

SPEECH BY PRIME MINISTER
LEE KUAN YEW AT THE CHINESE NEW YEAR
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In another decade, Singapore should have no more squatter huts or shanty towns. By the end of the century in 18 years, all the old dilapidated houses should have been pulled down and rebuilt. We shall be one of the few cities in Asia that will have rebuilt itself, keeping only those parts which are of aesthetic, artistic, architectural, or historic value. It is a future worth striving for.

Our first urban renewal started in 1964. In the south precinct, we knocked down the old Outram Road Prison. In the north precinct, we knocked down old rent-controlled houses in Crawford. Singaporeans must have a vision of what it is they can achieve and not only in their life-time. Their children's and grandchildren's future is equally, if not more, important. As we become better organised, educated and skilled, our material and economic circumstances improve. Our way of life, our styles of living and our social structures have undergone subtle but rapid transformations. Many are distinct improvements. We have a cleaner, greener environment because we no longer throw out our litter and garbage. We are more polite, courteous and considerate to each other. Our hawkers no longer clutter up our roads but are gathered together in hawker centres. And they are more hygiene conscious.

Married women and young girls now work in factories within their housing estates doubling the family income. The other side of the coin is that domestic help and personal services become harder to come by. We have to do many things for ourselves, whether it is cooking our own meals, cleaning our own homes, driving our own cars, and later, choosing our own food at self-service counters. These are the consequential changes of full employment and higher wages.

One side-effect of this rapid transformation in Singapore's urban landscape, the removal of many old familiar landmarks, and the air of new prosperity, is the impatience of our young to get into the act quickly, to get their share of the prosperity before the boom slows down. It is psychological fear that the boom will evaporate. There is disbelief in the durability of the change we have wrought in Singapore. We must put their impatience to rest. The more impatient our young are in wanting their share of the cake, the more they will check the pace and the permanence of our growth. The more Singaporeans, young and old, conduct themselves on the assumption that this transformation requires a sustained long-term effort, the more likely we shall maintain high growth through the 1980s into the 1990s.

We are still one whole industrial age behind America, Japan or Western Europe. There is considerable leeway for us to catch up. Our young need not be beset with anxiety. There will be opportunities galore for everyone willing to work hard, to learn new knowledge, to master new skills, and to improve one's professionalism.

Our development plans include a home for every family in the new Singapore. The fulfillment of these plans requires patience and perseverance, a willingness to defer immediate gratification for greater future gains. No one who increases his educational levels and skills will lose out because the building or stock market boom may be over. With solid steady growth through the 1980s each family will own its share of Singapore.

Singaporeans must never trap themselves into a zero sum game: the more he gets, the less there is for me. Even our finite land area, we have expanded by reclamation, to build new Changi Airport, and the land for East Coast Parkway on to the Benjamin Sheares' Bridge where it once was the sea. Nobody lost anything; everyone gained something in this expansion and development of Singapore. This is the guiding spirit and philosophy for Singaporeans.

However, there is one aspect of this process of change or modernisation which we must avoid at all costs - that is the breakup of the three-generation family. The three-generation family is a rarity now in Western Europe and in America. Yet it is still common in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, or Hong Kong, despite their industrialisation and modernisation. It is a question of family structure, of social framework, of filial ties and bonds, which hold family units together. Our strong family structure has been a great strength for continuity in bringing up of next generation. The family has transmitted social values, more by osmosis than by formal instruction. We must preserve this precious family structure if our society is to regenerate itself without loss of cultural vigor, compassion and wisdom.

There is another compelling reason why we must preserve the three-generation family, simply, that we do not have the land to build the flats needed if we break up three-generation family.

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By the year 2030, our population, on present trends, is expected to reach zero growth at a total of 3.6 million. With the two-child family, we may reach zero population growth earlier and an average household size of three persons earlier than 50 years. For, in fact our Chinese women already have a reproduction rate of 1.5, ie below the replacement rate of two for mother and father. Chinese reproduction rate of 1.5 is lower than that of Indian rate at 1.9, and Indian lower than Malay rate at 2.0.

Fast fertility rates were higher and have resulted in larger family size. The 1980 Census of average number of children born alive per married women is as follows:

<u>Race</u>	<u>Average number of children born alive per ever-married women</u>
Chinese	3.3
Malay	3.8
Indian	3.3
Others	2.2
Overall	<u>3.4</u>

With four per household, and a population of 3.6 million, we shall need 900,000 dwelling units. We have in existence about 70,000 private homes and 400,000 units of public housing. The private homes will increase by 30,000 to 100,000. Therefore, we shall need to build another 400,000, ie 8 new Ang Mo

Kio's, of 50,000 units each. We have the land to build the extra 400,000 flats needed.

In the 1970 Census, the average size of household was 5.35. In 1980, it went down to 4.71. Similar figures are reflected in the average size of HDB household:

1968	-	6.2
1972	-	5.7
1977	-	5.2
1981	-	4.8

As a pointer to the future, we can look at the average household size of applicants on the waiting list to purchase HDB flats. The average is 3.8:

3-room	-	3.8
4-room	-	4.1
5-room	-	3.6
Executive Apartments	-	3.3
Average	-	3.8

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If grandparents are left to live by themselves, the average household size will become three, and we shall require 1,200,000 units. This means we must build 700,000 more units, instead of 400,000. We would need 14, instead of 8, more new Ang Mo Kio's.

We do not have the land to build 14 new Ang Mo Kio's. We do not have the land to afford this modern practice of leaving old grandparents to live by themselves. However, different or modern our way of life becomes as a result of high-rise living, we must arrange for one married son or married daughter to live with their parents or have their parents live with them. The HDB will give priority to the three-generation family because it is the best answer to the problems of aging parents. And other measures will be introduced to support this aim.

The most crucial factors are home upbringing, education, and social pressure. Confucianism was part of the Chinese school environment, the fables and the parables recounted over and over again in books and through the teachers and encapsulated in sparkling sayings and succinct epigrams. The problem of moral education and religious teaching is under discussion and consideration. The choice of learning a religion will be that of the parents. Dr Goh Kong Swee agreed with me that for most Chinese students, Confucianism and not Buddhism

will be what parents would prefer their children to study. The problems are to write the textbooks and to get the teachers trained. The doctrines and philosophy of Confucianism in the Chinese school syllabus are spread in textbooks on Chinese language, Chinese literature, and Chinese history. It was also part of the upbringing, training and way of thinking of the older Chinese school teachers, now a vanishing generation. There are no textbooks compiled on Confucianism as a subject. So special textbooks for our schools will have to be written up, with the help of experts in Chinese education and Confucianism. Then they must be translated from Chinese into English. The key Chinese phrases should be kept in the original to enable students to appreciate the original flavor of the ideas and concepts. Just as the Bible was translated from original Greek into Latin, then into English, or German, or French, so I am confident we can, using English, transmit Confucianist values.

One question is how to prevent the erosion of these values by the all pervasive impact of American and British television programmes which purvey a totally different way of life. Anyone brought up in the Confucianist tradition will be ashamed to let his or her old parents live by themselves in loneliness and desolation. But when our young see on television, and some through travel, that this is the norm, and taken for granted in America, Europe and Australia, our traditional value system comes under severe pressures. Our task is to implant

these traditional values into our children when their minds are young and receptive, so that when they grow out of their teenage years, these attitudes harden and are forged for a lifetime.

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