THE DILLINGHAM LECTURE

"The Twain Have Met"

by

Prime Minister of Singapore

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The conclusion in Kipling's limerick that the "twain will never meet" finds an ironic rebuttal in over half a million Asians, Indians and Pakistanis, now permanently settled in Britain. The East has met the West. Together with over fifty million Britons, and another half a million Africans and West Indians, a whole second generation would have been born and bred in Britain, knowing nothing of India or Pakistan. Cheap, convenient and rapid mass transportation has resulted in considerable immigration of peoples. From the former dependencies, peoples have moved into the high leisure-seeking societies of Britain and France. They take up jobs mostly in the lower social and income brackets. East and West have met, albeit unequally, in one society.

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When the West first sailed out to the East, they met on unequal terms. Large areas of Asia were colonised by the superior naval, weapons and industrial strength of the West. The only country to repel Western domination was japan.

Even China had to cede extra-territorial concessions in her main ports. The Thai's were fortunate. The British in Burma could be played off against the French in Indo-China, thus avoiding direct and complete domination by either.

However, 23 years after independence in India and Pakistan, in 1970 East meets West still on unequal terms. Again the exception is Japan. China will dispute this. In fact, they probably consider themselves more than equal to the West. For the rest of Asia, whether it is the Westerner who visits the East, or the Easterner who visits the West, both are conscious of the inequality of their respective positions.

As individuals, there are many Asians whose ability and competence in their professional fields excel and are equal to the best of the Europeans and Americans. But that is not the point. More relevant is the question why, in group performance as nation states, most of the East, so far, have not been able to organise themselves, maintain effective administration, ensure political stability, provide proper sanitation, clean potable water, constant electric supply, control population growth, and widen the base and raise the levels of education, training and expertise. Only then can they by the use of machinery and equipment they can buy from the West make the technological, economic and social progress to equal the West.

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The great Hindu and Sinic civilisations, going back well beyond 2,000 and 3,000 years respectively could only have been created by peoples of considerable talent. They must have had the capacity for organisation and administration to sustain cultivated living over long periods of time. They must also have maintained a surplus in agricultural and pastoral production, to enable a significant portion of their people to cultivate the arts. For music, literature, painting, sculpture and architecture flourished. The genius expressed in solid granite chiselled and carved into the Ellora Caves near Aurangabad in the 6th to 7th centuries, the temples of Mahabalipuram near Madras in the 7th and 8th centuries, or more recent, in the 17th century under the Mogul emperor Shah Jehan, the Taj Mahal, these monuments surpass any architecture of the same period in the West. And in modern times, the poetry of Tagore bears witness to Bengali artistry in both English and Bengali, whilst India was still under the British Raj.

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What is it that has made Japan such an outstanding exception to the long catalogue of other not so successful attempts at modernisation and industrialisation in the East? A century after the Meiji Restoration in 1868 Japan has the third-highest G.N.P. in the world* , although in per capita terms she ranks

* Appendix

below West Germany. But by 1968, she nearly equalled, and by 1969 almost certainly has surpassed Italy.

In order to learn the technology of the West, the Japanese sent scholars abroad. They learnt the languages of the advanced nations. In a thoroughly eclectic manner, they chose from each his best. From the Prussians their military system and strategic doctrines, from the British shipbuilding. The French have also made a contribution to Japan's transformation. But, unfortunately, to this day grapes grown in Japan have prevented Japanese wines from being anything like the French. And this is not for want of trying.

By the turn of this century, the Japanese defeated the Russian fleet. They grew in strength and confidence. They systematically learnt from countries more advanced than themselves. They bought the sophisticated products of the West, took them apart, studied the components, and then re-produced almost identical products, albeit of unequal quality. However, a generation is now growing up, where the label "Made in Japan" denotes high quality at medium prices.

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In trying to identify the elements that made the West superior in the sciences and technology, the Japanese even copied the dress styles of the West. The black hat and grey gloves, striped trousers and black tails, they have become

part of Japanese protocol. Now they tailor all these out of their own felt, textiles and leather manufacture. At the same time, they have preserved as much as they could of their traditional forms of dress, styles of architecture and way of life.

After their defeat in World War II, and during the years of American occupation, they decided that perhaps their diet was deficient. This might have been a contributory factor towards the better performance of the Americans. So with customary thoroughness and zeal, their leaders set out to get the Japanese to consume more animal protein and wheat, in addition to their traditional diet of fish, pickled vegetables and rice. It is not by accident that one of the cheapest drinks available in Japan today is pasteurised milk, subsidised by the government to ensure that a whole generation grows up taller, stronger and brighter. This change in diet has produced a taller generation. Some doctors say that the extra inches has been as much because of sitting at tables instead of squatting on the floor for their meals, thus improving blood circulation to the legs.

