

PLANTING TREES

Chedet.co.cc

May 23, 2011

By Dr. Mahathir Mohamad

1. Malaysia is blessed with a climate and soil that enables trees to take root and grow very fast. Our success in the plantation industry is due to this. The trees we grow, rubber, oil palm tree and cocoa are foreign to Malaysia yet they grow better here than in the countries of their origins.

2. However, the success of our plantation industry has totally affected our thinking. We know that by planting trees in perfect rows, with the trees separated from each other by a specific distance, we maximise the potential for growth and render the extraction of the latex or the fruits easier and more efficiently. We miss none of the trees when we tap rubber or bring down the fruits.

3. But forest trees do not grow in rows. They are scattered haphazardly. It is this which gives the forest their special appearance or character.

4. For various reasons we have to reforest the forest we had raped. We also need to create new forests.

5. But because we are so addicted to planting trees in orderly rows, when we want to reforest or to create a new forest, we plant the forest trees in the same way. Even when we plant teak and other trees on the road shoulders, they are planted in perfect rows. Our secondary man-made forests look nothing like forests at all. They look like tree estates.

6. But there are times when planting on the road sides, we want to create an avenue of trees. Then we should plant just one row of trees or palm trees perfectly aligned and separated. The tree should be the same all the way through. But when we want to recreate forests let the trees be scattered haphazardly like in the forest.

17 Comments

• *bumi malaya*

May 23, 2011 at 3:44 pm

Dear Tun..

Alhamdulillah about your health to be better,

Ya sy setuju dgn pandangan Tun...

Semoga Tun kembali sihat dan terus berkhidmat.t.q

• *[kubakoya](#)*

May 23, 2011 at 3:50 pm

Trees are valuable, especially forest trees.

Then some people abused their authority to cut the forest down to make road, but after the forest gone, road never appeared. And the dam never generate electricity, either.

buat duit mau cepat, kerja malas.

We've got this kind 'Malay' mentality inside the YBs' head, and that's why we (pembangkok) are challenging them. To take them out of their comfort zone.

'You did wrong things to the roots under the ground, people can see at the tip of the leaf. '

- *ridz*

May 23, 2011 at 4:54 pm

Hmm...maybe the government should encourage and create more dusun buah-buahan instead. So everybody can share (and taste) the benefits. Btw how are you doing Tun? Hope you are getting better.

- *ng thing seng*

May 23, 2011 at 7:34 pm

Salam Tun,

Good to hear that you are well. I guess human simply has a nack in tempering and changing what nature has intended. We have created for ourselves, a concrete jungle to live in, a complex and efficient economy to support huge population, uniform education for our children. As such a human life has become much like a robot, enslave to an efficient system that rob us of our freedom. Adding to burden of life is a concious political reengineering of society that trample on those unfortunat soul that do not fit the description of the plan. Human just like tree is suppose to be able to grow without hindrance to a height as nature intended it to be. You may call it delima that required such adjustment. Logically I too agree with you. But still it is sad for many poor soul that is made to feel stateless. Bahasa jiwa bangsa. For many chinese born and grew up in Malaysia, who can't even read and write chinese is like orang tiada jiwa, perhaps that is the reason why most sent their kids to venacular school. Balancing two sides of a coin is not so that easy.

Salam Tun.

- *AHMAD BADRI*

May 23, 2011 at 7:39 pm

Dear Sir and Chedet bloggers,

I hope and pray you are gettting better, Tun. All of us hope and wish you speedy recovery. I like the topic on trees.

Many years ago I had an argument with a very rich logging towkey, who seemed to get logging concessions quite easily. He said that all those old trees in the forest should be harvested, otherwise they will die and fall to the ground eventually. Rugilah, he said. Itâ™s income to the government, denied. Thatâ™s true.

