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EXCELLENT CHARACTERISTICS ARE OFTENTIMES SPOKEN BY MORALLY EDUCATED ASEAN COMMUNITIES

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Abstract

Six Pillars of excellent characteristic are *Trustworthiness, Fairness, Caring, Respect, Citizenship, and Responsibility . Character/moral education in ASEAN is run from pre-school to university. It has also been conducted and become an integrated part of the education system. Excellent characteristic determines someone's private thoughts and someone's actions done. The very good characteristic is the inward motivation to do what is right, according to the highest standard of behavior, in every situation". The example of excellent character with which Allâh, the Exalted, has equipped his Messenger.*

A. Introduction.

Character education that is as a concept of education that instills character involving aspects of knowledge cognitive, feeling, and action is a solution to improve the good characters and morals of society . Practically, character education is a system of planting the values of kindness in dealing with God, fellow man, and the environment. The formation and development of excellent character through education is expected to have a positive impact for both the personal individu and for the environment .

Personal character is character or personality that is formed from the internalization of various virtues which are believed to be used as the basis for perspective, think, behave, and act (the Ministry of National Education (2010)[1]. Terminology character contains at least two things. They are the values and personality. As a reflection of the whole personality, the characte is based on the values which are adopted by individuals. Excellent character is also a dynamic state of human anthropological structure that is unique and different as a result of the integration of heart though, mind, spirit, feeling and intention as a congenital condition that is accompanied by efforts toward self-improvement in communities.

One of scientists has ever said that "Character determines someone's private thoughts and someone's actions done. Good character is the inward motivation to do what is right, according to the highest standard of behavior, in every situation" (Hill, 2002)[2]. When a student's talents are discovered and cultivated, the overall quality of life in the community improves. Education nurtures tolerance and breeds culture. An educated community embraces diversity, values progress and harbors an appreciation for the arts and sensitivity for the environment.

In some countries, such as China, the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, etc., the education of excellent characters has been spoken, taught, and discussed as a priority since the primary education began. In Indonesia, excellent character education has been fully considered and integrated with the formal education system. In some countries, excellent character education has also been conducted and become an integrated part of the education system since the early stage.

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[1] Mendiknas. UU. 2013. P. 03.

[2] Hill, T.A., 2005. Character First! Kimray Inc., http://www.charactercities.org/ downloads/ publications/Whatischaracter.

Excellent character education program has been a prominent activity in China that is run from pre-school to university. Li Lanqing, a Chinese politician and bureaucrat who has a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the education system emphasized the danger of too much emphasis on rote (drilling) education, and rigid ways of teaching, including the education system that is oriented only to pass the test. As a result, a relatively new chinese wake of the economic, social, cultural and run by the cultural revolution by Mao. He can so quickly catch up and become a developed country. President Jiang Zemin himself has ever collected all the special Politburo members to discuss how to reduce the burden of student learning through the adoption of a system of education that is age appropriate and fun, and the development of all aspects of the human dimension ; aspects of cognitive/intellectual, character, aesthetics, and physical/athletic, (Li, 2005)[3]. Throughout the reform of the education system, it is imperative to bear in mind that reform is for the fundamental purpose of turning every citizen into a man or woman of character and cultivating more constructive members of society .

B. Excellent Characteristic

What is character or characteristic?. Character is all the mental or moral qualities that make a person, group, nation, etc different from others. Characteristic is a typical feature or quality. [4] In real fact that there are a lot of people who have excellent characteristics, and some others have bad characteristics. In general, there are six pillars of characteristics that can be clasified again into several items. The Six Pillars of Character are Trustworthiness, Fairness, Caring, Respect, Citizenship,and Responsibility (Hill,2002).[5] In order to understand

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[3] Li, L., 2005. Education for 1.3 Billion. Pearson Education and China: Foreign Language Teaching & Research Press.

[4] http://charactercounts.org/sixpillars.html#sthash.Iw6oGSgA.

