

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY DR TAY ENG SOON, MINISTER OF STATE (EDUCATION),
AT THE ENG YONG TONG TAY SI ASSOCIATION'S SCHOLARSHIP
PRESENTATION CEREMONY AT THE TANJONG PAGAR COMMUNITY CENTRE
ON TUESDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 1987 AT 7.30 PM

I am very pleased to be present at tonight's dinner and to officiate at your Association's 15th scholarship presentation.

The tradition of awarding scholarships by clan associations goes back many years. It was the practice in China even before our forefathers came to Singapore. The tradition has continued to the present time.

This encouragement given to education and scholarship is the driving force which has raised our people to the present level. The vast majority of our people who came from South China were poor peasants with little education. Progress would have been very slow if they did not have the thirst for education and self-improvement. But because they had the drive, their children obtained an education. Their children's children went further, some obtaining degrees from the top universities of the West.

Today, because of the drive for education, over 86 per cent of our people are literate. This figure will reach 90 per cent and beyond before the end of this century. The fact that ours will become a very well educated and trained society will have profound effects on our further development as a nation.

I hope that your association together with other clan associations will continue to support education. Recently, the Government announced that schools with a proper scheme will be allowed to build up an Endowment Fund. Donations to this fund will be tax deductible. The Government will match the donation's dollar for dollar up to the first million. These Endowment Funds will be used by schools to help needy students, among other things. The Endowment Fund scheme will give organisations such as the clan associations an opportunity to contribute further to education.

May I conclude on that note and wish your association success in the years ahead.

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