

· PROMINENT SINGAPOREANS ·

# MISTER HDB

The Life and Legacy of Lim Kim San



ASAD LATIF & LEE XIN LI



# MISTER HDB





For Mrinal Mesho and Nita Mashi — ASAD

In memory of Verna Ho and Morris Ng — XIN LI

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The Life and Legacy of Lim Kim San

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EPIGRAM BOOKS / SINGAPORE





**A**bout a hundred years ago, a baby boy was born to a Peranakan family in Singapore. His name was Lim Kim San. He was the eldest of six children. They lived in a bungalow in River Valley Road, surrounded by durian trees and rubber estates. It even had a servants' quarters and a stable.





**F**or some time, young Lim was the only boy in a house full of women and girls. He cried a lot and was thoroughly spoilt. Who would have guessed that this self-centred brat would grow up to serve the people?





**Y**oung Lim loved animals and often got what he wanted. He was allowed to have six or seven pelicans as pets. Thinking that he had trained them, he took them out one day. To his utter dismay, they all flew away.



Lim went to Anglo-Chinese School (ACS) for his primary and secondary school education. His teachers were strict. When the boys broke the rules, they were pinched. When they made spelling mistakes, they were whacked on their palms. Before long, Lim learnt to behave in school.



**L**im Kim San came from a privileged background and was destined for a life of comfort. So what turned this party-going dandy into a hard-working public servant who would solve one of the most urgent problems during Singapore's early years: giving ordinary people decent homes?

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