

Singapore Government

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SPEECH BY MR PHUA BAH LEE, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY
SECRETARY (DEFENCE), AT THE 45TH ANNIVERSARY OF
CHUNG CHENG HIGH SCHOOL AT THE SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
ON SATURDAY, 14 JULY 1984 AT 10.00 AM

Chung Cheng High School is having its Annual Speech Day and celebrates its 45th Anniversary today. I feel greatly honoured to be invited to join you in your celebrations, and be given the opportunity to address you on this auspicious occasion.

It is heartening to note that Chung Cheng High School has, in the last two years, made good progress in its academic endeavours. In the 1983 Singapore Cambridge GCE 'O' level examination, Chung Cheng High School did very well. It attained 98.11% for 3 'O' level passes and ranked among the top 20 schools in terms of 5 'O' level passes. That this is possible is obviously due to a combination of factors among which are the generous support rendered by the Ministry of Education and the School Management Committee, the judicious guidance of the Principal, the dedication of the teachers and the pupils' spirit of striving for good performance. It is my hope that the staff and pupils of Chung Cheng High School will not become complacent with what they have achieved so far but will continue to strive for even more remarkable achievements.

Although Singapore is a small nation with no natural resources, it has over the years developed into the economic and financial hub in the South East Asian region. That it has attained such a status in spite of its size and lack of resources is ascribed to the importance our Government attaches to the education of our people, the only resource we possess. Also, because of its geographical position and

political reality, we cannot afford to be chauvinistic about our own cultures and languages. While we must retain and foster what is good and relevant in our heritage, we must be prepared to discard what is irrelevant and, at the same time, absorb values and knowledge that can help us to build up our national entity, even if they are not indigenous to us. We have adopted a policy of bilingualism in education because it is pragmatic to make Singaporeans learn their mother tongue and English. A knowledge of English will make for easy accessibility to the great wealth of advance technology and management expertise available in the West. This will keep us in pace with the world's progress and bring about a higher standard of living for our people. However, in our quest for advanced technology and knowledge, we may inadvertently let undesirable Western social values such as permissive life styles and decadent mores to slip into our midst. To prevent these pernicious elements from taking root in our society, the best way is to preserve and strengthen our own time-honoured traditions and values inherent in our cultures.

Chung Cheng High School, with its good traditions and conducive learning environment, is one of the nine Chinese-medium secondary schools which have been selected by the Ministry of Education to help fulfil these objectives. With the good teaching-learning facilities and the good primary 6 pupil intake from both the Chinese and the English streams that the school receives, I am sure that Chung Cheng High School will succeed in preparing the pupils to be effectively bilingual and imbuing them with good oriental virtues and traditions. Needless to say, the latter task is to be achieved through the Chinese language lessons the pupils learn in school. The pivotal role the Chinese language teachers will have to play cannot be over-emphasized. Traditionally, the Chinese language teachers

are dedicated and hard-working. I am sure with new teaching materials and methods, not only will teachers find their task fulfilled more effectively but also pupils will find learning Chinese a more interesting and appealing experience.

Finally, I like to congratulate the prize winners on their achievements. Their diligence has certainly borne fruit. I also hope that other pupils will emulate the good example set by these prize-winners and that the School Management Committee and parents will continue to give their full support and encouragement to Chung Cheng High School.

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