

**Appreciating symbols of Malaysia**  
**Malaysianmirror.com**  
**31 August 2010**

WHAT do the Jalur Gemilang, hibiscus, Negaraku, tiger, Proton car, National Monument and national emblem have in common?

Many of us know that the Jalur Gemilang and Negaraku are our national flag and national anthem respectively, but not many of the younger generation realise that the hibiscus (bunga raya) and tiger are also our proud national symbols.

If we observe, most of the major organisations and private sector such as Proton, Maybank, Universiti Malaya, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Filem Negara Malaysia also use one of these symbols in their logo.

However, stepping into the 53rd year of independence on Tuesday, many of us are not aware of the real meaning and number of national symbols that we have in our country.

Are Malaysians aware that the national flag, national emblem, national anthem, bunga raya, Tugu Negara (National Monument), Bahasa Malaysia, Proton Saga, Rukunegara, tiger and National Mosque are among our national symbols?

How many of us were actually offended or bothered when demonstrators burnt the Jalur Gemilang, spat and stomped on it in front of the Malaysian embassy in Jakarta this week? All these symbols reflect national identity which remains clouded not only among the younger generation but also among adults.

Our official language Bahasa Malaysia, our very first national car Proton Saga, the National Monument in Taman Tasik Perdana and the National Mosque in Jalan Sultan Hishamuddin are taken for granted by the younger generation who are supposed to pass down the information to the next generation.

Perhaps there are some confusion among Malaysians when asked if they know that the tiger is one of the country's national symbols.

Even officials and academicians responsible for preserving the country's heritage or teaching and researching history when contacted are not sure whether the tiger is an official symbol of the country or not.

But according to Natural Resources and Environment Minister Douglas Uggah Embas in his message in the National Tiger Plan for Malaysia 2008-2020, the tiger was chosen with the hope that the animal would also be protected from extinction in this country.

"This animal's symbolic importance is illustrated by the two tigers flanking Malaysia's Coat of Arms in a protective stance," he said.

On appreciation of the national identities, National Archives director-general Sidek Jamil said the younger generation today did not have strong attachments to such symbols.

He said all the symbols had their own meaning behind them while representing unity, peace and the country's history.

"It is not easy to get proper recognition as a symbol of a country. We had to go through so many processes that could take years sometimes," he said in an exclusive interview with

Bernama.

For example, he said, our national flower, the bunga raya was chosen after a public competition where many other flowers such as orchid were proposed.

"Many people do not want to internalise and appreciate the value of these symbols.

"Even some of them do not know that the bunga raya has five petals," he noted.

Asked whether the current school syllabus was good enough for students to know and appreciate these national symbols, Sidek said it was but the end results depended largely on how teachers delivered the message to the students.

"Instead of teachers explaining to students, doing it differently where students can talk about it will give better understanding of the meaning and the history of a particular symbol," he said.

"The exposure on all these valuable symbols should also not be restricted to schools but to extend to workplaces, shops, eateries and even hotels.

"You see today that most of the fast food restaurants reflect American culture with pictures such as of cowboys hanging all over the wall. I think this is how the West colonises our mind," Sidek said.

"Awareness should be everywhere...whether in schools, universities, workplaces, hotels and shopping complexes and on roads and highways," he added.

Copyright © 2009 [www.malaysiamirror.com](http://www.malaysiamirror.com)

Source :

<http://www.malaysianmirror.com/featuredetail/106-malaysia/49048-appreciating-symbols-of-malaysia>