

SPEECH BY MRS YONG NYUK LIN AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE LOCAL POTTERY AND IKEBANA EXHIBITION, SPONSORED BY THE NATIONAL LIBRARY ON WEDNESDAY 24/11/71 AT 6.00 P.M. AT THE LIBRARY LECTURE HALL, STAMFORD ROAD.

It gives me great pleasure to be here this evening at this exhibition of local pottery and tropical Ikebana. It is a most appropriate combination, for the work of the potter complements that of the flower arranger. Although it must be admitted that certain floral arrangements may not require the use of pots or vases, the majority of them would require a container of sorts to hold the materials together. In this exhibition you will find the creative fusion between the ceramic artists and the Ikebana exponents.

2. This exhibition has been organised by the Group Services Section of the Library for two main reasons. The first is to show that there is no lack of creative talents among our people. Our gifted and artistic young, given the proper training and facilities, can produce works of excellence and taste. The pottery pieces which are on display bear testimony to this. These 1st year ceramic students of our Baharuddin Vocational Institute have received training for only six months. Under the strict and disciplined eye of their instructor (whose work is also on exhibit), their creative and artistic pieces belie the brief but thorough training they have received.

3. The second reason is to dispel the notion that the art of flower arrangement is a hobby for the rich. I understand that the two teachers and exponents of the Sogetsu school have one simple message to convey to those who view their creations today, namely, that the source of beauty lies in common everyday materials. One need not go to great expense to practise the art of Ikebana. I hope that after viewing their arrangements, you will have ^Cmore discerning eyes and thus capture the beauty of nature ^Afor your homes through Ikebana.

4. The pressures of living in a highly urbanised, industrialised and competitive society like Singapore, demands more and more, that we do take some time-off after work to pursue some recreational activity. Whatever generation we may belong to, I venture to say, that an active interest in any creative craft can provide for both a sense of achievement and a zest for living. Any teen-ager absorbed in creative handicrafts will be kept too busy to get into

mischievous. The bored housewife, whose children have either grown up or left home, can fill the vacuum by discovering new interests or dormant talents. And for those who have retired from ^{an} active life, hobbies may ^{help} keep loneliness and neurosis away.

5. It is, therefore, most regrettable that facilities for the layman to learn pottery are practically non-existent in Singapore and this should be rectified. Pottery has a therapeutic effect in unwinding a person, as it were, by making him forget his worries and feel completely relaxed when he becomes absorbed with the clay he is moulding with his hands. I am sure those interested in pottery would welcome it if Adult Education evening or night classes could provide such facilities for this fascinating craft.

6. Whether it be pottery, Ikebana, or other forms of creative art and craft, we should all strive to find the ^{medium} ~~medium~~ which suits our talents and temperaments best, for I believe, that we are all born with ^{an} the artistic spark awaiting to be ignited. Unfortunately for most of us, the spark has yet to be kindled. I therefore congratulate the Group Services Section of the Library, for their initiative in stimulating interest in various arts and crafts through their regular programme of activities for adults, which cover a wide range of subjects, like copper-tooling, cake icing, painting on porcelain, collages, preservation of local flora, aluminium relief, vegetable carving, and needlepoint, etc.

7. I sincerely hope that those who attend these programmes will come away with renewed enthusiasm for their particular interest, and benefit from the trade secrets that our guest artists have so generously imparted.

8. Ladies and gentlemen, it is now my pleasure to declare this exhibition open and to wish it every success.

24th November, 1971