

Reproduced from *Singapore in the New Millenium: Challenges Facing the City-State* edited by Derek da Cunha (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002). This version was obtained electronically direct from the publisher on condition that copyright is not infringed. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the prior permission of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. Individual articles are available at <http://bookshop.iseas.edu.sg>

# Singapore in the New Millennium

The **Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS)** was established as an autonomous organization in 1968. It is a regional research centre for scholars and other specialists concerned with modern Southeast Asia, particularly the many-faceted problems of stability and security, economic development, and political and social change.

The Institute's research programmes are the Regional Economic Studies (RES, including ASEAN and APEC), Regional Strategic and Political Studies (RSPS), and Regional Social and Cultural Studies (RSCS).

The Institute is governed by a twenty-two-member Board of Trustees comprising nominees from the Singapore Government, the National University of Singapore, the various Chambers of Commerce, and professional and civic organizations. An Executive Committee oversees day-to-day operations; it is chaired by the Director, the Institute's chief academic and administrative officer.

# Singapore in the New Millennium

Challenges Facing the City-State

Edited by  
**Derek da Cunha**

**ISEAS**

INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES  
Singapore

First published in Singapore in 2002 by  
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies  
30 Heng Mui Keng Terrace  
Pasir Panjang  
Singapore 119614  
*Internet e-mail:* publish@iseas.edu.sg  
*World Wide Web:* <http://www.iseas.edu.sg/pub.html>

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

© 2002 Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore.

*The responsibility for facts and opinions in this publication rests exclusively with the editor and contributors and their interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views or the policy of the Institute or its supporters.*

---

### **ISEAS Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data**

---

Singapore in the new millennium : challenges facing the city-state / edited by  
Derek da Cunha.

Papers presented to a Conference on Singapore in the New Millennium :  
Challenges Facing the City-State, Singapore, 25 August 1999, organized  
by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

1. Singapore—Congresses.
  2. Singapore—Politics and government—Congresses.
  3. Singapore—Foreign relations—Congresses.
  4. Singapore—Economic conditions—Congresses.
  5. Singapore—Social conditions—Congresses.
- I. Da Cunha, Derek.
  - II. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
  - III. Conference on Singapore in the New Millennium : Challenges Facing  
the City-State (1999 : Singapore)

DS599.64 S612

2002

sls2001023169

ISBN 981-230-130-5 (soft cover)

ISBN 981-230-131-3 (hard cover)

---

Printed in Singapore by Seng Lee Press Pte Ltd.

# CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Contributors</i>	<i>ix</i>
1. The Limits of a City-state: Or Are There? <i>Linda Low</i>	<i>1</i>
2. External Challenges Facing the Economy <i>Raymond Lim</i>	<i>26</i>
3. Governance: Its Complexity and Evolution <i>N. Ganesan</i>	<i>50</i>
4. The Future of Civil Society: What Next? <i>Simon S. C. Tay</i>	<i>69</i>
5. Relating to the World: Images, Metaphors, and Analogies <i>Kwa Chong Guan</i>	<i>108</i>
6. Defence and Security: Evolving Threat Perceptions <i>Derek da Cunha</i>	<i>133</i>
7. Education in the Early 21st Century: Challenges and Dilemmas <i>Jason Tan</i>	<i>154</i>

---

8. Reframing Modernity: The Challenge of Remaking Singapore <i>J. M. Nathan</i>	187
9. National Identity, the Arts, and the Global City <i>C. J. W.-L. Wee</i>	221
10. The Media and the Flow of Information <i>Ang Peng Hwa</i>	243
11. Conclusion <i>Derek da Cunha</i>	269
<i>Index</i>	277

# PREFACE

The volume of literature on Singapore society, politics, and economics continues to grow at a steady rate. Few other countries of similar size have been so extensively written on. The reason why Singapore continues to come under the microscope of intellectual analysis is that it is unique in many ways. From the way it is governed to the way it conducts its commerce, Singapore has generally charted its own course different from what is generally pursued by most other countries.

Another book on Singapore can only be justified if there are new things to say. In that respect, if this book does reveal to the reader something new, it is a consequence of the impact on Singapore of the significant changes taking place in an increasingly interdependent world, and the equally significant geopolitical changes that have taken place in Singapore's own neighbourhood — Southeast Asia. These changes have occasioned economic, political, intellectual, and societal responses from both the Singaporean state and people, whose defining feature is to keep pace and anticipate change.

This book grew out of a one-day conference of the same name organized by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in August 1999. Eight papers were presented at that conference, of which seven were selected, revised in 2001, and now appear as chapters in this book. The editor then commissioned three more chapters, so as to make the book more rounded. The conclusion draws together some of the major themes in the various chapters, highlighting some key challenges that Singapore is likely to face in the years ahead and also reflecting on the significance of the 2001 general election.

The editor would like to thank Mr Jesse Cortes, a graduate student at the University of California, San Diego, for assistance in editing this volume. He would also like to thank the authors of the various chapters for their patience in waiting for the book's publication.

*Derek da Cunha*

# CONTRIBUTORS

**Ang Peng Hwa** teaches media law and management at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, where he is Vice-Dean of the School of Communication Studies. He is a lawyer by training and holds a Ph.D. in the mass media from Michigan State University. His research interest is in legal and policy issues in the media covering areas such as copyright, censorship, and content regulation on the Internet. In Singapore, he has served as the legal adviser to the advertising regulator, the Advertising Standards Authority of Singapore from 1994 till 2000. He has consulted for government and private bodies in Singapore on law and policy regarding the Internet. Internationally, he has consulted for international agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme, and has presented papers to government officials from Asia and the European Union.