However, I argued, from the ecological point of view, these old trees will die and fall to the ground after many hundred years, and then they will rot and decompose and return the minerals and rich moisture contained in the trees back to the forest floor. Also, the process of decomposition will release much needed nutrients to enrich various organisms which provide the substrates and nutrients to the young and emerging trees and food to the many types of small faunas, insects and other invertebrates, which, going around the ecological cycle, will give foods

to the many many faunal species and wildlife in the forest. So we have a rich tropical forest that provides the base for our rich biodiversity. The forest floor, with so much decomposed materials and forest litters, absorb the moisture, retain the water from rains, to release it slowly back to the lower grounds in the form of streams, waterfalls, while avoiding the occurrence of landslides and erosion. This of course brings no money, but is important for ecology. It also serves as the catchment for our water supply, as well as places for eco-tourism, not to mention the cooling effects.

The rich and well connected Tan Sri towkey seemed to be more concerned about taking out more logs from the forest which brings money, because he said, itâ€™s a waste not to take the logs out. I donâ€™t like arguing with a standard 6 graduate who was already a tan sri, with gold watch, big emerald ring and gold necklace and expensive speck rims. Any more argument is a waste of time and it makes oneâ€™s intelligence to drop a few levels off.

I am telling the above because very often decisions made by approving authorities lack or ignore ecological principles and their basic fundamentals. I call it the Rich Towkey Mentality (RTM). Apart from similar trees being grown in straight lines, there should also be considerations for more diversity of tree species, trees of various types that can, if well blended and cleverly arranged, will not only look aesthetic, but also provide good habitat for friendly faunas, and can even serve as small watersheds.

Needless to say, the minds of ecologists are quite different from many others, especially the RTM people, in that profit is disregarded, and not considered. Itâ€™s the ecological functions thatâ€™s primary. Here in Malaysia we can look at the Botanical Garden of Penang, the Lake Garden of KL, the Taiping Lake Garden for a good mix of tree species that can be used for public recreation and appreciation. But they were constructed during the colonial time. Nevertheless, a good place to see is the KLCC, which was 100% local ingenuity in park planning, tree selection, tree planting and selection of species.

There are many local species that can be used in urban parks, street and road landscaping and even highway tree corridors. The choice of kayu jati (*Tectonia grandis*) along our highways was good, but these trees take a long time to look gorgeous, maybe about 40 years or more. And so itâ€™s best not to harvest them so soon. A good example is the small kayu jati garden in Langkawi, already over 40 years old. They are also strong and firm, they look stunning, and are unlikely to fall off like the fast growers of legume species and pokok sena which tend to be the favourite with many local authorities.

I would like to suggest that when the local authorities are giving approvals for landscaping in new housing areas, new roads, new parks etc, the selection of tree species, planting distance and general landscaping should be given much thought and real expert guidance.

Previously the contractors were left to themselves to choose the trees, and they chose the cheapest (e.g. Acacia, legumes, pokok sena) and these were never taken care off properly. We find many trees which were not well maintained or regularly pruned, giving horrible looks after ten twenty years. So, after 50 years of independence, we should have better and well mixed trees grown in our built environment so that 50 years from now our grand children will know that we are not ecologically illiterate.

• emma49

May 23, 2011 at 8:19 pm

Salam Tun,

... Im glad you are OK! Miss you already... =)

<http://www.volcanodiscovery.com/java/volcano-trekking.html>

• *Hazman Abu Bakar*

May 23, 2011 at 11:15 pm

Yes sir! Let nature shapes its form.

• *atiefs*

May 24, 2011 at 12:55 am

Assalamualaikum Tun,

This time, your post bring me smile..

That natural sense of cynical humour is still within.. 😊

• *eanisazman*

May 24, 2011 at 9:46 am

Salam Tun and Family,

I would like to use this opportunity to wish you well and good health. I have read your book halfway and found many interesting facts, knowledge and also can get to know you rather well than before.

You have inspired me a lot from your book and broaden my horizon about how things were in this country and the world. I would like to thank you for the book, your leadership and also what you have contributed to the Malays, Malaysian and Malaysia.

As a normal citizen, I may have uttered words about you before which is merely based on rumours and may be a slander. I may also disagreed with you before and uttered bad words about you out of emotions. As a Muslim, I regretted it a lot not just to you and many others I would have sinned. I would like to apologise from you and hope that you can forgive me as I would like to seek pardon of my wrongdoings for the sake of my 'ukhrawi' journey.

Thank you.

