamp".

Such has been the Singapore journey to urbanisation and 90 per cent home ownership. Not to speak of the arboreal fantasy the island is today, with a green cover over fully half of it.

The route itself was a tribute to the man, cutting across the key sites that marked his life and career. The cortege passed Collyer Quay and Shenton Way, and between Queenstown and Commonwealth, British-era names Mr Lee felt no shame in retaining, having helped his people shed the colonial cringe long ago and, like him, look the world in the eye.

Overseas, thousands gathered in front of television sets or computers to watch the live streaming of the funeral service, wet-eyed and longing to connect with home. Others had taken a flight to be in Singapore yesterday. Just to be here.

Why would a taxi driver called Mickey Tan, recovering from prostate cancer surgery, don a cap and show up in the rain to shout, "Lee Kuan Yew, Lee Kuan Yew"? Why would a Kala Pillay keep an all-night vigil in Calgary, Canada?

Because they wanted to. As a proportion of their populations, the 454,700 who turned up to pay respects at Mr Lee's bier exceeded the throng at Nelson Mandela's passing. When Winston Churchill lay in state for three days, a total of 321,360 filed past the catafalque, according to the BBC's figures.

Churchill had been out of office for only ten years when he

died. Singapore's founding father stepped down from national leadership a quarter century ago.

Mr Lee, who in his governing years preferred to be teared over being loved, may have been pleasantly startled by the public outpouring of grief at his passing.

And what of the potentates, the heads of state and government from two dozen nations who travelled to the island to pay him respect?

There was the young king of tiny Bhutan, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, who, in 2006, had sought him out for advice on developing his nation. There was Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who leads the world's second largest nation, saying he had been inspired to believe he could work to transform India because of Mr Lee's record in developing Singapore within a generation.

There were Mr Bill Clinton, Mr Tony Abbott, Mr Hun Sen, General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Mr Shinzo Abe and others listening to the funeral orations on Mr Lee's record - in incorruptibility, raising living standards, in providing security to their minorities and the vulnerable, in his ability to forgive historical slights in the national interest, and longing to connect with home.

Thanks to the relentless media coverage of the past week, Mr Lee has come alive for Singaporeans in all his vigour. In the months and years that lie ahead, there surely will be times when the Gans and Tans of Singapore will turn their eyes towards him, longing to hear that strong voice and reassuring firmness.

In 1959, an 11-year-old Peter Gan had peeked down from his Neil Road home and spotted jubilant crowds carrying a newly elected Lee Kuan Yew on their shoulders. Yesterday, the Tanjong Pagar constituent watched him pass through the streets a final time. The next time Mr Gan looks for Mr Lee, he will not be there.

And yet, Singaporeans know he will endure.

Not just in the physical land-

marks around the island that bear his mark, but in other ways as well.

He will be in their minds when they hear an incipient in-flight announcement and wonder how startled by the public outpouring, when aspiring politicians hitch up their trousers and square their shoulders, LKY-style, as they approach a lecture, when parents go to bed without worrying about children having a late night out, in the confidence with which people step towards pedestrian crossings looking neither to right nor left, in the mini-United Nations that the country's work districts, shopping malls and restaurants have come to be.

As Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said, what was said of the British architect Christopher Wren could apply to Mr Lee - for Lee Kuan Yew's monument, just look around Singapore.

As he began his eulogy, PM Lee, alternating between pride for his father's life and grief over his death, said the "light that guided us all these years has been extinguished".

It was a faint echo from the poignant words Jawaharlal Nehru used for Mahatma Gandhi's death, as he broke the news to his then young nation about its first big tragedy.

Mr Lee Kuan Yew began his anti-colonial struggle admiring Nehru's words and vision.

If only for that reason, it is not inappropriate to borrow Nehru's words as Mr Lee himself departs the stage.

"The light has gone out, I said, and yet I was wrong," Nehru said on Jan 30, 1948.

"For the light that shone in this country was no ordinary light. The light that has illumined this country for these many years will illumine this country for many more years, and a thousand years later, that light will be seen in this country and the world will see it and it will give solace to innumerable hearts."

veloor@sph.com.sg



Many heads of state or government from other Asean countries and close partners were present at the University Cultural Centre yesterday. These included (top row, from left) Bhutan Queen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck, Bhutan King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, Malaysia's Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah, Brunei's Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, (front row, from left) Kazakhstan Prime Minister Karim Massimov, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott, and former US president Bill Clinton. ST PHOTO: STEPHANIE YEOH



Dignitaries who attended the state funeral yesterday included (clockwise from left) former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, Indonesian President Joko Widodo and his wife Iriana, Myanmar's President Thein Sein, South Korean President Park Geun Hye and Israeli President Reuven Rivlin. ST PHOTOS: CAROLINE CHIA



Foreign dignitaries attend state funeral

By RACHEL AU-YONG

LEADERS from 23 countries attended the state funeral of founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew yesterday, in a testament to the deep regard many had for his achievements and his insights.

Gathered at the University Cultural Centre were heads of state or government from the other Asean countries and close partners.

They were Malaysia's Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah, Brunei's Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, Indonesian President Joko Widodo, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, Laos' Prime Minister Thongsing Thammavong, Myanmar's President Thein Sein, Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha and Vietnam's Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung. Philippine Senate president Franklin Drilon represented President Benigno Aquino.

Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott, Bhutan King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, Canada's Governor-General David Johnston, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Israeli President Reuven Rivlin were also present.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Kazakhstan Prime Minister Karim Massimov, New Zealand Governor-General Jerry Mateparae, South Korean President Park Geun Hye and Qatar Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani also attended the funeral.

Chinese Vice-President Li Yuanhao, former United States president Bill Clinton, British Foreign Secretary William Hague and Russia's First Deputy Prime Minister Igor Shuvalov were also there.

In his eulogy, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said his father had raised Singapore's standing in the world.

"Mr Lee was not just a perceptive observer of world affairs, but a statesman who articulated Singapore's international interests and enlarged our strategic space," he said. He added that at crucial turning points, "his views and counsel influenced thinking and decisions in many capitals".

In the process, Mr Lee "built up a wide network of friends and acquaintances, in and out of power". He knew every Chinese leader

from Mao Zedong, and every US president from Lyndon Johnson. He established close rapport with President Suharto of Indonesia.

"Other close friends, PM Lee said, included former British premier Margaret Thatcher, Mr Clinton, and former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who was also at the funeral service.

"They valued his candour and insight. As Mrs Thatcher said, '(Mr Lee) 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'.

"Hence, despite being small, Singapore's voice is heard, and we enjoy far more influence on the world stage than we have any reason to expect," PM Lee added.

Mr Modi earlier told reporters that Mr Lee "was among the tallest leaders of our times".

"Singapore's transformation in one generation is a tribute to his leadership... I am sure that he left satisfied with Singapore's achievements and confident about its future," he said.

"He inspired not just South-east Asia, but all of Asia, to believe in its own destiny."

Mr Modi described Mr Lee as a source of inspiration, whose "achievements and thoughts give me confidence in the possibility of India's own transformation".

Bhutan's King said: "His legacy will live on forever (not just) through Singaporeans, but all over the world. People such as myself, young people who have great admiration for Lee Kuan Yew, will continue to remember him with great respect."

Mr Clinton added that he appreciated Mr Lee's insights and candour: "Because Singapore had been friendly to the US and was friendly to the forces of reform in China, we were all able to have an informal relationship and just talk things through, and I think that's the way."

"People can deal with differences as long as everybody is on the level. Lee Kuan Yew was on the level. Whatever the deal was, that's what he would say. It was a gift, not just to the people of Singapore, but to the rest of the world."

rachelau@sph.com.sg

SAYING GOODBYE

Mr Lee Kuan Yew
1923 - 2015

People huddled under umbrellas along North Bridge Road yesterday, waiting patiently for Mr Lee's cortege to pass. The wet weather failed to deter the crowds who had turned up to bid Mr Lee a final farewell. ST PHOTO: ALPHONSUS CHERN



The rain poured down along Commonwealth Avenue, one of the heartland areas along the 15.4km funeral procession route. ST PHOTO: TIFFANY GOH



At Esplanade Bridge, students braved the rain in ponchos to say goodbye to Singapore's first Prime Minister. The funeral procession from Parliament House to the University Cultural Centre passed significant landmarks including City Hall and the Padang as well as heartland areas. ST PHOTO: JOYCE FANG

'Unite with a new spirit' in post-LKY era

In a S'pore without Mr Lee, let words of national anthem lead the way

By IGNATIUS LOW
MANAGING EDITOR

I WAS fortunate enough to get an invitation to yesterday's funeral service for Singapore's founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. I know myself to be a rather sentimental person, so I went expecting to shed tears at some point.

All of the eulogies were heartfelt and some very touching, especially those by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, his brother Hsien Yang and former senior minister of state Sidek Saniff.

But my eyes welled up only right at the end of the ceremony, when all the speeches had been delivered and the audience stood up to sing the national anthem.

"Marilah kita bersatu dengan semangat yang baru; Semua kita berseru, Majulah Singapura, majulah Singapura!"

I've sung these lines so many times in my life, but yesterday the meaning of the words hit me hard. They call on Singaporeans to "unite with a new spirit" and urge the nation onward.

At the end of seven days of national mourning, Mr Lee Kuan Yew has been laid to rest and today will seem like the first day in post-LKY Singapore.

So much has been written about this moment, not just this past week but in the months and years leading up to it. What happens now? Can Singapore survive?

For me, the events of the past week have unearthed what seem to be two new certainties among the myriad variables that go into the answer to that question.

The first is the pleasant discovery that the Singapore spirit is alive and well.

We saw it all week in the unending queues of people waiting for hours in the hot sun and into the dead of night, just for a minute or two to pay their last respects to Mr Lee as his body lay in state at Parliament House.

We saw it again yesterday as thousands lined the streets in the pouring rain to greet Mr Lee's cortege as it made its way to the University Cultural Centre.

All week, people have been posting pictures online of Singapo-

reans in these queues being not only patient but also civilised, helpful and considerate, volunteering their time in aid of complete strangers, cleaning up after themselves, offering free food, flowers and water and taking only as much as they needed.

Going by the comments posted, these images have taken many people by surprise. In a week, Singapore seems to have collectively realised that, given the right circumstances, it can be the sort of idealised proto-Japanese or Scandinavian society that it constantly beats itself up for failing to emulate.

That leads me to the second happy discovery of the week, which concerns the notion of the ideal political model a country should adopt.

After years of increasingly intense debate about the failings of the Singapore system, many Singaporeans suddenly became proud of the unique way that their country is governed and run, whatever outsiders may say about it.

Two of the most widely circulated articles last week were plain-speaking commentaries by former Nominated MP Calvin Cheng and Business Times correspondent Joyce Hooi that took on Western criticism of the Singapore model head on.

If the much-vaunted political freedoms of the West mean anarchy, crime, failing public infrastructure and poverty, then we do not want it, both argued.

And do not mistake the Singaporean grumblings about higher freedoms to be proof that there was some terrible trade-off between economic growth and politi-

cal liberty, or that its system has not worked.

In fact, it is quite the contrary. As Ms Hooi put it, "such has been the earlier success of Singapore that its people have the middle-class wherewithal to demand change, and the Government has the resources to provide it". You could almost hear the collective roar of approval.

When you boil it all down, what you get is a Singapore that got a glimpse of the good in itself, and became more secure about where it is in the world and how it got there.

It was a much-needed shot of confidence that will help this relatively young nation continue to overcome the increasingly difficult challenges ahead.

My hope is that this is not a flash in the pan, and will be the seeds of the "new spirit" - semangat yang baru - we sing in the words of the national anthem.

If we get it right, then the only thing we need fear, in this post-LKY era, is the inherent uncertainty of the future itself.

Some of these uncertainties - such as the vagaries of global politics and economics - have little to do with Mr Lee Kuan Yew, although he was adept at anticipating and dealing with them.

Others, however, may be a direct result of his departure.

Will the political system in Singapore change? Are there new fault lines developing that will splinter society? Will we re-examine those Lee Kuan Yew "hard truths" about nationhood and survival, and eventually discard them?

As a nation, we take our first steps today without our founding father. But they are firmer steps, I believe - his last gift to us.

ignatius@sph.com.sg



(Above) Ceremonial pallbearers carrying the flag-draped casket of Mr Lee into the University Cultural Centre.

(Right) Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen (third from left), and Law and Foreign Affairs Minister K. Shanmugam trying to control their emotions as the eulogies were given.

ST PHOTOS: STEPHANIE YEOW, DESMOND LIM



WITH SOLEMN, HEAVY HEARTS

(Left) Officers preparing to fold the national flag that was draped over the casket of Mr Lee, at the Mandai Crematorium.

(Far left) A bugler from the SAF Military Band playing The Last Post during the final moments of the funeral service. This was followed by the observation of a minute of silence.

ST PHOTOS: KUA CHEE SIONG, STEPHANIE YEOW

EULOGIES

Honour him by making S'pore a great city: PM Lee

Singaporeans urged to continue life's work of founding father

By LYDIA LIM
ASSOCIATE OPINION EDITOR

PRIME Minister Lee Hsien Loong yesterday called on Singaporeans to continue Mr Lee Kuan Yew's

life's work by making this island nation a great metropolis that reflects the ideals of their founding prime minister.

In a 40-minute eulogy, delivered in English, Mandarin

and Malay, he spoke of the late Lee's commitment to multiculturalism, equality, meritocracy, integrity and rule of law; celebrated his ferocious fighting spirit and described his decades-long effort to prepare Singapore to continue beyond him.

Not only had he systematically identified and groomed a team of successors, but he also continued writing books into his 90s so that

a new generation could learn from his experience, and understand what their security, prosperity and future depended on. "His biggest worry was that younger Singaporeans would lose the instinct for what made Singapore tick," PM Lee said.

He cited three recent books, the first on bilingualism, the second entitled Hard Truths and the third - One Man's View Of The

World. The first two were launched in 2011 and the third in 2013.

PM Lee spoke of a man who fought and laboured tirelessly for his beliefs and the country he loved. In the 1960s, he battled communists and communalists, putting his own life on the line.

Later, he fought for Singapore's survival after separation from Malaysia and when the British

forces withdrew, taking 150,000 jobs with them.

"Just weeks after Separation, he boldly declared that '10 years from now, this will be a metropolis. Never fear!' And indeed he did it happen. He instilled discipline and order - ensuring that in Singapore, every problem gets fixed," PM Lee said.

He also enabled his economic team of Old Guard ministers Goh

Keng Swee, Hon Sui Sen and Lim Kim San to design and carry out their plans to attract investments and grow the economy. "As he said, 'I settled the political conditions so that tough policies... could be executed.'"

PM Lee added that "because people knew that he cared for them and not for himself, and because he had faith that Singaporeans would work with him to

achieve great things, Mr Lee won the trust and confidence of Singaporeans".

In both his eulogy at the state funeral service in the University Cultural Centre (UCC), and later at a private ceremony for family and friends at Mandai Crematorium, PM Lee shared personal memories of his father, including a conversation they had years ago over a golf game in which the

elder Mr Lee told his oldest child to take care of his mother, and younger brother and sister should anything happen to him.

Their father, he said, had already plunged deep into politics when the children arrived so their mother brought them up.

"But Pa set the tone, tracked our progress and made the big decisions. He sent us to a Chinese school; he started us on Malay les-

sons with Cikgu Amin; he encouraged Yang and me to take up SAF Scholarships, to serve the nation."

His father was there when he learnt to ride a bicycle, helped take care of his young children when his first wife died, and worried about his nutrition when he was undergoing chemotherapy for lymphoma.

His father's death "will leave a

big hole" in the hearts of family and friends, "but his values, his love, and his words - these will stay with us, inspire us and live on in us for a long, long time."

As for Singapore, Mr Lee Kuan Yew intended nothing less than to see that it "will be here a thousand years from now. It is the duty of those who remain to continue his life's work," PM Lee said.

He ended his eulogy with this rallying call to Singaporeans: "We come together to pledge ourselves to continue building this exceptional country. Let us shape this island nation into one of the great cities in the world reflecting the ideals he stood for, realising the dreams he inspired and worthy of the people who have made Singapore our home and nation."

lydia@sph.com.sg

I remember the night the children slept on the floor in my parents' bedroom at Temasek House in Kuala Lumpur, because the house was full of ministers who had come up from Singapore. Every so often my father would get up from the bed to make a note about something... That was 7 August, 1965, two days before Separation. Growing up with my father, living through those years with him, made me what I am.

at Parliament House, we had a few minutes. I sat by him and meditated.

Of course, growing up as my father's son could not but mean being exposed to politics very early. I remember as a little boy, knowing that his constituency was Tanjong Pagar. I was proud of him becoming legal adviser to so many trade unions, and I was cited by the hubbub at Oxley Road whenever elections happened, and our home became the election office.

I remember when we were preparing to join Malaysia in the early 1960s, going along with my father on constituency visits - the "fang wen" tours he made to every corner of Singapore.

For him, it was backbreaking work, week after week, every weekend rallying the people's support for a supremely important decision about Singapore's future. For me, these were not just Sunday outings, but also an early political education.

I remember election night in 1963, the crucial general election when the PAP defeated the pro-communist Barisan Sosialis. My mother sent me to bed early, but I lay awake to listen to the election results until the PAP had won enough seats to form the Government again. And then I think fell asleep.

I remember the day he told me, while we were playing golf at the Istana, that should anything happen to him, he wanted me to look after my mother and my younger brother and sister.

I visited the queue on the Padang. Many Singaporeans, not so few non-Singaporeans who came out of deep respect and a sense of compulsion that here was a man they wanted to do honour to. Many more wrote heartfelt messages and took part in tribute ceremonies at community sites all over the island. Thousands of Singaporeans gathered in our embassies and consulates to remember Mr Lee. And later in this funeral service, all of us in this hall, across our island and in far-flung and later in this funeral service all of us in this hall, across our island, and in far-flung lands will observe a minute a silence, say the National Pledge and sing Majulah Singapura together.

We have all lost a father. We grieve as one people, one nation. But in our grief, we've displayed the best of Singapore.

Ordinary people going to great lengths to distribute refreshments and umbrellas to the crowd and help one another in the queue late into the night. Citizen soldiers, Home Team officers, cleaners, all working tirelessly round the clock. Our shared sorrow has brought us together and made us stronger and more resolute.

We come together not only to mourn, we come together also to rejoice in Mr Lee Kuan Yew's long and full life and what he has achieved with us, his people in Singapore. We come together to pledge ourselves to continue building this exceptional country.

Let us shape this island nation into one of the great cities in the world reflecting the ideals he stood for, realising the dreams he inspired and worthy of the people who have made Singapore our home and nation.

Thank you, Mr Lee Kuan Yew. May you rest in peace.

When he was the architect of the cathedral, and he is buried in the cathedral which was his masterpiece. There is a Latin epitaph on his grave and it reads: *si monumentum requiris, circumspice* (If you seek his monument, look around you). Mr Lee Kuan Yew built Singapore. To those who seek Mr Lee Kuan Yew's monument, Singaporeans can reply proudly: "Look around you."

I said the light that has guided us all these years has been extinguished. But that is not quite so. For Mr Lee's principles and ideals continue to invigorate this Government and guide our people. His life will inspire Singaporeans, and others, for generations to come.

