

TEXT OF SPEECH BY TUAN HAJI SHA'ARI TADIN, SENIOR
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY (CULTURE), AT THE OPENING
OF THE MALAY YOUTH LITERARY ASSOCIATION 4PM LEADER-
SHIP WORKSHOP AT THE YOUTH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE, SOUTH
BOUNA VISTA ROAD, ON SAT., DEC. 27, 1975 AT 3.30 P.M.

I am happy to be here this afternoon to open the 4PM Leadership workshop. Workshops such as this are useful as they help to focus our thoughts from time to time on the problems of and to seek solutions for the Malay community and its leadership.

One of the problems that is frequently encountered by national bodies in Singapore is the difficulty in identifying an adequate number of suitably qualified representatives from the Malay community who are willing to volunteer for public service. Although within the community there is no problem in identifying community leaders and others with leadership potential, there does not appear to be a sufficient number to meet national requirements.

It is often said that leaders are born, not made. While this may be true in the case of leaders with charismatic appeal, there is no doubt, however, that the qualities of leadership can be developed and nurtured in individuals who have talent and are prepared to shoulder civic responsibilities.

The Malay community in Singapore, because of historical reasons, tended to lag behind in economic and social development. One of the reasons is that because we, as a community, place considerable value on customs and traditional beliefs which, though in themselves are valuable, somehow in certain instances, hamper progress and the competitive spirit of the community.

While customs and traditional beliefs are a necessary stabilising factor and make for the general well-being of the community as a whole, some change has become necessary because the world around us has changed. It is therefore desirable that the Malay community, like all other communities, be responsive to changes and adjust themselves to meet the circumstances of the present day. This is not to say that we should abandon our customs and traditions but we should modify some of them so that we can adapt ourselves to twentieth-century living.

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In the process of adaptation and adjustments to the new milieu, there will be some changes in our scale of values. We will have to discard outmoded customs and values and reorient ourselves to the challenges of today. Once freed from inhibiting factors, I have every confidence that the leadership qualities of members of our community will emerge and a greater number of leaders will then be more readily identified. There will then be sufficient numbers from the community who will rise to the occasion for our national requirements.

It is therefore my hope that this workshop will, during its session, which I have no doubt will be frank and soul searching, identify the more pressing problems faced by the Malay community and suggest solutions which the Malay community itself should resolve.

I have now pleasure in declaring the Workshop open.

DECEMBER 27, 1975.

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