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FEBRUARY 5, 1967













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February 5, 1967



**TAM exclusive
Conversation
with Malaysia's
Tengku Abdul Rahman**

Focus on
Photography '67



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Please address all correspondence to:
The Letters Editor,
The Asia Magazine,
31 Queen's Road Central, Hong Kong.

STUDENTS AND POLITICS

Sir — Today's students are tomorrow's leaders. Their participation in politics is therefore vital. Yet in Singapore the government and the ruling party provide moral support only for factions sympathetic to them. This is unfair.

Thomas Tan

University of Singapore

Sir — Students have always been a political force to reckon with in Asia; but often they exceed the limits by upholding the wrong cause. It is ridiculous to see university students demonstrating against cow-slaughter. In Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University recently, violent battle took place between students from two faculties — over football.

G. Melwani

Kowloon, Hong Kong

Sir — Political leaders, once in power, usually advise students to keep off politics. But in opposition they always make use of student-movements.

Remeo D. Villar

University of the Philippines

Sir — Your 'University symposium' was analytical and informative.

W. K. Leung

University of Hong Kong

ASIAN COMMUNISM

Sir — A benevolent dictatorship or a mild variety of Communism is the only alternative to poverty and economic stagnation one witnesses in the major Asian nations, such as India and Indonesia.

Leslie Dermott

Nagoya, Japan

HUSTON'S CASTLE

Sir — Writer Cox's scathing comments on 'The Bible' prompted me precisely to see the movie. A type of 'soft-sell'?

David Cheong

Osaka, Japan

Sir — No director on earth can be a hundred percent true to every letter in a classic, not to speak of the Bible, when he translate them into celluloid. It is foolish to demand that he does.

T. Nirasawa

Shinagawaku, Tokyo

Sir — I saw 'The Bible' twice. As one who loves the Bible stories, in my opinion, the whole movie was beautifully and faithfully produced. I hope Director Huston will make 'The Bible — Part II', continuing from where he left off.

Sheila Leven-hagen

Brizay Park, Singapore

Sun Tan

By Collette



"'Push-button age' indeed! As far as I'm concerned it is still the 'Push-husband age'!"

ASIANS TO WATCH

Sculptor carves a niche for himself

HONG KONG'S largest bronze relief mural, all 270 square feet of it, is the handiwork of an unassuming, soft-spoken, Chinese sculptor, Van Lau. Born in Vietnam 34 years ago, Lau schooled his talents in the Fine Arts Department of the Taiwan Normal University, from where he graduated in 1959. He first came into public view at a group showing in Hong Kong in 1961. Lau is happiest working in metal. While most of his contemporaries eschew colour for form, Lau seeks to combine both, in the search for dramatic expression of his ideas. Like most adherents of the lively arts, Lau has done his share of travelling — Tokyo, the United States, Europe — showing off his work and keeping in touch with contemporary developments in his chosen field. A member of Hong Kong's prestigious Circle Art Group, Lau was one-time lecturer in the extra-mural department of the colony's Chinese University. A qualified architect, he also teaches modern design.



Innovations for tomorrow

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COVER. Wearing a jaunty golf cap, Tengku Abdul Rahman, Prime Minister of Malaysia, surveys a course at Kuala Lumpur. "I'm a poor golfer," he says. His handicap is 24. Photographed by Dick Baldovino.

Credits: Pages 4, 5, 6 and 7, Dick Baldovino; pages 16 and 17, drawing by Willi Fernandez; pages 18 and 19, Takeshi Takahara.