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What can other Asian nations, with ancient and glorious civilisations, learn from the experience of Japan? Can they industrialise and modernise faster? What are the mistakes they should avoid repeating, like the despoilation of Japan's once beautiful and gracious environment, and the pollution of her air, rivers and beaches?

China and India have attempted to catch up in science and technology by two different political systems. The Chinese have been successful in detonating hydrogen bombs and sending a satellite into space whistling "the East is Red". But this is in spite, not because of the isolationism they have imposed upon themselves. The men who made possible their technological advance were scientists who worked long years in American research establishments on nuclear physics and aerospace sciences. Furthermore, from 1949 to the time of their conflict with the Russians in the early 60's, they were receiving Russian machinery and know-how. So until the split became openly acute, Russian was the second language taught in schools and universities in China.

Theoretically it should now be easier for the less developed to develop. There is the recent UNCTAD agreement in principle at Geneva on the 14th October. Now the developed countries can reduce tariffs on the manufactured products of the less developed, without having to give the same concessions to all, including the developed, as required by GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade). New countries should therefore be able to sell more of their products for more foreign exchange, and buy more capital machinery for further industrialisation. World Bank soft loans, United Nations agencies, bilateral and multi-lateral aid programmes, they are designed to ease the painful and difficult

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process of industrialisation, to make it less strenuous and exacting an effort. In theory these concessions should also shorten the time taken for industrial transformation.

But first there are some harsh realities which must be recognised, and several contradiction which must be overcome by the new countries. Then they can the better refurbish their societies, and create newer versions of their old civilisations, more relevant to the mass-production, high-consumption societies. Looking at the great relics of past civilisations in Asia, Mahabalipuram near Madras, the Ellora and Ajanta Caves, Borobudur near Jogjakarta in Java, Angkor Wat, near Siem Reap in Cambodia, what is often forgotten is that there must have been long periods of order and discipline, provided by a firm framework of administrative efficiency and discipline. And whenever incentives failed to work, some coercion or compulsion must have been applied. Otherwise, they could not have transformed to reality, in granite, or sandstone, or marble, the creative imagination of their artists, engineers and architects. For some of these monuments took several centuries, and five times as many generations, to accomplish.

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The first contradiction these societies face is how to reconcile, how to re-gear their value systems and culture patterns to meet the needs of an industrial

society, based on the higher sciences. It is not possible to move from the agricultural economies of Asia, somewhere at the level of 15th and 16th century Western Europe, into the "technetronic" era the Americans have entered, without jettisoning those parts of the value systems and culture patterns of the traditional past which inhibit or impede the acquisition of scientific knowledge, engineering techniques and work discipline. Industrialised status can be achieved only if new value systems and behaviour patterns are grafted on the old. Could it be that, in part, the difference between the more intense and exacting Sinic culture, and the less intense and more benign leisure values of Hindu culture, has made for the difference in results of industrial progress between Eastern and Southern Asia?

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It requires courageous leadership to eradicate those values which hamper the advance of a people into the higher sciences, and to inculcate new values and attitudes which will quicken the pace of change. Rapid acquisition of knowledge in the sciences and technology, higher manipulative skills, management expertise and marketing know-how are not congruent with a relaxed culture. Further, these new disciplines and techniques often need to be modified to fit into the different social and cultural moulds which their different histories have bequeathed them.

To compound the problem for the less developed, the Puritan ethics of the West which make virtues out of hard work, thrift and enterprise, they are at present being questioned in the West. The young of the developed countries are seen to be rejecting these virtues. The abundance of Western post-industrial societies has been accompanied by the ostentatious flouting, by students and unionised workers, of these conventional values, without which the abundance and leisure could not have come about in the first instance.

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This confuses the students and young workers of the less developed countries. They prefer to believe that with the latest industrial innovations, hard work, thrift and industry are no longer necessary to take their agricultural and pastoral economies into the industrial age. It is more congenial if the impersonal

application of science and technology to industry could do the trick, because personal effort and discipline make for a strenuous life.

Unfortunately, despite aid from the World Bank and UN agencies, despite the lowering of tariff walls surrounding the developed countries, with few exceptions, the less developed have stayed less developed. For the less developed to achieve standards of life comparable to that of the post-industrial West, two or more generations may have to toil away. The result is that many professionally competent, but impatient, young men in the less developed countries choose the easier way out. By migrating to the developed countries, they can immediately enjoy standards of life of their counterparts in developed countries. Too few take the patriotic road, for it means a long period of self-denial, and hard work, for which the real reward is the satisfaction of raising the quality of life for one's own community.

