

Paying a special personal tribute

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POEMS and *pantun* peppered the five-day proceedings of the 54th Umno general assembly, with almost all delegates spicing up their addresses with verses, some of which had been "borrowed" from well-known local poets while others were originals. So when journalist and New Straits *Times* group editor Datuk Ahmad A. Talib took the podium to pay a personal tribute to Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad with a poem *Tiada Kau Berdosa*, the crowd could not help but make some cynical remarks.

But as he recited his four-versed poem, occasionally in a choked voice, there was a hushed silence. All eyes and ears were on him.

Dr Mahathir, who kept his head down during the recital, appeared

moved by the touching poem which spoke of his exemplary leadership and posed the pertinent question of the future of the Malays without his wisdom and guidance.

For Ahmad, it was a special tribute to a great leader, the man and Prime Minister whom he had been covering in his 30-year career as a reporter. Ahmad had earlier said before the recital that he was inspired to write the poem after hearing Dr Mahathir's speech at the opening of the assembly. He also said fellow newsmen would remember Dr Mahathir as a man of substance.

As he read out the last line, all eyes turned towards Dr Mahathir, and then applause followed and everyone clapped in unison.

This is the first time a journalist

has been given the chance to take the stage at the Umno general assembly.

tiada kau berdosa
tiada kau berdosa padaku
tiada kau berdosa pada Melayu
tapiingin ku tahu
bagaimana Melayu tanpa mu
tiada kau leter tidak menentu
tiada kau puji dengan melulu
tiada kau marahtanpa periksa
dahulu
tiada kau tangisi tanpa sesuatu
sebenarnya,
perdana menteri ku
kata-kata mu pedoman ku
tingkah laku mu teladan bagi ku
sebenarnya,
perdana men teri ku
kaulah inspirasi ku.

■ Ahmad A. Talib

Pantun by Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak:

Berkereta kebal di balik papan
Meredah liat, daki dantanah
Demi survival Umno di masa
depan
Hapuskan hasad dengki dan
fitnah.
(Tribute to Dr Mahathir)
Dr Mahathirjuga Kak Hasmah
Nampak serious tapi peramah
Prinsip mu jujur bersih amanah
Menjadipemimpin harapan
ummah
Terima kasih kita ucapkan
Tidak terbalas jasa mu tuan
Bangsa dibina dengan kemajuan
Nama mu harum sepanjang
zaman.

Pantun by Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib:

Bangunlah kasih umat Melayu
Belahan asal satu turunan
Bercampur arah dari dahulu
Hanya Umno tempat kita
perjuangkan.

Pantun penned by Umno supreme council members Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Datuk Jamaluddin Jarjis (Second Finance Minister) and read by Tan Sri Abdul Hamid Othman during his winding-up speech:

Islam di Malaysia Islam khadari
Dr Mahathirpemikir semua ini
Ulama Pas bukanpewaris Nabi
Memecah umat itu saja yang
mereka reti.

Tan Sri Abdul Hamid Othman
If I say Z love you please don't say
no
Kalau nak selamatkan Bahasa
Melayu
Berjuanglah di dalam Umno.