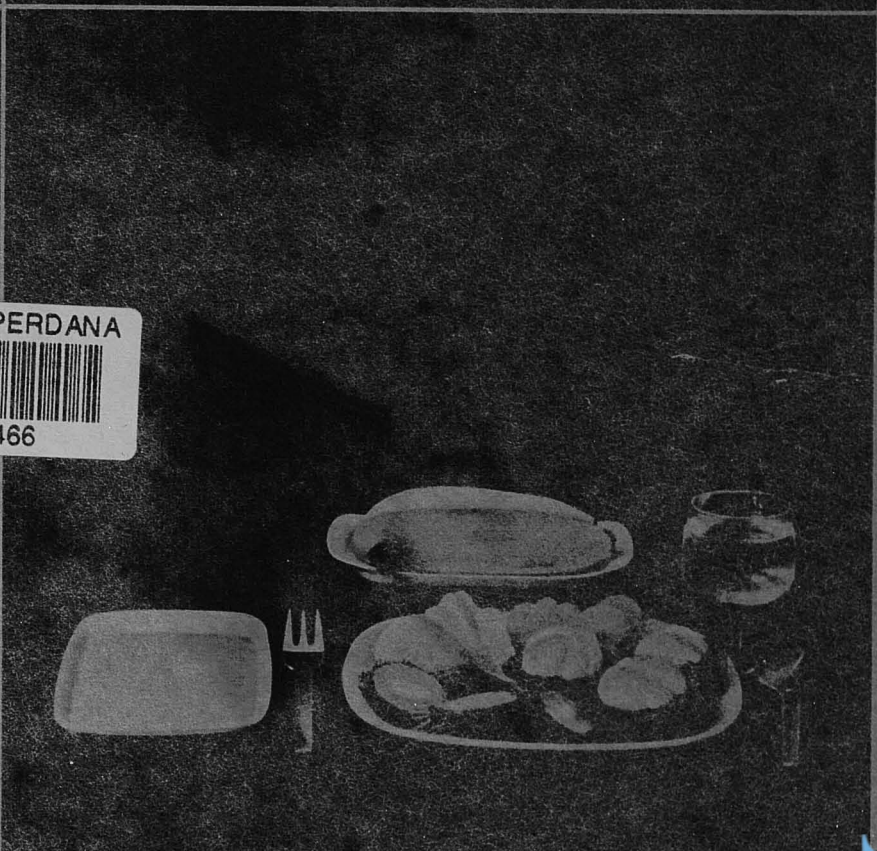
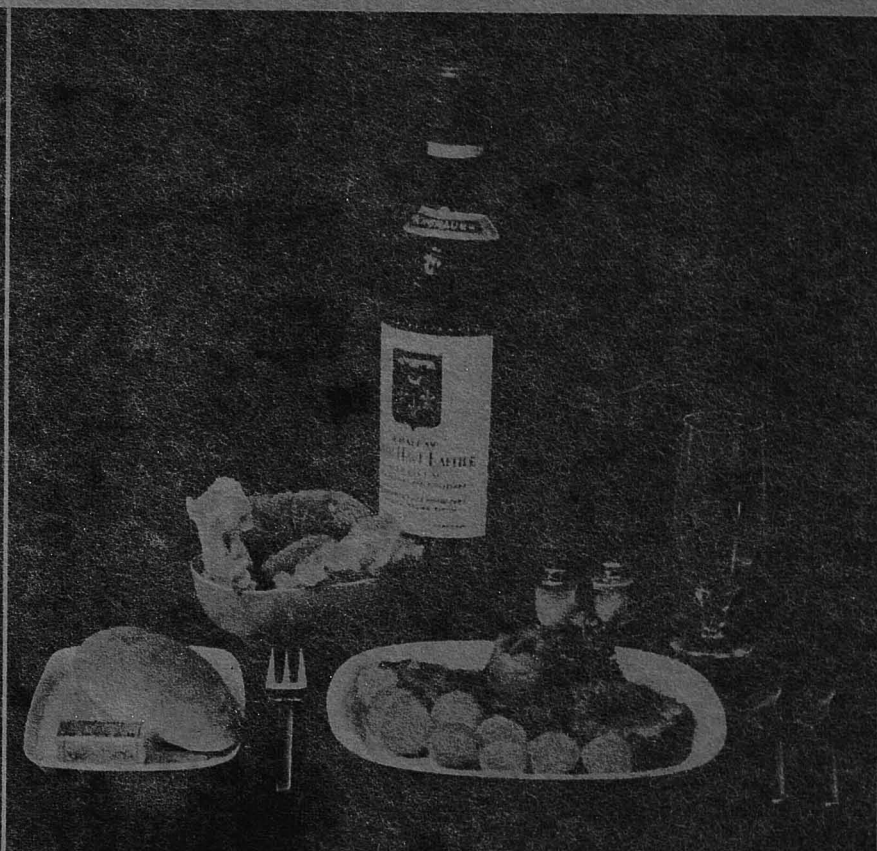
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YAYASAN PERDANA



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PERDANA LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION YAYASAN KEPIMPINAN PERDANA

An Asian Prime Minister's story

Mr. Prime Minister, we would like this conversation to be a warm, personal and frank one. Could you start by talking about your childhood, your family and those memories which still crowd the mind?

I am the twenty-first son of the Sultan of Kedah, Sultan Abdul Halim Shah. My mother, Makche Menjelara, was the daughter of Luang Mira a chieftain of one of the Siamese Shan states. I grew up in a palace in those spacious days when we had everything, for ours was a Royal family in every sense of the word. My Siamese mother's influence was always very strong, because my father had other wives and other children. He could not devote his attention to any particular son. It was my mother who guided me and to whom I went for comfort and the love children seek.