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The second major contradiction to be resolved is that of language. Pride in one's past is necessary for self-confidence and morale. These are essential ingredients of success. With independence comes a revivalist, romanticist streak. The native language, modes of dress, even manners and mannerisms, are resurrected and given pre-eminence. Often they are the external manifestations of a supposedly glorious past. It is a phenomenon to be found not only in older

civilisations. The pre-occupation of the Americans Negros with Afro-American studies, new hair and dress styles this may be an assertion of their right to a dignified and not inferior past. It is worth remembering that the Japanese preserved as much of themselves as was compatible with the industrial society.

In order to get access to this new knowledge, especially in the applied sciences, men must be prepared and sent abroad to study in developed countries. This requires the learning of the languages of these developed countries, English, Russian, German or French. The easiest course would be to continue using the language of the former metropolitan power, particularly where this happens to be English or French. The contradiction between pride in one's own language and the mastery of a foreign language can be reconciled. The foreign language the less developed have inherited can continue to be taught and used, whilst the indigenous language, over the decades can be modernised and enriched by extensively borrowing ideas and words, and eventually developing its own modern literature. Only in this way can scholars be sent abroad to learn new knowledge. More important, the textbooks, journals and publications of the developed countries can be imported, enabling more students to acquire scientific knowledge. The best reason for keeping up the learning and use of English or French is that professors and experts from advanced countries can visit the

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universities and institutions of the less developed, and instruct much larger numbers of students than can be sent abroad.

This is not inconsistent with what the Japanese did. They had some of their best students learn the languages of the advanced countries of the West, and sent them abroad to learn what the West had which Japan did not have. Then, after several decades, the Japanese were able to build up their own technical institutes and universities, using Japanese language textbooks for even technical and scientific subjects. Even today they have their scholars studying English, French and German to go abroad and keep abreast of the latest developments in the higher sciences. They also import foreign publications and keep in touch with contemporary work in all important fields. The assiduous learning of the language of an advanced country, and the fostering of one's own, are complementary, not inconsistent policies.

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On the other hand, the deliberate stifling of a language which gives access to superior technology can be damaging beyond repair. Sometimes this is done, not to elevate the status of the indigenous language, as much as to take away a supposed advantage a minority in the society is deemed to have, because that minority has already gained a greater competence in the foreign language. This can be most damaging. It is tantamount to blinding the next generation to the

knowledge of the advanced countries. Worse, it leads to an exodus of the bright and the promising who do not intend themselves or their children to be blinded from new knowledge.

No matter how good the translation from the English, Russian, French or German text can be, it will often be 3 to 5 editions behind by the time it has been translated, sent to the printer, and finally published and available in the bookshops. And the range of books or journals that can be translated can never equal the access to direct sources, now enable direct communication and a dialogue with specialists in the advanced countries.

Whilst national pride requires that the indigenous language be revived and expanded for modern day use, to deliberately drop the teaching and use of English or French and depend upon translations of scientific materials into an, as yet, inadequate language, is unnecessarily to maim themselves in their search of new knowledge.

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Western science and technology have created one over smaller world. It has lead to mutual exposure of peoples of the developed and less developed countries. It is difficult to ward off external influences. To close a society, rigid controls have to be constantly maintained. Even the Russians have found this

unprofitable. Their "in tourist" now encourage more wealthy tourists both to see their achievements, and to get more convertible currency. Their ballet and cultural troupes perform abroad. Their scientists and scholars attend congresses in the West, despite occasional defections. This trend is unlikely to be reversed. For the exchange of ideas leads to a cross fertilisation of different discipline and systems, often generating a creative stimulus.

The question leaders of the less developed have to answer is not whether or not to modernise. Affluent tourists and the mass media have already aroused the appetites of the peoples of the less developed countries for the sophisticated products, particularly consumer durables, of the advanced countries. The question these leaders have to answer is how rapidly can they modernise their societies, and equally important, how much of their traditional past can they retain, so that they are not just poor imitations of the West, with all the fads and fetishes, the disorders and aberrations of contemporary Western societies. One world need not mean one dull, grey, uniform world. The science, the technology, the computers, the automation, and the cybernetics for mass-production, high-consumption economies may have to be more or less the same. But architecture, social behaviour and styles of life need not be slavishly imitated. The intake of calories, proteins, minerals and vitamins may have to approximate certain optimum levels. But the cuisine, the culinary arts, need not be the same. The

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leadership of each new country must make up its own mind just how much to keep and how much to jettison of the old, to make progress and yet to keep enough to be one's own distinctive self. For cultural continuity is compatible with the absorption of new technology and will lessen the problems of disorientation consequent on rapid changes in ways of working and modes of life.

