

Singapore Government 10 DEC 1979

19	0060	72
----	------	----

PRESS RELEASE

Information Division, Ministry of Culture, City Hall, Singapore 0617 - tel: 328191 ext. 352, 353, 354 / 362207 / 362271.

MC/DEC/2/79 (Social Affairs)

SPEECH BY MR CHAN CHEE SENG, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
(SOCIAL AFFAIRS), AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING AND PRIZE-GIVING
OF THE EXHIBITION: OUR SINGAPORE CHILDREN AT THE YOUNG
PEOPLE'S GALLERY, NATIONAL MUSEUM, ON SATURDAY,
1 DECEMBER 1979 AT 4.00 PM

This exhibition of photographs of children will not fail to interest a large audience. For children make appealing subjects, in the same way as a beautiful face, pretty flowers or a charming landscape. There is something touching in a child's expressiveness, from its delight when happy to its pensive mood.

It is a pleasure to see this range of moods captured by master photographers in this exhibition of pictures of children. It is a change to see some pleasing record of children which is quite in contrast with the pitiful pictures of starving children which fill our newspapers and feature in our radio and television reports.

For a few moments we can take our minds away from the suffering children and a tortured people not too far away. Reality of events however cannot be blotted from our thoughts completely. We are reminded of suffering children caught in the tides of war, innocent of its causes and without understanding their cruel fate. We are reminded too, that amongst us there are children who carry the scars of beatings.

To pursue this line of thought further it may be well that we are also reminded how tenuous the bond of love for children is. It is often taken for granted. But it can be easily broken for example, when parents are too busy in earning a living, too selfish in following their own interests to have time for their children. It can even be corrupted as shown by harsh beatings on children by some brutal parents. In the upheavals caused by wars children are the ones who suffer, when their families flee from the war zones, got separated and left as orphans.

Human beings require a prolonged period of care, training and education before they can fend for themselves. Born helpless, the maturing process takes many years - spanning nearly the first third of human life. In comparison with animals this long period of growing up, of apprenticeship, of mental development, may appear to be a disadvantage. But in the long term it is an advantage as much more can be learnt. It is a reason for man's superiority in the animal kingdom. If the bond of caring for its young is severed and children are deprived of care and the learning process, then the unique advantage of humankind is lost.

Hence it is right that we take pride in our children; that we do all we can to nurture a love for them. It is important that we bring them up to develop their full potential.

This exhibition represents some of the best efforts of a photographic exhibition held in September. They are by both amateurs and professionals. The winners are congratulated for their success. As for the rest, do work harder and you will be identified accordingly in future.

I have great pleasure in declaring this exhibition open.