Mr Lee once said that "we intend to see that (Singapore) will be here a thousand years from now. And that is your duty and mine". Mr Lee has done his duty, and more. It remains our duty to continue his life's work, to carry the torch forward and keep the flame burning bright.

Over the past month, the outpouring of good wishes, prayers and support from Singaporeans as Mr Lee lay ill has been overwhelming. Hundreds of thousands queued patiently for hours in the hot sun and through the night to pay respects to him at the Parliament House.

I visited the queue on the Padang. Many Singaporeans, not so few non-Singaporeans who came out of deep respect and a sense of compulsion that here was a man they wanted to do honour to. Many more wrote heartfelt messages and took part in tribute ceremonies at community sites all over the island. Thousands of Singaporeans gathered in our embassies and consulates to remember Mr Lee. And later in this funeral service, all of us in this hall, across our island and in far-flung lands will observe a minute a silence, say the National Pledge and sing Majulah Singapura together.

We have all lost a father. We grieve as one people, one nation. But in our grief, we've displayed the best of Singapore.

Ordinary people going to great lengths to distribute refreshments and umbrellas to the crowd and help one another in the queue late into the night. Citizen soldiers, Home Team officers, cleaners, all working tirelessly round the clock. Our shared sorrow has brought us together and made us stronger and more resolute.

We come together not only to mourn, we come together also to rejoice in Mr Lee Kuan Yew's long and full life and what he has achieved with us, his people in Singapore. We come together to pledge ourselves to continue building this exceptional country.

Let us shape this island nation into one of the great cities in the world reflecting the ideals he stood for, realising the dreams he inspired and worthy of the people who have made Singapore our home and nation.

Thank you, Mr Lee Kuan Yew. May you rest in peace.

‘Because he never wavered, we didn’t falter. Because he fought, we took courage and fought with him.’

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's eulogy at the University Cultural Centre

THIS has been a dark week for Singapore. The light that has guided us all these years has been extinguished. We have lost our founding father Mr Lee Kuan Yew, who lived and breathed Singapore all his life. He and his team led our pioneer generation to create this island nation, Singapore.

Mr Lee did not set out to be a politician, let alone a statesman, as a boy. In fact, his grandfather wanted him to become an English gentleman! But events left an indelible mark on him. He had been a British subject in colonial Singapore. He had survived hardship, danger and fear in the Japanese Occupation. These drove him to fight for independence.

In one of his radio talks on the Battle for Merger many years ago in 1961, Mr Lee said: "My colleagues and I are of that generation of young men who went through the Second World War and the Japanese Occupation and emerged determined that no one - neither the Japanese nor the British - had the right to push and kick us around."

Mr Lee championed independence for Singapore through Merger with Malaysia, to form a new Federation of Malaysia. He worked tirelessly to bring this about, and succeeded. Unfortunately the merger did not last and before long we were expelled from Malaysia. Separation was his greatest "moment of anguish", but it also proved to be the turning point in Singapore's fortunes.

From the ashes of Separation he built a nation. The easiest thing to do would have been to appeal to Chinese voters alone. After all, Singapore had had to leave Malaysia because we were majority Chinese. Instead, Mr Lee went for the nobler dream of a multicultural, multi-religious nation. Singapore would not be based on race, language or religion, but on fundamental values - multi-racialism, equality, meritocracy, integrity, and rule of law. Mr Lee declared: "This is not a country that belongs to any single community; it belongs to all of us."

He checked would-be racial chauvinists, and assured the minorities that their place here was secure. He insisted on keeping our mother tongues, even as English became our common working language. He encouraged each group to maintain its culture, faith and language, while gradually enlarging the common space shared by all. Together with Mr S. Rajaratnam, he enshrined these ideals in the National Pledge.

He kept us safe in a dangerous and tumultuous world. With Dr Goh Keng Swee, he built the SAF from just two infantry battalions into a little wooden ship, then a well-trained, well-equipped, well-respected fighting force.

He introduced national service, and personally persuaded parents to entrust their sons to the SAF. He succeeded, first because he led by example. His two sons did NS just like every Singaporean son. In fact my brother and I signed up as regulars on SAF scholarships. Secondly, people trust Mr Lee, and

believed in the Singapore cause. And today we sleep peacefully at night, confident that we are well protected.

Mr Lee gave us courage to face a life of an uncertain future. He was a straight talker, and never shied away from hard truths, either to himself or to Singaporeans. His ministers would sometimes urge him to soften the tone of his diatribe speeches - even I would sometimes do that - to sound less unyielding to human frailties. And often he took in their amendments, but he would preserve his core message. "I always tried to be correct," he said, "not politically correct."

He was a powerful speaker: moving, inspiring, persuasive, in English and Malay - and by dint of a life-long hard slog - in Mandarin and even Hokkien. MediaCorp has been broadcasting his old speeches on TV this week, reminding us that his was the original Singaporean: passionate, formidable and indomitable.

Above all, Lee Kuan Yew was a fighter. In crises, when all seemed hopeless, he was ferocious, endlessly resourceful, firm in his resolve, and steadfast in advancing his cause.

Thus he saw us through many battles: the Battle for Merger against the communists, which most people thought the non-communists would lose; the fight when we were in Malaysia against the communists, when his own life was in danger; Separation, which cast us into a hazardous world; and then the withdrawal of the British military forces from Singapore, which threatened the livelihoods of 150,000 people.

Because he never wavered, we didn't falter. Because he fought, we took courage and fought with him, and prevailed. Thus, Mr Lee took Singapore and took us all from Third World to the First.

In many countries, anti-colonial fighters and heroes would win independence and assume power, but then fail, fall at nation-building because the challenges of bringing a society together, growing an economy, patiently improving peoples' lives are very different from the challenges of fighting for independence, mobilising crowds, getting people excited, overthrowing a regime. But Mr Lee and his team succeeded at nation building.

Just weeks after Separation, he boldly declared that "10 years from now, this will be a metropolis. Never fear!" And indeed he made it happen. He instilled discipline and order - ensuring that in Singapore, every problem gets fixed. He educated our young. He transformed labour relations from strikes and confrontations to tripartism and cooperation. He campaigned to upgrade skills and raise productivity, calling it a marathon with no finish line.

He enabled his economic team - Goh Keng Swee, Hon Sui Sen, Lim Kim San - to design and carry out their plans to attract investment, grow the economy, and create prosperity and jobs. As he said, "I settled the political condi-

tions so that tough policies could be executed."

However, Mr Lee was clear that while "the development of the economy is very important, equally important is the development of the nature of our society". So he built an inclusive society where everyone enjoyed the fruits of progress.

Education became the foundation for good jobs and better lives. HDB new towns sprung up one after another to house our people - Queenstown, Toa Payoh, Ang Mo Kio, to be followed by many more. We built roofs over our heads and we became a nation of home owners. With Mr Devan Nair in the NTUC, he transformed the union movement into a positive force, cooperating with employers and the Government to improve the lot of workers.

Mr Lee cared for the people whom he served, the people of Singapore. When Sars struck in 2003, he worried about taxi drivers, whose livelihoods were affected because tourists had dried up, and he pressed us hard to find ways to help them.

Mr Lee also cared for the people who served him. One evening just a few years ago he rang me up. One of my mother's WSOs (woman security officers) was having difficulty conceiving a child, and he wanted to help her. He asked me whether I knew how to help her to adopt a child. So Mr Lee was concerned for people not just in the abstract, but personally and individually.

Internationally, Mr Lee raised Singapore's standing in the world. Mr Lee was not just a perceptive observer of world affairs, but a statesman who articulated Singapore's international interests and enlarged our strategic space. At crucial turning points, from the British withdrawal "East of Suez" to the Vietnam War to the rise of China, his views and counsel influenced thinking and decisions in many capitals.

In the process, he built up a wide network of friends, in and out of power. He knew every Chinese leader from Mao Zedong and every US president from Lyndon Johnson. He established close rapport with President Suharto of Indonesia, one of our most important relationships. Others included Deng Xiaoping, Margaret Thatcher, Helmut Schmidt, George Shultz, as well as President Bill Clinton and Henry Kissinger, who we are honoured to have here this afternoon. They all valued his candour and insight.

As Mrs Thatcher said: "(Mr Lee) 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." Hence, despite being so small, Singapore's voice is heard, and we enjoy far more influence on the international stage than we have any reason to expect.

Mr Lee did not blaze this path alone. He was the outstanding leader of an exceptional team - a team which included Goh Keng Swee, S. Rajaratnam, Othman



ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Wok, Hon Sui Sen, Lim Kim San, Toh Chin Chye, Ong Pang Boon, Devan Nair, and quite a number more. They were his comrades, and he never forgot them. So it is very good that Mr Ong Pang Boon is here today to speak about Mr Lee later on. Thank you Mr Ong.

Mr Lee received many accolades and awards in his long life but he wore them lightly. When Mr Lee received the Freedom of the City of London in 1982, he said: "I feel like a conductor at a concert bowing to applause, but unable to turn around and invite the accomplished musicians in his orchestra to rise and receive the ovation for the music they have produced. For running a government is not unlike running an orchestra, and no Prime Minister ever achieves much without an able team of players."

Because he worked with a strong team and not alone, because people knew that he cared for them and not for himself, and because he had faith that Singaporeans would work with him to achieve great things, Mr Lee won the trust and confidence of Singaporeans. The pioneer generation, who had lived through the crucial years, had a deep bond with him. I once met a lady who owned a fried rice restaurant. She told me: "Tell Lee Kuan Yew I will always support him. I was born in 1948, and I am 48 years old (this was 1996). I know what he has done for me and Singapore." She and her generation knew that "Sen zhe Li Guangyao zou bu hui si de" - if you follow Lee Kuan Yew, you will survive.

Mr Lee imbued Singapore with

his personal traits. He built Singapore to be clean and corruption-free. His home was spartan. His habits were frugal. He wore the same jacket for years, and patched up the worn bits instead of buying new ones. He imparted these values to the Government. Even when old and frail on his 90th birthday, when he came to Parliament and MPs celebrated his birthday, he reminded them that Singapore must remain clean and incorruptible, and that MPs and Ministers had to set the example.

He pursued ideas with tremendous, infectious energy. He said of himself: "I put myself down as determined, consistent, persistent. I set out to do something, I keep on chasing it until it succeeds. That's all." This was how he seized opportunities, seeing and realising possibilities that many others missed.

So it was he who pushed to move the airport from Paya Lebar to Changi. It was he who rejected the then conventional wisdom that multi-national corporations (MNCs) were rapacious and exploitative, and he wooed foreign investments from MNCs personally to bring us advanced technology, to bring us overseas markets to create for us good jobs.

He was not afraid to change his mind when a policy was no longer relevant. When he saw that our birth rates were falling below replacement more than 30 years ago, he scrapped the "Stop at Two" policy and started encouraging couples to have more children.

Having upheld a conservative approach to supervising our financial sector for many years, he eventually decided to rethink and liberalise, in a controlled way. This was how Singapore's financial centre took off in a new wave of growth, to become what it is today. He was always clear what strategy to follow, but never so fixed to an old strategy as to be blind to the need to change course when the world changed.

Nothing exemplifies this better than water security, which was a lifelong obsession of his. He entrenched the PUB's two Water Agreements with Johor in the Separation Agreement, he personally managed all aspects of our water talks with Malaysia. He launched water-saving campaigns, he built reservoirs, and turned most of the island into water catchment to collect the rain, to process, to use.

He cleaned up the Singapore River and Kallang Basin. He dreamed of the Marina Barrage long before it became feasible, and persevered for decades until, finally, technology caught up and it became feasible and it became a reality and he lived to see it become a reality. When PUB desalination and Newater, and he wooed foreign investments from MNCs personally to bring us advanced technology, to bring us overseas markets to create for us good jobs.

He was not afraid to change his mind when a policy was no longer relevant. When he saw that our birth rates were falling below replacement more than 30 years ago, he scrapped the "Stop at Two" policy and started encouraging couples to have more children. Having upheld a conservative approach to supervising our financial

sector for many years, he eventually decided to rethink and liberalise, in a controlled way. This was how Singapore's financial centre took off in a new wave of growth, to become what it is today. He was always clear what strategy to follow, but never so fixed to an old strategy as to be blind to the need to change course when the world changed.

Nothing exemplifies this better than water security, which was a lifelong obsession of his. He entrenched the PUB's two Water Agreements with Johor in the Separation Agreement, he personally managed all aspects of our water talks with Malaysia. He launched water-saving campaigns, he built reservoirs, and turned most of the island into water catchment to collect the rain, to process, to use.

He cleaned up the Singapore River and Kallang Basin. He dreamed of the Marina Barrage long before it became feasible, and persevered for decades until, finally, technology caught up and it became feasible and it became a reality and he lived to see it become a reality. When PUB desalination and Newater, and he wooed foreign investments from MNCs personally to bring us advanced technology, to bring us overseas markets to create for us good jobs.

He was not afraid to change his mind when a policy was no longer relevant. When he saw that our birth rates were falling below replacement more than 30 years ago, he scrapped the "Stop at Two" policy and started encouraging couples to have more children.

Having upheld a conservative approach to supervising our financial

sector for many years, he eventually decided to rethink and liberalise, in a controlled way. This was how Singapore's financial centre took off in a new wave of growth, to become what it is today. He was always clear what strategy to follow, but never so fixed to an old strategy as to be blind to the need to change course when the world changed.

Nothing exemplifies this better than water security, which was a lifelong obsession of his. He entrenched the PUB's two Water Agreements with Johor in the Separation Agreement, he personally managed all aspects of our water talks with Malaysia. He launched water-saving campaigns, he built reservoirs, and turned most of the island into water catchment to collect the rain, to process, to use.

He cleaned up the Singapore River and Kallang Basin. He dreamed of the Marina Barrage long before it became feasible, and persevered for decades until, finally, technology caught up and it became feasible and it became a reality and he lived to see it become a reality. When PUB desalination and Newater, and he wooed foreign investments from MNCs personally to bring us advanced technology, to bring us overseas markets to create for us good jobs.

He was not afraid to change his mind when a policy was no longer relevant. When he saw that our birth rates were falling below replacement more than 30 years ago, he scrapped the "Stop at Two" policy and started encouraging couples to have more children.

Having upheld a conservative approach to supervising our financial

sector for many years, he eventually decided to rethink and liberalise, in a controlled way. This was how Singapore's financial centre took off in a new wave of growth, to become what it is today. He was always clear what strategy to follow, but never so fixed to an old strategy as to be blind to the need to change course when the world changed.

Nothing exemplifies this better than water security, which was a lifelong obsession of his. He entrenched the PUB's two Water Agreements with Johor in the Separation Agreement, he personally managed all aspects of our water talks with Malaysia. He launched water-saving campaigns, he built reservoirs, and turned most of the island into water catchment to collect the rain, to process, to use.

He cleaned up the Singapore River and Kallang Basin. He dreamed of the Marina Barrage long before it became feasible, and persevered for decades until, finally, technology caught up and it became feasible and it became a reality and he lived to see it become a reality. When PUB desalination and Newater, and he wooed foreign investments from MNCs personally to bring us advanced technology, to bring us overseas markets to create for us good jobs.

He was not afraid to change his mind when a policy was no longer relevant. When he saw that our birth rates were falling below replacement more than 30 years ago, he scrapped the "Stop at Two" policy and started encouraging couples to have more children.

Having upheld a conservative approach to supervising our financial

sector for many years, he eventually decided to rethink and liberalise, in a controlled way. This was how Singapore's financial centre took off in a new wave of growth, to become what it is today. He was always clear what strategy to follow, but never so fixed to an old strategy as to be blind to the need to change course when the world changed.

Nothing exemplifies this better than water security, which was a lifelong obsession of his. He entrenched the PUB's two Water Agreements with Johor in the Separation Agreement, he personally managed all aspects of our water talks with Malaysia. He launched water-saving campaigns, he built reservoirs, and turned most of the island into water catchment to collect the rain, to process, to use.

He cleaned up the Singapore River and Kallang Basin. He dreamed of the Marina Barrage long before it became feasible, and persevered for decades until, finally, technology caught up and it became feasible and it became a reality and he lived to see it become a reality. When PUB desalination and Newater, and he wooed foreign investments from MNCs personally to bring us advanced technology, to bring us overseas markets to create for us good jobs.

He was not afraid to change his mind when a policy was no longer relevant. When he saw that our birth rates were falling below replacement more than 30 years ago, he scrapped the "Stop at Two" policy and started encouraging couples to have more children.

Having upheld a conservative approach to supervising our financial

sector for many years, he eventually decided to rethink and liberalise, in a controlled way. This was how Singapore's financial centre took off in a new wave of growth, to become what it is today. He was always clear what strategy to follow, but never so fixed to an old strategy as to be blind to the need to change course when the world changed.

Nothing exemplifies this better than water security, which was a lifelong obsession of his. He entrenched the PUB's two Water Agreements with Johor in the Separation Agreement, he personally managed all aspects of our water talks with Malaysia. He launched water-saving campaigns, he built reservoirs, and turned most of the island into water catchment to collect the rain, to process, to use.

He cleaned up the Singapore River and Kallang Basin. He dreamed of the Marina Barrage long before it became feasible, and persevered for decades until, finally, technology caught up and it became feasible and it became a reality and he lived to see it become a reality. When PUB desalination and Newater, and he wooed foreign investments from MNCs personally to bring us advanced technology, to bring us overseas markets to create for us good jobs.

He was not afraid to change his mind when a policy was no longer relevant. When he saw that our birth rates were falling below replacement more than 30 years ago, he scrapped the "Stop at Two" policy and started encouraging couples to have more children.

Having upheld a conservative approach to supervising our financial

sector for many years, he eventually decided to rethink and liberalise, in a controlled way. This was how Singapore's financial centre took off in a new wave of growth, to become what it is today. He was always clear what strategy to follow, but never so fixed to an old strategy as to be blind to the need to change course when the world changed.

Nothing exemplifies this better than water security, which was a lifelong obsession of his. He entrenched the PUB's two Water Agreements with Johor in the Separation Agreement, he personally managed all aspects of our water talks with Malaysia. He launched water-saving campaigns, he built reservoirs, and turned most of the island into water catchment to collect the rain, to process, to use.

He cleaned up the Singapore River and Kallang Basin. He dreamed of the Marina Barrage long before it became feasible, and persevered for decades until, finally, technology caught up and it became feasible and it became a reality and he lived to see it become a reality. When PUB desalination and Newater, and he wooed foreign investments from MNCs personally to bring us advanced technology, to bring us overseas markets to create for us good jobs.

He was not afraid to change his mind when a policy was no longer relevant. When he saw that our birth rates were falling below replacement more than 30 years ago, he scrapped the "Stop at Two" policy and started encouraging couples to have more children.

Having upheld a conservative approach to supervising our financial

sector for many years, he eventually decided to rethink and liberalise, in a controlled way. This was how Singapore's financial centre took off in a new wave of growth, to become what it is today. He was always clear what strategy to follow, but never so fixed to an old strategy as to be blind to the need to change course when the world changed.

Nothing exemplifies this better than water security, which was a lifelong obsession of his. He entrenched the PUB's two Water Agreements with Johor in the Separation Agreement, he personally managed all aspects of our water talks with Malaysia. He launched water-saving campaigns, he built reservoirs, and turned most of the island into water catchment to collect the rain, to process, to use.

