

The happiest PM in the world
MalaysiaKini.com
15 Oktober, 2012
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The Tunku once described himself as "the happiest prime minister" when he was interviewed in 1983, by Peter Hastings, the foreign editor of the Sydney Morning Herald (SMH).

Today, as we read about Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, and the tactics used against the rakyat, NGOs, civil liberty groups and the opposition, we see a man who resorts to foul play, even breaking the law if necessary, to prolong his political career and that of his party, Umno.

Perhaps, what the Tunku (left) possessed and what his successors lack is a sense of humour. Behind the calm purpose of his jokes, Tunku was able to show his spirit of tolerance.

Tunku laughed when Hastings reminded him of the time an Islamic group had sought the Tunku's support for adulterers to be stoned to death and he had replied: "There are not enough stones in Malaysia."

In his biography, 'Tunku: His Life and Times', the Tunku is described as looking resplendent in his morning coat and top hat, when he posed with Think Big, the race horse which won the Melbourne Cup in 1975. Just before he went up to receive the winner's trophy, Tunku swapped his top hat for a black songkok and as the cup was placed in his hands, said: "I thank God for our victory", a phrase which he repeated later that night at the Victory Cup Ball.

Those who knew Tunku would remember that most of his dinners ended-up on the dance-floor. He revived the Ronggeng (a Malay dance) and foreign dignitaries were invited to dance with their Malay hostesses. With this method, he succeeded in diplomacy, both foreign and domestic, something which would be impossible to replicate in today's intolerant Malaysia.

The current crop of Malay leaders would never dare emulate Tunku by pursuing their hobbies openly, or even attribute gambling successes to God. They'd rather lie, for the sake of political expediency.

Many Malays of today are two-faced. The pious façade they present to the public is only to advance themselves in politics or to gain commercial advantage. It is widely known that prominent Malays including high-ranking members of the civil service, including the judiciary and police, have private poker sessions. The only time they don't hide from the public eye, is when they are abroad.

So, why is gaming in casinos and betting on horses prohibited, but corruption allowed? Why should politicians be allowed to play Russian roulette with taxpayer's money but individual Malays prevented from gambling with their own money?

In the SMH interview, Tunku was asked his views on the Look East policy of the prime minister of the time, Mahathir Mohamad. Tunku said: "Look east? Why should I? I have always liked to look in all directions."

'I like people to be happy'

At a birthday party in Kuala Lumpur in 1987, Tunku abandoned his prepared text and towards the end of his speech repeated his scorn for Mahathir: "Whether we look East or West, we shall always be friends with England."

Tunku told Hastings (SMH) about the influence of the Islamic traditionalists and drinking mores of the Malaysian politicians of the 80s: "It is changing. I used to provide scotch, brandy and champagne at my banquets. The people did not mind. They are tolerant, but Tun Razak, my successor, never liked it. He feared the political consequences. I like people to be happy."

The Tunku comes across as a normal human being, one the rakyat feels comfortable with. He did not hide behind the veil of hypocrisy, unlike his successors.

Perhaps, the Tunku's "what you see is what you get" attitude endeared him to the public, rather than the sham public face which many of his successors wear.

When Tunku was advised to stop drinking alcohol at one of the earlier Umno meetings, he said: "People must accept me as I am: my bad habits and my virtues. At the age of 48, I cannot change them."

Like other prominent Malay families, Tunku sent his daughter to study as a boarder at the Light Street Convent in Penang. Today, church halls have to remove crucifixes and other emblems of Christianity when Umno leaders are present. Umno expects people of other faiths to respect Muslims and Islam, but thinks nothing of trampling on the rights of other faiths, or accusing them of taking over the country, simply to rile the Malays.

Mahathir exploited the vulnerability of the Malays and gave the Umno Malays legal protection, in the same way that wildlife organisations protect endangered plants and animals. Mahathir made it an offence for anyone to threaten the Umno Malays by changing the environmental, or other parameters, in which the Umno Malays would thrive.

Two weeks ago, Najib argued that successful Malaysian women risked making men "an endangered species". He is wrong. What he meant was that Umno Malays are the world's most protected species.

Didn't Mahathir and Najib learn in school, that if you take an animal from the wild and

domesticate it, the animal soon forgets to fend for itself?

Bred in captivity

Successive generations of Umno Malays have been bred in captivity and have become dependent on the food from their keeper. If released into their natural settings, Umno Malays will die. Like most caged animals, they have become lazy and obese. Their mental processes deteriorate because they lack the stimuli necessary for survival. Umno Malays could be weaned off their bad habits, but Umno will never allow that to happen.

If the zookeepers (Umno leaders) have no animals (Umno Malays) to take care of, then they are out of a job.

In today's Malaysia, the fund for maintaining the Umno zoo is running low. The keepers have siphoned off most of the takings from the zoo. With food stocks running low, portions are small and feeding is erratic. The animals are distressed. They have been used to large meals, at any time of day, not just at feeding times.

These are dangerous times. The animals are waiting to pounce. One wrong move and the keeper becomes their next meal. Those of us watching from outside the cage would then be happiest. If Umno Malays refuse to be mentally liberated now, they run the risk of extinction.

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Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/211779>