

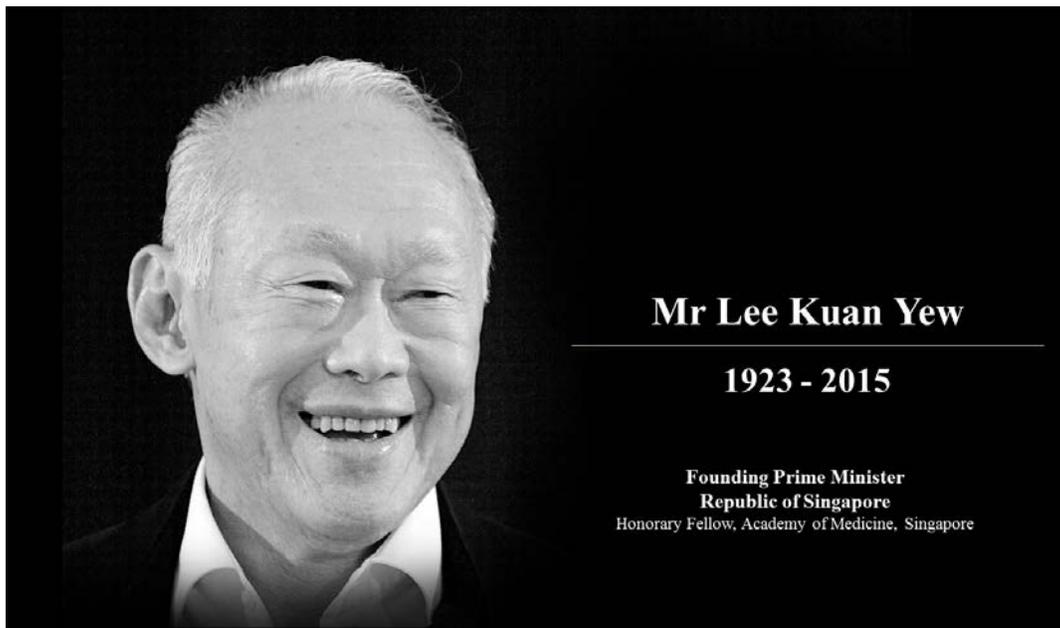
**ADDRESS BY DR LIM SHIH HUI**  
**MASTER, ACADEMY OF MEDICINE, SINGAPORE**  
**First Induction Comitia 2015 of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore**  
**28<sup>th</sup> March 2015, Saturday, Academia, SingHealth**

**Our Guest of Honor, Dr Lam Pin Min, Minister of State, Ministry of Health, Singapore,  
Past Masters, Council Members, Fellow Academicians,  
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

It is with heavy heart I deliver the Master's address at this Induction Comitia.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2015, Singapore and the world have lost a great leader, Mr Lee Kuan Yew,  
Founding Prime Minister of Singapore and Honorary Fellow of the Academy.

Please rise and observe a minute of silence to give our utmost respect to him.



Please be seated.

Mr Lee is deeply respected as a far-sighted thinker, a profound strategist, a global visionary and an eminent international statesman of his era. He will be remembered by many for the remarkable and monumental accomplishments he had made in his life. The turbulent times and precarious future of Singapore in the 1950s and 1960s gave him the opportunity to transform Singapore from a Third World country to a First World nation in just 3 decades.

The two Chinese proverbs, “时势造英雄”, i.e. “current state of affairs creates a hero”, and “英雄造时势”, i.e. “a hero creates or changes the state of affairs”, are both applicable to Mr Lee. What he had done for Singapore can truly be described in Chinese as “空前绝后” i.e. unprecedented and unrepeatable. He is not just a Giant of one Generation “一代巨人”, but a true Giant of History “历史巨人”, a phrase which is recently used by Mr Obama, President of the United States of America to describe Mr Lee.

Our very existence as a globally respected medical community here in Singapore was contributed by the direction and leadership provided by Mr Lee, his team and his successors. Through strong primary, secondary and post-secondary education, as well as the creation of a solid healthcare system especially in infrastructure development and healthcare financing, we medical professionals have moved from providing basic medical needs, treating communicable diseases, reducing perinatal mortality and morbidity, and handling public health problems to providing the highest standard of care for patients with vascular, metabolic, neurological, ophthalmic and cancer-related diseases. With increasing life expectancy and better work-life balance, we are now helping our patients to prevent and delay complications arising from chronic diseases.