He cleaned up the Singapore River and Kallang Basin. He dreamed of the Marina Barrage long before it became feasible, and persevered for decades until, finally, technology caught up and it became feasible and it became a reality and he lived to see it become a reality. When PUB desalination and Newater, and he wooed foreign investments from MNCs personally to bring us advanced technology, to bring us overseas markets to create for us good jobs.

He was not afraid to change his mind when a policy was no longer relevant. When he saw that our birth rates were falling below replacement more than 30 years ago, he scrapped the "Stop at Two" policy and started encouraging couples to have more children.

Having upheld a conservative approach to supervising our financial

In this final hour, Papa is with family

A father that we share with S'pore

Excerpt from the eulogy by **MR LEE HSIEN YANG, 57, younger son of Mr Lee Kuan Yew, at the University Cultural Centre**

SINGAPORE has lost the father to our nation. For my family, we have lost our beloved father and grandfather. We are bereft.

I was born in 1957 and, for as long as I can remember, Papa was a public figure. As a child, I was only vaguely aware that my father was an orang besar, or VIP in Malay. All little children must think their fathers are special; I do not remember when it dawned on me that he was not just my own special father and not just an ordinary orang besar, but an extraordinary orang besar.

Papa was immersed in his work for much of my childhood. In September 1998, he gave Fern and me our copy of his book *The Singapore Story*. In it, he penned a note with a tinge of regret:

"To Yang & Fern, You grew up while I was running around as I describe in this book."

Perhaps in different circumstances, he would have been an entrepreneur; but he chose to dedicate his life and to serve the people of Singapore and to build a better future for all. He wanted to ensure his three children an "normal" childhood. He didn't want us to grow up with a sense of privilege and entitlement.

As a teenager in secondary school, seeking to assert my independence, I would sometimes ride the public bus. Papa did not object, and my poor security officer had to follow me around on buses. When I was in junior college and kept on outdoor activities, my security officer had to shadow me as I trekked around Pulau Ubin, Pulau Tekong and canoed around Singapore. But Papa's principles ensured that I had as normal a childhood as possible, although I think I put out the security detail often!

Family holidays were happy occasions. We were able to see more of Papa. We didn't go anywhere far away, rest or exotic: the government rest houses in Fraser's Hill, Cameron Highlands, and later Chang Cottage, a small, two-bedroom seaside bungalow that holds many precious memories for me, even if once in a while the air-con there doesn't work and we have to sit in the sun.

Golf was Papa's principal recreation and a passion, so golf featured prominently not only on vacations, but also after work in the evenings. The nine-hole course in the Istana grounds provided ample room for us children to find adventure while he golfed. Both Long and I were sent to long drives from the tee box, but neither of us really took to the game and we stopped when we grew up.

But eventually, Papa, too, prompted by Ling, gave up golf, and for exercise he took to jogging, swimming, stationary cycling. In January 1973 when I was 15, Ling and I joined Papa and Mama on a trip to visit Loong, who was at university in Cambridge. It was our first family holiday where we travelled so far apart. On that trip, Papa and Mama took the family to Stratford-upon-Avon, Shakespeare's birthplace. We watched the Royal Shakespeare Company's production of *Coriolanus* and toured the usual Shakespearean sites in Stratford.

At the time, I had assumed it was just Mama indulging her love for Shakespeare and trying to educate us while we were on vacation. But years later when Papa wrote his memoirs, we realised the hidden meaning this visit held for my parents. They had married secretly in Stratford-upon-Avon in December 1947.

Private farewell for about 300 held at Mandai Crematorium for Mr Lee

By **CHUA MUI HOONG**
OPINION EDITOR

FIRST, the Singapore flag draping the coffin was removed, folded ceremoniously, and handed over to the elder son.

Then the coffin lid was lifted, revealing an open casket.

Inside, the body of Mr Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's first Prime Minister who died last Mon-

day aged 91, lay in repose.

With that, the public mourning of Mr Lee the public figure became the private mourning of Papa and Ye Ye by family members.

Earlier, at the University Cultural Centre, the state funeral had been a sober affair of more than two hours attended by state dignitaries and about 2,000 others. Now, at Mandai Crematorium as the sun set, a private farewell was

held for about 300.

As the casket arrived at about 6.30pm at Hall 1, daughter Wei Ling, 60, placed the memorial portrait in front of the coffin.

Then, as he had led the nation in its mourning as Prime Minister, Hsien Loong, 63, the eldest of Mr Lee's three children, stood to lead the family to mourn its patriarch.

He said: "We are gathered here to say our final farewells to Papa - Mr Lee Kuan Yew.

"After the formalities of the lying in state and the state funeral service, in this final hour, Papa is with his family, his friends of a

lifetime, his immediate staff who served him loyally and well, his security team who kept him safe and sound, and his medical team who took such good care of him."

Mr Lee's three children and two grandsons delivered eulogies.

Daughter Wei Ling delivered a hearty, heartfelt eulogy on her "stubborn, determined" father she admitted she so resembled.

She lived with her father in Oxley Road, and as a doctor too, was often the first line of defence when he was ill, she said. She thanked his medical team for their care of her father.

Dr Lee has shunned the media spotlight all week, even as 1.2 million people in Singapore paid their last respects to Mr Lee at Parliament House at tribute centres across the island. Clad in a black dress yesterday, she looked composed, although she admitted it had been a difficult week for her.

In the morning, she said, the maid put Mr Lee's chair away from the dining table and lined it against the wall. "It was a poignant moment because it came home to me that this farewell is forever. And I nearly broke down - but I can't break down. I am a

Hakka woman."

Younger son Hsien Yang, 57, said: "Papa, thank you for a lifetime of service to the people of Singapore. You made this little red dot into the nation all of us are proud to call home."

For Li Hongyi, 28, second son of Hsien Loong, Ye Ye was more than a grandfather; he was an inspiration. "Ye Ye showed me that you could make a difference in this world. Not just that you could make a difference, but that you could do it with your head held high. You didn't have to lie, cheat or steal," he said, and

helped. But the lift was not installed in vain. On several occasions when he was ill and needed to be admitted to SGH (Singapore General Hospital)... the SO would simply guided him into the lift.

The SOs were an integral part of Papa's life, even more so in the last five years. They looked after him with tender loving care, way beyond the call of duty. One doctor friend, who came to help dress a wound Papa sustained when he fell, noticed this and said to me: "The SOs look after your father as though he is their own father."

"I'm well aware of that. That's why so much of the speech is dedicated to the SOs."

Papa believed that goodwill goes both ways. He was very considerate towards his SOs. Sensing he was special, all the SOs have been very kind to Papa.

On behalf of my family, I would like to thank all of them. I know each of them well. I even know the number of children they have. The SOs were not only staff whose job was to look after Papa, but they were also friends many of you have noticed. He lost a lot of weight and appeared thin and gaunt.

Papa was stubborn and determined. He would insist on walking down the steps at home, from the verandah to the porch where the car was parked. Ho Ching had a lift installed so Papa need not negotiate those steps. But as long as he was alert and aware, he refused the lift even though it was a struggle for him to walk down those steps, even with three SOs

helping. But the lift was not installed in vain. On several occasions when he was ill and needed to be admitted to SGH (Singapore General Hospital)... the SO would simply guided him into the lift.

The SOs were an integral part of Papa's life, even more so in the last five years. They looked after him with tender loving care, way beyond the call of duty. One doctor friend, who came to help dress a wound Papa sustained when he fell, noticed this and said to me: "The SOs look after your father as though he is their own father."

"I'm well aware of that. That's why so much of the speech is dedicated to the SOs."

Papa believed that goodwill goes both ways. He was very considerate towards his SOs. Sensing he was special, all the SOs have been very kind to Papa.

On behalf of my family, I would like to thank all of them. I know each of them well. I even know the number of children they have. The SOs were not only staff whose job was to look after Papa, but they were also friends many of you have noticed. He lost a lot of weight and appeared thin and gaunt.

Papa was stubborn and determined. He would insist on walking down the steps at home, from the verandah to the porch where the car was parked. Ho Ching had a lift installed so Papa need not negotiate those steps. But as long as he was alert and aware, he refused the lift even though it was a struggle for him to walk down those steps, even with three SOs

helping. But the lift was not installed in vain. On several occasions when he was ill and needed to be admitted to SGH (Singapore General Hospital)... the SO would simply guided him into the lift.

The SOs were an integral part of Papa's life, even more so in the last five years. They looked after him with tender loving care, way beyond the call of duty. One doctor friend, who came to help dress a wound Papa sustained when he fell, noticed this and said to me: "The SOs look after your father as though he is their own father."

"I'm well aware of that. That's why so much of the speech is dedicated to the SOs."

Papa believed that goodwill goes both ways. He was very considerate towards his SOs. Sensing he was special, all the SOs have been very kind to Papa.

On behalf of my family, I would like to thank all of them. I know each of them well. I even know the number of children they have. The SOs were not only staff whose job was to look after Papa, but they were also friends many of you have noticed. He lost a lot of weight and appeared thin and gaunt.

Papa was stubborn and determined. He would insist on walking down the steps at home, from the verandah to the porch where the car was parked. Ho Ching had a lift installed so Papa need not negotiate those steps. But as long as he was alert and aware, he refused the lift even though it was a struggle for him to walk down those steps, even with three SOs

lunches at Ye Ye's house, where the white walls, old furniture and even the food would remain the same through the years.

He added: "I grew up, sometimes I would talk to Ye Ye about politics and the state. Always he spoke with the courage of his convictions, with a certainty born of long consideration. As you might guess, we didn't always agree."

After the eulogies, family members filed past the casket for one last look at Mr Lee, laying a single rose each in the open casket.

His sister Monica Lee was the first; then members of the extended family. Next, the grandchildren; then Mr Lee's three children and his spouses.

Hsien Loong, as eldest child, was last. He placed his rose in the casket, then beckoned to his wife Ho Ching and put his arm round her.

They stood, side by side, beside the casket. Then they bowed, once, twice and thrice, in their final farewell to Papa.

It was time for Singapore's founding father, and the Lee family patriarch, to go to his final rest. As so many have noted in tributes all week, he had done so much for

each and every one of them for the care they have provided to Papa.

When Pa was not well at home, I was in fact the first line of defence for the doctors, meaning I would try to handle it on my own until I thought that it was out of hand and I would rather call a doctor.

The most common emergency Papa had was pneumonia, so one particular doctor was called most frequently. He doesn't wish to be named, and in fact he's so shy that he refused to turn up even, and so I'll have to call him Dr X. After several calls, I learnt that Dr X would be up by 5-45am to see his children to school. One morning at 5am, I had to call him. I apologised for waking him up and asked him to tell his registrar on duty at SGH what to do, adding: "You don't need to rush in to see Pa. You can see him after you have sent your children to school."

Dr X replied, "Today is Sunday." But I knew that even on Sundays, Dr X makes his rounds at SGH. Even my father noticed that he would be there. He said to me: "This doctor actually examines me."

During his last illness, Papa had to be cared for in the medical ICU (intensive care unit) of SGH. This was a very difficult time for Papa, the medical staff, as well as for the family. The ICU staff were diligent and meticulous in their care, and no effort was spared to help Papa and tend to his needs. The ICU staff had meetings twice a day to discuss how to pro-

ceed, and this happened on weekdays as well as Chinese New Year, which I really felt was extremely impressive and a lot of effort went into it.

To all the medical staff who helped Papa, my family is extremely grateful. I also want to thank the (Prime Minister's Office) staff who kept the office running smoothly in Papa's absence.

My brothers have said much about Papa. I just want to focus on one point: What have I learnt from Pa? What is the biggest lesson he taught me?

The influence parents have on children depends on many things. And if I saw someone being bullied unfairly by his superior, I have no hesitation to come to the rescue of the victim. And since I am not a bully pugnacious like my father... I enjoy a fight so long as it is for a just and good cause upon the temperament of the parent and the child.

Temperamentally, I am very similar to Papa. So similar that in a given situation, I can predict how he would feel and respond. The SOs will know. They looked on with some degree of amusement at the way Pa struggled to complete his 12 minutes on the treadmill three times a day after each meal. Even on days when he was tired, he would still try to do it in 12 minutes even if he needed more rest in between. In comparison, the SOs can easily tell when I'm not well, simply because Papa's chair and placed it against the wall. It was a poignant moment because it came home to me that this farewell is forever. And I nearly broke down, but I won't break down. I am a Hakka woman.

So farewell, Papa. I will miss you. Rest in peace. And... as tough as Hakkas come... as

Mr Lee Kuan Yew
1923 - 2015



Singapore; and it was time for another generation to take over.

Earlier, in his eulogy, PM Lee had described how his father helped him in his first bid for office: "Once when I was just getting the hang of balancing on two wheels, he pushed me off... I pedalled off across the field, thinking that he was still supporting and pushing me."

"Then I looked back and found that actually he had let go, and I was cycling on my own, launched, and he had let go! He was so pleased. So was I."

mulhoong@sph.com.sg

pa that you remain single and hence will be able to look after us in our old age. As you will be lonely. Also, you have inherited my traits but in such an exaggerated way that they are a disadvantage to you."

I won't deny that.

Papa, I know you would have predicted if I had married and had children. But I have no regrets, no regrets I was able to look after you and Mama in your old age.

What is the most important lesson I have learnt from Papa?

It was never to push anyone simply because he or she is weaker than me or in a socially inferior position... And never to let anyone bully someone else if I was in a position to stop such bullying.

And if I saw someone being bullied unfairly by his superior, I have no hesitation to come to the rescue of the victim. And since I am not a bully pugnacious like my father... I enjoy a fight so long as it is for a just and good cause upon the temperament of the parent and the child.

Temperamentally, I am very similar to Papa. So similar that in a given situation, I can predict how he would feel and respond. The SOs will know. They looked on with some degree of amusement at the way Pa struggled to complete his 12 minutes on the treadmill three times a day after each meal. Even on days when he was tired, he would still try to do it in 12 minutes even if he needed more rest in between. In comparison, the SOs can easily tell when I'm not well, simply because Papa's chair and placed it against the wall. It was a poignant moment because it came home to me that this farewell is forever. And I nearly broke down, but I won't break down. I am a Hakka woman.

So farewell, Papa. I will miss you. Rest in peace. And... as tough as Hakkas come... as

rationally that one day we will have to say farewell, yet emotionally we find it hard to imagine it happening. Then one day our parents are really gone, and we are left with a sense of loss and pain. That is the human condition.

Papa had thought long and hard about this. When preparing what to say today, I remembered that once upon a time he had made a speech about growing old and dying, to a gathering of doctors. Nobody else remembered it, except Janadas. We searched for the speech, and eventually after a heroic effort, YY found it. Papa had made it to a congress of cardiologists, very long ago - in 1972! I must have read it at the time, and it left such an impression on me that I remembered it across four decades.

I re-read the speech with delight. It was vintage Lee Kuan Yew - thoughtful, erudite, elegant, witty, but with a deeper point. Sadly, nobody makes after-dinner speeches like that any more. He titled it "Life is better when it is short, healthy and full!"

He talked about cardiac health, decrepitude, the right to die, advanced medical directives (though the term had not yet been invented), and much more. You have to read the full speech yourself, because it is impossible to summarise. I will just share one quote: "Life is better short, healthy and full than long, unhealthy and dismal. We all have to die. I hope mine will be painless. As de Gaulle said: 'Never fear, even de Gaulle must die', so, He did."

Papa had a long, short, healthy and full than long, unhealthy and dismal. We all have to die. I hope mine will be painless. As de Gaulle said: "Never fear, even de Gaulle must die", so, He did."

Papa had a long, short, healthy and full than long, unhealthy and dismal. We all have to die. I hope mine will be painless. As de Gaulle said: "Never fear, even de Gaulle must die", so, He did."

When we are young, we think our parents will always be there. After we grow up, as we watch their age and grow frail, we know



Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and his wife, Ho Ching, at the Mandai Crematorium. PM Lee gave the first eulogy at the service in Mandai, where he spoke about his father as head of the family and as a loving grandfather. ST PHOTO: KUA CHEE SIONG

He was 'my own special father' and more

Excerpt from the eulogy by **MR LEE HSIEN YANG** at Mandai Crematorium

MY FATHER was born when Singapore was part of the British Empire, the Straits Settlements flag fluttered over Government House, and the people of Singapore sang "God Save the King". Papa was given the name Harry at birth. He grew up to feel that that did not fit in and reflect who he was as a son of Singapore.

When Papa was 10, his youngest brother Suan Yew was born. Papa persuaded his father and his mother that it was not a good thing to give Suan Yew a Western name. And so at 10 years old, he had prevailed in the household. Decades later, when Papa entered politics, he found the name Harry to be a political liability. It was from politics that he found it, but in truth two decades before that, he had felt that this was not right for him.

When Loong, Ling and I were born, Papa gave us only Chinese names. As Papa did not have a good command of Chinese and came from a Peranakan household, he sought the help of the court interpreter, Mr Wong Chong Min, in the choice of names. For their eldest son, Papa and Mama chose the name Hsien Loong. It meant "illustrious dragon". It was an appropriate and auspicious choice for a boy, especially one born in the Year of the Dragon.

For my sister, they chose the name Wei Ling, which means "the beautiful sound of tinkling jade". I suppose Mama thought that that was an appropriate and feminine name for a daughter, though I don't think it circumscribed Ling's development!

For me, they chose the name Hsien Yang. The name Yang has more literary origin. It was taken from a quote from the Three Letter Classics which can mean "to show off". So my mother used to tease me before I knew this and



Mr Lee Hsien Yang and his wife Lim Suet Fern with their sons Li Huanwu (back row, left), Li Shaowu (second from right), holding Mr Lee's portrait with Li Haoyi, PM Lee's son. ST PHOTO: KUA CHEE SIONG

said: "Your name means you're an illustrious show-off". Actually, the phrase meant "to bring honour and value to your parents".

I am sure many Singaporeans travelling abroad have often received compliments on Singapore and its transformation over the last 50 years. Usually the conversation would quickly acknowledge the contributions of Mr Lee Kuan Yew. I would nod in agreement but I would not acknowledge my relationship, and I just kept quiet. I'd say: "Yes, it's been a remarkable journey."

Unsolicited compliments like this are the most authentic and heartfelt. Keeping private my family connection only served to enhance the pleasure for me, and sadly, as I developed a more visible public profile, it became harder not to be recognised as Lee Hsien Yang and my father's son. I taught my children not to

mention or flaunt their relationship with their grandfather, that they needed to make their own way in the world, on their own merit and industry. I suggested to them that should they be asked whether they are related to Mr Lee Kuan Yew that a good answer was to say: "My name is spelled 'Li'. Mr Lee Kuan Yew's name is spelled 'Lee'. 'Li' is one of the most common Chinese surnames in the world..." This response, which I suggested, was not meant to mislead or to obfuscate, it's born out of a desire to be recognised for who we are as individuals and not for who we are related to.

We are immensely proud of Papa and his achievements, and yet I feel that it is part of our DNA to seek our own way in life. I am sure that Papa would not have wanted it otherwise.

Papa, thank you for a lifetime of service to the people of Singapore. You made this little red dot

a nation all of us are proud to call home.

