

14 Feb 1984

Singapore Government **PRESS RELEASE**

Information Division, Ministry of Culture, City Hall, Singapore 0617 • tel: 3378191 ext. 352, 353, 354/3362207/3362271

84-TCW-2

Release No.: 35/JAN
14-1/84/01/25

**SPEECH BY MR TEH CHEANG WAN, MINISTER FOR
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF
"WAN HUA YING CHUN" AT THE GEYLANG WEST COMMUNITY CENTRE
ON WEDNESDAY, 25 JANUARY 1984 AT 6.45 PM**

I am very glad to be here tonight to perform this pleasant task of opening the "Wan Hua Ying Chun" Flower Show organised by the Geylang West Community Centre Management Committee.

Singapore has undergone intense urbanisation in the last two decades. More buildings have been constructed in the last twenty years than in all the 140 years between the founding of Singapore in 1819 and the attainment of self-government in 1959. With such rapid urbanisation, it is vital that we strike a good balance between the man-made environment and nature. The Government has always been very conscious of the need to green and beautify the island even as pressures mount to develop, build and urbanise. A separate department, the Parks & Recreation Department, was created and charged with the specific responsibility of making Singapore a garden city. Thanks to the Parks and Recreation Department and the Garden City Campaigns mounted, Singapore today is much greener than it was twenty years ago despite the intensive development that has taken place.

Provision of parks and open spaces is an important feature in the Master Plan. Parks can be grouped under three categories depending on the scale of development. The regional park covers an extensive area and serves a geographical sector of the population. A well-known example is the East Coast Park which has an area of 206 hectares. Designed to cater for both active and passive recreation, the regional park has a comprehensive range of facilities.

Other regional parks that have been developed or are being developed include the Botanic Gardens, Central Park, West Coast Park, Pasir Ris Park and Mount Faber Park.

At the intermediate level is the town garden. Owing to economic constraints, older HDB estates like Queenstown, could not be provided with a big town garden. The earlier town gardens, like the Toa Payoh Town Garden, are rather modest in size. Those in recently developed new towns, however, are spacious and beautifully landscaped. For instance, Woodlands Town Garden and Clementi Woods each covers about 13 hectares of land while Ang Mo Kio Town Garden (West) is 22 hectares in size. The town garden will be a standard feature of all future HDB new towns.

Finally, we have the neighbourhood parks. Primarily serving nearby residents, these take the form of little open spaces or small fruit gardens between apartment blocks in HDB estates or landscaped gardens in private condominiums. In the Central Area and business district, the Urban Redevelopment Authority ensures that little open spaces are set aside for development as gardens, greens or plazas. These small pockets of open land serve a very important function in the urban landscape. They break up the jungle of tall concrete buildings and provide a much-needed space for office workers to rest, relax and have their lunch. Well-known examples of small parks in the Central Area include Robinson Park, Hong Lim Park, Bras Basah Park, Pearl's Hill Park, the Esplanade and the Padang.

With an open space standard of 0.8 hectares per 1000 population, Singaporeans enjoy generous open space provision compared to dwellers in other Asian cities. Hongkong, for example, has a standard of 0.4 hectares per 1000 population, while Tokyo has only 0.2 hectares per 1000 population.

Therefore, while land constraint has made it necessary for Singaporeans to adopt high-rise living, this has not deprived us of the enjoyment of parks and greenery. The average Singaporean need not bemoan the absence of a private garden of his own. As an apartment dweller, he can still indulge in cultivating orchids, bonsai and indoor plants; pursuing gardening as a leisure activity in a manner suitable for high-rise living and deriving as much pleasure from it as low-rise dwellers.

And now, it gives me great pleasure to declare open the "Wan Hua Ying Chun" Show.

oooooooooooooooooooo