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133TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

## Tunku's birthday wish — stay united

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**F**EB 8 is a memorable day for Malaysians. While we celebrate Chinese New Year, let us not forget that this day also marks the 133th birth anniversary of Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, the best loved of all the leaders the nation has known, a towering icon known in the hearts of our people as *Bapa Kemerdekaan* and *Bapa Malaysia*.

This day also marks the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in London, on Tunku's 53rd birthday, and the golden jubilee of the opening of the Tugu Negara (National Monument) 10 years later on his 63rd birthday.

Chinese New Year has coincided with Tunku's birthday on two previous occasions: 1940 (Year of the Dragon) and 1959 (Year of the Boar).

In 1967, Tunku's birthday was celebrated on the eve of Chinese New Year.

It is interesting, as a way of remembering Tunku, to recollect his words of wisdom that were addressed to the Chinese on Feb 8, 1967, the eve of the Year of the Sheep.

"Tonight, it gives me great pleasure to come before Malaysian Chinese to wish them *Kong Hee Fatt Choy*. As I speak to you, Chinese families all over the country will be gathered together for their traditional family reunion dinner.

"There will be much firing of crackers as an expression of their joy, and those who live in the urban areas will no doubt be disturbed and perhaps lose a few hours of sleep. But, what does it matter, so long as it makes others happy.

"As I have said before, it is better to lose a little sleep through the firing of crackers than lose many lives through the firing of guns. Let everyone, therefore, take this noisy cracker-firing in the happy spirit of the joyous occasion.

"Chinese New Year, like our other great festivals, comes but once a year."

At the same time, he did not think anyone would begrudge the protection afforded to the indigenous people of this country, "who know no other country but this as their home".

"Chinese New Year's eve this year happens to fall on my birthday, and it would be a lovely present for me if you would only give some thought and attention to my advice on the need to live together in peace, goodwill and harmony."

The fulfilment of his dream for a happy and united Malaysia is the "lovely present" that the people of this country can offer in memory of the Tunku on this occasion of the first day of the Chinese New Year.

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8 Feb 2016



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