Papa, thank you for being a wonderful husband and companion to Mama, for loving her completely, for caring for her during her illness and during your lives together.

Papa, thank you for being my own special father. Always there to guide, counsel and advise me every step of the way, but also prepared to step back and let me find my own wings and make my own way.

Papa, it is hard to say goodbye. You work is done and your rest is richly deserved. In our own different and diverse ways, my family and I will continue to honour you and your memory in all that we do.

Pa was always there for us and taught us lessons in life

Excerpt from the eulogy by **MR LEE HSIEN LOONG** at Mandai Crematorium

SO MUCH has said about Pa's public life in the past few days. His public life is something we share with all of Singapore, with the world.

But we were privileged to know him as a father, a grandfather, an elder brother, a friend, a strict but compassionate boss, the head of the family.

Actually, Pa was the head of two families. As the eldest son, from a young age he was effectively head of his household, helping his mother - Mak - to bring up his younger brothers and sister. He remained close to them all his life. To my uncles and aunts, he was always "Kor", never "Harry".

Sai Sok (Suan Yew) would have him over to dinner every Christmas, and Ku Cheh (Monica) would cook him his favourite dishes, and teach his cook how to do them, almost to the same standard as hers. Papa made it a point to attend the Chinese New Year reunion dinner of the extended Lee family every year, even till last year, to catch up with his siblings, to meet his nephews and nieces, and later grand-nephews and grand-nieces.

Pa was also head of his own family - my mother and the three children. He had plunged deep into politics by the time we arrived.

In fact, the day I was born, when he visited Mama and the new baby in Kandang Kerbau Hospital, he told her how he was going to represent the postmen's union in their dispute with the government. This was the postmen's strike which first made his name and launched him into active politics.

So day to day, Mama ran the household, brought us up, saw to our schooling. But Papa set the tone, tracked our progress and made the big decisions.

He sent us to a Chinese school; he started us on Malay lessons

with Cikgu Amin; he encouraged Yang and me to take up SAF Scholarships, to serve the nation; he persuaded Ling to become a doctor instead of a vet. He set us on the path to make our own marks in the world, and we are grateful.

We are also grateful that Pa guided and nurtured us to grow up into normal, well-adjusted people, even though we were the Prime Minister's children, always in the spotlight, in every danger of being spoilt, indulged and led astray. He and Ma decided that we would stay in Oxley Road and not move to Sri Temasek, lest we grow up thinking that the world owed us a living.

He made sure we did not get the wrong ideas - no inflated sense of self; never be inconsiderate to others; not to throw our weight around. We may not always have done it right, but we were never left in any doubt what the right way to behave.

I took pride in us children. When I learnt to ride a bicycle, he was there. Once when I was just getting the hang of balancing on two wheels, he pushed me off from behind to get me started. I pedalled across the field, thinking that he was still supporting and pushing me. After a few seconds, I turned around and found I was on my own. He had let go. He was so pleased. So was I.

Like all good fathers, Papa continued to be there for us, even after we grew up. When Yang and I got married, he wrote us long and thoughtful letters sharing advice on how to make our marriages successful. Precious lessons drawn from his own long, very happy marriage with Mama.

After Ming Yang died, and especially before I remarried, he and Mama spent time with Xiqi and Yiqing, the stillborn twins, to fill the gap and help bring them to life. They took them for walks after dinner every night in the Istana. He was not an indulgent grandfather, but a loving one. There is a

photo of Papa with four grandsons, who were then toddlers, blowing soap bubbles in the garden in front of Sri Temasek.

Papa was happy that all the three children grew up to be successful, responsible people, contributing to society in our different ways. A few months after I became Prime Minister, he wrote me a letter on his Minister Mentor letterhead. It read: "These are mock-ups of my Christmas and New Year cards for this year 2005. The photograph after the swearing-in at the Istana records a memorable evening in my life. Have you any amendments or comments?"

The photo was of me shaking hands congratulating him, I as the new Prime Minister and he as the new Minister Mentor and President S R Nathan looking on. Naturally I replied that I agreed and had no amendments. He was proud of his son, but he wanted to do things in the proper way, as always.

He continued to teach us lessons in life even in his later years. We learnt from watching him grow old with Mama. She meant the world to him, and he to her. They delighted in each other's company.

After Mama's stroke in 2003, he nursed her back to health, encouraged her to exercise and stay active, and continued to take her on trips abroad. He even learnt to measure her blood pressure using a traditional sphygmomanometer and stethoscope, and faithfully did this twice a day every day and e-mailed the results to her doctors. He would tell her: "Life is an endless series of adjustments as you grow older, you adjust. Think how lucky we are and how much worse off we could be. Always look on the bright side of things."

After every fortnight or so, Kim Li, his niece, would take him out for meals, and for a change of surroundings. They would go to Underwater World Sentosa, Changi Airport to see Project Jewel, to take a boat ride in the harbour. He enjoyed the outings and the company. A few friends would join in and take turns to host him - Wai Keung, Stephen Lee, Ong Beng Seang, Ban Leong, Peter Seah, Robert Ng, among others. We are grateful to Kim Li, and to them.

I would also like to thank the medical team of doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, specialists of all kinds led by Professor Fong Kok Yong, for taking such good care of

EULOGIES

Ye Ye showed us what we could be

Excerpt from the eulogy by **MR LI HONGYI, 28, son of PM Lee Hsien Loong and grandson of Mr Lee Kuan Yew**

SOME years ago when I was preparing to go to university, Ye Ye gave me a camera. This was the first and only time he ever gave me a present. Over the next few years, I got deeply into photography and took thousands of photos of my time in college. After I graduated, I got a book printed with my favourite ones. I presented it to him as a thank you for his gift and hopefully to show him I had done something good with it.

Ye Ye was more than a grandfather to me. He was an inspiration. As a child, I looked up to him and wanted to grow up to be the kind of man he was. Even now, I still do.

We would have lunch with Ye Ye and Nai Nai every Sunday at their house. We always ate simple things: mee rebus, nasi lemak, popiah. He was never one concerned with luxury or lavishness. The idea that he would care about how fancy his food was or what brand his clothes were was laughable. His mind was always on more important things. He would have discussions with our parents while my cousins and I would sit by the side and listen. I would always feel a bit silly after listening. He made me realise how petty all my little concerns were and how there were so many bigger problems in the world. He made me want to do something more with my life.

He was not an especially charming man. Yet when he spoke, you felt compelled to listen. Because when he spoke, you knew he was being straight with you. He was not trying to cajole or flatter. He would be completely frank and honest. After speaking to him in person, you knew that his speeches were not puffed-up fluff. They were truly his opinions on the matters he cared most about. He would never echo empty slogans or narrow-minded ideologies; it was always thoroughly researched

Grandpa was 'our man of tomorrow'

Excerpt from the eulogy by **MR LI SHENGWU, 30, Mr Lee Hsien Yang's eldest son and grandson of Mr Lee Kuan Yew**

WHEN the grandchildren were very little, Ye Ye would take us on walks to feed the fish at the Istana. We would perch on the edge of the pond, the ripples of our breadcrumbs breaking the mirrored surface of the water. He liked to have the grandchildren nearby as he pedalled his exercise bike on the green grass.

Sunday lunch with Ye Ye was an institution for our family. His voice and his hearty laugh would carry to the children's table, talking about matters of state, recounting meetings with foreign leaders whose names we neither recognised nor remembered.

In a city of continual renewal, my grandparents' house never changed. Always the same white walls, the same wooden furniture, the same high windows letting in sunlight.

The food stayed the same too – Singapore cooking that would not end up to take at a good stall in a hawker centre. Ye Ye and Nai Nai would take us on outings, to the zoo, to the Science Centre, to National Day. As a child, I believed that the chief benefit of his position was that it came with a marvellous view of the world.

Ye Ye loved his role as a doting grandfather. It delighted him, at each Chinese New Year, when the grandchildren gathered to greet him and receive hongbao. After Nai Nai's her second stroke in June 2008, he continued the tradition, preparing himself the hongbao for his grandchildren.

As I grew up, sometimes I would talk to Ye Ye about politics and the state. Always he spoke with the courage of his convictions, with a certainty born of long consideration. As you might guess, we didn't always agree. At the dining table, he never argued opportunistically, never took a position he didn't believe in for the sake of a tactical advantage. The facts were the facts; our beliefs should accord with the evidence, and not the other way around.

and well-considered perspectives. I had the privilege once of accompanying Ye Ye to a ceremony in Washington where he was receiving an award. Hearing him speak and watching the entire room listen made me feel so proud. His charisma came not from showmanship but from pure substance.

Ye Ye understood the limits of his knowledge. He made it a point to try and understand the flaws and risks of his own perspectives better than anyone else. This was especially true when it came to Singapore. He refused to let blind nationalism run this country into the ground.

He cared deeply about this country and made sure he was aware of any weaknesses that could cause us harm. But he was very proud of Singapore and confident that we could be better.

Ye Ye showed me that you could make a difference in this world. Not just that you could make a difference, but that you could do it with your head held high. You didn't have to lie, cheat or steal. You didn't have to charm, flatter or cajole. You didn't have to care about frivolous things or play silly games. You could do something good with your life, and the best way to do so was to have good principles and conduct yourself honourably.

People admired Ye Ye for his brilliant mind. They admired him for his ability to lead and rally us together. They admired him for all of his staggering accomplishments. These are all true. But to me, what made him a great man was the person he chose to be. A man of character, clarity and conviction. We should remember him less as a man who gave us great gifts, and more as a man who showed us the kind of people we could be.

When Ye Ye gave me that camera years ago, he wrote me a note. It was a simple note that he hoped I make good use of it. I hope I have.

Softer side of Mr Lee unveiled

Leaders recall a tough but fair man who agonised over hard decisions

By **FIONA CHAN**
DEPUTY POLITICAL EDITOR

A SOFTER side of the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew emerged yesterday from the eulogies of those who had worked closely with him.

They spoke of Singapore's founding Prime Minister not just as a scrupulously honest leader and a tough taskmaster, but also as a mentor, a teacher, a friend – and a hero.

President Tony Tan Keng Yam recalled the "roar" of the crowd at the National Day Parade two years ago when the audience burst into a loud cheer upon seeing Mr Lee make his entrance.

"That roar captured the feelings of a nation, of all of us, towards Mr Lee. It rang with respect, affection, friendship and deep emotional attachment."

"It was the sound of one nation united," Dr Tan said at a state funeral for Mr Lee at the National University of Singapore's University Cultural Centre (UCC).

Last week, the nation gathered to mourn him, and did so in a manner that would have made him proud, the President added.

Singaporeans queued patiently for hours to pay their last respects to Mr Lee, who died last Monday. Many helped to make the wait less onerous by offering shelter and refreshments.

"This was what (Mr Lee) had worked for his whole life – to build a united people, who respect and care for one another as fellow citizens," Dr Tan said.

Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong, who had taken the Prime Minister baton from Mr Lee in 1990, described him as a man who "drove his people hard" to quickly create a nation from scratch.

But Mr Lee – whom Mr Goh first met in 1958 when he invited the then opposition leader to speak at his school, Raffles Institution – was also a "great teacher" and an inveterate warrior.

"He shared with the Cabinet useful articles, his conversations with world leaders, and insights from overseas guests," Mr Goh told the 2,200 guests at the funeral.

He also "worried incessantly whether Singapore would survive after he and the old guard were

gone. He wanted to be judged on this, not by the city he had built and the lives he had improved".

To usher in Singapore's next generation of leaders, Mr Lee "had to cut short the political careers of his old colleagues", a process that "was painful for him", recalled Mr Goh.

"He said that it was 'emotionally difficult but necessary... I had to do it, whatever my own feelings'."

"I know he felt for them. He would occasionally ask me about them," he added.

After Mr Goh himself stepped down as Prime Minister in 2004, handing the office over to Mr Lee's son, current Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, he continued to have lunch regularly with the elder Mr Lee until the latter's health declined in 2013.

Mr Goh also caught peeks of Mr Lee's personal life during those lunches. "We talked about our families and health. After Mrs Lee's death, I glimpsed how lonely and sad he was."

Former Cabinet minister S. Dhanabalan, once identified by Mr Lee as a potential successor, shared similar memories of the latter mentoring younger ministers.

"When he made official visits and went to conferences, he always made it a point to take a few of us in the younger team along with him," he said.

"Mr Lee never tired of repeating his war stories, observations, and conclusions about events and personalities. To me, he was Minister Mentor from the time I started working with him."

Like Mr Goh, Mr Dhanabalan also witnessed Mr Lee's anguish behind the scenes when he had to make difficult decisions. "He was sometimes seen as a hard-hearted man who acted without feelings. But on the few occasions he discussed privately with me the decision to act against someone, I know that he agonised over the decision," said Mr Dhanabalan, now chairman of NUS Business School's management advisory board.

But he added that Mr Lee "was convinced that a soft-hearted approach would undermine the ethos he wanted to embed deeply in public service".

One value Mr Lee held dear was that of no wastefulness, said



Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and his wife Ho Ching bowing to thank the 2,200 mourners and guests near the end of the funeral service for Mr Lee Kuan Yew at the University Cultural Centre yesterday. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

former senior minister of state Sidek Saniff.

Speaking in Malay, he choked up at times as he recounted how Mr Lee had told him not to spend money buying a new overcoat and boots for a trip to China, but instead to borrow them – from former Cabinet minister Ahmad Mattar and Mr Goh respectively.

Concluding, Mr Sidek turned to face Mr Lee's coffin and said: "Farewell, friend. Farewell."

An equally heartfelt goodbye came from Mr Dhanabalan, who also faced the coffin and said simply: "Farewell, Sir."

Dr Tan and Mr Goh, on the other hand, ended their eulogies by urging Singaporeans to continue Mr Lee's legacy of a harmonious and successful Singapore.

"Let us stay united, across race, language, religion, across young and old, across rich and poor, across our whole society,

to write an exciting sequel to his and our Singapore story," said Mr Goh.

Other eulogists at the 2½-hour state funeral included former Cabinet minister Ong Pang Boon, trade unionist G. Muthukumarasamy, Tanjong Pagar community leader Leong Chun Loong and civil servant and former journalist Cassandra Chew.

Their speeches were bookended by eulogies from Mr Lee's sons, PM Lee and Mr Lee Hsien Yang.

After the 10 eulogies, PM Lee and Dr Tan laid wreaths near Mr Lee's coffin.

A moment of silence was then observed islandwide for Mr Lee and the pledge and national anthem recited before the family left for the cremation service at Mandai Crematorium.

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

to write an exciting sequel to his and our Singapore story," said Mr Goh.

Other eulogists at the 2½-hour state funeral included former Cabinet minister Ong Pang Boon, trade unionist G. Muthukumarasamy, Tanjong Pagar community leader Leong Chun Loong and civil servant and former journalist Cassandra Chew.

Their speeches were bookended by eulogies from Mr Lee's sons, PM Lee and Mr Lee Hsien Yang.

After the 10 eulogies, PM Lee and Dr Tan laid wreaths near Mr Lee's coffin.

A moment of silence was then observed islandwide for Mr Lee and the pledge and national anthem recited before the family left for the cremation service at Mandai Crematorium.

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Dedicated leader not afraid to implement unpopular policies

Excerpt from the eulogy by **MR ONG PANG BOON, 86, Cabinet minister from 1959 to 1984, who led the ministries of Home Affairs, Education, Labour and the Environment**

THE first time I heard of Mr Lee Kuan Yew was during the 1952 postal workers' strike, when I was a student at the University of Malaya.

At the time, the English and Chinese papers reported widely on how his legal adviser representing the unions argued successfully against the colonial government for the unions' and workers' welfare.

Like many other young people, I was deeply impressed by this brilliant lawyer.

So when the People's Action Party decided to contest the 1955 election, I did not hesitate to support the PAP as a volunteer, and was assigned to be Mr Lee's election agent.

But after the election, my employer posted me to Kuala Lumpur, and I thought that was the end of my political involvement.

In 1956, Mr Lee was en route to Cameron Highlands for a holiday with his wife and elder son, and arranged to see me at the Kuala Lumpur Station Hotel.

To my surprise, he asked me to join the PAP as its organising secretary.

I was determined to join the battle for independence from colonial rule, and accepted his offer without a second thought and joined the march for change. I have never regretted that decision.

As the PAP's organising secretary, I had to work closely with Secretary-General Comrade Lee and other Exco members. This gave me a better understanding of Mr Lee.

He was a consummate and far-sighted politician, maximising every opportunity to advance his political advantage and the PAP's interests.

Although English-educated, he understood that power rested with the pro-communist stu-



Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee Kuan Yew
1923 - 2015



We don't have everything, but we have more than most, because of Mr Lee's lifelong labour, says Ms Chew, who got to meet Singapore's first Prime Minister during two assignments as a journalist. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

On behalf of young S'poreans everywhere, thank you

Excerpt from the eulogy by **MS CASSANDRA CHEW, 31, civil servant and former journalist with The Straits Times**

I DID not know Mr Lee Kuan Yew personally for most of my life. We met while I was on two assignments as a journalist – documenting his life at home and collecting photographs for a picture book for his 90th birthday.

I met him up close six times, for meetings and interviews, from July 2011. Most were large, formal meetings at the Istana. Naturally, I was on my best behaviour.

I didn't dare to say a word to him until my editor made me lead one of the interviews. He thought Mr Lee would enjoy the interaction with a younger Singaporean.

I was so nervous I could hear my heart pounding before the meeting, and actually felt a headache coming on. I braced myself to be peppered with questions on whether I was married, when I planned to have children or whether I spoke Mandarin often enough – questions Mr Lee was known to ask young Singaporeans he met.

But there was none of that during the 80-minute interview, which was focused on the beginnings of his political career. There was no room for nervousness either.

He came in, sat down and asked: "Who's going to start?" And with that, the interview began. As always, Mr Lee was focused on the task at hand.

Over time, I gained more glimpses of what he was like as a person. For instance, it was a thrill for me to learn from his oral history that he once recalled an art exam in primary school. But that was, of course, a small blemish on his distinguished academic

record. I also learnt that in his later years he craved his late mother's gado gado and mee siam which, thankfully, his sister, Madam Monica Lee, could replicate.

I made at least eight visits to 38 Oxley Road, where I went into all the rooms. But the only time I saw him at home was during our 20-minute photo shoot which began in his study, where he spent most of his time while at home. He was in good spirits that day, dressed in a white, short-sleeved shirt, dark trousers and his trademark sports shoes.

I looked as if he had been going through his e-mail at his desk, which had newspapers, magazines, binders of papers and stationery, all neatly arranged.

It was clear that even at home, his focus was on his work. That was how I viewed his life: very simple and frugal, and always putting the country first and his own creature comforts second.

We moved to the living room, which was also a very private space because it was where the late Mrs Lee was remembered. Her photographs were displayed in two rows above her urn, and I was told Mr Lee would gaze at them daily as he had his meals.

I could feel how much Mr Lee missed his late wife. She was his partner, his anchor, for more than 63 years.

The last set of photos we took at his home are my favourite. Seated on a chair by a wooden table on the verandah, Mr Lee flashed a bright smile. They turned out to be the best photos on the reel.

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singaporeans' lives, says Mr Ong Pang Boon. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

To thank him for the photo shoot that day, I had prepared two chocolate cupcakes after learning how much he enjoyed chocolate. But, on the day, I was far too excited and dropped the box before I could present them to Mr Lee.

