

SPEECH OF MR CHUA SIAN CHIN, MINISTER FOR HEALTH
& HOME AFFAIRS, AT THE 42ND ANNIVERSARY DINNER
OF THE CHEE YANG (CHUA SI) KONG HUAY ASSOCIATION
AT 38, AMBER ROAD ON SUNDAY, 17 DECEMBER 1972 AT 7.45 P.M.

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The last time I addressed a gathering of the Chee Yang (Chua Si) Association was when I officiated at the Official Opening of the Association's premises here in Amber Road. That was on the 1st of January, 1969. At that time we were faced with the problems of the accelerated British troop withdrawal. We had to quickly build up our own defence forces with national service as well as solve the resulting unemployment problem.

Nearly 4 years have passed and we can safely say now that we have successfully solved these problems which at that time appeared quite insurmountable. For this year 1972 we can expect our rate of economic growth to be as high as that of last year. Our own defence capability has now reached a level which is in the position to make no small contribution to any defence arrangement. All this do give us cause for celebrations. It therefore gives me much pleasure to be with you tonight to celebrate our Association's 42nd Anniversary.

The challenges that face us now are quite different. Our rapid economic development and the modernising process have brought in their train new problems. Together with the modern technologies of the West have also come some undesirable influences and life attitudes from the West.

On the social plane, there is a trend on the part of some of our youths to imitate the permissive life styles of the West resulting in a growing drug and "long-hair" problem. With the breakup of the family unit filial bonds have weakened. We now face the increasing problem of the care of the aged because their

children have disclaimed responsibility to care for them.

On the economic level we can see that some of our young people are beginning to adopt the consumption orientated attitudes of the West. They spend whatever they earn and do not save. This is indeed a far cry from the attitude of our fore-fathers who built Singapore into what it is to-day by sheer thrift and hard work. Worse still there are some who spend more than they earn as many do in Western countries by way of hire purchase and credit cards. It is obvious that if these life styles are allowed to become widespread in Singapore, the result will be certain disaster. As a young nation with a developing economy we cannot afford such pernicious influences to distract us from our goal of building a strong and viable nation.

As a counter-measure to this tendency towards a consumption orientated economy the Government has been increasing C.P.F. contributions with every wage rise. This is not only to ensure that our workers will have savings so that they can own their own flats but also to minimise inflation.

However, Singapore being what it is, it is not possible to isolate it from outside influences. The only way is to immunise our population from any deleterious influence coming from outside. To succeed in so doing we must at all cost preserve our cultural ballast. Every Singaporean of whatever race must be deeply rooted in his own cultural tradition. Whatever new technologies, scientific knowledge and worthwhile values we learn and adopt from the West we must never forget our own cultural identity and heritage.

The clan organisation is one of the old institutions which we inherit from our fore-fathers. It was a most useful institution

when our fore-fathers were immigrant settlers in this part of the world. In those early days when there was very little law and order mutual help and protection amongst clansmen was most essential and clan loyalties were very strong. Circumstances have now changed. There is therefore a need to re-orientate the work of the clan organisation to cater for present-day needs. Our clan organisation can now do a most useful service in the field of mutual aid whereby the members can do their bit to help the needy, the aged and the sick, not only amongst fellow clansmen but also to those who need such help outside. Thus our cultural heritage is not only being preserved but is also put to good use in our present-day society.

Finally, I would like to thank you for inviting me and my fellow Members of Parliament as guests of honour to this dinner. May I also wish you all success and prosperity in the coming year.
