

1938: Born

1941-1946: India

- Family of 6
- India

- You were born in 1938 in Malaya - before Malaysia *existed*. What are your earliest memories from that time?
 - Japanese air raid sirens!

Your dad was very active politically, associated with China's Kuomintang party. Due to his anti-Japanese war efforts, the Japanese put a bounty on him & your whole family had to flee to India.

- **1941-1946 (age 3-6):** Family evacuated to India - what was it like?
 - Lived in hill station in N. India: **Musoori** → **Daradoon**
 - Dad had bad accident - horse riding
 - Daradoon: Guava plantation, elephant herd, leper colony
 - **Mumbai - Marine Drive (by sea) + Kite flying**
 - Kindergarten: St John's Cannon School
 - Parents entertained Malaysians & SG - Bridge & mahjong
 - Chan Wing, Chan Kwong Hon, Tan Chin Tuan
 - *Shy & quiet boy: Too young to feel trauma of war
 - Indian maid looked after you & younger brother

1946-1951 (age 8): Return to Malaya

During Emergency Rule, dad appointed to:

- Malayan Union Advisory Council
- Fed Legislative Council
- Fed Exe Council

- How did you return Malaya? Kuala Lumpur?
 - Whole day: convoy of cars
- Bad neighbourhood - what do you remember?
 - Lots of poor people; people who fought Japanese & became communist terrorist
- 1948: British imposed emergency rule due to communist insurgency
 - Dangerous time?
 - Lots of kidnapping
- School: **Batu Road School** → **Victoria Institution**

1952 (age 14): Victoria Institution → Move to England

9 years in England

- Home 3 times for summer

- Remember when you were told by your dad that you were going to school in England with your brother Alex (age 13)? How did you feel?
 - Very intimidated: Never mixed with British, ate their food, used

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dad saw us once in England 	<p>fork/spoon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Journey to England: 3 weeks on Dutch ship (just you & your bro?) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highlight: Go thru Suez Canal - Lots of Dutch people on board? [were leaving Indonesia] - 30 hours: 4-5 stops by plane; 3 weeks by boat <p>Leys School, Cambridge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Did you stay in touch with your family? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Saw dad once - he was on govt mission: - You didn't know what's happening in Malaya? - Alone in UK from ages 14 - 23: What kind of impact on you? - Leys School chosen as located in Cambridge - you always knew you had to go to Cambridge. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When did your dad tell you "I want you to go to Cambridge to study law"?
<p>St John's, Cambridge</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How did you end up at St John's? What was it like? - Very sporty? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Best way to meet people is thru sports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Played badminton in winter; - Captain of St John's College tennis team in summer - Cambridge Society of Malaya & Singapore - You always went down to London to eat Bar dinners at Inner Temple
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 summers: Tourist guide in Costa Brava, Spain! How'd that happen? • Also worked: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Picking strawberries ○ Worked at brewery
<p>1950/60s: 2 Crown Office Row, London</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Moved to London in the 1950/60s: What was it like? Strange to be there? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Didn't like it - Got used to it - Shared flat with good friends - You were accepted by Charles McCullough (later QC & HC judge) s pupil - how'd that happen? What was it like?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inner Temple found him - Follow him to Court in London/sit in his room - He practiced on Midland Circuit - Insisted on buying me lunch - *Most memorable incident? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A case against Geoffrey Lane QC (later become Lord Chief Justice) - Heard Gerald Gardiner QC submit on motor accident - How long were you at 2 Crown Office Row? Did you always know you'd be heading home eventually? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dad always wanted me to go home asap after finishing the Bar
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MBA at Harvard? - Interviewed with John Skrine while in London (Bannon & Bailey)?
<h2>1961: Return to Malaysia</h2>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Were you resentful to be going home? Hard to assimilate back? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Even speaking Cantonese was strange - What was KL like then? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Less than 1 million pax; no PJ/high rise - No TV/aircon - Highlight: stalls at Campbell Road; famous Majid Salley satay stall - Accompanied mum to Chinese opera & BB Park
Social life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dad made you a member of Selangor Golf Club (before the Royal) - life revolved around there
Bannon & Bailey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 British partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What was it like at Bannon & Bailey? - 3 other pupils? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chan Sek Keong - later AG & CJ of SG: became your mentor for all Malayan legislation & law - Was Hussein Onn (3rd Malaysian PM) a fellow pupil? - Your role <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mostly debt collection + look up law for lawyers - Go for mentions in Lower Courts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drove to Ipoh for tennis tournament: Car skipped & entered river! Ruined law books
<h2>1 May 1963: Skrine & Co</h2>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bannon & Bailey dissolved in 1963 to become Skrine & Co: do you remember much of this period? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 British partners; didn't like what the 4th did with a file - No partnership agreement for resolving disputes, so firm dissolved
<p>3 led by John Skrine, Peter Mooney and Stanley Peddie formed Skrine & Co. with Don Bewsher and Chin Yoong Chong in 1963</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Was it hard for you to decide to go with Skrine & Co? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Was it hard to establish a new practice? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practised at Kwang Tung Association building, Jalan Pudu - 1965: 2 years later, you became partner with Alex & Hussein Onn - John Skrine - what was he like? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supported church, charities, loved polo - Loved firm so much: Retired to Ireland; remained a Consultant - Wife Helen complained: <i>He was married to the Firm</i> - did you feel that you had to do the same? - John Skrine always said: <i>Don't harbour a grudge; life is too short for that.</i> - did that influence you a lot? - Peter Mooney <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Had been Sarawak AG: Came from Scottish Bar - As a young person, found him quite formidable & stiff; later a good & valuable friend - Paid for 2 sons of his Malay servant to do medicine & legal - Concert pianist - Became Malaysian; remained a Consultant - Stanley Peddie <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brought up in Ceylon by Scottish dad (tea estate planter): compiled his own digest of cases - Very patient man: Consult with him - he'd always give time - National bridge player - Con Bewsher <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Great mixer & patron of Long Bar, The Selangor Club - A fav of many local, Brit & Austr clients - Great example of a networker with lots of local friends
<h2 style="text-align: center;">1960s: Malaysian Legal Profession</h2>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What was 1960s legal profession like? Chooi & Co formed in 1962 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 500-600 lawyers; - Some British lawyers in Shearn, Lovelace & Hastings, Allen & Gledhill, Bannon & Bailey - Prominent people? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ramani, Robert Chelliah, Eusoffe Abdulcader, Seenivasigm brothers, Selvarajah, Ng Ek Tiong, Yong PUng How, LP Thean. P.G. Lim Prominent Singapore lawyers used to practice here