I had been reflecting on what I was learning about Mr Lee, as a person and founder of independent Singapore, and had just begun to understand just how much he and his family had sacrificed to ensure Singapore's success. I realised just how much I had taken for granted, and how much more I had to thank him for.

To me, Mr Lee had transformed from an elderly statesman who our textbooks say did a lot for us but didn't seem relevant to my daily life, to a man for whom I developed a deep sense of gratitude and appreciation. So much of Singapore began to make sense to me now that I had seen the world through his eyes.

I decided to try to express my thanks again, and wrote him a thank-you card.

I had so much to say, but did not know how to say it, and ended up writing four simple lines.

A few weeks later, I received a reply. True to his personality, his response was brief and to the point. "Thank you," he wrote, and signed off as "LKY". I was thrilled to have heard back from him, but a little sad that I did not convey what I felt in my heart.

This is my last chance. Mr Lee, thank you for everything. Some days I cannot believe how fortunate I am to have been born a Singaporean.

We don't have everything, but we have more than most, because of your lifelong labour and how you have made Singapore everywhere, I'd like to say: Thank you.

Mr Lee spent every moment thinking of how he could improve Singapore and Singapore



ST PHOTO: JAMIE KOH. PHOTO TAKEN FROM SWISSOTEL THE STAMFORD

The guns boom, the skies weep

A heavy downpour rained down – as even the heavens seemed to weep – as the funeral cortege of Mr Lee Kuan Yew wound past the historic Padang. It was here that on June 3, 1959, after sweeping the polls at general elections for the first fully elected Legislative Assembly, Mr Lee and his colleagues held a victory rally. To the tens of thousands gathered there, and who had placed their faith in the People's Action Party, he said: "Once in a long while in the story of a people, there comes a great moment of change. Tonight is such a moment in our lives... We begin a new chapter in the history of Singapore." The Padang and City Hall were also where Mr Lee read out the proclamation of merger with Malaya in 1963, and where he proclaimed Singapore's independence two years later. Singapore's first National Day Parade was also held here, and the 1968 NDP at the Padang had also been drenched by a downpour.

As the cortege made its final journey, cannon on the Padang fired a 21-gun salute in honour of Mr Lee. In the background is the Old Parliament House, the scene of so many fiery speeches from Mr Lee, first as an opposition assemblyman, then as Prime Minister and Senior Minister.

SAYING GOODBYE: PARLIAMENT HOUSE, PADANG

Mr Lee Kuan Yew
1923 - 2015

Crowds line streets to witness start of final journey

Young, old, locals and expats brave downpour outside Parliament House

By KARAMJIT KAUR, ANDREA NG and KOK XING HUI

THE scene of unprecedented crowds for the lying in state, Parliament House still saw scores turn up yesterday to witness the start of the end of Mr Lee Kuan Yew's final journey.

By about 10am, more than 200 people - young, old, Singaporeans, expatriates, tourists - were lining the streets outside Parliament House. Some had turned up as early as five hours before the funeral procession was due to start, to pay their final respects.

A light drizzle, followed by heavy rain and strong winds, did little to dampen their spirits.

At about 11.45am - 45 minutes before the cortege was scheduled to set off - the road in front of Parliament House was closed.

This prompted mourners to surge forward to take up vacant space and police officers had to step in to maintain order.

When the combined military and police band started playing, leading a marchpast comprising military personnel and students to the front of Parliament House, some in the crowd shouted "Umbrellas down", so that the view of those behind would not be blocked.

A young man's comment - "Rain, never mind, tomorrow take MC (sick leave)" - raised cheers from those around him.

Soon after, the ceremonial gun carriage carrying Mr Lee's casket emerged from the front gates of Parliament House.

The crowd, drenched from head to toe, broke out into chants of "We love you, Mr Lee", "Thank you, sir" and "You made us, Mr Lee" as the casket made its way down North Bridge Road before turning into Parliament Place.

Walking behind before they got into their vehicles after a short distance were Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and other family members. They were joined by current and former Members of Parliament, including Minister for Defence Ng Eng Hen and Health Minister Gan Kim Yong. The group also included former MPs Mahmud Awang, Chan Chee Seng and Chiam See Tong, with the latter two in wheelchairs but determined to be present.

The gun carriage was escorted by 48 personnel from the Singapore Armed Forces and Singapore Police Force in ceremonial uniforms.

Some in the crowd wept but private tutor Ong Than Eng, 64, proudly chanted "Lee Kuan Yew,

Lee Kuan Yew, God bless Lee Kuan Yew". He said: "We've shed enough tears. I cried when Mr Lee was in the Singapore General Hospital and when I paid my respects to him at Parliament House, but he's in a better place now."

Others like Madam Ang Quee Whuay, 83, could not hold back their tears. She said that, if not for Mr Lee and the Government's education subsidies, she would not have been able to put her five children through school after her husband died.

She queued for five hours last Thursday to pay her final respects at Parliament House and turned up again yesterday morning. "I'm just too thankful," she said as she wiped away her tears.

There were tourists present, too, such as Australians Brian Edgley, 67, who is retired, and his wife Susan Gilmore, 63, an administration officer. The couple had not planned to witness the funeral procession but ended up staying instead of going to Gardens by the Bay. Mr Edgley recalled: "In our 20s, anything to do with Asia, Lee was it."

About an hour after the cortege had passed, the streets had emptied and the crowd had moved to City Hall MRT Station, where train officers had to stop people at the entrances to avoid congestion inside.

✉ karam@sph.com.sg
✉ andrea@sph.com.sg
✉ kxinghui@sph.com.sg



FIRST TRIP TO SINGAPORE

"I really admire Mr Lee. When I was a young man and working in Malaysia on odd jobs, I was envious of the way he took care of the country. He made sure everyone in Singapore is equal, unlike in Malaysia. I wanted to send him off. It was difficult moving around Singapore as it's my first time here. I keep having to ask for directions. It's my wish to send him off, Mr Lee is a good leader."

- Retiree Cheng Kam Yeong, 67, a Malaysian from Kuala Lumpur and a member of the opposition Democratic Action Party (DAP), who turned up in a DAP T-shirt

THEY WAVED OUR FLAG



"He made Singapore good." - Foreign workers and Indian nationals (from left) Pandi, B.S. Chari and Rajess at the construction site of the National Gallery were given a break to catch the procession. They were holding small Singapore flags



"It touched me to see so many Singaporeans with their flags, under the rain, waiting to say their last goodbye. Mr Lee's dedication is an example for Brazil and other countries to follow."

- Brazilian tourist Renato Barandier, 35, an urban planner, was "checking out the city" after arriving on a business trip. He saw the growing crowds of people at the Supreme Court and stood there watching, when someone handed him a Singapore flag



A LESSON FOR OUR CHILDREN

"The kids - aged 11, 10 and five - don't know who Mr Lee is, what he did and why he did what he did. We want them to learn from him to have no fear of failure, to continue aspiring for their dreams and to not take things for granted."

- Mr Chua Joo Meng, 42, a transport assistant, and his wife, Madam Loh Oi Yeong, a secretary, turned up with their three children, (clockwise from bottom) Cavan, Cheryl and Tarey, at High Street Centre, 3 1/2 hours before the funeral procession was due to start



(Clockwise from above) The family of Mr Lee Kuan Yew following the ceremonial gun carriage carrying the casket as it left Parliament House for the University Cultural Centre at the National University of Singapore yesterday afternoon. Despite the torrential downpour, members of the public, some huddling under umbrellas, lined the streets, waiting to pay their final respects as the cortege went past. To honour Mr Lee, gunners from the 21st Battalion Singapore Artillery executed a 21-gun salute at the Padang. PHOTOS: KEVIN LIM, NEO XIAOBIN, JAMIE KOH, ALPHONSUS CHERN, MINDEF



Among those who waited in the heavy rain yesterday were Mr Philip Cheng (in black shirt), 63, who remembers marching in the 1968 NDP during a downpour, and Mr David Hong, 58, with his wife Malee. ST PHOTOS: JONATHAN WONG, JERMYN CHOW

Rain brings back memories of 1968 National Day Parade

THE skies opened up and the deluge came, but thousands of people lining the streets around the Padang to say one last goodbye to Mr Lee Kuan Yew stayed put.

Getting soaked to the skin despite having ponchos and umbrellas, they waited up to five hours to catch a glimpse of the state funeral procession going past.

For Mr Philip Cheng, 63, and Mr David Hong, 58, there was a

sense of déjà vu.

Mr Cheng had stood in the same grass field as a 16-year-old, with the rain pouring down at the National Day Parade (NDP) in 1968. He had been part of the National Cadet Corps contingent.

"We were completely soaked but... we were not bothered by the rain," said Mr Cheng, who was among the more than 1,000 participants in 81 contingents.

"To see our fellow Singaporeans continue to stand and watch us was very special too," recalled Mr Cheng, who was with his wife Florence, 63, yesterday. "It showed solidarity. Just like today, as we wait to say goodbye..."

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, too, had performed at that parade 47 years ago, as a member of the combined school brass band. His father, Mr Lee Kuan

Singaporeans do us proud with kind, caring deeds

By MARC LIM, JERMYN CHOW and JONATHAN WONG

IT IS the place that has witnessed it all in the last few days, from snaking queues of tens of thousands of people, to yesterday's 21-gun salute in honour of the nation's first Prime Minister.

As Singapore mourned the death of Mr Lee Kuan Yew, the Padang was also the place where Singaporeans showed the best of themselves.

As Mr Lee lay in state at Parliament House from last Wednesday to Saturday, more than 450,000 people turned up to pay their respects. Never mind the queues of up to 10 hours through the Padang, or the scorching sun. Not a complaint was heard.

In fact, everyday folk turned up to give out food, water and umbrellas, and even spray cooling mist and collect rubbish from the crowd, just to make the wait a little more pleasant.

As thousands turned up again yesterday, this time to say one last goodbye to Mr Lee as the funeral procession passed by, it was no different.

For instance, business owner Amy Lee, 43, and 15 members of her extended family, including her 82-year-old father-in-law Chia Tong Fong, were out distributing miniature Singapore flags at the main entrance of Raffles City shopping mall at 8.30am yesterday. They had bought 10,000 of the flags, and gave them all out in under three hours.

Said Madam Lee: "We wanted everyone here to be able to wave the Singapore flag during the funeral procession and show how much they love this country, and

thank Mr Lee for everything he had done for us."

When torrential rain blanketed the city centre an hour before the cortege left Parliament House, many were caught by surprise.

But as retiree Rejina Tan, 61, found out, others jumped in to help. "It's the first time that I've seen so many Singaporeans being so kind and caring to each other... Strangers were helping each other to wear the ponchos and were sharing umbrellas," she said.

Mr Jason Lin, 27, who works in an IT company, was surprised at how orderly and patient the crowd was. "You could really feel that sense of unity... volunteers were patient and helpful, and the crowd were understanding and never complained," he said.

"That's what being Singaporean means and, hopefully, it will continue even after this."

Many were also appreciative that the Urban Redevelopment Authority decided to open The Jubilee Bridge - which links Merlion Park to the promenade in front of the Esplanade - yesterday, a month earlier than planned. This meant more had a good vantage point to watch the procession.

Said housewife Audrey Koh, 48: "I think we have proven those doubters wrong. We don't need to be showy but we will come together when it matters."

ITE graduate Yuma Amalinapasha, 20, believes the spirit will live on. "We saw people of different races and ages coming together," she said. "Perhaps we need to do this more often, and not just in sad times."

✉ marclim@sph.com.sg
✉ jermyn@sph.com.sg
✉ jonwong@sph.com.sg



TIME TO GIVE BACK

"On Saturday when we went to pay our respects at Parliament House, people kept giving us biscuits and drinks along the queue, so we are giving back. I wanted to prepare 200 boxes but I couldn't hit the mark in the end. The late Mr Lee did so much for Singapore and for Singaporeans. This is my small way of saying 'thank you'. It is really no big deal."

- Madam Geeta Nanikram, 57, a housewife, who was up at San yesterday and spent four hours preparing 103 packets of fried beehoon to distribute free to mourners waiting by the Supreme Court to bid a final farewell to Mr Lee Kuan Yew. Her daughter Pooja Nanikram (above), 25, a visual merchandiser, even managed to rope in several little helpers to distribute the food



PRIVILEGED TO HONOUR HIM

"Our friends and family back home in NZ have told us that all the flags are at half-mast today. That just shows you what sort of impact and influence Mr Lee had, not just here in Singapore, but even thousands of miles away. He was a great man and we are privileged to be here to honour him and be part of a piece of Singapore's history."

- New Zealander Warren Streeter, 44, a business development director who has been living in Singapore for four years. He was with his wife Irene, 43, and children - Katelyn, 11, and Jack, nine - as well as his parents-in-law



EARLY EXPOSURE TO HISTORY

"She is probably too young to understand what an important day today is, but we wanted to bring her (here) for this and, hopefully when she is older, she will remember this moment and feel a strong sense of Singapore's history."

- Mr Chng Boon Cheng, 36, an engineer who was at the Padang with his wife Emiliana, 36, and their five-year-old daughter Eva, who was perched on her father's shoulders



EVEN A GLIMPSE IS GOOD

"We can't and shouldn't complain so much. It is just rain and it will pass... even if we have to squeeze with many people just to glimpse the cortege for a few seconds, it is good enough."

- Mr Alan Woo, 39, a sales manager who took his wife and three children to One Fullerton to catch the funeral procession

GLAD TO STAY FOR SEND-OFF

"I have always felt bad and sorry for giving up my citizenship... Mr Lee has done so much for this country and my family benefited. I am glad I extended my stay here to see him off."

- Mr William Tan Keng Seng, 67, who was supposed to head home to Melbourne but extended his stay for the funeral. He gave up his citizenship in 1990



SAYING GOODBYE: SHENTON WAY, TANJONG PAGAR

Mr Lee Kuan Yew
1923 - 2015



A GREAT MAN

"At first, I thought he was just a very famous figure everyone is talking about. But after listening to his speeches, I now know he made what seemed impossible, possible. I really feel he is a great man."

— Secondary 1 student Kai Peh, 12 (top, with friend Thaddeus Chua, 7), who was at Shenton Way with his mother. He has been watching clips of Mr Lee's speeches and rallies on television since last Monday



TEES TO HONOUR MR LEE

"I wanted to do something special to remember and honour Mr Lee."

— DBS staff union executive committee member Jonathan James Wong, 45, on why he printed his own "Remembering Mr Lee Kuan Yew" T-shirts for his family and wore them yesterday with his seven-year-old daughter, Jovine



SAY GOODBYE WITH THE KIDS

"My husband and I want all our four children to learn about Mr Lee's contributions to Singapore. That is why we have taken them to Parliament and the Tanjong Pagar CC to pay our respects, and now we are here to say goodbye to Mr Lee as he passes by Shenton Way."

— Customer service staff Jasmine Ang, 45, with her husband Albert Ang, 48, who is self-employed, and their children (from left): Zaid, seven, Jayden, five, Enlila, nine, and Alline, 12



PAY RESPECTS AS A FAMILY

"Mr Lee is a great man. Being here is our way of paying our respects to him as a family."

— SIA pilot Captain Michael Goh, 41, who was with his wife Eunice, 36, son Jonathan, 10 and daughter Joyce, seven



HE DID SO MUCH

"We are doing it out of respect for Mr Lee. He's done so much for the country. I want to be able to pray for him without holding anything in my hands."

— Mr Tan Chor Kiat, chief executive of Vital, a central government department that handles human resource and finance matters, who was there with about 50 of his staff

Unionists, bank staff say goodbyes

Mr Lee's role in workers' rights and economic development remembered

By TOH YONG CHUAN
MANPOWER CORRESPONDENT
and JOANNA SEOW

WITH their families in tow, about 1,000 unionists lined the street outside the labour movement's headquarters in One Marina Boulevard yesterday, to pay homage one last time to the man whose career began by representing labour unions.

Mr Lee Kuan Yew's final journey through Singapore's financial district was remarkable as young and old put aside their umbrellas and, in pouring rain, bowed as the cortege passed by.

"Thank you, Mr Lee, for looking after workers," a lone shout rang out from the crowd.

The members of the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) and their families began streaming in as early as 9am for the best spots at the junction of Collyer Quay and Marina Boulevard.

NTUC's secretary-general Lim Swee Say arrived around 10am, stayed over an hour before heading to the University Cultural Centre for the state funeral service.

"We organised the event so that union members and their families can say farewell to Mr Lee," Mr Lim told The Straits Times.

Mr Lee began his political career in the 1950s, fighting for

workers' rights in his role as legal adviser to more than 50 unions. He was pivotal in nurturing tripartism, which strengthened the three-way partnership of unions, employers and the Government.

For his contributions, the NTUC gave him its highest award in 1991: Distinguished Comrade of Labour.

Unionist Raymond Chin, 32, cradling his six-month-old daughter Melanie, said: "She is too young to know what is going on, but when she grows up, we will tell her about Mr Lee."

Mr Chin is with the Union of Security Employees.

After the cortege passed, the NTUC played an a cappella version of the National Anthem, to which the unionists sang along, many tearfully.

Further down the road towards Shenton Way, about 550 staff and management of DBS Bank and their families gathered outside OUE Downtown 1 building, which previously housed its headquarters.

"We came a few hours early to reserve a place on the steps," said Ms Karen Ngui, head of group strategic marketing and communications at the bank.

Unionists and their families outside the NTUC Building in Collyer Quay. They started arriving as early as 9am yesterday. ST PHOTO: LAU FOOK KONG

"Shenton Way was the original financial centre and it symbolises the economic development that Mr Lee brought to Singapore."

Next door, safety coordinator Ismail Johari, 34, had waited with facade cleaner Mohamad Fairuz, 27. They had been cleaning the windows of OUE Downtown 2.

Said Mr Ismail: "I wanted to go to Parliament House after work on Friday but they closed the queue, no luck to see Mr Lee."

"But we got called back to work overtime today and heard he is passing by, so it's just nice, we can also pay our respects. He is our founding father after all."

Railings along the pavements were lined with the national flag.

Residents from estates in Pasir Ris, Bedok and Paya Lebar, as well as civil servants from the Ministry of National Development and Urban Redevelopment Authority flanked the roads.

Housewife May Liang, 46, could not hold back her tears as the cortege passed. She was with her sisters, children and nieces. They laid yellow and orange flowers on the road where they stood.

She said: "Since last week, I've been tearing every time I see the news and read people's tributes."

"We just wanted to bring something for him. He did so much for us."

tohyoc@sph.com.sg
josoe@sph.com.sg

SIA pilots gather to salute Mr Lee

ABOUT 200 pilots stood in the pelting rain yesterday and saluted Mr Lee Kuan Yew, in a touching send-off for the man who once had a fractious relationship with their union.

Dressed in dark blue jackets with peak caps, the pilots of Singapore Airlines (SIA), Silkair and SIA Cargo were led by Captain Tan Peng Koon, honorary secretary of the Airline Pilots' Association, to the airport on Dec 1.

He summoned the union officials to the Istana and told them bluntly he would ground SIA, sack

front buildings in Collyer Quay. Holding umbrellas, instead of seeking shelter in nearby buildings, they waited for the state funeral procession of Singapore's founding Prime Minister. When the cortege approached, they put away their umbrellas and saluted in the pouring rain as a mark of respect.

