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SPEECH BY DR SEET AI MEE, MINISTER OF STATE (COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT) AND (EDUCATION), ON THE OCCASION OF HWA CHONG JUNIOR COLLEGE 15TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER AT WESTIN STAMFORD BALLROOM ON SATURDAY, 12 AUGUST 1989 AT 7.30 PM

I am pleased to share this reunion dinner with you tonight to celebrate the 15th Anniversary of Hwa Chong Junior College.

I stand here as one who has associations with Hwa Chong through both my two children, one of whom has passed through your gates. In one sense, I, with my two children, have journeyed with you in the last three years of dislocation from your Bukit Timah campus, to Woodlands, and now to your present Bukit Batok campus.

I recognise that that was a difficult time in the life of the college, and I am really proud to note the dedication and additional hard work put in by the principals, staff and students during the period when you are without a permanent home, to maintain the high standard which is the hallmark of Hwa Chong.

You have proved beyond doubt that it is possible to thrive in adversity, and I take this opportunity to commend your efforts in these last three years.

In spite of these setbacks, Hwa Chong has continued to excel academically, as well as in sports and extra-curricular activities.

Last evening my Ministry announced the official introduction of a Language Elective Programme (LEP) beginning January 1990 which will be available at two junior colleges, Hwa Chong and Temasek. Students in the LEP will have a wide range of enrichment activities to help them acquire creative writing skills as well as stimulate in them a greater interest in Chinese culture and literature. They will offer Chinese at CL1 level at the GEC 'A' level exams.

Hwa Chong's forte in effective bilingualism and her close and abiding attachment to her cultural roots will surely provide a conducive and enriching environment for students with outstanding flair and ability in the Chinese language.

The college is, I know, very proud to inaugurate this new scheme and deeply conscious of the responsibility placed upon its shoulders. I am confident that the college, with the experience drawn from your 10-year old Humanities programme, will build up this parallel programme and support it with zeal and enthusiasm.

In the last 15 years Hwa Chong Junior College has developed a shared ethos, a sense of tradition and a secure identity built on the firm foundation of achievements in academic work, sports and extra-curricular activities.

Today Hwa Chong faces a new challenge, a challenge which will draw upon all it has built up so far. Plans are on-stream to re-develop the Bukit Timah campus. While the Ministry of Education has pledged 80 per cent of cost of standard facilities for the project, the College itself has to raise a further \$7 million. The raising of \$7 million dollars is surely no small undertaking, and will require the dedicated and generous support of everyone who feels a sense of commitment to the future of the college.

There are two ways in which the college can view this immense fund-raising project - either as a burdensome millstone round her neck, or as a challenge to rally the support of all those who acknowledge their ties with the college.

In this respect, the college and my Ministry is grateful to the Chinese business community for its unstinting support and concern for the college throughout the last 15 years and for its solid support of the fund-raising.

I believe, also, that the ethos and spirit of Hwa Chong goes beyond the Chinese community to encompass the thousands of students who have gone through her gates in the last 15 years, and who have now taken up positions of responsibility in society.

As the Chinese would say: 飲水思源

- which, directly translated, means "when you drink water, think of its source." I am sure the alumni remember with gratitude how they were nurtured by the college in mind and in spirit, the opportunities they received for scholastic excellence, for building up leadership qualities and moulding of character, and how greatly they have benefitted from it.

I believe that this is an opportune time to arouse among the alumni, their sense of belonging to, and pride in, the achievements of Hwa Chong, and, to stir up in them a spirit of giving to the Building Fund. The sense of camaraderie with and belonging to the college would be further strengthened through their involvement in the re-development of the fondly remembered campus, that home away from home, whose gates through which they have passed.

The indomitable Hwa Chong spirit will continue to be built up as the alumni are continually involved in the activities of the college, even after the re-development of the campus.

The return to the Bukit Timah campus will be a happy and auspicious occasion, a good time, perhaps, for another reunion dinner such as tonight's. Meanwhile, I am sure that I speak not only for myself, but for everyone present this evening when I offer the college, its staff and students, my very best wishes for the future.

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