

We are indeed very fortunate to have the Tunku -a man of noble birth and character and of outstanding statesmanship and diplomacy, as our Prime Minister and national leader.

My loyalty to Tunku is wellknown. As I have said earlier, he is not only my leader and friend, but I also regard him as a father. Had my father been alive today, he would not have been much older than the Tunku.

May Allah shower upon him all the blessings on his birthday and grant him good health and long life so that our Tunku will continue to guide us towards greater peace and greater prosperity for many more years to come.

THE CULTURAL PROBLEMS

THE TUN PRAISES THE MALAYSIAN SOCIETY OF ORIENTALISTS

Tun Abdul Razak described as timely the Cultural Conference of the Malaysian Society of Orientalists held at the Library Room of the University of Malaya on 22nd October, 1965. "We will be interested to know the cultural impact on nation building in a multi-racial society such as ours." he added.

The subject of your conference, "The Cultural Problems of Malaysia in the context of South East Asia" is one not only of tremendous interest to me personally but also of vital importance to the people of Malaysia and the future development of this country.

Malaysia, as most of you well know, is a multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-cultural country. It is a melting place of the great cultures of the great countries of Asia—of India, China and the Polynesian region of Asia. Also in comparatively recent history Malaysia has been the subject of cultural impacts and influences by countries of the Middle East and by European countries. Therefore Malaysia can truly be said to be the melting pot of the cultures of the great countries of the world. You will, therefore, agree with me that cultural problems of Malaysia will make a very interesting study as Malaysia represents various cultures of Asia, the Middle East and Europe.

I must say this conference that you are now holding on the cultural problems of Malaysia is indeed timely. Since independence Malaysia has undergone rapid changes and development in various fields of activities.

Our main problem and one uppermost in Government's mind is the welding together of the various racial groups that have made this country their home and the object of their undivided loyalty. It has always been the policy of this government, the Alliance Government to maintain and strengthen goodwill and understanding and friendship among our people of all races so that ultimately they will be able to regard themselves as members of one nation, as one people.

This process must necessarily take time but it must be the unshakeable determination of all of us to move ahead towards this ultimate goal so that we can build a happy, prosperous and united country. Therefore in our task of building a united nation, development of culture is a problem to which we must pay due attention.

As I have said. Malaysia is a melting pot of the most important cultural traditions in human history. Here the cultures of China. India, the Middle East. Europe and the indigenous Malay-Polynesian culture have come together into one area as nowhere else in the world. Therefore the challenge that faces the leadership of this country today is the development and harmonization of these various cultures, so that we can evolve a truly national culture. That is why ever since our achievement of independence, the development of our culture has been the subject of discussion and thought, not only by the Government but by various voluntary bodies.

I am indeed happy there has been established now a Malaysian Society of Orientalists which I have no doubt will play a great part in helping to promote the study of cultures and languages of our multi-racial society.

In the development of our society our policy must be not to change existing patterns of our culture in the sense that we impose a new pattern of culture to our people but we should rather develop existing traditions and the way of life, evolve them into a way of life that is compatible with modern development and with the National aspirations of our people.

The various parts of Malaysia had been subject to colonial rule for over a century. Fortunately under the British colonial rule our traditional way of life, our customs were allowed to remain and in many cases undisturbed. Therefore with independence there came a general awakening among our people to evolve our own cultural identity as opposed to political and cultural domination by the colonial power.

Ever since we achieved independence, we have endeavoured to carry out development, to give our people greater opportunities in the various fields of activities and to give them a higher and better standard of living. Our development programme does not only include the development of our economy and the development of a higher standard of living but also include the development of other things essential to the people of a happy nation; the development of a free personalis. free to smile, free to worship, free to talk, free to choose one's own way of life and free to advance by the application of one's own effort and ability. I

We have to carry out all these developments through democrat processes. We haw a democratic Constitution which not only guarantees everyone of our citizens a rightful place in our country hut also protects his rights and privileges. We believe in the ideals of freedom. justice and fair play and these ideals are embodied in our Constitution.

It has therefore been the cardinal policy of the Alliance Government within the structure of our democratic constitution to direct all our efforts in all our national policies towards creating strong united and loyal citizens from the various races in our country. Our national education policy is aimed at bringing our children of all races together, learning the same things in the same way and under the same roof so that they will feel, they will share the same ideals and the same destiny.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we in the Government are most interested to know your views, your assessments, your findings of the various problems in the cultural development of our country. We will be interested to know the cultural impact on nation building in a multi-racial society such as ours. We will be interested to know the ways in which we can change the attitude of our people, their approach to life so that they will cultivate a spirit of self-reliance and self-respect.

Our policy is not only to build a united people but also to make them stand on their own feet particularly those in the rural areas so that they will have self-reliance and self-respect necessary for a civilised and progressive nation. The progress of a nation is the sum total of the efforts of all its citizens and we must therefore be able to exhort everyone of our citizens to do his or her best to make this country a happy place for our people and for our children in the years to come.

Ladies and Gentlemen, having posed these various problems facing our country and our people. I have great pleasure in declaring your Conference open and wishing it all the success that it deserves.

TRUE SPIRIT OF THE COMMONWEALTH

MALAYSIA IS A FULL AND EQUAL MEMBER

In opening the 3rd Exhibition in Kuala Lumpur organised by the Malayan Branch of the Royal Commonwealth Society on 24th May, 1965, Tun Abdul Razak said. "Thanks to the initiative and foresight of our beloved Prime Minister. who in 1962 suggested the formation of this branch. we are now able to celebrate as full and equal members of the Commonwealth together with our brothers and sisters in the other Commonwealth countries."

One of the main objects of this Society is to bring about a better understanding among the people of the Commonwealth and I think that exhibitions such as this are an excellent way of enhancing the goodwill and understanding that members the Commonwealth share with one another. When one is studying the Commonwealth, it is useful to be quite clear in our mind what in fact it is. I do not think that one should have a definition of the Commonwealth because in many ways it defies that definition.

One Commonwealth Statesman some time ago described Commonwealth as an unorganised organisation. There is no constitutional or legal tie that binds together countries of the Commonwealth.