

SPEECH BY MS LOW YEN LING, MINISTER OF STATE, MINISTRY OF CULTURE, COMMUNITY AND YOUTH & MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY, AT THE LAUNCH OF THE BOOK “12 FAMILY HISTORIES: A TAPESTRY OF SINGAPORE’S MULTI-CULTURAL LEGACY”, ON SATURDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2023, 3.30PM

Mr Ng Yew Kang,
President of Genealogy Society Singapore,
Mr Daniel Teo,
President of the Goh Loo Club,
Genealogy Society Singapore (GSS) Advisors:
Prof Wang Gungwu and Prof Phua Kok Khoo,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Introduction

1. Good afternoon. It is with great delight that I join you today for the launch of the book “12 Family Histories: A tapestry of Singapore’s multi-cultural legacy”, published jointly by Genealogy Society Singapore and the Goh Loo Club.
2. The family histories of individual Singaporeans contribute to the depth of our social understanding and the richness of our society. These narratives reveal intricate details of past social and family contexts that may not be readily found in official records but yet form an integral and irreplaceable part of our heritage.
3. The 12 families featured in this book come from various ethnic groups and diverse backgrounds. The stories delve into the lives of their ancestors, uncovering where their forefathers came from, why they came to Singapore, and how they lived.
4. When we reflect on history, we often focus on the “big picture” and “big personalities” – what nations and national leaders did. While that is important, the history of our country has been equally shaped by the stories of ordinary people. These stories offer us precious glimpses into the lives led by our ancestors through their personal and family stories, portraits, and photographs. They help humanise our

history, providing valuable insights into the experiences and contributions of those who came before us.

5. These stories not only reveal the diverse range of experiences among our people but also highlight our common threads. In our wonderfully diverse society, our shared heritage plays a vital role in bridging differences and fostering understanding. Having these stories compiled in a single book is particularly valuable as it paints a vivid picture of the rich social tapestry and histories that have shaped the Singapore of today.

6. Thank you to the Genealogy Society Singapore and the Goh Loo Club for your hard work and generous support in documenting our heritage and making it come alive. Your dedication has helped deepen our appreciation of Singapore's diversity, legacy and values we hold dear. Your work has contributed much to fostering mutual understanding and unity in our community.

7. Congratulations to the authors and publishers once again on the launch of your book.