[5] Hill, T.A., 2005. Character First! Kimray Inc., http://www.charactercities.org/ downloads/ publications/Whatischaracter.pdf.

each of the pillar pay attention the following items: 1. Trustworthiness (a. Be honest ;b. Don't deceive, cheat, or steal; c. Be reliable — do what you say you'll do; d. Have the courage to do the right thing; e, Build a good reputation ;f. Be loyal — stand by your family, friends, and country). 2. Fairness (a. Play by the rules; b. Take turns and share; c. Be open-minded; listen to others; d. Don't take advantage of others; e. Don't blame others carelessly ; f. Treat all people fairly). 3. Caring (a. Be kind; b. Be compassionate and show you care; c. Express gratitude; d. Forgive others ; e. Help people in need). 4. Respect (a.Treat others with respect; b. follow the Golden Rule ; c. Be tolerant and accepting of differences ; d. Use good manners, not bad language ; e. Be considerate of the feelings of others ; f. Don't threaten, hit or hurt anyone ; g. Deal peacefully with anger, insults, and disagreements . 5. Citizenship (a. Do your share to make your school and community better ; b. Cooperate • Get involved in community affairs ; c. Stay informed; vote ; d. Be a good neighbor ; e. Obey laws and rules ; f. Respect authority ; g. Protect the environment ; h. Volunteer).6. Responsibility (a. Do what you are supposed to do ; b. Plan ahead ; c. Persevere: keep on trying! ; d. Always do your best ; e. Use self-control ; f. Be self-disciplined ; g. Think before you act — consider the consequences ; h. Be accountable for your words, actions, and attitudes ; i. Set a good example for others).

What about excellent?. It has a similar meaning of very good or very high quality. Excellent Characteristic. Some philosophers explore the psychological foundations of virtue and the contributions made by friendship, family, community, and meaningful work to good moral character. To do ethics properly, one must start with what it is for a human being to flourish or live well. That meant returning to some questions that mattered deeply to the ancient Greek moralists. These questions focused on the nature of "virtue" (or what we might think of as admirable moral character), of how one becomes virtuous (is it taught? does it arise naturally? are we responsible for its development?), and of what relationships and institutions may be necessary to make becoming virtuous possible. Answers to these ancient questions emerge

today in various areas of philosophy, including ethics (especially virtue ethics), feminist ethics, political philosophy, philosophy of education, and philosophy of literature. Interest in virtue and character was also indirectly the result of a more practical turn in political philosophy, inspired by the publication of This entry provides a brief historical account of some important developments in philosophical approaches to good moral character. Approximately half the entry is on the Greek moralists Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics. Of these, most attention is given to Aristotle's views, since most other philosophical discussions of character are indebted to his analysis. The latter half of the entry explores how other philosophers have responded to the concerns first raised by the Greeks. Some philosophers, such as Hugo Grotius and Immanuel Kant, represent a "modern" approach to character that subordinates it to other moral notions such as duty and obedience to law. Other philosophers, such as David Hume, Karl Marx, and John Stuart Mill, take an interest in the psychology of moral character that is more reminiscent of the Greeks. Finally, this entry indicates the directions taken by some contemporary philosophers in recent work on or related to moral character. This is one example of the excellent character with which Allâh, the Exalted, has equipped his Messenger. He described him as, [in Al-Qalam (68): 4] that has the meaning of: "Verily, you (Muhammad) are on an exalted standard of character." 'Â'ishah (radiyAllâhu 'anhâ), described him as, "His character was just [a reflection of] the Qur'ân."[6] Excellent character cannot be attained without three conditions, they are:

1. The foundation must be good. If one has a rough and dry nature, it will be hard for him to submit to this [excellence of character] through knowledge, will, or practice. On the other hand, a mild and smooth nature will be ready and willing to receive the plowing and the seeds [to prepare it for character excellence].

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[6] http://www.angelfire.com/al/islamicpsychology/ethics/excellent_character. html

2. The soul must be strong and capable of conquering calls of laziness, transgression, and desire. Those matters contradict perfection, and souls that cannot defeat them will always be defeated and conquered.

3. [One must possess] a discerning knowledge of the truth of matters, enabling one to put them in the rightful position, and to distinguish between flash and cancer between glass and jewels.

If these three qualities are present in a man, and Allâh's facilitation helps him, then he will be among those whom the best (husnâ) has been decreed and for whom Allâh's care has been secured. It is often said about character building. One of scientists, his name is Helen R. LeGette, tell us about 21 strategies to help our child develop good character.[7]

1. *Model good character in the home. As William Bennett observes in The Book of Virtues, 'there is nothing more influential, more determinant in a child's life than the moral power of a quiet example.' It is critically important that those who are attempting to influence children's character in positive ways 'walk the talk.'*

2. *Be clear about your values. Tell your children where you stand on important issues. Good character is both taught and caught. If we want children to internalize the virtues that we value, we need to teach them what we believe and why. In the daily living of our lives, there are countless opportunities to engage children in moral conversation.*

3. *Show respect for your spouse, your children, and other family members. Parents who honor each other, who share family responsibilities, and who resolve their differences in peaceful ways communicate a powerful message about respect. If children experience respect firsthand within the family, they are more likely to be respectful of others. Simply stated, respect begets respect.*

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4. *Model and teach your children good manners. Insist that all family members use good manners in the home. Good manners are really the Golden Rule in action. Whether the issue is courtesy or other simple social graces, it is in the home that true thoughtfulness for others has its roots.*

5. *Have family meals together without television as often as possible.* Mealtime is an excellent time for parents to talk with and listen to their children and to strengthen family ties. Whether the meal is a home-cooked feast or fast-food from the drive-through, the most important ingredient is the sharing time – the time set aside to reinforce a sense of belonging to and being cared about by the family.