Mr Lee had in 1980 taken the pilots' union to task for staging an unofficial work-to-rule protest in November, to demand a 30 per cent basic pay rise, among other things. After 10 days, Mr Lee, who was then Prime Minister, stepped in on Dec 1.

He summoned the union officials to the Istana and told them bluntly he would ground SIA, sack

all the pilots and build a new national carrier unless all flight operations returned to normal and the airline's image, restored.

In 2003, Mr Lee spoke at a public forum and warned SIA management and pilots that there would be "broken heads" if tensions over wages continued to escalate.

Yesterday, Captain Tan said: "Mr Lee did what he had to do, the pilots then did what they felt was right. It was the past. Let bygones be bygones."

Added the 51-year-old Boeing 777 pilot as he removed his spectacles to wipe away tears: "Today, we are here to pay our respects to Mr Lee. Without him, there would be no SIA and no Singapore."

TOH YONG CHUAN



Staff and residents of welfare homes under Jamiyah waiting to witness Mr Lee's final journey. ST PHOTO: JAMIYAH

Muslim groups wait at 'meaningful' spot

THEY were some of the first to arrive at Shenton Way at around 8am, and stood outside the Singapore Conference Hall for more than four hours to wait to witness Mr Lee Kuan Yew's final journey.

About 100 officials, staff and residents of welfare homes under Muslim voluntary welfare organisation Jamiyah braved the rain under dark green umbrellas.

"Even the sky is crying," said Mr Osman Sapawi, 39, a resident at one of the homes, who said he was glad to have the chance to say farewell to Mr Lee.

Dr H. M. Saleem, a Jamiyah vice-president, said: "We wanted to select a place where we can all

be together to see the moment."

"We are very grateful for what Mr Lee has done for Singapore. He is a world-renowned visionary and leader," he added.

They were joined by several Indian Muslim community leaders at around 10.30am. Mr Faridullah A.W. Saifulnail, president of the Federation of Indian Muslims (FIM), said the community was thankful for the peaceful society Mr Lee helped to form.

"Mr Lee has done a lot to help us build racial and religious harmony in Singapore, where the minority group of Indian Muslims can live and integrate with all Singaporeans peacefully," he said.

FIM deputy president K.M. Deen said the location they chose was particularly meaningful for the occasion, as the former Trade Union House was a counting centre during the elections when Mr Lee was Prime Minister.

As the rain grew into a downpour and the number of bystanders swelled, the group offered this reporter a poncho.

Dr Deen, his eyes reddening, said he was moved by the crowd that had gathered.

"Whatever rain, whatever storm we have to stand in, it's nothing compared to what he has done for the nation," he said.

JOANNA SEOW



Tanjong Pagar keeps faith with its MP till the end

By RACHEL CHANG
ASSISTANT POLITICAL EDITOR

IN 1959, an 11-year-old Peter Gan peered out of the second-floor window of his house in Neil Road at jubilant crowds below.

They were carrying a man named Lee Kuan Yew on their shoulders in electoral victory back to the People's Action Party headquarters at 140 Neil Road.

On that heady Election Day of 1959, Lee Kuan Yew had not just been returned as MP for Tanjong Pagar, but had also become Prime Minister of Singapore.

Yesterday, 67-year-old Peter Gan, now slightly stooped, stood in the crowd as Mr Lee was carried once more through the streets.

This time, raindrops mixed with tears, and it was grief rather than triumph that broke through the shouts of "Lee Kuan Yew! Lee Kuan Yew!"

"We respect him very much," said the retired Singapore Armed Forces officer, just before Mr Lee's cortege passed through his political stronghold. "We supported him all the way."

Founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew was just weeks shy of his 60th anniversary as Tanjong Pagar's political representative when he died on March 23.

From the day he came to Tanjong Pagar in 1955 – chosen because he was just weeks shy of the common man and the worker, not the landlords or merchants over at Tanglin – he had their hearts.

They gave him landslide electoral victories from Day 1. And while they did not see their MP as much as other constituencies saw theirs, they knew, and he knew they knew, that it was an unbreakable bond.

In 1989, Mr Lee penned the foreword for a coffee-table book on the area's history.

Thanking the people of Tanjong Pagar for their "simple and abiding loyalties", he said: "They never changed their mind about supporting me because I never broke faith with them."

Many of those lining the Tanjong Pagar streets yesterday in the torrential rain to witness the passing of Mr Lee's cortege were resi-

dents of The Pinnacle@Duxton, including Mr Gan.

Some stood by the road while others watched from his 50th-floor Sky Garden – just one of the features that have made the estate the most enviable HDB address in town.

It was a fitting congregation, for the Pinnacle is the realisation of a promise Mr Lee made first to Tanjong Pagar residents – and then to the nation as a whole.

In the 1963 elections, he stood on stage at the very site, next to two half-finished blocks – the first Housing Board blocks in Tanjong Pagar – and promised that if he was re-elected, they would be completed.

He was, and they were.

Forty years later, the old blocks were torn down and in their place rose the Pinnacle, a grand monument to a vision that was delivered many times over.

Office manager and Pinnacle resident Sandy Ng, 36, wept as Mr Lee's cortege passed by yesterday.

"My biggest regret is never meeting him personally," she said. "I'm glad I stay in his constituency and managed to pay my last tribute to him."

After Mr Lee's cortege passed through Tanjong Pagar, many among the crowd retreated to the Community Club steps away to watch his funeral service.

The hall is not air-conditioned, a growing rarity among CCs. The grassroots leaders are proud that their CC has remained modest over the years. Its frugality fitting their MP.

The filled hall watched on big screens as the cortege wound its way west and reached the University Cultural Centre.

As the military guard began removing the coffin from its glass case to be transported into the hall, all were silent.

Then a small, white-haired 84-year-old woman named Chua Ah Poh soundlessly and slowly rose to her feet.

One by one, the rest of the crowd followed suit.

In death as in life, the people of Tanjong Pagar rose in respect for their forever-MP.

Mr Ooi moved from Jurong West five years ago, buying a unit in the iconic public housing development, The Pinnacle@Duxton. The 50-storey complex has won design awards, and made headlines in January when a

But yesterday, Madam Goh and thousands of Tanjong Pagar residents who lined Cantonment Road, did the waiting.

They did not move even when the skies opened, soaking many to the skin.

The moment was historic. They were bidding farewell not just to their MP, but Singapore's first Prime Minister, a founding father who led a team that brought Singapore from Third World to First.

Mr Lee first set eyes on Tanjong Pagar in 1955 because it "represented the heart of the economic and social problems of Singapore of the time", and he wanted

to turn things around.

He had represented the area since then.

Retiree Low Ming, 80, who has lived in Tanjong Pagar all his life, met Mr Lee when he was campaigning for the legislative assembly general election in 1959.

"He kept his promises to us. He said he would clean up the area, and he did. There used to be triads here who would collect protection money from us. When Mr Lee came along, he got rid of them. I have always voted for him," said the former hawk.

His wife Chim Kow Chey, 71, tears welling up, added: "He is a very, very good man."

Others, like Ms Ranjeet Kaur, 45, agreed. The former teacher, who has a flat in Cantonment, said her mother and two brothers all chose to live in Tanjong Pagar "because of Mr Lee".

Ms Kaur, who is doing a distance learning course to become a behavioural analyst, pointed to the Pinnacle@Duxton as an example of how Mr Lee had delivered on his promises.

Yesterday, many like her lined Cantonment Road, undeterred by the heavy downpour.

As the cortege drove by, they waved their flags and chanted "thank you" to their MP.

Over at the Police Cantonment Complex, a short walk from the Pinnacle, five women police bagpipers played Auld Lang Syne as the cortege neared.

Said Station Inspector Norma-wati Mohd Nor, before she took up her position: "I feel emotional, but we have to keep our feelings in check and produce the best quality of sound to give Mr Lee a fitting send-off."

As the strains of music filled the air, a line of Home Team officers, thoroughly drenched, snapped to attention and saluted the passing gun carriage bearing Mr Lee's flag-draped coffin.

Mr Ooi said Mr Lee's passing was a momentous occasion worth remembering and passing down through the generations.

"Mr Lee Kuan Yew had diplomacy, foresight, wisdom – he had the Midas touch," said Mr Ooi. "Whether it was defence, water, Garden City or incorruptibility, he was all of these policies. No politician will ever have this kind of overwhelming support again."

When Mr Lee came to office, he immediately started rounding them up. He caught them until they were no longer a problem. He made Chinatown safe for me."

— Retiree Toh Kwee Hoe, 78



The cortege passing The Pinnacle@Duxton in Cantonment Road. Mr Lee was just weeks shy of his 60th anniversary as Tanjong Pagar's political representative when he died on March 23. ST PHOTO: DESMOND WEE

Constituents bid farewell to their MP

By THAM YUEN-C
and CHONG ZI LIANG

IN THE eyes of Madam Goh Boon Keow, 73, Mr Lee Kuan Yew was always her Member of Parliament.

The long-time resident of Tanjong Pagar moved out of the area in 1992, but, every year, she would dutifully attend the constituency's National Day dinner just to see him and hear him speak.

At these dinners, residents always started eating without waiting for Mr Lee, who would slip in during the second or third course, said Madam Goh, adding: "He had no airs about him."

Mr Ooi said he paid around \$1 million.

Mr Ooi said he paid around \$450,000 for his four-room unit. Speaking at the Tanjong Pagar Community Club's tribute site, where he had just watched the 10 eulogies delivered at Mr Lee's funeral service, Mr Ooi said: "Mr Lee is the reason I chose to move here. This was his first constituency, and his last, his legacy."

Mr Ooi moved from Jurong West five years ago, buying a unit in the iconic public housing development, The Pinnacle@Duxton. The 50-storey complex has won design awards, and made headlines in January when a

Lee represented Tanjong Pagar for six decades.

Mr Ooi held up the Pinnacle as lasting proof of how far Singapore has come in his generation. "I grew up in an attic house, in a kampung near Thomson Road, behind the old Chequers Hotel."

"The wooden toilet we had was unforgettable: there were huge 'commando' houseflies, mosquitoes, big lizards crawling around.

Others, like Ms Ranjeet Kaur, 45, agreed. The former teacher, who has a flat in Cantonment, said her mother and two brothers all chose to live in Tanjong Pagar "because of Mr Lee".

Ms Kaur, who is doing a distance learning course to become a behavioural analyst, pointed to the Pinnacle@Duxton as an example of how Mr Lee had delivered on his promises.

Yesterday, many like her lined Cantonment Road, undeterred by the heavy downpour.

As the cortege drove by, they waved their flags and chanted "thank you" to their MP.

Over at the Police Cantonment Complex, a short walk from the Pinnacle, five women police bagpipers played Auld Lang Syne as the cortege neared.

Said Station Inspector Norma-wati Mohd Nor, before she took up her position: "I feel emotional, but we have to keep our feelings in check and produce the best quality of sound to give Mr Lee a fitting send-off."

As the strains of music filled the air, a line of Home Team officers, thoroughly drenched, snapped to attention and saluted the passing gun carriage bearing Mr Lee's flag-draped coffin.

Mr Ooi said Mr Lee's passing was a momentous occasion worth remembering and passing down through the generations.

"Mr Lee Kuan Yew had diplomacy, foresight, wisdom – he had the Midas touch," said Mr Ooi. "Whether it was defence, water, Garden City or incorruptibility, he was all of these policies. No politician will ever have this kind of overwhelming support again."

When Mr Lee came to office, he immediately started rounding them up. He caught them until they were no longer a problem. He made Chinatown safe for me."

— Retiree Toh Kwee Hoe, 78

HE TAUGHT US SELF-RELIANCE

"At the age of five or six, I was already hearing Mr Lee speak on the radio. I may not have understood the words fully, but even as a young child, I could feel the passion in his speeches. He was a very fiery speaker during his time as Prime Minister. But his tone changed and mellowed when he became Senior Minister. He began sounding more like someone who was trying to educate and persuade. It was almost like we were brought up by him because he inculcated values in us through his speeches. We learnt about hard work and the need to be self-reliant as a nation."

— Mr Edmund Pang, 54, insurance broker who came from Pasir Ris and was standing outside the Police Cantonment Complex.

BILINGUAL POLICY WAS RIGHT

"Mr Lee would rather people misunderstand him while he did his best for Singapore, than be popular. Without his foresight in his bilingualism policy, many of us will be struggling today. Instead, today many Singaporeans can go overseas and be effectively bilingual, giving us an edge.

When I was in school, maybe I didn't really understand the need for it, and was frustrated by having to learn two languages. But he saw how the world would change before most people did."

— Ms Sandy Ng, 36, office manager who cried as the cortege passed Cantonment Road

A MAN WITH NO AIRS

"Mr Lee never had any airs. My father was a Hakka like him, and whenever he had any difficulties or need advice, he would go to Mr Lee. Mr Lee would readily give him his time. There was no 'I am better than you, you are just a fisherman' attitude. If you went to him, he would help you."

— Ms Oh Geik Sin, 57

HE TOOK THE LONG VIEW

"I wanted to be Singaporean because life here is peaceful, the environment is good to raise children and the salary is good. Most importantly, people respect each other, and we are all equal.

Sometimes when I look at India, Sri Lanka, so many other countries, if they had followed the Singapore-style, they could be as successful as Singapore. But they didn't have a leader like Lee Kuan Yew. Mr Lee always had the long view, that is why Singapore has reached this stage."

— Mr Chinnu Raju, 45, maintenance engineer and Pinnacle resident. He came from Chennai, India in 1995 for work, and became a citizen in 1999.

A DECISIVE LEADER

"I still remember I was 15 when the 1963 riots happened. I was at my father's tailor shop in Arab Street, and I saw a lorry load of parang-wielding men get down looking for trouble. We quickly shuttered the stall.

Mr Lee took immediate action, putting a curfew in place. I remember we only had two hours a day to go to the market. But it worked, the troublemakers could not incite violence anymore. People could see that he was a decisive leader, that could lead Singapore well."

— Retiree Pauline Poon, 70

A CRIME BUSTER

"I remember when I was staying in Chinatown in my 20s, there were a lot of gangsters in the neighbourhood. They had different gang names they would chant, and from my window, I could see them carrying sticks and glass bottles. They would clash and overturn tables, scaring me. I was a seamstress based at home then.

When Mr Lee came to office, he immediately started rounding them up. He caught them until they were no longer a problem. He made Chinatown safe for me."

— Retiree Toh Kwee Hoe, 78

Mr Ooi said Mr Lee's passing was a momentous occasion worth remembering and passing down through the generations.

"Mr Lee Kuan Yew had diplomacy, foresight, wisdom – he had the Midas touch," said Mr Ooi. "Whether it was defence, water, Garden City or incorruptibility, he was all of these policies. No politician will ever have this kind of overwhelming support again."

When Mr Lee came to office, he immediately started rounding them up. He caught them until they were no longer a problem. He made Chinatown safe for me."

— Retiree Toh Kwee Hoe, 78

Mr Ooi said Mr Lee's passing was a momentous occasion worth remembering and passing down through the generations.

SAYING GOODBYE: BUKIT MERAH, QUEENSTOWN

Mr Lee Kuan Yew
1923 - 2015

Mr Lee's cortege making its way along Jalan Bukit Merah. From the kerbside and the flats above, people leaned forward eagerly to catch their last glimpse of Singapore's founding father.



People watching and waiting in the rain along Jalan Bukit Merah, some with their children in tow. ST PHOTO: WANG HUI FEN



A boy with a rose tucked into his poncho waiting along Jalan Bukit Merah. ST PHOTO: WANG HUI FEN

Mr Lee 'gave our families the life we have today'

S'poreans and immigrants alike pay tribute to his vision and conviction

By JOHN LUI

SHE is wearing a home-made black ribbon on her chest. She has been standing in the rain for three hours, waiting for the man who was Singapore's Prime Minister for much of her youth.

Ms Mary Koh, 42, is comfortably middle class now, but from where we stand on Jalan Bukit Merah, through the rain, we can see the Redhill Estate block where she spent all her early years, in a three-room flat shared with five siblings and her parents. Her father was a driver; her mother, a housewife.

The former financial analyst and now full-time housewife is here to thank Mr Lee for her education in schools such as Nanyang Technological University.

"Without him, I don't think I would have what I have today," she says, dabbing her eyes. "My husband's parents were hawkers. They had no education. But two of their children went to university. They didn't need special connections - just hard work," she says, surrounded by her three boys, Henry, nine, Walter, 10, and Bryan, 14, and husband Simon Ong, 42, an auditor. They have had a rough week.

Henry is in a wheelchair because he broke his ankle after a fall. The cast is wrapped in plastic to protect it against the rain.

Pushing him through the crowd has been awkward, but Ms Koh wants her sons to know how

important this moment is. "They grew up without Lee Kuan Yew. I don't know if they appreciate everything we have. I hope they do," she says, before emotion overcomes her again.

Around the time she was growing up in Redhill, not far away, Mr Ijas Ali, 57, was moving in.

The immigrant from South India became a citizen 18 years ago. The businessman is here with his family to see the procession and, like Ms Koh, finds it hard to talk about the former Prime Minister without tearing up.

"This country provided me with everything. The sky is the limit here," he says.

He exports tyres from China to Africa and, to him, Mr Lee was the "prophet" who foresaw that China would become the world's factory.

"Where did he get his ideas? Where did he get his intelligence? He surprised people again and again. He was one in a million," says Mr Ijas. "I don't just admire his intelligence - I worship it."

His son came at 9am to stake out a spot along Jalan Bukit Merah. He has been here since 10.30am, waiting for the procession, expected to pass at 1pm.

He is here today because he never met Mr Lee in the flesh. His daughter Nabeelah Sahen, 19, a retail assistant, is by his side.

"Person to person, man to man. I want to give him a salute," he says.

johnlui@sph.com.sg



Many are overcome by tears and grief as the cortege passes through Bukit Merah. ST PHOTO: MARK CHEONG

Restaurant gives 100kg of flowers to crowds

By PRISCILLA GOY

YELLOW jasmine petals - thousands of them - made a striking tribute to Mr Lee Kuan Yew, thrown on the road as his cortege passed along a stretch of Jalan Bukit Merah.

The brilliant-coloured petals covered about 30m of the 3.5km road.

They were handed out for free to crowds lining the road near Indian restaurant Brinda's, located at Block 162, Bukit Merah Central. Restaurant staff gave out about 100kg of the fresh flowers, specially flown in from India.

Many threw the petals as Mr Lee's cortege passed by at 1.20pm; others left stalks of flowers on a grass patch nearby.

Managing director S. Veera,

who paid \$1,500 for the flowers, which were delivered the night before, said: "In Indian custom, throwing flower petals is a sign of showing respect and gratitude."

His shop, usually open 24 hours, also stopped its operations from noon to 4pm as a mark of respect to Mr Lee.

"We opened here in 2003, and this area used to be part of Tanjong Pagar GRC (where Mr Lee was an MP)," said Mr Veera.

"But giving these flowers is not about me or our shop; this is for the country. Mr Lee has laid the foundations and done a lot for Singapore."

