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SPEECH BY MR A RAHIM ISHAK, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR
FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE ADVISORY
COMMITTEE OF THE TEMASEK JUNIOR COLLEGE ON FRIDAY,
24 FEBRUARY '78 AT 7.00 PM AT THE COLLEGE AUDITORIUM

Tonight I would like to share a postulation with you. I believe that civic consciousness and the willingness to be of service to others in the society are two ingrained characteristics among Asian cultures and people. Perhaps this is an outgrowth of the common concept in Asian cultures of the extended family and our responsibilities towards it. The idea of 'gotong royong' is a reflection of this development. Asian history has recorded the works of many charitable souls who have sacrificed their personal time and energies for the benefit of their fellowmen, indeed of mankind as a whole. Among others, there were Confucius, Gandhi and Rizal.

The social milieu has changed since the lifetimes of these historic figures. This is especially so in Singapore which has grown from a mere trading post to a highly urbanised and industrialised society. It has become more crowded with a growing proportion of our population housed in high-rise public flats. Our children are growing up with the benefit of scientific discoveries and innovations. Culturally we are also bombarded through the cinema, TV and magazines with western concepts and values. Inevitably, this would pose as a challenge to the Asian values and mental make-up which we inherit from our forefathers including the positive characteristics associated with the concept of the cohesive family.

I mentioned earlier that civic consciousness and the willingness to be of service to others in society are two ingrained characteristics which had grown out of the concept of the extended family. Since they are ingrained, there is a need to prevent any erosion by the intrusion of negative western cultural values. At

the same time we should also make efforts to cultivate the fruition those positive but gradually germinating characteristics. The participation of those of you in our Schools' Advisory Committee is a good case in point. There are at the moment 279 such committees in Singapore. It is based on the premise that the proper and efficient running of our schools could benefit from the assistance that could be rendered by the public in general. School principals and the teaching staff can, with the help of the Schools' Advisory Committees, support and enhance the activities of the students. Many of them have helped in organising excursions, tuition and food schemes as well as the payment of examination fees. Such activities are highly commendable and I am sure the members who are to be installed as members of the Advisory Committee for the Temasek Junior College will faithfully and diligently fulfil their roles.

With growing affluence and increasing hours of leisure in Singapore, more and more of us will have the time and the energy to devote and sacrifice for the benefit of others who are perhaps less fortunate and less capable. Members of the Schools' Advisory Committees have set good examples and I am hopeful that others will join you in contributing to the general welfare of our fellow citizens.

I wish to congratulate the Chairman and members of the Temasek Junior College Advisory Committee on their appointments and thank you for inviting me to your function tonight.

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