6. *Plan as many family activities as possible. Involve your children in the planning. Family activities that seem quite ordinary at the moment are often viewed in retrospect as very special and memorable bits of family history. A dad's ‹date› with a teenage daughter, a family picnic in the park, or a Sunday excursion for ice cream can provide a meaningful time for being together and sharing as a family.*

7. *Worship together as a family.* Recent studies verify that youth who have strong religious convictions are less likely to drop out of school or engage in delinquent behavior. Shared worship experiences help to strengthen family unity and provide a moral foundation for its members.

8. *Don't provide your children access to alcohol or drugs. Model appropriate behavior regarding alcohol and drugs.* Despite peer pressure, the anxieties of adolescence, a youthful desire for *sophistication, and media messages that glamorize the use of drugs and alcohol, the family is the most powerful influence on whether a young person will become a substance abuser. Nowhere is the parents' personal example more critical than in the area of alcohol and drug use.*

9. *Plan family service projects or civic activities. At the heart of good character is a sense of caring and concern for others. Numerous opportunities for family service projects exist in every community, and even young children can participate. Simple acts like taking food to a sick neighbor, mowing an elderly person's yard, or collecting outgrown clothes and toys for charity help youth learn the joys of assisting others and develop lifelong habits of service.*

10. *Read to your children and keep good literature in the home. Great teachers have always used stories to teach, motivate, and inspire, and reading together is an important part of passing the moral legacy of our culture from one generation to another. Children's questions and comments about the stories offer parents important insights into their children's thoughts, beliefs, and concerns.*

11. *Limit your children's spending money. Help them develop an appreciation for non-material rewards. In today's consumerist culture, youth could easily come to believe that image, wearing the 'right' clothes, driving the 'right' car, and representing the path to success and happiness. Parents can make strong statements about what they value by the ways in which they allocate their own resources and how they allow their children to spend the funds entrusted to them.*

12. *Discuss the holidays and their meanings. Have family celebrations and establish family traditions. Abraham Lincoln observed that participating in national celebrations causes Americans to feel 'more attached the one to the other, and more firmly bound to the country we inhabit.' Observing holidays and celebrating family traditions not only develop these feelings of attachment to and kinship with others, but they also serve as a special kind of glue that binds us together as human beings, as family members, and as citizens.*

13. *Capitalize on the 'teachable moment.' Use situations to spark family discussions on important issues. Some of the most effective character education can occur in the ongoing, everyday life of the family. As*

parents and children interact with one another and with others outside the home, there are countless situations that can be used to teach valuable lessons about responsibility, empathy, kindness, and compassion.

14. *Assign home responsibilities to all family members.* Even though it is often easier to clear the table, take out the trash, or load the dishwasher ourselves than to wait for a child to do it, we have an obligation to help children learn to balance their own needs and wishes against those of other family members – and ultimately, other members of society.

15. *Set clear expectations for your children and hold them accountable for their actions. Defining reasonable limits and enforcing them appropriately establishes the parents as the moral leaders in the home and provides a sense of security to children and youth. It also lets them know that you care enough about them to want them to be – or to become – people of good character.*

16. *Keep your children busy in positive activities.* Children and youth have remarkable energy levels, and the challenge is to channel that energy into positive activities such as sports, hobbies, music or other forms of the arts, or church or youth groups like the Scouts. Such activities promote altruism, caring, and cooperation and also give children a sense of accomplishment.

17. *Learn to say no and mean it.* It is natural for children, especially teenagers, *to test the limits and challenge their parents' authority. Despite the child's protests, a parent's most loving act is often to stand firm and prohibit the child's participation in a potentially hurtful activity.*

18. *Know where your children are, what they are doing, and with whom.* Adults need to communicate in countless ways that we care about children and that we expect the best from them, but also that we take seriously our responsibility to establish standards and to monitor, chaperone, and supervise. At the risk of being perceived

as 'old fashioned,' insist on meeting your children's friends and their parents.