Bukit Merah Central is part of the Radin Mas constituency, which was carved out from Tanjong Pagar GRC in 2011.

goysiji@sph.com.sg



Managing director S. Veera of restaurant Brinda's says in Indian custom, throwing petals is a sign of showing respect and gratitude. PHOTO: S. VEERA

Early birds get plum kerbside spots

By AARON LOW
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

HEARTLANDERS came from all corners of Singapore yesterday to line the streets of Bukit Merah and Queensway to bid a final farewell to the man they may not have met personally but whose policies had a direct impact on them and their families.

Mr Lee Kuan Yew led a team that, many said, helped provide a roof over their heads, built schools to educate their children, and grew the economy to create jobs.

So Ms Yew Poh Yock, 58, and her sister, Ms Yew Poh Har, 54, came as early as 6am to get a plum kerbside spot to wait for the cortege to pass at around 1pm. The older Ms Yew, who lives in Commonwealth Drive, said in Mandarin: "I was expecting a

huge crowd and did not want to be too late."

Others like Mrs Heng Xin Yi, 34, and her young daughter made their way from Ang Mo Kio and found a spot near Commonwealth and MRT station. "It's no sacrifice. Rain or shine, we want to be here to say thank you for what he had done for us. Without him, how many of us can own our home?" said Mrs Heng, her eyes red from crying.

As the hours passed, the crowd grew five-deep in some places as thousands lined the 8km route from Jalan Bukit Merah all the way to Commonwealth Avenue.

As the cortege turned into Jalan Bukit Merah, one of Singapore's oldest HDB estates, at about 1.15pm, there was a surge of emotions among residents, whose well-being had always been a priority with Mr Lee.

They waved small Singapore flags, clapped loudly and shouted Mr Lee's name as the state funeral procession rolled by, passing Housing Board flats, schools, shops and light industrial estates.

Hougang resident Heng Liang Yeow, 59, said he arrived in Bukit Merah at 9am to say goodbye to Mr Lee on behalf of his late father Heng Kim Wah, who was a People's Action Party (PAP) activist.

The factory worker had with him his father's PAP membership card: "I want to pay my respects on behalf of my father who passed away at age 49. I know he would have wanted to be here."

The ceremonial gun carriage with Mr Lee's casket also passed by several places of worship - the Silat Road Sikh Temple, the Wat Ananda Metyarama Thai Buddhist Temple, the Blessed Sacrament

Church, Sri Muneeswaran Temple and Masjid Mujahidin.

The close proximity of these different places of worship was not lost on residents. Many paid tribute to Mr Lee for helping ensure harmony among different races and religions here.

Tanglin Halt resident Sayuti Dahlan, 82, recalls how as a young man in his 20s, he would cycle from Pasir Panjang to Tanjong Pagar to attend rallies where Mr Lee would give powerful speeches.

"Standing on a stationary, open-topped lorry, he would shout: 'The British think we are stupid. But I will show them that the people of Singapore can and will have merdeka (freedom).'"

He added: "Mr Lee never used the words Chinese or Malay or Indian to describe us. He always said Singaporeans."

Regional manager Lim Boon

Hwa, 56, said Mr Lee's most profound impact was his creation of a multiracial society.

"We had the chance to live in a meritocratic and an equal-opportunity society because of him," said Mr Lim, as he waited along Queensway.

As the procession moved past Commonwealth, where the HDB built some of the earliest public flats in the 1960s, many longtime residents were tearful as they waved goodbye.

Mr Seah Chew Chan, 91, has lived in Tanglin Halt since the flats were built. He was discharged from hospital on Saturday but wanted to be out waiting for the cortege: "Gratitude is the only thing I have for Mr Lee."

Additional reporting by Priscilla Goy, Aw Cheng Wei, Mariassa Lee, Rachel Au-Yong and Miranda Yeo

30 members, 3 generations, one family, one purpose

By MARISSA LEE

MORE than 30 members of the Chua family, spanning three generations, turned up at Bukit Merah yesterday to hold up a banner they had printed in honour of Singapore's founding father Lee Kuan Yew.

They started gathering in Bukit Merah at about 8.30am, more than four hours before the funeral procession was due to pass through, on its way from Parliament House to the University Cultural Centre.

"Behind this road is Jalan Bukit Ho Swee, where a lot of homes were burnt down during a big fire that was a dark moment in the history of Singapore," said Mr Patrick Chua, 47, who works in the oil and gas industry.

He was referring to the 1961 fire that razed a squatter settlement, costing 16,000 their homes.

Mr Lee, Singapore's first Prime Minister, salvaged many lives with his public housing initiative, added Mr Chua.

The clan, waiting with their banner, stood stoically for hours in the pouring rain to pay their re-

spects. Among them was Mr Chua's nephew Sng Yin Jun, a 12-year-old from Tao Nan School.

Yin Jun said he would salute Mr Lee when the cortege passed. "We have to respect our founding father, and coming here is a form of respect," said the Primary 6 pupil.

His grand aunt, Madam Tan Si-yu Lian, 67, said it was important to teach the younger generation to be grateful to Mr Lee, and to always remember him. "Because of him, we all have roofs over our heads and our children all have good jobs," she said in Mandarin.

The idea of the banner, thanking Mr Lee for leaving them a living legacy, came about during a family chat, when 15 second-generation members spoke about their experiences visiting Parliament House, where Mr Lee's body was lying in state, over the last few days. On Friday, it was a mad rush to find a printer to deliver at such short notice.

Said Mr Chua: "We will keep this banner and display it every National Day, starting at my cousin's house this year."

marlee@sph.com.sg



Some of the group of over 30 members of the Chua family at Bukit Merah with a banner they rushed to get printed. They gathered from about 8.30am, four hours before the procession was due to pass through. ST PHOTO: WANG HUI FEN

A ROOF OVER OUR HEADS

"I was born in a kampung in Tanjong Pagar and we moved to a flat in Telok Blangah - our first flat. Mr Lee has a special significance for me because he always advocated for all Singaporeans to have a roof over our heads. I witnessed how he transformed Singapore into this modern city. I remember how we used to stand by the road when he came to the estate to visit residents. Today I am here as it's my final chance to say goodbye. I am proud to be able to lead my residents here."

- Nee Soon Central RC chairman Andrew Lim, 54, who spent his childhood in Tanjong Pagar

FOR MY FATHER

"I just want to pay my respects on behalf of my father who passed away at age 49. I know he would want to be here."

- Hougang resident and factory worker Heng Liang Yeow, 59, went to Bukit Merah at 9am to say his final farewell to Mr Lee on behalf of his father, Mr Heng Kim Wah, who was a PAP activist.

IN ALL OUR HEARTS

"He may be leaving, but his spirit lives on in every Singaporean. Mr Lee Hsien Loong said that there won't be a second Lee Kuan Yew, but I disagree because we all hold Lee Kuan Yew in our hearts and remember his selfless contributions to Singapore. If we carry his spirit with us and all give a little bit to Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew lives on."

- Laundry shop owner Lee Cheng Kang, 58

HE KEPT HIS WORD

"Mr Lee Kuan Yew always delivered on his promises. He promised to give us safety and he did after he came into office."



- Retiree Ang Sai Kee, 80, who remembers living in constant fear of the gangs that terrorised her kampung near Redhill in the past

SON INSISTED WE COME

"We tried to get to the Padang at lam last Friday, as we thought it would be less crowded after midnight. But the queue was closed and my son was quite disappointed, so he said that we must come to send off Mr Lee Kuan Yew, no matter what."

- Secretary Vivien Tong, 45, who came from Teban Gardens with her two children, Jefferson, 12, and Vernice Foo, 12

HE HELPED CLEAN UP AREA

"My dad would tell me that this used to be a gangster area, but Mr Lee has helped to clean up this whole place. Even in the small things, he's made the area more comfortable, with the lift upgrading and the covered walkways."

- Ms Natalia Tan, 37, who works in marketing, waited with her father Lambert Tan, 86, near the Spring Singapore building in Jalan Bukit Merah, from 10.30am

FAR-REACHING POLICIES

"He made it possible for us to have clean water, efficient transport and access to a good education. This is on top of his multiracial policies. Without a common language (English) to bring different races together, we would have difficulties understanding and communicating with each other. The fact that we can talk to each other is a direct impact of how his policies have affected us."



- Teacher Ramish Goby, 29

HELPING MY FAMILY IN INDIA

"Mr Lee built this country... for us to come here and work. The money I earn here and send home helps my family in India to be better."

- Mr Alagesan Rajkumar, 27, a construction worker, who has been in Singapore for the past eight years

SAYING GOODBYE: SINGAPORE POLY, COMMONWEALTH

Mr Lee Kuan Yew
1923 - 2015

A very Singaporean send-off for Mr Lee

It took days of planning, camping out early to get good spot to say goodbye

By MELODY ZACCHEUS and MATHEW PEREIRA

WHETHER it was to secure a good spot to view the funeral procession, or make the crowds that lined the roads along Commonwealth Avenue West feel more comfortable, planning was needed. Private school teacher Alice Ng made a mental note of a spot along Commonwealth Avenue West as soon as she got confirmation of the procession route. It was on the divider under a stretch of the overhead MRT track between Buona Vista and Dover MRT stations. The 48-year-old said: "Every time I took the bus home the past few days, I would look at the place and say, 'it is perfect'." Ms Ng came down at 9.30am with two chairs - one for herself, the other for daughter Shermaine Lam, 16. The wait was nothing. "What is this compared to what Mr Lee has done for Singapore," said Ms Ng, tearfully. New Creation Church had a lot more people to think about. It started assembling an army of volunteers several days ago. Anticipating a large crowd lining the streets, the church ordered 15,000 bottles of water, 4,000 packets of biscuits, 1,000 buns and 70 umbrellas to shield off the sun. But the volunteers did not expect the rain, and some ran to

stores to purchase ponchos. The mood of the crowd along the stretch of road which ran beside the Singapore Polytechnic, opened by the late Mr Lee in 1979, was somber. Some arrived as early as 9am. Carrying flags, they found spots on slopes around the hilly estate, and camped out on foldable chairs and mats. Others travelled from neighbourhoods beyond the west of Singapore. They included a husband-and-wife pair, storeman Mohamad Lamin, 66, and housewife Sukati Mustaffa, 62, who live in Sembawang. Squeezed under an umbrella as the rain poured, the couple, whose 36th wedding anniversary fell on the same day as Mr Lee's funeral, said they admired the late statesman's love for his wife. "He was a loving father and husband and so dedicated to us as a nation... and we in return joined him on the streets to show our love," said Mr Mohamad. Friends Aseling M., 75, and Asmadi Samy, 68, both housewives, took cover under Commonwealth MRT's tracks. When asked which of Mr Lee's policies impacted them the most, Ms Aseling teared up. She said: "We loved everything he did for us. It's so important for us to be here to bid him farewell." melodyz@sph.com.sg matthewp@sph.com.sg



Despite the heavy downpour, members of the public along Commonwealth Avenue did not let up on shouting "Lee Kuan Yew" while waiting for the cortege to pass by.

ST PHOTO: DANIEL NEO

Emotions run high in Clementi

By ABDUL HAFIZ and MELISSA LIN

ON THIS short stretch of Clementi Road, after Commonwealth Avenue West and towards Dover Road, it was fitting that many who defied the downpour for a final goodbye to Mr Lee Kuan Yew spoke of his push to make education a cornerstone of nation-building. A short distance away is the National University of Singapore (NUS). Even closer is Singapore Polytechnic's Dover Road campus which Mr Lee officially opened in 1979. Mr Sim Lye Hock, a 58-year-old facility officer who waited for Mr Lee's funeral procession with his wife and daughter, said: "I could go to school because he pushed for it. If not for him, I don't know where I'd be now." Ms Chloe Lee, third-year chemistry student at NUS, was there with four schoolmates. "We didn't experience Singapore's transformation, but that doesn't mean that we don't appreciate it. Like the fact that we are female but can get an education, unlike in other countries," the 21-year-old said. A crowd there started gathering at 10am yesterday. A group of more than 30 from Pioneer Zone 6 Residents' Committee sat on mats waving mini flags. RC chairman Salim Ali, 54, said: "I met Mr Lee 10 years ago at a conference. I waved to him, he waved back." Many like him cherished their meetings with Singapore's first Prime Minister, no matter how brief. Said senior research engineer Krishnamoorthy Baskaran, 42: "I met him once at a garden

party at the Istana in 2012. I shook his hand." The fickle skies drizzled, then poured, and repeated the cycle. But the people stayed - in ponchos, and under umbrellas and mats which became emergency shelters. As news filtered through that the procession was nearing, those on the other side of Clementi Road surged forward along the stretch, turning the central road divider into a makeshift barrier. A hush fell around 1.40pm. Then came the roar. "Lee Kuan Yew! Lee Kuan Yew!" they shouted. Taxi driver Yeow Bee Hock, 54, who was with his 19-year-old daughter, Petrina, was emotional when he spoke of his regret after the procession. "When I was younger, I thought very differently about Mr Lee. After he died, I had the chance to watch old documentaries of him. I came to apologise to him." Retired oil field consultant Gunasingam Thambiraja, 69, said: "I wish more had recognised Mr Lee and all that he did when he was alive, instead of having to be reminded." "They said he was too aggressive, too hot-tempered. Whatever they said about him, he had a plan for this country." Madam Naysagam, a 77-year-old who lives in Clementi, was asked what seeing Mr Lee for the last time meant. "It was very sad. He was a very nice man, a very good man, he did everything for us." Her voice breaking, she added: "I want to say so many things, but I cannot say anything now." hafiz@sph.com.sg melissalin@sph.com.sg



A large crowd gathered near Faith Methodist Church in Commonwealth, braving the heavy rain in order to bid a final goodbye to Mr Lee.

ST PHOTO: TIFFANY GOH

Mr Lee's politeness stood out

FORMER Singapore Airlines stewardess Sharon Chong has fond memories of her brief encounter serving the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew on a flight to Bali, Indonesia. It was 1977 and Ms Chong had been specially selected to be part of the crew flying with Mr Lee, who was then Singapore's Prime Minister. Mr Lee was travelling on government business with then Deputy Prime Minister Goh Keng Swee and a delegation of doctors, reporters and security crew. Ms Chong's interaction with Mr Lee on the Boeing 737 flight was brief as Mr Lee had been deep in conversation with Dr Goh, she said. But what struck her about the late statesman was his politeness towards the airplane crew - like



A 1976 photo of Ms Sharon Chong (far right), who served Mr Lee his lunch during a 1977 flight to Bali, Indonesia. PHOTO: SHARON CHONG

when she served him his lunch. "He stopped his conversation, looked up and thanked me sincerely after I laid the food before him. "His acknowledgement meant

a lot to me because I was very nervous and 'blur'... I was fresh out of National Junior College and just 19," said the retired air stewardess. Ms Chong was among the thousands who parked themselves along Commonwealth Avenue yesterday as the cortege carrying the late Mr Lee travelled through the west of Singapore. She said: "It was important for me to go out into the streets to say goodbye to Mr Lee. I want him to know I'm grateful to him. "We're the silent, sleeping ones who have kept quiet all these years. We are awakened now that he has passed on. We feel ashamed that we have not done much for the nation and never bothered with his contributions until now." MELODY ZACCHEUS

AN INSPIRATION

"I came to Singapore with just a suitcase but now I have a home and my family is here. I travel often but I don't have to worry about my family because I know they are safe. Even my son in kindergarten is inspired by the late Mr Lee. He told me about the things he did and about the one minute of silence they observed in school. Mr Lee Kuan Yew is an inspiration to me and my son." - Mr Muraladharan A.P.K., 42, an engineer at Makino who was at Dover

WITNESS TO CHANGE
"I have too many reasons to be here. I grew up in a kampung when I was young and I have seen all the changes." - Mr Abdul Majid Mohamed Eusopp (below), 52, who works in a logistics firm and was at Dover with his daughter



SHARING HIS LEGACY

"When I was growing up, my grandparents told me about the changes made by Mr Lee and I am really grateful and want to show my gratitude. I hope to share this with my students, too. Even though they did not know him, I want them to know that he brought the nation together. I am here to send him off in high spirits." - Mr Abdul Majid's 25-year-old daughter Nashah Abdul Majid (above), who is a teacher

FAMILY PRIDE

"I brought my children to show them why we're all so proud to be Singaporeans. I really hope they can learn from Mr Lee and the various lessons of good governance." - Mrs Nungki Yeo, 36, housewife, with her children Yeo Su Jin, seven, and Yeo Su Jay, six. Mrs Yeo is Indonesian, while her husband and children are Singaporean

SHARING IN THE LOSS

"My little girl says she wants to meet Mr Lee in heaven. (My children) understand the loss that the nation feels and wanted to come out here to send him off." - Mrs Clare Low, 29, with her children Paige, 11, and Raeann, six. Mrs Low is a teacher

FOREIGN SUPPORT

"He's one of the greatest leaders that have ever existed. We've been in Singapore for seven years. I felt it was important to show our support." - American expatriate Anne Duncan, 40, an administrator at the Singapore American School. She had lifted her daughter Martha, 10, onto her shoulders so she could see the procession

SENSE OF CLOSURE

"There was a sense of closure for all of us Singaporeans as his cortege passed. We did what we could to show appreciation and add layers of gratitude to a solemn occasion." - Mr Kelvin Tan, 50, a part-time lecturer

LUCKY TO HAVE HIM

"We don't have a figure to respect like that from where I come. Singaporeans are lucky that Mr Lee has changed it from a poor country to a great one like it is today." - General worker Rahman Anisur, 33, from Bangladesh who was clearing the barricades after the procession left Commonwealth Avenue. He said he clapped as the cortege went past



Madam Tan Goon Kwan, 65, breaking into tears as the cortege passes by. She made it to Bukit Merah Central at 8am yesterday to secure a good spot to view the funeral procession. ST PHOTO: WANG HUI FEN



The people stayed - wrapped in ponchos or under umbrellas and mats - in spite of the fickle skies. ST PHOTO: TIFFANY GOH

Happy to learn three languages

SREE Harin Baskaran may be only 12, but he is bilingual and on the way to becoming trilingual. He knows English and his mother tongue Tamil, and started picking up Chinese earlier this year. That he is able to study three languages is something the first-year student at National University of Singapore High School of Mathematics and Science is thankful to Mr Lee Kuan Yew for. "He's the reason I can have a good education and he also encouraged bilingualism," Sree Harin said. He was among the throngs who braved the downpour along Clementi Road yesterday to bid Mr Lee a final farewell. He picked Chinese as a third language because "China has the largest population in the world and I want to be able to interact with the people in Chinese." "I wasn't able to go to Parliament House (for the lying in state), so this is the least I could do for Mr Lee," said Sree Harin,



Senior research engineer Krishnamoorthy Baskaran and his son Sree Harin Baskaran waiting in Clementi Road yesterday. Sree Harin knows English and Tamil and started picking up Chinese this year. ST PHOTO: MELISSA LIN

who started waiting by the road with his family at 10.45am, holding mini-flags that he waved as Mr Lee's cortege passed by three hours later. Sounding wise beyond his

years, he added: "Waiting three hours was nothing compared to being able to pay my last respects to Singapore's first Prime Minister." MELISSA LIN

SAYING GOODBYE: THE COMMUNITY

Mr Lee Kuan Yew 1923 - 2015

National grief: Why such an outpouring?

