

**SPEECH BY GUEST-OF-HONOUR
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR KOO TSAI KEE, MINISTER-OF-STATE
FOR DEFENCE AND CO-CHAIRMAN FOR SINGAPORE-SICHUAN
TRADE AND INVESTMENT COMMITTEE AT THE
OFFICIAL OPENING OF
“*MYSTERY MEN FINDS FROM CHINA’S LOST AGE*”
ON 15 JANUARY 2007 AT 7.00PM
AT THE ASIAN CIVILISATIONS MUSEUM**

Mr Xu Rong Xuan, Deputy CEO, Sichuan Province Cultural Department and
CEO for Cultural Relics Bureau, Sichuan

Professor Tommy Koh, Chairman, National Heritage Board

Mr Michael Koh, CEO, National Heritage Board

Ms Priscylla Shaw, Chairman, Asian Civilisations Museum

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening,

1. I am happy to be here today to officiate the opening of the “Mystery Men: Finds From China’s Lost Age” Special Exhibition, jointly organised by the Asian Civilisations Museum and the Cultural Relics Bureau, Sichuan.

Singapore-Sichuan Trade and Investment Committee (SSTIC)

2. The strong and long-standing friendship between Singapore and Sichuan has come a long way. A decade ago back in 1996, with the aim to

promote greater economic and trade co-operation between Singapore and Sichuan, the Singapore-Sichuan Trade and Investment Committee (SSTIC) was formed.

3. Over the past 10 years, the SSTIC has played an active role in encouraging and helping Singapore companies to go regional and explore new business opportunities in Sichuan. In recent years, Chengdu's plans to develop into a modern service hub has opened new window of opportunities for Singapore companies to capitalise on this new growth sector. More Singapore companies are now exploring opportunities in Sichuan, from the management of industrial parks, township development, retailing, education, services, healthcare, infocomms to environment services.
4. It is indeed heartening for me to see that the strategic intent set to promote greater economic and trade co-operation for a start has not only helped established many win-win economic partnerships, it has also extended beyond the trade industry into the tourism industry. Singapore and Sichuan has established yet another new partnership to jointly develop the tourism industry in Chengdu announced in 2005.

Singapore-Sichuan Bilateral Relationship: From Economic To Cultural

5. Today, the “Mystery Men” Special Exhibition marks another new significant aspect to strengthen the relationship Singapore and Sichuan in the cultural realm. At the 6th SSTIC meeting in 2002, the Asian Civilisations Museum signed a memorandum of intent with the Sichuan Sanxingdui Museum to jointly organise a major exhibition on artefacts excavated in Sanxingdui.

6. The discovery of over 4,000 artefacts dating to the 13th to 11th century BCE (Before Common Era) in two sacrificial pits in Sanxingdui revealed an early Chinese civilisation. These rare finds offer us a new perspective on Chinese history that lies in the Sichuan basin.

7. I am delighted to know that Singapore is the first in Southeast Asia to show these extraordinary artefacts and showcasing some artefacts that are exhibiting outside China for the first time.

8. This exhibition is a step further to promote cultural exchanges between Singapore and China. I believe that Singaporeans and tourists will benefit from a deeper understanding of rich Asian cultures. It will also help them to better appreciate the important cultural attributes that make up Singapore's multi-ethnic society and their link to Asia and the world.

9. It now gives me great pleasure to declare the exhibition open.

10. Thank you.