19. *Refuse to cover for your children or make excuses for their inappropriate behavior. Shielding children and youth from the logical consequences of their actions fails to teach them personal responsibility. It also undermines social customs and laws by giving them the impression that they are somehow exempt from the regulations that govern others' behavior.*

20. *Know what television shows, videos, and movies your children are watching.* While there are some very fine materials available, a proliferation of pornographic and hate-filled information is easily accessible to our youth. By word and example, teach your children responsible viewing habits. If you learn that your child has viewed something objectionable, candidly share your feelings and discuss why the material offends your family's values.

21. *Remember that you are the adult!* Children don't need another buddy, but they desperately need a parent who cares enough to set and enforce appropriate limits for their behavior. Sometimes being able to say, ‹My dad won't let me› provides a convenient escape for a youth who really didn't want to participate in a questionable activity.

C. Excellent Community

Community (singular) the people living in one place district, or country, considered as a whole, or in other words "Community is a group of people of the same religion, race, occupation, etc or with shared interests" (Hornby, 1995)[8]. Educated community is a community that is ased degree of knoledge or experience. Living in an excellent community must be enjoyable, and what is a community

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[8] Hornby. 1995. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. New York: Oxford University Press.p.230

of excellence?.[9] The question is not so simple, because it is concerning to at least; Leadership and Citizen Engagement, Planning, Economic Development Strategy, Quality of Life, etc.

1. Leadership and Citizen Engagement

a. Community Leadership

The community has many dedicated, diverse, and energetic leaders. The private sector, community and civic organizations, and faith-based organizations are consistently involved in local initiatives and projects. The community has an active civic life with multiple opportunities for citizen involvement (e.g., town meetings, deliberative forums, concerts, festivals community improvement projects). Local government leaders are committed to strengthening community partnerships and engaging citizens. Elected officials maintain good working relations and seek to constructively resolve differences. Local government leaders build bridges and alliances with other jurisdictions and organizations to encourage economic development in the region. City and county governments are committed to the training and professional development of local government officials and staff.

b. Leadership Development

The community/county has a formal, active leadership development program. Local government, the chamber of commerce, the business community, and civic groups actively support the program and encourage employee participation. There are adequate funds and staff to plan and conduct the program. Program participants represent the diversity of the community (racial, gender, geographic, political, economic, etc.). The curriculum includes instruction on basic leadership skills/strategies (e.g., planning, problem-solving, teamwork, interpersonal skills, conflict management, valuing diversity, etc.). The curriculum adequately addresses economic development, community

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[9] http://ecdi.wordpress.com/2010/04/11/what-does-an-excellent-community-look-like.

development, and community planning and design topics. The program format is interactive, participatory, and innovative (i.e., not simply lectures and presentations). The program has a youth leadership component. The program provides the opportunity for real-world applications connecting participants with community improvement plans or projects.

2. Planning

a. Vision and Strategic Planning

The community has an up-to-date strategic plan that provides a compelling vision for the future along with specific strategies for realizing that vision. A large, diverse group of leaders and stakeholders participated in the process and support the plan (i.e., planning participants include a broad cross-section of the community). A detailed action plan specifies how the plan's goals and objectives will be implemented in the community (i.e., who will be involved, the time frame for accomplishment, needed resources, key milestones/ benchmarks, and the expected results or product); and A mechanism for ongoing review and revision is incorporated into the plan – both to evaluate accomplishment and to correct implementation problems.

b. Comprehensive Planning

The community has an up-to-date comprehensive land use plan that includes policies and strategies for land use, transportation, housing, community facilities, and resource conservation. The community has specific plans for zoning, development regulation, and design/ appearance review that are actively enforced. All planning initiatives are consistent with community design standards and goals.

3. Economic Development Strategy

The community has an up-to-date, comprehensive economic development plan (either separately or as part of the strategic plan). The plan addresses business retention, expansion and recruitment; commercial, retail and small business development; and tourism and

retiree attraction. The economic development plan includes an analysis of the local economy identifying strengths, potential opportunities, and the types of businesses that best fit the community. The plan is fully supported by community leaders involved with economic development.

a. Infrastructure

Local infrastructure is adequate to support the selected business targets. The community is connected to the global economy through high-speed Internet. The community has a quality site that is suitable for desired business targets, free of easements and/or encumbrances, and available at a fair market price.

b. Organization

The community (or county) has an economic development or industrial development authority/board/individual responsible for business recruitment. A single point of contact is identified/designated for all economic development activities. The organization has a structured and trained prospect sales team. The staff (or officers) of the development organization regularly participates in state professional association activities.