Gratitude just one of many reasons, national grieving also about release

By CLARISSA OON DEPUTY LIFE EDITOR

THE guestbook spoke volumes: the entry from the young girl who thanked Mr Lee Kuan Yew for giving her safe streets at night and "the luxury of deciding what and where to study"; the scrawl of the Indian gentleman beside her expressing gratitude for this "great country".

Invocations of "Allah" and "God", declarations like "I love you", as well as Malay phrases and Chinese characters peppered other entries on the facing page.

Standing at the East Coast and Joo Chiat Community Tribute Centre yesterday afternoon, I who make my living from words was at a loss for them. Finally I wrote, simply, "My condolences to you, PM Lee Hsien Loong and family, on the loss of your father and our first Prime Minister."

One of the big questions of the past seven days must surely be what accounted for the emotional outpouring among usually reticent Singaporeans in reaction to Mr Lee's death at age 91.

Veteran opposition politician Chiam See Tong provided part of the answer when he likened the man who was arguably his fiercest political opponent to the country's Churchill.

"He was there at the time when Singapore was swamped with numerous problems, ranging from domestic to international issues. He was there, just as Britain needed Winston Churchill during World War II - always taking a strategic and long-term view of Singapore," said Mr Chiam, 80,

now almost bent double from old age and illness but with the clarity that sometimes comes from a rival rather than a friend.

In a nutshell, many Singaporeans felt they owed something to Mr Lee, and this cut across age, gender, race and religion. This was their last chance to express it to the strongman leader whose tough love had mobilised a nation and carved out a place for it in the sun; the arch-pragmatist whose devastating, take-no-prisoners brand of oratory had a way of bringing all political debates down to earth.

He did not leave anything to faith or chance, but believed in being two steps ahead of the competition. To improve Singapore's chances of success, he retooled everything from the languages we spoke to the number of babies we had. We lived with the rapid economic growth, legislated multiculturalism, bilingual education policy and overarching state control that were his imprints, internalising these to no small extent even if we disagreed with some policies.

Crowd psychology is a complex affair, of course, and gratitude is only one of the elements fuelling the overwhelming turnout to say a final goodbye.

One can discern group solidarity - the cheers of the crowd along the route of yesterday's funeral procession and the shouts of "Lee Kuan Yew, Lee Kuan Yew!" evoked a National Day Parade or post-election victory parade, rather than a state funeral.

The most bandied-about question of the past week, "Are you going?", carried with it a fear of



Many Singaporeans feel they owe something to Mr Lee, and this cut across age, gender, race and religion. ST PHOTO: LAU FOOK KONG

missing out on a historic moment and even peer pressure. Mr Lee's body had lain in state at Parliament House until Saturday, and several hundred thousand people formed snaking queues to pay their last respects to him there.

Finally, the public mourning carries with it nostalgia for an earlier era when Singapore faced a crisis of survival and needed forceful leadership.

Today that survival is taken for granted, but the aspirations of Singaporeans are more complex, the hunger for alternative voices is greater and the divisions in society no less deep. In that sense, Mr Lee was a product of his time and it is debatable if a young man cut from the same cloth as him would succeed as spectacularly in

today's political arena. In a 1986 parliamentary debate, Mr Chiam once likened Mr Lee's dominance to that of a banyan tree with roots so well spread out that nothing else can grow under it.

In a sense then, the national grieving over the past week has also been about release, much in the same way that the death of an elderly parent allows one finally to find oneself.

In the years ahead, the country will look to new leaders across the political spectrum to fill the void. Until then, the collective mourning is akin to that last great imagined huddle under the banyan's shade, before new shoots spring up to take its place.

claire@sph.com.sg



RAFFLES PLACE: The crowd held in rapt attention watching the live telecast of Mr Lee's funeral service. One could discern group solidarity later on, with the cheers of the crowd along the route of the funeral procession and the shouts of "Lee Kuan Yew, Lee Kuan Yew!" evoking a National Day Parade or post-election victory parade, rather than a state funeral. ST PHOTO: ONG WEE JIN



ANG MO KIO: More than 1,400 people gathered to watch a live feed of the funeral service, observe the national minute of silence and mourn together in the GRC where Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong is an MP. ST PHOTO: LAU FOOK KONG

At PM Lee's constituency, tears and a standing ovation

By CHARISSA YONG

MS SIVA Pillai, 41, stationed herself along Jalan Bukit Merah to catch a glimpse of the gun carriage bearing Mr Lee Kuan Yew's casket as it passed by at 12.00pm.

Then, barely an hour later, she was at the community tribute centre about 15km away in Ang Mo Kio watching Mr Lee's funeral service being screened live.

Ms Pillai's long hair and black clothes were still damp from the pouring rain. But she said she rushed back to Ang Mo Kio, where she lives, to be with her fellow Singaporeans to observe the moment of silence, sing the national anthem, and recite the national pledge.

"Mr Lee's legacy will live on," she said, tearing up. "This week, he's done what we could not do on our own. He brought us all together."

In Ang Mo Kio GRC where Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong is an MP, more than 1,400 people gathered to watch a live feed of

the funeral service and to mourn together. All the 900 seats there were taken, with dozens of people standing at the back, craning their necks to watch the service on a large screen on a stage.

Several cried, dabbing at their eyes and damp cheeks with tissue as PM Lee delivered his eulogy to his father. They gave their MP a standing ovation when he finished and, later, rose again to observe the national moment of silence.

Ms Anita Chia, 57, said: "This is a time for community. I could've watched the funeral service at home. But being here as part of a group is what Mr Lee would've wanted. Regardless of the rain, we are here to say goodbye to our national leader," the lecturer added.

She said she chose to go to the Ang Mo Kio site to support PM Lee. It was the last chance for residents - the only chance, for many - to pay their respects to Mr Lee.

Retiree Lai Tsun Yuen, 74, said: "I came here to honour Mr Lee because I can't go to the city centre to pay my respects (at Parliament House). "There were too many people there. I'm an old man, I can't stand in line for hours," he said. Mr Lai had no trouble at all in Ang Mo Kio, as the front rows of chairs were reserved for the elderly and people with disabilities. Student Haikal Hirman, 15, was perched on his bicycle near the stage, next to three friends he had come with to pay his respects. When it was the moment of silence, one by one, the four friends stood, removed their caps and bowed their heads. Administrative assistant Lu Ying, 39, said in Mandarin that she was touched by the events. Said the permanent resident, who moved to Singapore 13 years ago and is married to a Singaporean: "Even though I'm not a citizen, I felt like I was going to cry. This week, I found out how united Singaporeans truly are."

charyong@sph.com.sg



CHANGI: Time stood still for staff, passengers and visitors at Changi Airport. PHOTO: CHANGI AIRPORT GROUP

TOA PAYOH: Mr Vincent Das, who lost one leg to diabetes last year, stood when observing a minute of silence during the live broadcast at Toa Payoh Hub. He wanted to go to Parliament House to pay his respects to Mr Lee. No one could take him there, so he caught the telecast of the funeral service at Toa Payoh instead. ST PHOTO: WANG HUI FEN



All over Singapore, a minute of silence for a lifetime of dedication



BISHAN: A woman became emotional during the live telecast of the state funeral service. At the Junction 8 mall, many came to a halt in front of a big screen outside shopping malls like Raffles City, while others at work, in-

cluding SBS Transit staff at the Toa Payoh bus interchange, put what they were doing aside for that moment of silence. Even the MRT train service stopped for the minute of silence.

At the Junction 8 mall in Bishan, the usual stream of people came to a standstill in front of a big screen outside the MRT exit.

Part-time florist Sharon Chew, 58, had tears in her eyes as she said: "It's such a pity that we lost such a talented and great man. I'm deeply pained because he's left us. I've been watching his life history on television and I really feel very moved."

Said Mr Jason Lee, 29, an assistant banquet manager who was watching the eulogies on his phone: "It was a show of respect ... for a man who gave his life to the nation. The minute was the least we could have done."

MAY CHEN, AW CHENG WEI, JOANNA SEOW and CHARISSA YONG

FROM MRT stations to bus interchanges, homes and community centres, Singaporeans acted as one yesterday evening, when they observed a minute of silence to honour the country's founding father, Mr Lee Kuan Yew.

As those at the funeral service bowed their heads, a lone bugler from the SAF Military Band sounded the Last Post - a final salute to the deceased - and people across the island also bowed their heads as a mark of respect for Singapore's first Prime Minister, who died last Monday aged 91.

Many stopped in their tracks - some with bags in hand outside shopping malls like Raffles City, while others at work, in-

cluding SBS Transit staff at the Toa Payoh bus interchange, put what they were doing aside for that moment of silence. Even the MRT train service stopped for the minute of silence.

At the Junction 8 mall in Bishan, the usual stream of people came to a standstill in front of a big screen outside the MRT exit.

Part-time florist Sharon Chew, 58, had tears in her eyes as she said: "It's such a pity that we lost such a talented and great man. I'm deeply pained because he's left us. I've been watching his life history on television and I really feel very moved."

Said Mr Jason Lee, 29, an assistant banquet manager who was watching the eulogies on his phone: "It was a show of respect ... for a man who gave his life to the nation. The minute was the least we could have done."

MAY CHEN, AW CHENG WEI, JOANNA SEOW and CHARISSA YONG

TRANSPORT STAFF: At Braddell, (from far left) MRT station managers stopped work to observe a minute of silence. Over at Toa Payoh bus interchange, SBS Transit staff (left) did the same thing. All over Singapore, buses were held back at interchanges, and trains pulled to a stop at stations during that moment of silence too. PHOTOS: LIM YAOHUI FOR THE STRAITS TIMES, DESMOND WEE

SAYING GOODBYE: OVERSEAS

Mr Lee Kuan Yew
1923 - 2015

Tears flow as S'poreans abroad gather to watch funeral

From Beijing to Bangkok, they came together to bid Mr Lee final farewell

SINGAPOREANS across Asia yesterday gathered to bid farewell to the man who put Singapore on the world stage.

Away from home, it was their chance to honour and thank Mr Lee Kuan Yew, who had made a difference in their lives and made them feel proud to be Singaporean.

Mr Lee 'sacrificed so much'

BEIJING - No flight delay or cancellation could stop China-based businessman Raymond Lim, 66, from travelling to Beijing, where he joined some 300 Singaporeans to watch the live telecast of Mr Lee's state funeral.

Emotions ran high in the ballroom of the Shangri-La China World Summit Wing hotel, with many sobbing or hugging their loved ones as they followed the live coverage of the funeral procession back home.

"Mr Lee had sacrificed so much for Singaporeans. I'm just sacrificing a few hours of sleep and rest to see him through the last phase as a form of my respect for his leadership," said Mr Lim, who runs a seafood processing company in coastal Weihai city.

After his flight from Weihai was cancelled after a long delay on Saturday night, he drove two hours to nearby Yantai city from where he flew to Beijing.

The telecast was organised by the Singapore Chamber of Commerce and Industry in China. Similar events took place in Shanghai, Suzhou and Xiamen.

Mr Stanley Loh, Singapore's Ambassador to China, told the audience that many Singaporeans were enjoying good opportunities in China because Singapore was regarded as a country that is successful and has a reputation for zero tolerance of corruption.

Former Chinese president Jiang Zemin and former premiers Li Peng and Zhu Rongji had sent personal letters of condolences, he told reporters.

More than 5,000 Singaporeans and foreigners paid their respects at the embassy and in consulates in China, he added.

In Hong Kong, over 1,000 Singaporeans gathered to view the live telecast at the consulate. The Consul-General of Singapore, Mr Jacky Foo, led the tributes, saying: "He gave us the security umbrella. He gave us economic opportunities. And he built a social framework, for Singapore to thrive and Singaporeans to pursue their dreams."

Said Mr Lim Thuan Kuan, Singapore's High Commissioner to India: "The response has been emotional from Singaporeans of all ages, even the younger ones. You see people crying as they sign the book."

'The least we can do'

BANGKOK - For Singaporean friends Lulu Seah, Aileen Ang and Nicholas Ng, who are in their 50s and live in Bangkok, it was the first time they got together not to celebrate but to mourn the man who "made them proud to be Singaporean".

They were some of the 300 people who gathered at the Singapore Embassy yesterday. Among them were Thai nationals like Ms Suneev Vivalakron, 83, who made a three-hour journey, taking three buses and a motorcycle taxi, to get here.

"She did not know Mr Lee personally, but two of her grandchildren were schooled in Singapore. "He was a good man, and I admire him," she said.

Singapore Ambassador to Thailand Chia Siew San said over 1,000 people had come to sign Mr Lee's condolence book in the past week.

"It's been overwhelming, the response," she said, adding that

three Singaporeans, in their late 90s at least, took a nine-hour bus ride from Chiang Mai because "it's the least we can do".

Tears for 'guiding light'

KUALA LUMPUR - There was no holding back the tears, for some of the 100 people at the Singapore High Commission as they listened to Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's eulogy for Singapore's "guiding light" Mr Lee.

"Fifty years ago, we were abandoned just like that. Without him, we wouldn't be where we are today," said Ms Adele Bek, 42, referring to the 1965 Separation.

Singapore's High Commissioner to Malaysia, Mr Vanu Gopala Menon, said more than 2,000 had signed the condolence book in the past week, including Malaysians.

Bound by same name

JAKARTA - Mr Jason Ting Kuan Yew, 32, was among the 70 people who were at the Singapore Embassy here yesterday to pay their last respects and watch the telecast.

"My father is an admirer of Lee Kuan Yew and even though I'm Malaysian, I was named after him," said Mr Ting, who was with his Indonesian wife Dewiiani Muljadi and baby son. "We feel moved by the ceremony."

Singapore's Ambassador to Indonesia Anil Kumar Nayar said large numbers of people had signed the condolence book at the embassy. "Not just Singaporeans, not just political office-holders in Indonesia, but also ordinary Indonesians, Malaysians, other foreigners," he said.

NEW DELHI - Some held hands, others comforted each other as tears fell when more than 40 Singaporeans met at the Singapore High Commission here yesterday.

Some said they came because they did not want to watch Mr Lee's last journey alone.

"I think watching by yourself and together with other Singaporeans is different. You don't want to grieve alone," said Mr Yeoh Phee Teik, chief executive of Vistara, the joint venture airline between Singapore Airlines and Tata Sons. The Malaysian is a Singapore permanent resident.

Indian flags flew at half-mast yesterday as the South Asian country marked a day of national mourning in honour of Mr Lee.

Missing home

MANILA - Solemn and silent, nearly 100 people were at the Singapore Embassy in the heart of Manila's financial district to watch Mr Lee's final journey.

"When you're stuck in heavy traffic at 6pm, you miss home. You miss the Singapore that Lee Kuan Yew built," said Mr Christopher Tan, 23, who has been in the Philippines for six months to help with his father's fish trading business.

Mr Peter Tay, 60, president of the Singapore Philippine Association, said he would have queued for eight hours himself to pay his respects to Mr Lee had he been in Singapore.

Reports by Kor Kian Beng, Tan Hui Yee, Shannon Teoh, Wahyudi Soeriaatmadja, Nirmala Ganapathy and Raul Dancel



(Clockwise, from above) The Indian flag was flown at half-mast at Parliament House in New Delhi, as India marked a day of mourning for Mr Lee.

Mourners at the Singapore Embassy in Jakarta gathered to watch the live coverage of the funeral. In Beijing, French national Harold Pradal, 37, and his Singaporean wife Evangeline Ho, 33, attended the live telecast of the funeral. Mr Pradal worked in Singapore from 2006 to 2009, where he learnt about Mr Lee's contributions to Singapore.

Around 50 Singaporeans gathered for a simple memorial ceremony in Washington, DC on Saturday, which Singapore Ambassador to the United States Ashok Mirpuri attended.

In Vancouver, 140 Singaporeans attended a memorial event for Mr Lee. The live telecast of the funeral drew a big crowd at the Singapore High Commission in Kuala Lumpur.

The Malaysian Jason Ting Kuan Yew was at the Singapore Embassy in Jakarta with his Indonesian wife Dewiiani Muljadi and baby son to pay their respects to Mr Lee. Mr Ting says his father admired Mr Lee and named him after Singapore's former PM. Over in Manila, Ms Kelicia Tan, 40, wept while watching the live streaming of the funeral.

PHOTOS: NIRMALA GANAPATHY, WAHYUDI SOERIAATMAJIA, KOR KIAN BENG, SINGAPORE EMBASSY IN THE U.S., GIE LUI BEL, SHANNON TEOH, RAUL DANCEL



A coming of age for 'good life kids'

By JANICE HENG

AN HOUR before Mr Lee Kuan Yew's body left Parliament House, the hipster cafes of Tanjong Pagar were busy with the usual young crowd, though the flowing tops and short-sleeved shirts were in more sombre shades than usual.

Later, I recognised some of those same 20-somethings nearby as we stood in the rain at the junction of Cantonment Road and Neil Road, waiting for the arrival of a man most of us had never met.

Our generation are the lucky ones. We are the "good life kids", as our elders remind us in dialects that the late Mr Lee did not quite manage to eradicate.

We knew this well before the past week, of course. We had Social Studies lessons and the stories of our parents, stories so distant that we imagined them in sepia: night-soil carriers, kampung games, a life before television.

But perhaps it was only with Mr Lee's death that that history

has become real to us.

"When he was still around, you just didn't grasp what he had done," said researcher Raymond Khoo, 29, who was also at the same rain-lashed junction.

"His passing made us more curious about him, and made us realise how much he did."

Like other 20-somethings to whom I had spoken, while Mr Khoo was sad about Mr Lee's death, grief was not his greatest reaction: "It's more that we're grateful that he has contributed so much."

In a sense, we grew up in a post-Lee Kuan Yew age. I was two years old when the prime ministership passed to Mr Goh Chok Tong in 1990.

The improvements we have seen in our lifetime are small in comparison: the disappearance of non-air-conditioned buses, say, or the rise of Marina Bay Sands.

As 29-year-old Lin Wei Liang, who works in human resources, said: "I haven't been through the tough times. What we understand

is really from the books, from the news, from our parents."

But precisely because my generation do not know - cannot know - the vast changes which Mr Lee wrought, we can only marvel at them in retrospect.

What were we trying to do, this past week, with our mourning Facebook statuses?

For a generation whose life experiences feel more like current affairs than history, perhaps there was some selfishness under all that emotion and reflection.

In our own way, we strove to become part of this historical moment, to stake a claim on a chapter of the Singapore story that we had always thought about in the past tense.

And so we gathered, yesterday morning, on that rain-swept corner.

The crowd perked up as the first police motorcycles sped past. As the cortege drew into view, flags rustled gently.

A cry went up - "Lee Kuan Yew! Lee Kuan Yew!" - but then

the coffin passed, just like that, and silence fell in its wake.

Even before the vehicles were out of sight, people began to peel away from the barricades: Old men shaking the rain off their sandals, families in matching raincoats.

But a few of us lingered a little longer. There was Mr Lim, sharing an umbrella with his girlfriend. There was a young man with a stylish quiff, staring ahead, smartphone forgotten in his hand.

Something far greater than us had come and gone, and was even now fading into the rain.

But perhaps in bearing witness to its passing, we too became part of something so greater. This was history, right before us, and for once - for perhaps the first time - it was a history we could call our own.

janiceh@sph.com.sg