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SPEECH BY MR TEO CHONG TEE, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
(ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS), AT THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY
DINNER AND DANCE OF THE SINGAPORE JUDO FEDERATION
AT THE JADE ROOM RESTAURANT, HOTEL ROYAL RAMADA
ON FRIDAY, 7 DECEMBER 1984 AT 8.00 PM.

I would like to thank the Singapore Judo Federation (SJF) for inviting me to this auspicious function tonight. I would also like to congratulate SJF for its relentless efforts in promoting judo in Singapore in the last 30 years.

Judo is both an art and a science. As an art form, it enables the practitioner to arrive at self-realisation and true self-expression. The scientific component of judo involves the mastery of various laws of nature: gravity, friction, momentum, velocity and weight transmission. In addition to this, the judo exponent is a master in self-discipline and has a strong sense of morality and righteousness. Thus, the learning of judo not only gives one good health, but also self-confidence, alertness and tranquillity.

As with all other martial arts, judo requires the learner and practitioner to observe a strict code of safety and discipline. In practice or competition, each judoka is responsible for the safety and well-being of all the other judokas. The higher the rank and greater the skill of a judo practitioner, the greater is his responsibility for the safety of all others practising the sport. This strong sense of responsibility for the safety of others, coupled with the equally strong emphasis on gentleness and politeness makes a judoist a cultured and a well-balanced person.

The SJP is among the more active National Sports Associations in Singapore. From a humble following of 34 in 1954, there are now more than 5,000 judo practitioners. The Singapore judokas have also done Singapore proud in the SEAP/SEA Games. They have so far collected 19 gold medals to their credit from the Games. In order to gain more international experience, the SJP also sent participants to the Olympic Games in Tokyo and Montreal.

The average annual growth rate of judoists in Singapore has been an impressive 500 per cent in the last 30 years. However, in absolute terms, the number of judoists in Singapore is still rather small. It only constitutes 0.4 per cent of the population in the active age range of 10 to 34 years. In line with the government's policy to encourage more people to participate in sports and games as a means to acquire physical and mental fitness, the SJP should draw up a long term plan and map our relevant strategies to further promote the sport.

Two most obvious target groups for the SJP are the school children and members of the uniformed groups. Currently, only 1,000 school children or 0.2 per cent of the total primary and secondary school population are learning judo. If the SJP aims at winning over say five per cent of the total school population in the next 10 years, there would be 22,643 school children participating in the sport by 1994. With good leadership, correct strategy and the right approach, this target is not beyond reach.

Self defence is an essential training for members of the Police Force and the Armed Forces. Being the doyen of the martial arts in Singapore, judo enjoys an advantage

over the others. yet, it does not seem to command a wide following in these Forces as well. The Management Committee of the SJF may wish to take a closer look at the promotion of judo in the Forces jointly with the officers of the Force. The problems of lack of interest should be identified and solutions found. I believe the availability of a pool of good and dedicated instructors is a key factor in the promotion of any sports.

The community centres offer ideal venues for any community-based activities. Besides their strategic locations in the midst of population centres, the new generation community centres are also well-equipped and well-patronised. The SJF may want to explore with the People's Association to popularise judo among the general public.

To achieve what I have outlined will no doubt keep the SJF busy in the years ahead. It is my sincere wish that it achieves the same rate of success as it had done in the past.

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