c. Information and Marketing

The economic development organization maintains current, relevant information about the community and has a quality promotional brochure. Available properties are monitored, listed in the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama (EDPA) database, and updated regularly. The organization/individual effectively markets the community to appropriate businesses targets and maintains regular contact with state officials and other economic development professionals. The community/county hosts a website on the Internet with information appropriate to its targets.

d. Existing Business Program

The community has a formal and ongoing business retention and expansion program that includes: Regular visits to business owners and

managers. A process for addressing problems identified by industry leaders.An annual industrial and commercial recognition event, A survey of labor wages and fringe benefits, and Workforce education and training programs.

e.   Commercial/Retail Business Development

The community has an active Chamber of Commerce or Business Alliance with at least a paid part-time executive. The community maintains a comprehensive inventory of retail, commercial, and service properties, including spaces that formerly housed retail or commercial entities and those with that potential.

4.   Quality of Life

a.   Education

All schools in the community consistently achieve "academically clear" status with student standardized test scores at or above the state average.

1).   The schools/school system:

 Is Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accredited. Offers Career/Technical Education counseling and programs. Coordinates formal parental involvement programs. Provides Adult Literacy programs. Participates in formal partnerships with local businesses. Participates in the Alabama Reading Initiative or a similar program. Participates in the Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) or other enhanced math and science programs. Provides leadership training for principals and superintendent. Provides pre-kindergarten programs. Provides quality teacher education and professional development opportunities (in addition to the state appropriated professional development days). Offers appropriate curriculum for migrant populations that includes "English as a Second Language," if applicable, and Utilizes distance learning to connect the school to virtual classrooms.

2). Healthcare

Primary, dental, and mental health services are available to all age groups. The community utilizes telemedicine to expand healthcare in areas with limited access to physicians. The community has ready access to a hospital that provides an array of vital services, including emergency transport services and a 24-hour emergency room. The community has access to long-term care (i.e., nursing home/ assisted living facility) and home health services. The community promotes wellness and prevention programs (i.e., health education, recreation and physical fitness). The community's healthcare leadership is committed to planning for future healthcare services and needs (e.g., recruitment and retention of health care providers and professionals, workforce development, and the development of strategies for funding healthy initiatives). Public buildings are designated smoke-free environments.

3). Amenities and Aesthetics

The community supports a variety of amenities that contribute to enhanced quality of life (e.g., arts, entertainment, recreation). Public property and buildings are well-maintained. Attractive gateways are maintained at city entrances. The community supports downtown enhancements and preservation of historic buildings.

D. Moral Community

Moral is concerrned with principles of right and wrong behaviour, etc. "Few people will dispute the statement that we all belong to a moral community." Moral community is "a group of beings that shares certain characteristics and whose members are or consider themselves to be bound to observe certain rules of conduct in relation to one another because of their mutual likeness. These rules create what we call obligations and derive in some intimate way from the characteristics which the beings composing the moral community have in common." 'Most moral theorists' would deny that such exceptions undermine the moral community.

"Now what sorts of beings do actually belong to a moral community?. The sorts of characteristics: critical self-awareness; the ability to manipulate complex concepts and to use a sophisticated language… and the capacity to reflect, plan, deliberate, choose, and accept responsibility for acting."

These abilities "make humans autonomous or self-directing and capable of functioning as rational moral agents.""It is the whole cluster of interrelated capacities, and this alone, that constitutes the nature of an autonomous being." And this makes for "moral superiority." The basic moral rights are possessed solely by persons. The possession of characteristics that make humans members of a moral community also makes them the possessors of rights. Thus rights belong to beings because they are moral agents functioning within a community of which responsibility and accountability are central features and where they are acknowledged to be such. "Autonomous beings are capable of recognizing autonomy in others and of full participation in the moral community, as already described. It is not arbitrary to hold that all and only such beings qualify for the possession of rights.

E. Conclution

Character education is a system of planting the values of kindness in dealing with God, fellow man, and the environment.

Allâh, the Exalted, has equipped his Messenger as, [in Al-Qalam (68): 4] that has the meaning of: "Verily, you (Muhammad) are on an exalted standard of character." The description is that "His character was just [a reflection of] the Qur'ân". Excellent character cannot be attained without three conditions;1.The foundation must be good; 2. The soul must be strong and capable of conquering calls of laziness, transgression, and desire; 3. [One must possess] a discerning knowledge of the truth of matters, enabling one to put them in the rightful position, and to distinguish between flash and cancer between glass and jewels. Most moral theorists' would deny that such exceptions undermine the moral community. It is enjoyable to live in an excellent community.

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