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SPEECH BY MR CHAN SOO SEN, PARLIAMENTARY

SECRETARY (PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE & MINISTRY

OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT), AT THE SINGAPORE BUDDHIST WELFARE SERVICES CHARITY
FUND-RAISING DINNER FOR BRIGHT VISION HOSPITAL, ON SATURDAY,

27 FEB 1999, 7.00 PM, AT WTC EXPOSITION HALL 3

Good Evening

My Parliamentary Elders

Mr Ch'ng Jit Koon, JP

Mr Ng Kah Ting, JP

Mr Teo Chong Tee, JP

Venerable Kuan Yan, BBM

President of the Singapore Buddhist Welfare Services

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am very happy to join you today at the Singapore Buddhist Welfare Services' Charity Fund-raising Dinner for Bright Vision Hospital. This project, dedicated to the care relief of the elderly, the chronic sick and the terminally ill patients, as well as support for their families, was the vision of the late Venerable Yen Pei. As we gather here to raise funds for the late Venerable's project, we remember his life and his legacy.

Venerable Yen Pei was a teacher, a scholar, and a compassionate social worker. His teaching and his benevolence acts touched many. He was strict and disciplined towards himself, yet generous and compassion towards others. His heart went to the sick, the old, and the needy. In his lifetime, the Venerable had accomplished much towards relieving the pain and sufferings of others. He founded the Singapore Buddhist Welfare Services and Homes for the elderly, aged sick and children.

Most unfortunately, the Venerable was not able to personally fulfill the Bright Vision Hospital. However, he had laid out his vision, and inspired his disciples and followers, in particular, current President of the Buddhist Welfare Services, Venerable Kuan Yan, to continue with the important work. Venerable Yen Pei envisaged the Hospital to provide not just medical and nursing services, but also counselling and assistance to the patients and their families. This would help to give them guidance and emotional support, so that they would face life with greater confidence and optimism. We hope they would also have a brighter vision of the future.

This original vision has since been expanded by Venerable Kuan Yan to include the proposed Grace Home Care Service. The Service will complement the Hospital to provide domiciliary medical services for the home-bound elderly. This service will widen the network and reach of the Singapore Buddhist Welfare Services in serving the sick.

The spirit of Bright Vision Hospital is Buddha's spirit of compassion and benevolence. The aim of Bright Vision Hospital is Buddhism's aim of relieving pain and suffering of the less fortunate. Your presence here tonight, and your generous contributions despite the difficult economic environment, show the strong support of

the Hospital.

I would like to commend the Singapore Buddhist Welfare Services for your dedication towards building a more compassionate society. The Buddhist community has an excellent track record in mobilising resources and volunteers for social service programmes. I am confident that you will be able to raise the necessary funds to build an outstanding Hospital to fulfill Venerable Yen Pei's vision.

Let us, however, remember that building a Hospital is just the first step. The success of a Hospital lies in its management and professional practices. So our greater challenge comes when the Hospital is built: How to achieve effectiveness, efficiency, high professional standards, and yet remain affordable to the clients we aim to serve?

The issue of cost-effectiveness will be vital for the clients that Bright Vision aims to serve. A good hospital will have significant recurrent and maintenance costs. As our society ages, there will be fewer younger people to support a larger base of older people. Our challenge is to ensure that every dollar that we have will be stretched as long as possible while high professional standard is not compromised. A hospital project is not a sprint, but a marathon.

I am sure with your vision, commitment and compassion, the Singapore Buddhist Welfare Services will overcome these challenges. We look forward to seeing the Bright Vision Hospital serving the community in the near future. I also wish the Singapore Buddhist Welfare Services all the best in its endeavours.

Thank you.

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