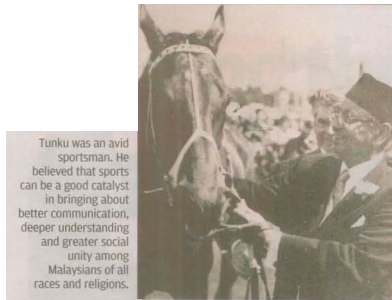




PERDANA LIBRARY
 PERDANA LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION
 NEWSPAPER CLIPPING

Newspaper	The Star
Date	28/8/2011



Tunku was an avid sportsman. He believed that sports can be a good catalyst in bringing about better communication, deeper understanding and greater social unity among Malaysians of all races and religions.

No ordinary prince

THE Father of Malaysia, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, was born on Feb 8, 1903. As the seventh prince of the royal house of Kedah, he enjoyed an elite education at the finest schools in the country and abroad, among them Penang Free School and Debsurin School in Bangkok.

Tunku graduated from St Catharine's College, Cambridge, with a Bachelor of Arts in Law and History in 1925. His hobbies reflected his upbringing - football, golf, riding and sailing.

Like many of the well-educated people of his time, he was employed in the highest prgaisation then, the civil service. He joined the Kedah government in 1931 and served for a decade, until the Japanese invasion. After Japan's surrender, he took up legal studies at the Inner Temple, one of the four Inns of Court in London, and was called to the Bar in 1949. He then joined the Kedah Legal Department, before moving to the Federal Legal Department in Kuala Lumpur.

From an early age, Tunku Abdul Rahman had shown a keen interest in social issues. He was always mindful of his birthright as a royal leader of the Malay race, and chafed at the colonial yoke that weighed heavily on his homeland.

He joined the United Malays National Organisation and rose steadily through the ranks, earning respect as a savvy and able leader. In August 1951 he resigned from his plum position in the civil service to succeed Dato Onn Jaafaras the leader of Umno.

Although he did not have the abrasive and ruthless dexterity of many politicians, Tunku was a natural leader with charisma, skill in building consensus, and a genuine love for people.

From 1952 he deftly guided Umno in an astute multi-racial, multi-cultural political alliance with the Malay Chinese Association and the Malayan Indian Congress. In 1955, the Alliance became the de facto semi-autonomous local government of the country when it won 51 of the 52 electable seats in the Federal Council.

Tunku became Chief Minister of the Federation of Malaya in that year, and the country's first Prime Minister when it gained independence in 1957. In 1963, Malaysia was born - when Sabah, Sarawak, and Singapore joined the Federation. Under his leadership, the fledgling nation prospered, with tin-mining and rubber cultivation as the main economic drivers.

An avid sportsman, Tunku believed that sports can be a good catalyst in bringing about better communication, deeper understanding and greater social unity among Malaysians of all races and religions. In 1966, he was elected the first president of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), a post he held for a decade.

Although Malaysia prospered economically, the communist insurgency, the Indonesian Confrontation (1963-66), and Singapore's secession in 1965 created underlying racial tension. The establishment of the Malaysian People's Revolutionary Army in May 1968 left a deep divide in the political and social fabric of the nation. In 1970, Tunku stepped down as prime minister and voluntarily relinquished the reins of power.

He then turned to religion and social welfare issues. From 1970-73, Tunku served as secretary-general of the Islamic Secretariat in Kedah, and remained actively involved in Islamic issues in Malaysia for the rest of his life.

He moved back to his lovely home-town in Penang, where he devoted his time to religious and social causes, and contributed actively to public debate through his regular columns in *The Star*. His articles and comments have been published in various collections, including *Looking Back* (1977) and *Reminiscence of Tunku Abdul Rahman on the Japanese Occupation, 1941-1945* (1983).

Tunku died peacefully on Dec 6, 1990, and was laid to rest at the Langgar Royal Mausoleum in Alor Setar.

To honour him, the Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Memorial in KL, which used to serve as his residence cum office from 1956-70, when he was Chief Minister, and subsequently, Prime Minister.

The memorial is a nostalgic place where young and old can rediscover interesting facts and information about Malaysia's Father of Independence, the politician, statesman and leader who proved that he was no ordinary prince.

- *The Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Memorial (03-2694 7277) is at Jalan Dato' Onn, KL, near Bank Negara. Take the MRT to the Braddisley Station at the RTM. From there, take the MRT to the Bank Negara Station. The memorial is at the junction of Jalan Dato' Onn and Jalan Sultan. It is open from 10am to 5pm, except on Mondays and public holidays.*