

A portrait of Lee Kuan Yew, an elderly man with white hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a blue patterned tie. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the right. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights on his face and suit, set against a dark background.

THE
BIG
IDEAS
OF
LEE KUAN YEW

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EDITED BY

SHASHI JAYAKUMAR AND RAHUL SAGAR

LEE KUAN YEW was born in 1923, a time when Singapore was under British rule. After studying at Raffles Institution and then Raffles College, and experiencing the Second World War and Japanese Occupation, he travelled to England to study Law. He graduated from Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge in 1949.

On returning to Singapore, Mr Lee commenced a legal career that was marked by increasing political involvement. Together with a group of like-minded individuals, he formed the People's Action Party (PAP) in 1954. Following the PAP's victory in the 1959 Legislative Assembly General Elections, Mr Lee became the first Prime Minister of Singapore, at the age of 35. He held this position until 1990. After stepping down from the premiership, he remained in the Cabinet until 2011, serving as Senior Minister and subsequently as Minister Mentor.

During his time in office Mr Lee oversaw Singapore's transformation from a Third World country to a First World country. This remarkable achievement has prompted both admiration and debate. This volume makes a distinctive contribution to our understanding of Mr Lee's legacy because it represents the first time the men and women who worked closely with him have come together to discuss his ideas. The resulting essays shed valuable light on Mr Lee's views on a range of topics including law and politics, society and economics, and governance and foreign affairs.



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INTRODUCTION



□ **Lee Kuan Yew's
Complex Legacy**

Kishore Mahbubani



LEE KUAN YEW'S COMPLEX LEGACY

Kishore Mahbubani

WHEN THE DUST has settled and the histories of the 20th century are written and lists are produced of the ten greatest men of the century, there is no doubt that one name from Singapore will feature on many of the lists: Lee Kuan Yew. Many know that he was the key man behind the successful transformation of Singapore. Few know the larger geographical footprint of his impact. When the major archives are opened and the notes of conversations between Mr Lee and the great world leaders of the 20th century are declassified and released, they will show that Lee Kuan Yew influenced many key minds and influenced them significantly. In so doing, he shifted the course of world history from time to time.

Richard Nixon, one of the great leaders of the 20th century, once lamented: "The fact that a leader of Mr Lee's breadth of vision was not able to act on a broader stage represents an incalculable loss to the world." Yet, paradoxically, Richard Nixon never failed to give credit to Mr Lee for influencing his global perspectives. Similarly, President Nixon's legendary secretary of state, Henry Kissinger, never hesitated to endorse Mr Lee as one of the greatest leaders of his time. "There is no better strategic thinker in the world today. Two generations of American leaders have benefited