• *PenyuMenagis*

May 25, 2011 at 12:09 am

Assalamualaikum,

Dear Yang Berbahagia Tun Mahathir and Para Blogger yang dihormati,

Allow me to divert from the present discussion....

I am now reading your autobiography and reaching the chapter on Look East Policy. Let me share some of my experience visiting Japan last year. I was invited to an International Conference in Kobe and in addition was given the honor to speak during the Conference Banquet. The following is my short speech. I will send you the accompany presentation separately.

—

Banquet Speech

(9th International Conference Nano-Molecular Electronics, Kobe 14-16 December 2010)

By Penyu...

Ladies and gentlemen,

First and foremost let me thank the organiser for inviting me to give this banquet speech. It is a great honour and a pleasure to me to be given this opportunity. I find it impossible to refuse, even though I am unsure of what am I suppose to say.

As a foreigner visiting Japan, naturally what is more interesting and desirable (to talk about) is to relate my cultural experience, since Japanese culture fascinates me most. My fascinations are on the followings: **3Ts**, bento, Fuji, maples and kimono.

Limited by time and space, I will touch quickly the 3Tâ™s, even though I have so much to say for each of these.

The **3 Tâ™s**, refers to âœToilet, Train and Technologyâ™.

Simply, the toilet in Japan is the best in the world. I have never seen toilet and public convenience being taken so seriously and with so much respect that I even witnessed (to my amazement) a toilet cleaner bowed down to an empty toilet before he cleaned it.

There is no other country in the world, where ordinary household can afford sophisticated toilet with **warm seat, many functional buttons**.

In many countries, especially in the so called, the third world, toilet is considered the dirtiest place, which should be ignored. This simple observed correlation has many implications and ramifications but I shall not elaborate here.

Worldwide, there is a growing number of *Japanophiles* (people who loves Japan even before coming to Japan). I must be one of them (the earlier ones) and our first contact to Japan was through the cartoon and anime.

My favourite was *Ultraman*. Whenever I take the train ride, I cannot help but having the vivid imagination of a big bad monster smashing the criss-crossing Japanese trains and *Ultraman* came to the rescue.

The commuter train culture in Japan is another one of my fascination. From the local/rapid trains, subways and *shinkansen*, I cannot help thinking how is the time table managed so well and so precisely coordinated.

The *shinkansen* service has never had any collision and yet runs 4-5 trains hourly between Osaka and Tokyo, while in Malaysia, over the same distance (eg. Kuala Lumpur and Penang), there is only one train per day! (and sometimes late!!!)

I do not want to elaborate on how I admire Japanese technology (made in Japan), but rather to comment on one of the inspiring characters, *doraemon*, the cat that has all sort of gadgets (technology) in his pocket to solve any problem. *Doraemon*'s name is a combination of *dora* as in dorayaki and *emon* which is the end name of a samurai. He is indeed my favourite cartoon character and through him, I understand Japanese technological sense and sensibility. He is a symbol of Japanese technology samurai and he has technology in his pocket. That is very cool for an *otaku*. He loves dorayaki and so am I.

I have made three cultural visits to Japan; the first was sponsored by the Japanese Society of Promotion of Science (JSPS) and hosted by Prof. Shunsuke Kobayashi (also known as Mr.LCD), who was at the Tokyo Agriculture University, Department of Electrical and Electronics. My second and third visits were hosted by Prof. Akihiko Sugimura, Department of Information System Engineering, Osaka Sangyo University.

I thank both generous hosts and the Institutions, who sponsored my cultural scientific visits. And I would like to elaborate on what I have learnt in this aspect.

4. There are reasons why forest trees grow haphazard naturally. They do not grow instantly that way. Natural selections; and they are the best.

5. Imitating those require years of studies and experts.

6. FRIM, its time to show that the taxes are well spent (for real).

fbm

• *amin tan*

May 25, 2011 at 8:08 pm

Dear Tun,

I am sorry i have to disagree with you on reforestation. Ours is the rain forest as such there are many types of trees, plants, insects, worms and wild animals in the original setting of virgin jungle. It is not reasonable for anyone to reproduce a replica of its original virginity. When we want to replace the harvested valuable trees in the tropical forest, surely we would not try to cultivate trees or plants of very low commercial value. We would only replant trees of high commercial value and in a way most profitable to the entrepreneurs. If the cost of replanting in straight rows is the same as that of replanting haphazardly, surely it is more logical and pleasing to the beholders if reforestation is done in a more orderly way. It is a matter of opinion.