Another major problem for many of the less developed countries is that they have to raise not only levels of knowledge and skills, but levels of intelligence, ability and dexterity. The controversy over whether ethnic differences correlate with low or high I.Q. levels and manipulative skills, may never be resolved either for academic or political considerations. But whether it is nature or nurture, one problem more acute in new, than in old, societies is that the abler and more educated segments of their population tend to have much smaller families than the less able and less educated, whose families are often five or more times larger than the more educated. Even if genetics have no bearing on ability, and it were the environment, the opportunities, the diet, the care and attention which determines performance, this still poses a grave problem. But if it turns out that nature as much as nurture decides the level of achievement, then some system of incentives and disincentives must be found to make sure that with each succeeding generation, standards of education and skill, levels of performance and achievement, will rise both as a result of nature and of

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nurture. Whether it is the genes, or the environment, or both, to catch up with technology and capital accumulation of the developed, this problem must be faced by the political leadership of the less developed, then alternative solutions defined, explained to the people and vigorously implemented. Then the quality of life will rise as levels of education and performance are raised.

Over the next few decades there will be more in the East who can meet the West on equal terms. By the year 2000, there could be over a thousand million people in the East who will equal the West in the sciences, technology and in the arts. A danger to be avoided is the possible loss of their cultural distinctiveness which has made the civilisations of the East so different. In Asia, the basic social unit is the family. Strong family ties have, so far, enabled Eastern societies to avoid the maladies which are afflicting the West. The young in the West are being softened by an abundance of the necessities of life. Creature comforts are taken for granted. Parents usually have less control over their children.

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Different social mores have produced a younger generation who are only too ready to experiment on themselves with drugs and sex. Quite a number may be physically and emotionally crippled for life.

Contacts between peoples of the developed and less developed countries are increasing in frequency, and spreading over wider groups of peoples. It is

generating greater unease because of the consciousness of their unequal positions. Unless the standards of living between the fully developed and the less developed countries become less unequal, there will be more inter-racial, inter-religious and inter-national friction. These frictions could so easily be aggravated into acute conflicts if they were exploited by those revolutionary countries still in the feverish proselytising period of communism.

Disillusionment in the less developed countries has set in because of their failure to make the grade. The despondency is all the greater because of earlier beliefs that growth was the natural and effortless result of the transference of capital equipment and work techniques from the developed to the less developed. It was generally believed that all the less developed required was the advanced machines, preferably with automation and cybernetics, from the advanced countries on easy payment terms, and progress was assured. This has not happened because there never was this easy ride towards the industrial society.

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The willingness of the developed West, and of the developed East in the case of Japan, to pass on the technology, capital equipment and skills under terms which are not too onerous, may regenerate optimism and on a more realistic basis. An appreciation of each other's cultural differences which make for greater or lesser speed in developing the human and natural resources of each country and their peoples, will also help human relations across ethnic and national boundaries.

Perhaps this Centre for Cultural and Technical Interchange between East and West in Honolulu can fulfil this valuable function in getting the East to meet West under friendlier conditions, with both sides at ease with each other. And when the less developed understand that the developed can, and are willing to help, but that the decisive factor is the quality of their leadership, the innate attributes of their people, their levels of education, their cultural ballast, then perhaps confidence and mutual respect will be established between East and West as appreciable and steady progress is achieved in the East.

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G.N.P and Per Capita Figures - 1968

At Market Prices

		G.N.P (US $ '000)	Per Capital US $
1.	United States	880,744,000	4,379
2.	Japan	141,882,000	1,404
3.	W. Germany	132,700,000	2,206
4.	France	126,623,000	2,537
5.	U.K.	102,875,000	1,861
6.	Italy	74,787,000	1,418
7.	Canada	62,254,000	2,997
8.	India	41,114,000 (1967)	80 (1967)
9.	Australia	29,830,000	2,479
10.	Mexico	26,744,000	566
11.	Pakistan	15,287,000	140
12.	Indonesia	10,868,000	96
13.	Malaysia	3,057,000 (1966)	314 (1966)
14.	Ceylon	1,798,000	150
15.	Singapore	1,438,000	723

Sources: UN Statistical Yearbook 1969. Page 563, Table 183.

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Estimates in U.S. dollars (1968 prices)

Russia	US$	386 billion	US$1,552
U.S.	US$	815 billion	US$3,902