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In Mandarin and English

SPEECH BY MR CHAN SOO SEN, PARLIAMENTARY

SECRETARY (PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE &

MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT),

AT THE CULTURE SOCIETY'S LUNAR NEW YEAR
CELEBRATIONS & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES,

ON SUNDAY, 7 FEB 99, AT 7.00 PM

AT FAR EAST SQUARE, AMOY STREET

Good evening

Ms Boey Yut Mei

President, The Culture Society

Mr David Liow
Organising Chairman
The Culture Society Lunar New Year Celebrations
& Cultural Activities

Venerable Shi Fazhao
President, METTA Welfare Association

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me first of all wish all of you a Very Happy and Prosperous Year of the Rabbit. Year of the Tiger has been a tough year. All of us hope Year of the Rabbit will be a year we can break-through this period of difficulties towards better times ahead. Let us hope the auspicious atmosphere we experience today sets the stage for a good start.

2 So let us all thank the Culture Society for creating this auspicious atmosphere right at the heart of Chinatown for the Lunar New Year. To start with, there will be many traditional Chinese cultural activities, ranging from calligraphy and arts exhibition as well as demonstrations, tea ceremony, garden exhibition and so on. The highlight is, of course, the longest Yu Sheng to "Lo Hei" and usher in the Year of the Rabbit. I understand it will be in the shape of a dragon measuring 63m. It took more than 40 chefs from Singapore, China, Hong Kong and Taiwan working with 250kg of salmon, 500 kg of vegetables, 150kg of garnish, and 120kg of sauces. We wish the Yu Sheng will make it to the records book as the longest of them all.

3 However, what impresses is not just the sheer size or length. The concept also demonstrated The Culture Society's creativity, innovation, understanding of Chinese culture, and spirit of social service.

(a) The raw fish is presented in the shape of a dragon, rather than the conventional circular shape in a bowl. This allows more people to "Lo Hei", and demonstrates lateral thinking. I really look forward to seeing how this unique lateral "Lo Hei" is done;

(b) Dragon is an auspicious animal in Chinese mythology. Chinese dragons are deities in control of water. It is so vital to the Chinese as an agricultural people that dragons become imperial symbols. Let's hope this 63m dragon at the heart of Chinatown can bring us lots of good fortune, like dragons used to bring in the water and bond harvest.

(c) That this "Lo Hei" is organised for the purpose of raising funds for the METTA Home for the Disabled. It gives participants an opportunity to enjoy themselves while at the same time, give to the less fortunate. Their good deeds will bring good fortune to themselves and the community at large.

4 Being able to remember the less fortunate at a happy occasion demonstrates grace and compassion. A gracious and compassionate society will be blessed with good fortune. I would therefore like to wish both the Culture Society and the METTA Welfare Association every success in your good work. I would also like to wish all present, good health and good fortune in the Year of the Rabbit.

Thank you.

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