

The Editor's Musings

DR TINA TAN

Editor

Dr Tan is a psychiatrist in private practice and an alumnus of Duke-NUS Medical School. She treats mental health conditions in all age groups but has a special interest in caring for the elderly. With a love for the written word, she makes time for reading, writing and self-publishing on top of caring for her patients and loved ones.



At the July 2025 Aspen Security Forum in Colorado, USA, Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan (who is no stranger to us in the medical community) participated in a fireside chat and was asked by a journalist whether Singapore was “safe”.

His immediate response?

“History is replete with the carcasses of small states.”

This vivid imagery is a sobering reminder that what we have achieved here in Singapore is not to be taken for granted, especially given how remarkably uncertain this year of 2025 has been from a global lens. The tariff war was a real rollercoaster, was it not? And it is not over yet.

Still, there is no more appropriate time to remember how far our nation has come than this year, as Singapore celebrates a whopping sixty years of independence. If I thought SG50 was marvellous, look at how quickly ten years flew by for us to arrive at SG60.

It also brings to mind this question: “How did our forefathers do it?” How did they traverse the narrow and difficult path of nation building against the odds in those post-colonial, post-war days? If you ask me, the answer is this: passion.

What is passion? It is a strong desire or enthusiasm for something. A fervent belief that provokes conviction, action and change.

It is for this, I believe, that members of our own community might take the “path less travelled” and do things that few of us would be inclined to do outside the usual scope of clinical work, administration, research and education. To that end, and to commemorate this year’s National Day, we extended an invitation to Dr Lim Wee Kiak, who kindly agreed to share his reflections on straddling medicine and politics. On that note, while Dr Lim calls himself an “accidental politician”, he wound up serving our nation as a Member of Parliament for nineteen years, before stepping down earlier this year. Further, we have Dr Hoe Pei Shan’s submission, in which she interviews emergency medicine physician Dr Tiah Ling about her “nomadic life”, where she “hops” from “passion project to passion project” while serving the humanitarian needs of others.

At the risk of sounding like a social studies textbook, Singapore has come a long way since those early years of independence. Our healthcare system has made strides in accordance with the progress that our nation has made. Are there outstanding issues? Undoubtedly. Are we, as a medical community, all in this together? Like it or not, yes.

So, I ask the younger readers among us – what are you passionate about? And to the older readers – what keeps you passionate? ♦