Most of us have travelled overseas for specialized medical training under the Health Manpower Development Programme at least once in our life time, and attended regional and international conferences, as many as several times per year. Such opportunities could be viewed as the norm nowadays, but this is not the case for many of our counterparts in the developing countries. We now have doctors coming from developing world to our public institutions for

clinical fellowships funded by us, and these fellows treasure the time spent with us as they know that they are not as lucky as us who could travel overseas easily.

Many of us probably have contributed to educational and humanitarian work in Asia during peacetime and disaster. We have the chance of witnessing and experiencing different healthcare systems in less privileged countries and communities, something similar to what we had gone through in the 1980s to 1990s. Delivering our speeches and interacting with delegates in English during teaching courses and workshops seem quite natural to us. However, in Asian countries where English is not their first language, these participants struggle to understand and communicate with us through translation or broken English. Only then I appreciate the policy of bilingualism and the reason to make English language the administrative language in Singapore. Every time I returned to Singapore from these overseas' trips, the beauty and efficiency of our Changi airport and the ease of traveling home always remind me how fortunate I am to live in Singapore.

We have also organized regional and international conferences in Singapore. The fact that many international medical organizations want to have their conferences held in Singapore speaks for the great work Mr Lee have done to make Singapore safe, clean, efficient and accessible. We might have taken these for granted and do not realize that we are “身在福中不知福”, which means “unaware of the good fortune we are now in”, but without Mr Lee's leadership and his chosen teams, we would not have progressed so far in a short period of time. Truly, we are indebted to Mr Lee for giving us what we have now.

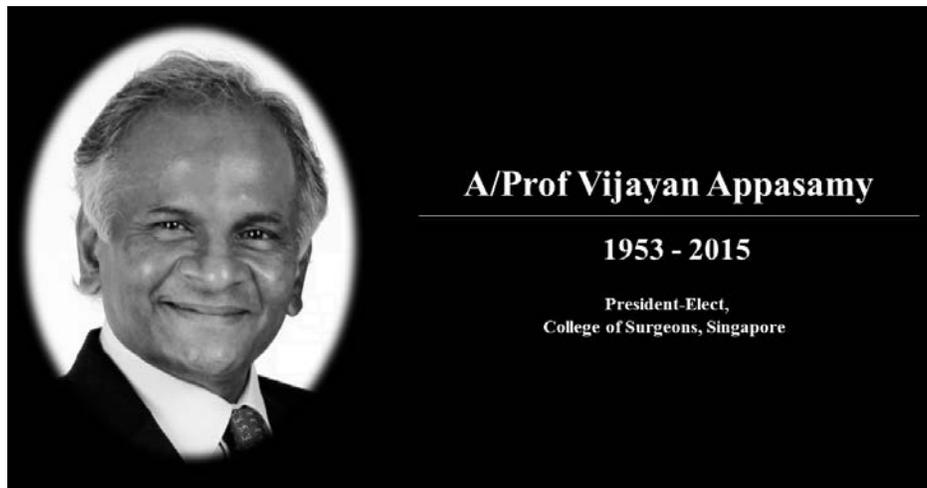
In 1975, Academy hosted the 10<sup>th</sup> Singapore Malaysia Congress of Medicine. The [Guest of Honour](#) at the opening ceremony and Induction Comitia was Mr Lee Kuan Yew. He was [conferred Honorary Fellowship](#) of the Academy, the first Singaporean who received such honor, for his effort in strengthening the under- and postgraduate medical education, as well as for the full support to improve Singapore's healthcare which included rebuilding of the Singapore General Hospital at that time and planning of a new hospital at Kent Ridge.

In his [speech](#) at the conferment ceremony, Mr Lee said: ***“The Academy of Medicine stands for Standards of Excellence. This is not an aspiration easy to achieve. The standard of the medical profession in Singapore has always been high. In a period of rapid university expansion throughout the developed and developing world, standards have fallen in many universities. We cannot let this happen in Singapore”***.

I am glad that our Past Masters, previous and current Councils have not let our standards of Excellence down. Over the last 5 decades, Academy has grown in strength, with creation of new Colleges and Chapters for better professional development of specialists. From a size of 34 founding pioneer Fellows, the Academy now has close to 3,000 Fellows in 11 Colleges, 36 medical specialties, 5 medical subspecialties and 7 dental specialties. Our Fellows are now giving professional opinions to the Ministry of Health, more than 50 requests annually, and also providing independent expert opinions to Coroners’ Court and police. Many of our Fellows are active members of Specialist Training Committees, Subspecialist Training Committees, Residency Advisory Committees, Joint Committee for Specialists Training (JCST), Specialists Accreditation Board, training institutions and medical schools, overseeing and contributing to the training and assessment of next generation of doctors. Through the Chapter of Clinician Scientists which was formed in 2012 and the Chapter of Clinician Educators formed in 2013, Academy now aims to achieve academic excellence in research and education.