In Europe and Scandinavia, reforestation of pine trees is a huge industry in terms of supply to paper industry and building industry. Last year, I had the opportunity to visit the country side of Dublin, Ireland. The replanting of pine trees in such vast mountains was amazing and overwhelming. The scale and vastness of the reforestation is no child play. Wallahuallam.

amin tan

• *Hajar*

May 25, 2011 at 9:27 pm

Salam YAB & diKasihi Tun,

Syukur Alhamdulillah, Tun dah sihat dan boleh berâ bloggingâ seperti biasaâ |
Tentang cara untuk menghasilkan HUTAN BUATAN, saya pun berasa pelik juga jika orang yang diberi tanggungjawab tidak peka dengan keadaan & kedudukan pokok-pokok di dalam HUTAN SEBENAR.

Inilah masalahnya, takkan lah perkara mudah seperti ini pun Tun kena beri pandangan, tetapi inilah hakikatnya. Saya yang bukan pakar dalam hal ini pun rasanya kalau di beri tugas tersebut akan melakukannya seperti yang Tun utarakan, tanpa disuruh.

Terima kasih Tun.

*** Semoga Allah SWT sentiasa melindungi Tun sekeluarga ***

• *Tunku Sofiah Jewa*

May 26, 2011 at 1:34 am

Beloved Tun,

Your piece on â Planting Treesâ reminds me of â The Heart of the Treeâ , a poem by American poet Henry Cuyler Bunner(1855 – 1896) which goes as follows:

What does he plant who plants a tree?

He plants a friend of sun and sky;

He plants the flag of breezes free;
The shaft of beauty, towering high.
He plants a home to heaven anigh
For song and mother-croon of bird
In hushed and happy twilight heard –
The treble of heaven's harmony –
These things he plants who plants a tree.
What does he plant who plants a tree?
He plants cool shade and tender rain,
And seed and bud of days to be,
And years that fade and flush again;
He plants the glory of the plain;
He plants the forest's heritage;
The harvest of a coming age;
The joy that unborn eyes shall see –
These things he plants who plants a tree.
What does he plant who plants a tree?
He plants, in sap and leaf and wood,
In love of home and loyalty
And far-cast thought of civic good –
His blessing on the neighbourhood
Who in the hollow of His hand
Holds all the growth of all our land –
A nation's growth from sea to sea
Stirs in his heart who plants a tree.
Malaysia may be blessed with a climate and soil that enable trees to take root and grow very fast.
But nothing can match the blessing that our country has in having in our midst a statesman
extraordinaire who never seems to fail to share his thoughts and ideas even from the seclusion of
his hospital bed where he was brought in hardly a week ago.
I know that Tun Siti and the doctors are taking good care of you at IJN, Tun, but all the same, do
not overstretch yourself and give Che Det blog a rest!
My thoughts and prayers, and those of every member of my family, are always with you and Tun
Siti.
With much affection.
Tunku Sofiah

• *mgpunya*
May 26, 2011 at 12:29 pm

YABhg Tun,
....unfortunately, the town where I live, Local Government turn all available land into concrete
jungle!! Yes....we have more shops than parking lots too..

• *amr28*
July 3, 2011 at 8:33 am

Assalamualaikum Tun...

Ana cadangkan kita suburkan KL dengan taman Kurma Ajwa (Kurma Rasulullah) pemimpin Teragung sekian Manusia dan Makhluk ALLAH dan semoga dengan berkah Kurma Ajwa tu dapatlah kita merasai (InsyALLAH) Hikmah dan Hidayah ALLAH yang telah banyak jauh tersimpang dengan noda-noda dunia kini..... Semoga dengan RahamatNYA "BERSIH" lah Batin kita untuk zahirkan kerBersihan perbuatan...
Semoga ALLAH terus cucuri rahmatNYA pada Tun setelah NikmatNYA sekian lama ini...Amin

Source: <http://chedet.cc/blog/?p=524>