

**SPEECH BY NUSS PRESIDENT MR EDDIE LEE
NUSS LO HEI DINNER
MANDALAY GUILD HOUSE
11 FEBRUARY 2019, MONDAY**

Emeritus Senior Minister & NUSS Honorary Member, Mr Goh Chok Tong

NUS Pro-Chancellor, Dr Chan Sek Keong

Chairman, NUS Board of Trustees, Mr Hsieh Fu Hua

NUS President, Professor Tan Eng Chye

NUSS Honorary Member, Mr Wong Ngit Liong

NUS Senior Management

Deans, Rectors, Hall Masters & Directors

NUSS Past Presidents

Fellow MC members

Ladies and Gentlemen

Happy and Prosperous Chinese New Year , Xin Nian Kuai Ler,

May you and your family enjoy good health and good fortune in the new year.

Welcome to Mandalay Guild House. When I first told a member that we will be having a new guild house at Mandalay and ask whether she could help in setting up a community garden, she said: "No problem but would you be paying for my air ticket and accommodation?" She thought that our guild house is in Myanmar; that will be Bernard's department, setting up overseas chapters and NUSS would be happy to collaborate.

We had a soft opening last Friday, with the traditional lion dance, for good luck.

Today is an auspicious day. It is the 7th day of the new year, and everyone's birthday.

MC members and I thank you for honouring us with your presence and gracing the occasion this evening and your kind compliments.

The Guild house is not fully completed. The children playground, fitness corner and community garden will be ready next month.

At the entrance, there are four signboards; three indicate the names of MC members, past presidents, honorary members and advisory panel.

The fourth signboard state the Society's mission statement, which is to foster a lifelong relationship with our alma mater and to promote its interest and development.

In line with this objective, we have continued to support the NUS through a variety of programmes and projects undertaken last year.

One such initiative is the **NUSS-NUS Mentorship Programme**, which was first introduced in 2012 and currently going strong. The programme provides opportunities for undergraduates to seek advice and learn from NUSS members with regards to post graduation opportunities and possibilities.

This programme has been growing steadily and expanded its reach further in 2018 to include NUSS' Junior Category B undergraduate members as well as scholarship holders in their 3rd year and above.

Last July, the Society organised the **32nd NUSS Golf Annual Charity** in honour of Prof Tan Chorh Chuan which raised over \$500,000 for an endowed student support fund aimed at assisting financially challenged NUS students. This is in addition to the Society pledge of \$250,000 to help the needy students, which we will present this evening.

NUSS has also given our support in the annual **NUS Day of Service**. Last September, 40 volunteers – consisting of NUSS members and staff spent their Saturday morning accompanying underprivileged families to the supermarket, where each family was given some money to spend on groceries.

The **NUSS-YSTCM Music Appreciation Series: Beyond the Score** is an initiative between NUSS and the NUS Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music that aims to provide participants an insight into the art of music appreciation and an avenue for intellectual discourse. Each series has been well-received by members and guests alike. At the most recent edition, Ms Adriana Chiew and Mr Gabriel Hoe – two soon-to-be graduates of the conservatory, performed a stirring programme of classic works by famous 20th century composers at our Suntec City Guild House.

In recognition of the NUS' student leaders' efforts and contributions, NUSS also extended a complimentary one-year Junior Membership for them to use our Guild Houses. In addition, we organised a post-exam party for the NUS Student Union Council for them to de-stress and let their hair down.

In 1996, the **NUSS Professorship Lecture** was established, with an endowment of \$1.5 million to fund talks by renowned visiting professors both locally and overseas. This is part of NUSS' efforts to develop meaningful partnerships with our alma mater through academic pursuits. Over the years, we had the honour to invite and host several eminent visiting professors who were willing to share their knowledge and expertise with us. This evening, we are happy to have, **Professor Lim Chwee Teck, inaugural NUS Society (NUSS) Professor** at the Department of Biomedical Engineering, Founding Principal Investigator of the Mechanobiology Institute and Director of BIGHEART at NUS, join us.

We are pleased to have **Dr Gillian Koh, Deputy Director (Research) at the Institute of Policy Studies, NUS** as our editor of the past three editions of the **NUSS Commentary**. This annual publication focuses on hot topics close to the hearts of Singaporeans. Our latest publication, Commentary Volume 27, titled "SGP 4.0: An Agenda", comprises of a collection of articles written by thought-leaders and academics on our nation's era of change, as Singapore's Prime Minister, Lee Hsien Loong builds up what is termed as "the fourth generation" or 4G Leaders. The volume features valuable views and discussions by contributors and sheds light on the possible challenges and opportunities these 4G leaders and our citizens might face. Two of its articles have been featured in the Straits Times already. You may pick up a copy of the Commentary outside this room or read it online at our website.

For the previous edition, *The Little Nation That Can: Singapore's Foreign Relations and Diplomacy*, which was also edited by Gillian, Prof Tommy Koh has been giving copies out at his talks and to guests whom he meets at the Civil Service College and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and he continues to ask for copies.

Over lunch last year with Board of Trustees Chairman, Mr Hsieh Fu Hua, we discussed how the Society could further align itself with NUS through lifelong learning. The NUSS Active-Ageing and Lifelong Learning Sub-Committee has been very proactive in promoting meaningful and active engagement among NUSS members aged 50 years and above. One highly successful initiative is through the series of short courses conducted in collaboration with the Council for Third Age (C3A) and the National Silver Academy. Its first run was in the second half of 2017, and after two years, we are currently in our fourth round. In the first three runs, we have successfully run 51 short courses to members and public. We also welcome the School of Continuing and Lifelong Education to conduct its LLL courses at the function rooms here in Mandalay. *[Prof Susanna Leong, Vice-Provost (Lifelong Education) is in the audience].*

Mr Hsieh and I also discussed developing entrepreneurship within ASEAN. I'm glad to share that our **Business Connect Section** was formed last year, with the objective of allowing NUSS members to gain new insight into the emerging markets through first-hand engagement with government, industry and emerging leaders within the region.

Through this Section, our members have increased opportunities to develop new business contacts and know-how to establish businesses in the region. Since its inception, the Section has travelled to 4 cities, Phnom Penh, Bangkok, Hanoi & Manila for business mission trips. Perhaps, in time to come, we could invite a few NUS final year students to join us as part of their learning experience before they step into the working world.

We are pleased to be able to support our alma mater and the wider graduate community through the various initiatives and hope that in the New Year ahead, we will be able to continue expanding and deepening our connections with the NUS Community. We look forward to new opportunities and connections the Year of the Pig will bring!

I hope that all of you will have an enjoyable evening tonight. And I would like to propose a toast.

The first toast is to the Republic of Singapore, for continued prosperity and stability.

The second toast is to our Alma Mater, NUS to continue to be a world class university attracting the best brains and producing outstanding and brilliant students.

The third toast is for NUSS, to continue to grow in number and stature and fulfil our mission to our alma mater.

Thank you.