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Aide: Tunku cried like a child when May 13 riots broke

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GEORGE TOWN: The late Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj's love for his country was so immense that he sobbed like a child when the May 13 riots broke, one of his closest aides recalled.

Former Asst Supt of Police Owen Chung, who was Tunku's aide-de-camp, said the episode illustrated how much national unity meant to the nation's Bapa Malaysia.

"Tunku would only shed tears when he was truly sad. He confided in me his sorrows.

"The riots made him feel like all his hard work and efforts to unite the people were wasted and had gone down the drain.

"He never wanted the Malays and Chinese to fight each other," he said in an interview in conjunction with the 60th National Day at his residence in Bell Road here yesterday.

The 85-year-old Chung, who still sports his trademark handlebar moustache, said the first prime minister had never expected anything in return for his efforts.

"He said we must get the Malays,



Chinese, Indians, and even the Eurasians to be united. Then only will the country prosper. He was not out to make a buck," said Chung, the great-grandson of Kapitän Chung Keng Kwee who was a leader of the Chinese community in Penang and Perak in the late 1800s.

Chung, who became Tunku's aide in 1972, also recalled an incident where Tunku had helped a contractor's mother who wanted to emigrate from China to Malaysia.

He said the grateful contractor wanted to reward Tunku and him,

but the former refused to accept anything.

"Tunku told me, 'Owen, what is not yours, do not take'. He was a man of principle. He always repeated that to me, never to take anything," added Owen, who served Tunku until his death in 1990.

A trip down memory lane:

Chung pointing to a framed photograph of himself (standing, left) and his colleagues posing with Tunku Abdul Rahman (seated), during an interview with *The Star* at his residence in Bell Road, Penang.

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Chung reiterated that Malaysia would not be what it is today without Tunku's great sacrifices.

He said when Tunku was on his deathbed, he allowed only six people in the hospital room in Kuala Lumpur.

"He called for me. I was most honoured," he added.



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