The Chapter of Clinician Educators has been busy lately, hosted the HMDP visiting expert Prof Brian Hodges in January and conducted the Train-the-Trainers programme last month, preparing Fellows of the Chapter to conduct the Unit 1 of the Master of Health Professions Educations of the Maastricht University in Singapore.

It is with much regret that one of the most passionate clinician educators who is also the President-Elect, College of Surgeons, Singapore, Associate Professor Vijayan Appasamy passed away suddenly in Chicago, on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015, at the age of 61.



As described by his friends and colleagues, [Prof Appasamy](#), Mr V or Vijayan, was a trauma surgeon, caring doctor, nice gentleman, meticulous researcher, altruistic volunteer, dedicated teacher, inspirational mentor, trusted colleague, excellent administrator and unwavering friend, who had touched countless lives in many ways.

Helping less fortunate people has been a central feature of Vijayan's life for the past 30+ years. Though his job already involved helping people through performing life-saving surgical procedures, Vijayan's concern for the well-being of others did not stop when he ends his office day. Hailing from a humble background, Vijayan walked to and from school while growing up because his family could not afford the bus fare. He shared that his family struggled to send him and his siblings to school and that instilled in him the importance of giving back to society. He believed that a little help could go a long way in making a difference in people's lives.

From 1980s, he served in various grassroots organizations and undertook various initiatives to reach out to youths and the elderly. He served in Drug Rehabilitation Review Committee for 15 years and Home Detention Advisory Committee for 8 years. Another initiative was the setting up of a small neighborhood library. The library was set up to encourage young readers to inculcate a love for reading. He also engaged them to run the library. The library soon became a spot for children and their families to gather.

For his voluntary work done for the communities and various committees at Tan Tock Seng Hospital, National Health Group, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Home Affairs, he was honored with many [awards](#), including several long service awards and medals, Excellent Service Award (Gold) of the Spring Singapore, Health Care Humanity Award of the Singapore Courage Fund, Public Service Medal (Pingat Bakti Masyarakat, PBM) and the [Public Service Star](#) (Bintang Bakti Masyarakat, BBM).

As a passionate educator, sharing of knowledge and cultivating a sense of curiosity and an inquisitive mind in fellow junior clinicians and students were a bonus to him. He strongly believed in lifelong learning and always reminded us that “to teach is to learn twice!” Even at the age of 58, he pursued a Master degree in Medical Education so that he could teach better. For his commitment and leadership in medical education, he was honored with NHG Education Leaders award.

I got to know Vijayan in 2011 when he became the Honorary Secretary of the College of Surgeons, Singapore. Subsequently he was appointed a member of JCST and we interacted frequently during the weekly JCST Co-Chair Meetings. I always paid particular attention to what he shared, as his years of experience and wisdoms assisted JCST to make certain difficult training decisions, even though some of these decisions were not related to surgery. Our Academy and JCST staff liked him a lot, as he took his assigned task very seriously, very thorough in his job and yet a warm and affable man to work with. I was very glad when he was elected the next President of the College of Surgeons and would join the Academy Council soon after AGM. Now that he has left us, it is a great loss to the Chapter of Clinician Educators, College of Surgeons and the Academy.

Mr Lee and Vijayan have departed this world, but they will always live in our memories. As said by Albert Einstein, “*Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile*”. Both their lives are fulfilled by serving others. Mr Lee’s legacy is unprecedented and unrepeatably, and Vijayan’s spirit of helping less privileged and educating others can and will be perpetuated.

For the 101 new inductees, please accept my heartiest Congratulations! You are now truly part of us, helping the Academy to preserve and advance our medical profession! As specialists in your own field and Fellows of the Academy, I have no doubt you will maintain your clinical competencies by actively taking part in your continuing professional development programme. What you need to pay particular attention is to continue to maintain a high standard of professional and ethical practice which is expected of you by the Academy and our profession. After spending quality time with your family, please devote some of your free time for the advancement of our profession and serve in your respective Chapter, College, Academy, or education.

Let me also congratulate our 11 graduates of the Staff Registrar Scheme Diploma programs. You should be proud of your achievement to have fulfilled the stringent requirements to obtain the SRS Diploma. Your role in our public healthcare system is very important. Your longer presence will strengthen our aim to provide comprehensive and holistic care to our patients. I wish you all the best in your career advancement.

Let me say in conclusion that this afternoon will not be complete without the presence of our Guest of Honour and all of you in the audience.

Thank you.