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SPEECH BY MR. YATIMAN YUSOF, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY (INFORMATION AND THE ARTS) AND MP FOR TAMPINES GRC, AT THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE TEMASEK POLYTECHNIC MALAY CULTURAL WEEK AT TEMASEK POLYTECHNIC ON

WEDNESDAY 13 OCT 99 AT 5.15 PM

Thank you for inviting me to the closing ceremony of your Malay Cultural Week.

I am told that during the week, Temasek Polytechnic students were given the rare opportunities of viewing and participating in a number of cultural items put up by your Malay Cultural Society. It is indeed a refreshing experience for many, including myself, to see the growing interest in arts and culture shown by our young people.

Cultural development in any country depends on the close co-operation between the government and the people, especially the arts community. The government can use its financial resources to build the necessary infrastructures such as theatres, opera houses, arts houses, museums and arts institutions. But its success hinges to a greater extent on the readiness of its people to give new life to our various cultural forms by adding their own new ideas and experience. Whether it is the visual or performing arts such as paintings, sculptures, music, theatre and dances, or in film-making and installation arts, their future development relies on the kind of support and enthusiasm shown by the practitioners and audiences.

The input that comes from fresh ideas would not only help to sustain the

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interest in these fields but also provides a new momentum for a more creative expression.

The involvement of young people who are exposed to modern techniques, materials and ideas, is crucial in creating a vibrant, cultural and artistic life in our country. Polytechnic students are a special breed. Through your training in multi-media communication and other fields, you will be able to add value to various cultural forms and items that you produce. Such value-added input could give a new life and meaning which later could be shared by the public at large.

Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci stand as the gems to the creative world because of their multiple ability and scientific touch that they left on their artistic creations. They lived truly as great pioneers in applying innovation to their creative works. Such work had left lifelong impact on the cultural life of many people worldwide and they are being held as the epitome of artistic excellence.

We could learn from many such great pioneers and encourage our talented young people to use their knowledge, skill and training to create something that would live beyond their lifetime and in doing so, help to build an excellent cultural and artistic tradition for Singapore.

As Singapore moves ahead, we will be using our economic success as a springboard to bring our society into the creative milieu of our life. In doing so, we will help to build a renaissance city. But to achieve this, there is a real need for young, able and creative people to come forward collectively to help achieve this laudable objective.

Temasek Polytechnic is in a position to play such role. You can develop your home grown talents within Temasek Polytechnic and later enable them to bloom through further specialised training provided for under the various schemes offered by institutions such as LaSalle College of the Arts and Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts or expose them through training abroad. In doing so, you are participating in a meaningful role of transforming Singapore into a culturally and artistically vibrant nation.

On this note, I would like to congratulate the Malay Culturally Society for their fine effort and wish that you will assume the effort of promoting the arts and culture unceasingly and vigorously for years to come.

Thank you.