	<p>were Lee Kuan Yew, David Marshall. Dingle Foot QC did a case here and he was so polished</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very impressed with Ramani's eloquence - Lee Kuan Yew? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nature of law practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practice not so hectic - Turn around time unless urgent: 3 weeks! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - **Economic crises when work was very urgent - *Even a successful lawyer could die a pauper, unless he was a good investor in real estate/share market <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High tax rate & estate duty - Nature of legal research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research: Malal's Digest, Empire Digest & textbooks, Eng Law Report
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You started your career with debt collection & motor accidents - why was that? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Debt collection useful: Learn about recovery via courts, bankruptcy, winding up, foreclosures, Summary judgment - After Malaysian independence, did you see a change in the nature of cases you were handling? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 10 years after our Independence, British and other international companies were still operating in Malaysia, e.g. trading companies, banks, insurance companies, tin and rubber companies. - Skrine & Co represented a fair share of these companies and I did quite a lot for them. When they Malaysianised, I was also involved
<h2 style="text-align: center; color: red;">Outside the Law</h2>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some memorable people you met thru your dad? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tunku Abdul Rahman <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Truly a prince amongst people - Tun Dr Ismail - pity he died early; stern, but fair <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You were absolutely terrified to meet him? - Tun Suffian (CJ of Malaya)
<p>1961: Join RSGC</p> <p>1963: Represent Malaysia in tennis - Asian Games in</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How important was the Royal Selangor Golf Club in your life? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major part since 1961; on Committee for 14 years in a row - Vice captain to Dato Hamid (Captain) → he became the President of Malaysian Golf Association and I was his VP. - When I first came back I started playing tennis seriously when I got back:

	<p>survive - how? What did they do well?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very lean: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No one had secretary; a few typists - Tremendous energy & enthusiasm - *John Skrine was alive: very sad all of us had left Skrine
<p>2005 (age 66): Lee Hishammuddin Allen & Gledhill</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2005: Merger with Allen & Gledhill to form Lee Hishammuddin Allen & Gledhill - how did that happen? Key incidents? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A few key partners wanted to merge - What are the key things to watch out for lawyers wanting to merge with another law firm?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How has COVID-19 impacted the legal landscape?
<p>Miscellaneous</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Looking back, invited twice to join judiciary (incl CoA): Why do you not regret accepting? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dad advised you not to accept - Never felt pressured by dad's legacy? - Knowing what you know now, what is one thing you wish you could redo in your life? - Advice to young/aspiring lawyers?

<https://www.lh-ag.com/interview-with-lhag-senior-partner-dato-thomas-lee/>