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**SPEECH BY DR NG ENG HEN, MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND
SECOND MINISTER FOR DEFENCE, AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING
OF MANJUSRI SECONDARY SCHOOL'S NEW CAMPUS ON
THURSDAY, 22 APRIL 2010, AT 6:00PM**

The Venerable Sik Kwang Sheng,

President, Singapore Buddhist Federation

Miss Sum Chee Wah,

Director, Education Programmes Division, Ministry of Education

Mrs Tay Yang Fern,

Principal, Manjusri Secondary

Distinguished Guests
National Archives of Singapore

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening

Introduction

1. It gives me great pleasure to join you here at Manjusri Secondary School on the opening of its new campus.

Nurturing Future-Ready Students

2. The mission of the secondary school today is a challenging one. As our society progresses, so too the aspirations of our students and that of their parents. A secondary school leaving certificate is not considered the desired end-point. Almost all would want to continue studying to obtain a post-secondary qualification. Students of course vary in their aptitude and teachers can have an important influence is helping them discover their inherent strengths and talents which best suit the different pathways available.

3. Only a select few can score A in all their subjects, so this cannot be the measure of success of our secondary school education. But regardless of their academic ability, we can strive to develop each student into a confident person, a self-directed learner, an

active contributor and concerned citizen. This is the core curriculum for all students. We want them to be literate in global, cross-cultural and civic issues. We want them to think critically, seek information independently and communicate skillfully. These are skills that will last a lifetime.

4. I am glad that Manjusri values this mission of education for all its students. The school has been awarded Silver for Academic Value-Add for three years in a row for the Express stream. At the same time, it has also received the Sustained Achievement Award for Uniformed Groups and for Aesthetics in 2008 and 2009 respectively. Manjusri is also a niche programme school for Wushu.

5. In tandem with its academic programme, the school offers an Arts Exposure programme to expose all lower secondary students to introductory modules on Wushu, Dance, Chinese Percussion, Digital Music Improvisation, and Speech and Drama. All students will therefore have the chance to discover new talents and interests and then further develop them in the various CCAs.

6. In fact, some students with little or no background in their CCAs prior to Manjusri, have gone on to represent the school and even the nation in various competitions. Goh Qiu Bin was one such student. He started learning Wushu only when he enrolled in Mansjuri, but has since gone on to become the Sportsman of the Year in 2006 and a three-time Taiji Gold medalist at the South-East Asian Games. I am happy to learn that Qiu Bin now gives back to his alma mater as a Taiji coach of the Wushu team here.

7. There are also students who began at Manjusri with modest PSLE results, but who have gone on to graduate with excellent results. One such student is Leonard Loh Wei Leong, an EM3 student who joined Manjusri in the Normal (Academic) stream. With the support of his parents and teachers, and his own determination and hard work, Leonard graduated with four A1s and one A2 in the O Levels. He was also a Station Inspector of the National Police Cadet Corps (NPCC) and a winner of the Singapore Police Force (SPF)-NPCC award, a pinnacle award for NPCC cadets.

Developing Socially-Responsible Students

8. I am glad that Manjusri aspires to cultivate in students not just a passion for learning but also a commitment to serve. Dr. Ken Ong Kian Pin is one such Manjusrian who has emerged with both a successful professional career and an excellent record of contribution to society. Ken graduated from the University of Edinburgh with a PhD in Engineering and Electronics, and had been awarded the Gold Award under the National Youth Achievement Award Scheme for his work with youths. Today he continues to serve the youth community and is an active member of the National Youth Council. We want more young Singaporeans to follow in Dr Ong's footsteps.

Ensuring Social Harmony

9. I am heartened to see that Manjusri, though religiously-affiliated, has extended its duty of care to nurturing all students regardless of ethnicity, religion, or background. Manjusri may have begun as a homogenous Chinese school, but in recent years more and more non-Chinese have opted to join the school. I even see non-Chinese

students doing well in Wushu, a sport that many would have thought was confined to Chinese students. These are good signs.

10. I am happy to hear Venerable Sik Kwang Sheng's announcement of the SBF-Manjusri Merit Scholarship, which will incentivise primary school leavers with good PSLE scores to pursue their secondary school studies in Manjusri.

Conclusion

11. In conclusion, I would like to highlight Manjusri's school motto: 'Knowledge', 'Conduct', 'Benevolence' and 'Aspirations', all of which complement MOE's focus to develop 21st century competencies for our students. May this Motto continue to guide the school's progress to greater heights.

12. Let me once more congratulate the school on the official opening of its new campus. I am confident that Manjusri Secondary School will continue to play an important part in the education of young people.

13. It is now my pleasure to declare the new campus of Manjusri
Secondary School open.

Thank you.

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