This is a study of Dr. Lim Boon Keng, a pioneer in Singapore's history, with emphasis on his early years.

Using a biographical approach, this study attempts to find out what Dr. Lim's main activities were in his early life (1869 - 1921), and to make an objective assessment of his many contributions to society.

This thesis consists of 6 chapters. The first chapter is a brief review of literature and a justification of the study. The second chapter presents the socio-historical milieu in which Dr. Lim lived, his family background as well as his education. The following chapter discusses his role as a social reformer in the straits settlements. (included education, social conduct and lifestyle) Chapter four discusses his cultural inclinations and his involvement in the Confucian revival movement in early Malaya. The next chapter deals with his political orientations focussing on his dual loyalty towards the British Empire and China. The final chapter is an overall evaluation of his work, his personality and his contribution to society before 1921. This chapter concludes that Dr. Lim was a man with a variety of interests, making him a colourful character in the early history of Singapore and Malaya.