

THE PRINCIPLES OF ROTARY AND THE UNITED NATIONS

Speaking to Ipoh Rotarians at their dinner on 2nd July. 1967, Tun Razak expressed the view that if the United Nations General Assembly could adopt the principles of Rotary International perhaps there would be more peace in this strife-torn world of today,

I have been told that a certain tribe in Africa had a very fine method of dealing with public speakers; the method which you might like to adopt as a Rotary principle.

This African tribe considers long speeches injurious both to the speaker and the audience, and in order to protect both, there is an un-written law that every public speaker must stand on *one foot* while addressing his audience: as soon as the other foot touches the ground, his speech must stop!

Also, I understand other people say that an after-dinner speech is like a baby because it is easy *to conceive*, but difficult *to deliver*, and even more difficult, *standing on one foot*

Would you like me, Mr President, to stand on one foot? I can, if you want me to!

However, Ladies and Gentlemen, talking of "feet", I think our country, Malaysia, which is becoming more stable and firmly established in the world, owes its stability to the fact that we stand *not on one foot*. or on two *feet*. With the unity of our three main races, the Malays, Chinese and Indians, we have *three strong feet*, firmly on the ground, provided that we can nurture and strengthen, from day to day, the unity of our three peoples of different origin!

Anyone who does anything to break *this unity* is in fact, like the un-written law of the African tribe I mentioned, asking us to ^h> and progress as a nation by standing on one foot alone.

I have no wish to bore you with a political speech, but, as you know, on 31st August, this year, we will not only celebrate our annual Merdeka Day, but also, celebrate *ten years of progress* as an independent nation. We can now look back with pride and Pleasure, that in the ten years since 1957, we have achieved a

tremendous lot, particularly, in the field of Development, and we have many plans for the future, so that in the decade ahead of us, Malaysia will achieve more and more and achieve our goal of becoming a really prosperous and thriving nation.

But. Development plans, development projects and an increased standard of living are not enough in themselves, neither can they be achieved in Malaysia without the application of the basic philosophy of the Alliance Government of which our main aim. *first and foremost*, is to achieve *national unity*, and make each one of us. whether we are of Chinese, Indian or Malay origin, feel in fact that we are real citizens of our country, and are all one hundred per cent Malaysian.

As I have said so many times before, our policy is not ever to accentuate the differences of the racial origin of our people. but are to accentuate and focus on our similarities w that we can work, live and strive together as one unified people—the people of Malaysia.

You Rotarians. not only, here in Ipoh. but throughout even city and town in which there is a Rotary group, are already helping tremendously in fostering this spirit of national unity. I would like to thank you who are here tonight and all your fellow-Rotarians throughout Malaysia, for the good work and the contribution that you are giving to our country. Keep up this spirit, not only in words, but also in deeds, and you will help push Malaysia forward on the path of progress.

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In fact. I was thinking the other day, it would be a good thing if the General Assembly of the United Nations could adopt the principles of "Rotary International" and apply them, because if they did, perhaps there would be more peace in this strife-stricken world of to-day.

To go back to this word *Unity*. there seems to be. particularly, in this area of Perak. some, what I might call, *deliberate misunderstanding* of our constitutional condition of applying and of adopting the National Language.

The introduction of the National Language *should worry no one* because it does not in fact discredit or discourage any other language in Malaysia, which may be used by various groups day-to-day, but when the time comes that all of us can communicate

with each other, irrespective of our original native tongue; then, I believe, that the good-will which is already evident and abundant in our relationship with each other; will increase ten-fold because language is the main means of human communication. I would like you to regard the national language as a *common denominator* of discourse and goodwill amongst us.

It is not difficult to acquire a working knowledge of it. Anyone who takes the trouble to acquire this working knowledge will find that his horizon of human friendship will be very much broadened and brightened, while at the same time, he can still use to his own content. English. Tamil. Cantonese or any other dialect in which he is accustomed to speak.

We have been independent for ten years, and this liberty of independence must be protected if we are to survive, in the future, as an independent nation for ever, and not allow our sovereignty to be subjugated to other evil influences such as the main threat to-day. the influence of Communism.

In a Democracy, everyone talks about freedom of speech and freedom of expression. This we already have firmly established in Malaysia.

I am not so much concerned with the right of everyone *to say anything he pleases*. as I am about our need, as a self-governing people, *to hear and to understand and to absorb everything. the right things* which are relevant to our progress in unity as a nation.

And this is the type of democracy that we must build; it is a democracy in which the listeners must have the ability and choice *of determination and discrimination*, whereby they can *weigh the words of speakers* and then *decide for themselves* the direction in which they want their own nation to progress; and, therefore, *not be misled* by mischief-makers!

Let me give you an example from the world of shipbuilding.

I understand that every ship which sails the high seas is fitted with an instrument, which keeps it steady on its course, no matter how rough the seas may be. or how strong a storm may be. and that instrument is called a Gyroscope.

The dictionary definition of this Gyroscope is "a heavy fly-wheel *rotated* at very high speed and supported at right angles to the

direction of the steering wheel. It keeps the ship on a steady course.

There is a definite connection between the *rotating* movement of a Gyroscope and the movement of Rotary International in Malaysia. They both have the same effect except that one stabilises a ship and the other helps to stabilise the community.

Because, as I foresee the development of Malaysia in the future within the frame-work of our democratic way of life, the more stabilising institutions we have, and the more stabilised are our *electorate* who can judge for themselves sound commonsense approaches to progress, then the less will be the chances of our country falling into the cold-blooded hands of Communist leadership on the one hand, or on the other, of falling into the hoc-headed hands of irresponsible leadership!

FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS

I wish to emphasize that our willingness to give you the necessary co-operation to suppress what is regarded by your country as smuggling is made in good faith and the sincere belief that relations between our two countries could thereby be enhanced and be strengthened. We do this despite loss of revenue to our country and despite the risk of unemployment to the State of Sabah. This trade has been with us for many decades and as far as Sabah is concerned, it was a legal trade. The traders did not violate Malaysian laws. However, despite all these, we agree to co-operate with your Government in the belief that as friends and neighbours, we should understand each other's problems and should try to help each other as much as we could and one should not endeavour to prosper at the expense of the other.

— *Tun Abdul Razak said this after signing the Anti-Smuggling Agreement with the Philippines in Kuala Lumpur on 1st September, 1967.*