

**Moderate Civilisation Cannot Be Realised By Neglecting History, Says Historian Dr Khoo Bernama
January 18, 2012**

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 18 (Bernama) -- A moderate civilisation will not be realised if history becomes an unfavourable subject neglected by students, historian Prof Emeritus Tan Sri Dr Khoo Kay Kim said today.

Saying that history is the mother of all disciplines, he said he is bewildered with the current situation where students are not even aware of their own history.

"It is very sad. As we become more modern, we are becoming more ignorant, but we are very good at confrontation. Ask them about Malaysia ... who was the first Malay to become a doctor, who was the first to enter the civil service, they don't know ... 90 times out of 100 they cannot answer," he said in his paper on "The Role of Education in Nurturing Moderation" presented at the International Conference on the Global Movement of the Moderates, here.

Dr Khoo said the number of students taking the history subject is declining, and cited the example of the history department at Universiti Malaya which used to take in 1,300 students every year but is now taking in not more than 300.

He also said that history should teach facts and not emphasise mythical figures.

"I have been criticised lately because I said there is no such person as Hang Tuah or Hang Jebat. They think it is very important. If you don't agree with me, show me the proof. To me, they are nothing but mythical figures and you must not emphasise mythical figures.

"In Kuala Lumpur, for example, there is Jalan Hang Tuah, Jalan Hang Jebat, but there is no Jalan Sutan Puasa, the leader of the Mandailing, the first who opened up KL," he said, adding that history and the education system should be revised.

Approached after his presentation, Khoo said that to create a moderate civilisation, the education system should also stress good values to prevent students from becoming more materialistic.

"Our education system does not emphasise noble values such as moderation. If we raise that in universities, they will laugh. What they want is to know how to get rich quick. Materialism has become so important in our society," he said.

Asked whether the concept of moderation could be implemented in education, he said it could be done provided that the students have to be advised beforehand.

"I believe that if we want to emphasise that aspect, we have to convince our students that they have to be more patient, and not just want to quarrel," he said.

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