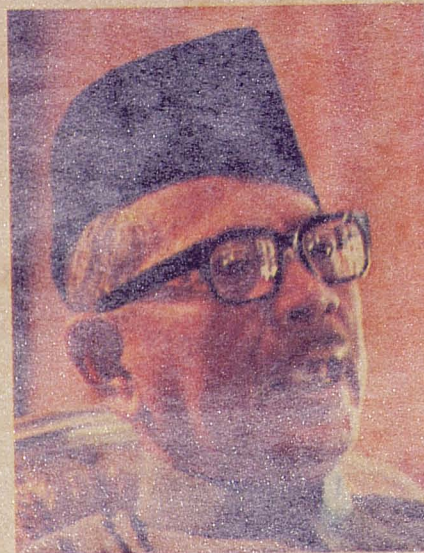
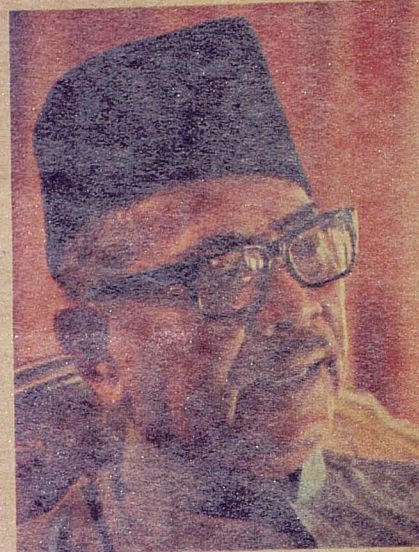
What kind of education did you have around this time?

I had to go to many schools, Malay schools and Siamese schools in Bangkok. Thereafter I went to the Penang Free School to study English and from here I was awarded the first Kedah scholarship to attend a British public school. I had only been in an English school for three years, but I was too old for admission to any good British public school. I was 16. Naturally, I had to try and get into a university. I was eventually admitted to Catherine College at Cambridge. Here I learnt my first lesson in patriotism.

It happened like this. I asked for the right to live in the College. The College is a small one, and students were permitted to live in rotation for a brief period. When it came to my third year I was still not given a room in the College. I made another request. The clergyman, who was the Dean, told me 'you know this College was built for English gentlemen, I can't let you stay here, because I know the Englishmen won't like it.' I said, 'this is very good, I wish you had told me earlier. Anyway, I am quite happy to know your mind and the mind of Englishmen.'

Were you terribly upset about this at the time?

I wrote back home and told them what had happened. The Kedah Government got very angry and sent the British Adviser to see



"I WOULD LIKE to retire right now," he says with the satisfaction which derives from achievement, "but they won't let me." Few men have endured in power without losing popularity; fewer still find themselves wedded to office because of popular pressure, as does Tengku Abdul Rahman Putra, Prime Minister of Malaysia. At 64, the burdens of leadership are beginning to show. The diversions of life — cuddling his adopted children, boating, golfing, watching thrill-packed television shows, playing poker late night with friends — are what he seeks in the evening of his life. The Tengku is an uncomplicated person — warm, humane, and engagingly friendly. "I have achieved everything I set out to do," he concedes, seemingly in an attempt to rationalize his desire to step down from office. Toward this end, he has farmed out most of his authority, especially to his designated heir-apparent, Tun Abdul Razak, the Deputy Prime Minister. But patriotism, the ideals of service, burn fiercely within him. The Tengku realizes that his nation needs him now, more than it ever did. And while this conviction persists he will stay on, doing what he knows best.

the College authorities. After he had intervened, the Dean himself called me up and said 'I am very sorry, I did not know you were a prince, the son of the Sultan. Of course I will give you a room.' I turned him down. I told him I was not going to move in. I was not accepting it because I was the son of the Sultan. I wanted to get in like any other student. I have never told anyone that I was the son of the Sultan of Kedah. I never went into residence. That was for me a big lesson. From then on I became a worker for independence.

Of course I did not work very hard at it at the time. I was a bit slow. You see I was very fond of life; fond of sports, music, cars, horses and the skirts. But deep in my heart I was a patriotic man. In those quiet moments, those serious moments, I would think how we could be free, independent.

I was reading law and history at Cambridge. I graduated in 1926 and returned home for a holiday. I went back to London to study law. But London is no place to study. I was very young. There was no proper control. I was fooling around for three years. Got through only in three subjects in law.

What kind of allowance did you receive when you were in London, how did you spend it?

I suppose I got more allowance than most students. My scholarship gave me £400 a year and my private income was £600. That was more than many students received, and those were the days when a penny was a penny. Naturally all this money spoilt me. When I was at Cambridge I had a Riley super sports car and other sports cars. Later I went in for slower cars like the Austin and Standard. My mother used to send money every time I wanted to buy a new car.

I also used to get into fights at the dance halls. Some Chinese restaurants, three of them in fact, barred me from going inside. You see when I used to be dancing or dining with my girl friends, the British and the Jews in those days, used to pass remarks. I used to give it back to them, particularly when I was dancing with pretty girls. So I used to get into fights. I lived extravagantly at that time.

Finally, I decided to return home. This was in 1931. On the boat to Malaya I met the

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