**Derek da Cunha** is a Senior Fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, where he is Co-ordinator of the Regional Strategic and Political Studies (RSPS) programme and Editor of the journal *Contemporary Southeast Asia*. He has M.Phil. and Ph.D. degrees in the field of International Relations from Cambridge University and the Australian National University respectively. His areas of research specialization include Asia-Pacific defence and security issues, and Singapore society and politics. He is author of the book *The Price of Victory: The 1997 Singapore General Election and Beyond* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies), and editor of *Debating Singapore: Reflective Essays* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies). He is a member of the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies.

**N. Ganesan** received his tertiary education in North America, earning a B.A. (Hons.) and an M.A. from McMaster University in Canada and a Ph.D. from Northern Illinois University. He is currently a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Political Science with concurrent responsibilities in the Southeast Asian



Studies Programme at the National University of Singapore. He has also lectured at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, Singapore. His teaching, research, and publication interests are in contemporary Southeast Asian politics and foreign policy. He also lectures regularly for the Singapore Ministry of Defence's Central National Education Office as well as for the Foundation Course for Administrative Service Officers and Induction Course for Senior Officers at the Civil Service College, Singapore.

**Kwa Chong Guan** is Head of External Programmes at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, Singapore, and Co-Chair of the Singapore National Committee of the Council for Security Co-operation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP). He was previously Head of the SAFTI Military Institute's Department of Strategic Studies (which he helped establish) and concurrently Adjunct Associate Professor in the Division of History of the National Institute of Education's School of Arts. He has authored papers on the heuristics of Asian security practice, Singapore historiography, and Southeast Asian art history. He is also co-editor of *Oral History in Southeast Asia, Theory and Method* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies).

**Raymond Lim** is a Member of Parliament in Singapore, and on 1 December 2001 was appointed a Minister of State (Foreign Affairs and Trade and Industry). He was Managing Director of Temasek Holdings. Prior to that, he was the Chief Executive Officer of DBS Securities and Group Chief Economist of ABN AMRO Asia Securities where he was ranked as one of the best economists in Asia by international fund managers. A Rhodes Scholar, he holds First Class degrees in Economics and Law from the Universities of Adelaide, Oxford, and Cambridge. He is a Board member in the Singapore Broadcasting Authority and Energy Market Authority and Council member of the Economic Society of Singapore.

**Linda Low** is Associate Professor, Department of Business Policy, National University of Singapore. Her areas of research specialization include public sector economics and public policy, public enterprises and privatization, social security and retirement, health economics, human resource development and manpower policies, international trade and regionalism, development economics, and macroeconomic policies related to the Asia-Pacific and ASEAN economies. She has consulted for various ministries and agencies in Singapore, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United

Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Asian Secretariat, and the Commonwealth Secretariat. She is a board member of the Central Provident Fund, a Senior Adjunct Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies, Singapore, a committee member of the Financial Planning Association of Singapore, and a council member of the Singapore Institute of International Affairs.

**J. M. Nathan** is Assistant Professor in the School of Education, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He has taught in colleges and universities in Singapore and North America, and was a research scholar in the National University of Singapore before he was awarded a CIDA scholarship to pursue his doctorate in philosophy at Queen's University in Canada. On his return, his interest in the philosophy of psychology, ethics, and values led him to design and write the curriculum for the values-based critical thinking programme for Temasek Polytechnic, where he is now a consultant. He has written articles in a range of journals, including the annual *Southeast Asian Affairs*.

**Jason Tan** is Assistant Professor in the Policy and Management Studies Academic Group, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He obtained his doctorate in comparative education at the State University of New York at Buffalo. His research publications focus on the marketization of education, education achievement of the Malay minority in Singapore, and curriculum policy. He is co-editor of *Education in Singapore: A Book of Readings* (Singapore: Prentice Hall) and *Education in Singapore: Issues and Challenges at the Start of the Twenty-First Century* (Singapore: Prentice Hall). He is also Executive Editor of the *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*.

**Simon S. C. Tay** is Associate Professor in the Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore, where he teaches international and constitutional law. He is a nominated Member of the Singapore Parliament (NMP), and also chairman of the Singapore Institute of International Affairs. His work focuses on the environment, human rights, and civil society in Asia. A Fulbright scholar, he won the Laylin Prize at the Harvard Law School for the best thesis in international law. He is also a prize-winning writer of fiction and poetry. In January 2000, the World Economic Forum at Davos listed him as a "Global Leader of Tomorrow".

**C. J. W.-L. Wee** teaches literature and cultural theory at the Nanyang Technological University. He was previously a Fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, in its Regional Social and Cultural Studies programme, and a Visiting Fellow at the Committee for Cultural Choices and Global Futures, New Delhi. He was also a co-editor of *SOJOURN: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, and now is a member of its advisory committee. He is the author of *Culture, Empire, and the Question of Being Modern* (forthcoming) and the editor of *Local Cultures and the New Asia: The State, Culture, and Capitalism in Southeast Asia* (forthcoming), and has published articles in *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* and *New Formations*. He did his postgraduate work at the University of Texas, Austin, and the University of Chicago.