

PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY MR LEE KHOON CHOY, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE (PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE) AND PRESIDENT OF THE SINGAPORE MARTIAL ARTS INSTRUCTORS' ASSOCIATION AT THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE SINGAPORE MARTIAL ARTS INSTRUCTORS' ASSOCIATION AT THE SOUTHERN THEATRE RESTAURANT AND NITE-CLUB, UIC BUILDING, ON WEDNESDAY, 25 AUGUST 1982 AT 8.00 PM

The Singapore Martial Arts Instructors' Association was organised three years ago with the purpose of bringing together all forms of martial arts in Asia and to promote them. It is not for the personal glory of any single individual to undertake this task, for it is a difficult one. This task is difficult because at the present moment, most people who learn the martial arts are still inward looking. They keep a closed mind and identify themselves to a certain form of martial art - be it Tae kwan do, Hup ki-do, or Tan So-do of the Korean type; the Aiki-do, Karate or Judo of the Japanese style; or Chinese Kungfu and Malay Bersilat. They are loyal to a particular school and the instructors do not encourage their students to learn other forms of martial art.

How to break this monopolistic tendency of the instructors, and how to make the students more open-minded, is the most important and difficult task facing the organisers of this Association.

We are a new nation. All the forms of martial arts, except for bersilat, have originated from abroad. In other words, all martial arts are imported. We have the advantage of all the rich resources and wisdoms of so many countries at our disposal. We can take advantage of them only if we have an open mind. By open mind, I mean learning from each other the technics of martial arts, for no martial art is perfect. Some may be good in leg work and others may be better in the use of fists and arms. The idea of getting together is to learn from one another.

I hear/2.

I hear that during the first year, the Association was rather enthusiastic. It has organised classes of mutual appreciation for each other's martial art technics and the students have tried to fight each other with their different technics. But, the enthusiasm somehow die off, and in the whole of last year, not a single mutual appreciation class was organised. Only the leaders met from time to time.

It is time to sit down to reflect the work of the organisation. Has the Association set out to do the things they should be doing? If not, some measures must be taken to rectify them.

I think it is time for the instructors to start giving special courses in Hup ki-do, Tae kwan do, Tan so-do, Judo, Aikido, Karate, Tai-chi or Bersilat in the Association or wherever is more convenient so that students from all forms of martial arts have the opportunity to learn. If the students can learn all the various forms of martial arts, they will definitely have the advantage over those who know only one form of martial art. Gradually, Singapore martial arts students who have mastered the various forms of arts will evolve their own form of martial art. It will take a long time but a Singapore form of martial art will emerge, perhaps better than the other forms of martial arts because it has taken the advantage of the best forms of martial arts in Asia. But, we must not be in a hurry to artificially force the pace by creating something new rightaway.

The Association should concentrate its energy in providing more training clinics or cross breeding sessions for the students of instructors from the various streams. Let them learn from each other, and exchange their experiences. This is the whole aim and purpose of the Association, not in setting up a new premises or other gigantic projects. There is no time for personal glory and the Association must set its priority right. Otherwise it will be a waste of time and the Association is not doing the things it ought to do.

This is my humble advice. I wish the Association will grow in strength and will succeed in the aims it has set out to do.

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