

# An Historical Reflection on East and West in Singaporean Identity

Vernie Oliveiro

East of West, West of East Conference

19 October 2016



SOME GLIMPSSES

INTO

LIFE

IN THE

FAR EAST.

BY

J. T. THOMSON, F.R.G.S.,  
LATE GOVERNMENT SURVEYOR, SINGAPORE.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

RICHARDSON & COMPANY, 23, CORNHILL.

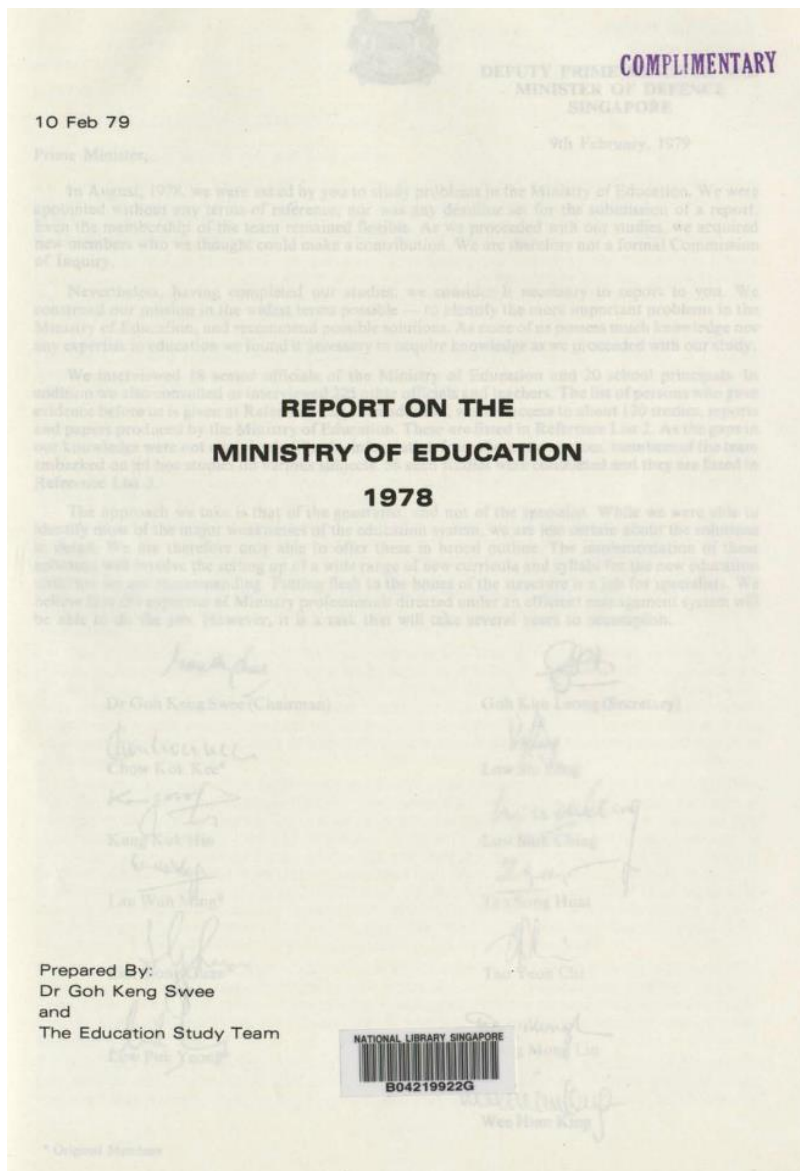
1865.

[The right of Translation is reserved.]

## Chapter XLIV: The Eurasian Family

“Some of the children were as dark as Hindoos, others as fair as Swedes; but there was this difference made, and admitted to be correct on all sides, that **the fair ones went out to evening parties, while the dark ones stayed at home.** The fair ones were expected to take a leading part, and so were attentively educated; the dark ones were intended for more humble usage, and so had little spirit in them. Such were the arrangements that a happy Eurasian family fell into, without involving dispute or disagreement.”





“The best of the East and of the West must be blended to advantage in the Singaporean. **Confucianist ethics, Malay traditions, and the Hindu ethos** must be combined with sceptical **Western methods of scientific inquiry**, the open discursive methods in the search for truth. We have to discard obscurantist and superstitious beliefs and practices of the East, as we have to reject the passing fads of the West.”  
- LKY’s message to the committee, p. v.

“One of the dangers of **secular education in a foreign tongue** is the risk of losing the **traditional values of one’s own people** and the acquisition of the more spurious fashions of the west.”  
- Goh Keng Swee Report, 1978

# 1990s in Singapore

- Five Shared Values
  - Nation before community and society above self
  - Family as the basic unit of society
  - Racial and Religious Harmony
  - Consensus, not conflict
  - Community support and respect for the individual
- “Asian Values”
- “Stayers” vs “Quitters”
- “Heartlanders” vs “Cosmopolitans”
- 1999 NDR: “First World Economy, World Class Home”
- 2003: “Remaking Singapore”

# Today

