

# Mad Heaven

## *The Biography of*

*Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr. M. Mahadevan*

Foreword by  
**Professor Chester Pierce**  
of Harvard Medical School  
Boston  
United States of America

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*To the esteemed Professor Chester Pierce, who has been a constant source of inspiration, teacher, mentor and guide to Tuan who taught him that life is a process and not an event.*

Also by Aneeta Sundararaj

*THE BANANA LEAF MEN*



## **Acknowledgements**

I must begin by thanking the person who made this biography possible at all and that is Tuan. His generosity in importing his knowledge, experiences and photographs have made it a pleasure to write this book.

I would also like to mention a few others, namely, Professor Chester Pierce, Harbhans Singh, Rabinder Singh, Richard Thornton, Dr. T. Shan, Dato' Dr. Majumdar, Kamini Arichandran and most importantly, G. Ramalingam and Mohd Khir Ab. Latip who have patiently made this book presentable.

## THEORY OF THE EARTH

The theory of the earth is a branch of geology which deals with the origin and development of the earth and its various parts. It is a science which seeks to explain the processes which have shaped the earth and its features, and to determine the time and place of their occurrence.

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## Foreword

It is a pleasure and a privilege to read the biography of Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr. M. Mahadevan. His life code and life work reflects the very best of human activity. The reader is inspired and elevated by what this man has done and the style with which he did it.

The author is to be saluted for the superb job she did compressing and distilling into a book, some of the adventures, contributions and philosophy of a very interesting person. This compassionate doctor, who is known, respected and beloved by professional colleagues around the world, has participated in an astonishing array of important professional activities. Even so he found time to pursue a host of avocations as well as social and community engagements.

More amazing was that he has devoted huge amounts of time to all sorts of endeavors involving horses. These endeavors ranged from playing polo to managing pedigree registrations for thoroughbreds. His pioneer work in pet therapy, using horses, has been acclaimed across the world.

Meanwhile he traveled widely and associated with a myriad of celebrated people and individuals who were extremely interesting in their own right. Nevertheless, he never relinquished massive clinical responsibilities in administering a large hospital. Here his humane creativity and daring developed a community psychiatry movement second to none in the world.

What a challenge to write this book! Which of his studies should be reported? How can his astute handling of forensic cases be discussed? What instances of shrewd clinical management should be recorded? Which story from which country should be included?

The book succeeds in meeting this challenge. The author presents the nuances of family, culture and history, especially in Malaysia and India, that had such profound influence in shaping this cosmopolite. It can be anticipated that a host of readers from all walks of life will be augmented by learning about "Tuan". Speaking on behalf of psychiatrists, it is certain this book will be well-received as it memorializes one of our most charming and well-known members. All of us wish for the sort of courage, patience, expertise, versatility and concern for patients that characterize Tuan.

**Chester M. Pierce**

Boston, MA, USA

2004

## Nine Sovereigns



Mahalingam Appukuttee Mailvaganam  
and his wife, Ratna Ammal, Tuan's  
parents

At precisely 6.49 a.m. on the 9th of September 1929, Mahalingam Appukuttee Mailvaganam and his wife, Ratna Ammal, welcomed the birth of their sixth child into the family. Their third son, his given name was 'Mahadevan'. It was also conjectured that since the number '9' featured so prominently in the circumstances surrounding his birth, Mahadevan was destined to be a 'Tuan Besar' [a term in Bahasa Malaysia which means an 'Important Man']. Henceforth, all who knew him on a

personal basis would call him 'Tuan'. Hereinafter, it will be this name, 'Tuan' that will be used to refer to Mahadevan whose official title today is Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr. M. Mahadevan.

To understand the world in which Tuan was born, it is necessary to delve into the history of Malaya and how it is that Tuan's family, being of Indian origin, came to live in a country which was initially not their own.

Tuan's father, Mahalingam was born in Ceylon [present day Sri Lanka] in the late 19th century and later came to British Malaya for two reasons. One was the fact that as a member of the Ceylon Civil Service, he was posted to Malaya. At that time, this was not an uncommon move as the Ceylon Civil Service, the Indian Civil Service and the Malayan Civil Service came under one umbrella in the British Empire. The other reason was that since his family owned property in British Malaya, Mahalingam was sent to oversee the management of these estates. In time, Mahalingam chose to make Malaya his home and in so doing, was to become one of the very many immigrants who made up the fabric of the multi-racial people of the Malay States.

By the time Tuan was born, the population of the Malay States had risen dramatically from less than 500,000 people in the mid 1850s to around 4,000,000 in 1932. This marked increase in population was a result of the policies and economic exploitation of their colonies by the British, namely in the industries involving tin mining and rubber products.

In 1823, the three British Straits Settlements of Penang, Malacca and Singapore were under the Federal Government. The capital of this Federal Government was firstly situated in Penang



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and later in Singapore. In time, all policy matters were placed directly under the jurisdiction of the Colonial Office in London. Initially, other than the three states mentioned there was no intervention by the British in all of the other Malay states. However, this policy was to change soon. Civil war broke out in the state of Perak because there was rivalry between ambitious factions in the aristocracy and the group of Chinese miners. The British were approached to arbitrate in the matter. The result was that by 1874, the Treaty of Pangkor was signed by all concerned. Thereafter, there would be a new Sultan of Perak and an appointed British resident who would advise on all matters save for those relating to Malay religion and custom. James W. W. Birch was the first Resident of Perak. Unfortunately, he proved unpopular and was later murdered. By the 1880s, however, the situation stabilised and Perak's enormous natural resources began to pay dividends. Also all revenues would be collected and controlled and administered within Perak and regulated by the British resident. This practice of appointing a British Resident was followed by the other states namely Selangor, then Negeri Sembilan and Pahang. By 1896, these four states became the Federated Malay States under the administration of a central Government in Kuala Lumpur. The British Resident-General headed this administration and advised the respective Sultans of all four states.

In 1909, by the time Mahalingam had begun to make his mark in Malaya, the British formed a Council which consisted of the British High Commissioner or the Governor of the Straits Settlements, the Resident-General of the Federated Malay States, the four Sultans of the Federated Malay States, the four British Residents, and representatives of the people. This Council was not well received and in time only served to put more power into

the hands of the High Commissioner. The Council received criticism from the Malay rulers who eventually withdrew from the Council. In 1909, the Unfederated Malay States, comprising the states of Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Terengganu, which had till then been under Siamese suzerainty, finally came under British influence with the Treaty of Bangkok in consideration of a lot of money on loan and a pledge that the British would not interfere with Siam's (present day Thailand) internal affairs.

By 1914, the political scenario in Malaya was as follows:

1. The Straits Settlements of Singapore, Malacca and Penang were British colonies with Singapore as its capital.
2. The Federated Malay States of Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, Perak and Selangor were British Protectorates headed by a British Commissioner-cum-Governor of Straits Settlements with its capital in Kuala Lumpur.
3. The Unfederated Malay States of Perlis, Kedah, Johor, Kelantan and Trengganu were British Protectorates, under the tutelage of a British Advisor in each state who was responsible to the British High Commissioner.
4. Sarawak was a British Protectorate ruled by the Brooke family, with its capital in Kuching.
5. Sabah was a British Protectorate ruled by the Chartered Company of British North Borneo, with its capital in Jesselton.

By the 1920s, Malaya had new developments in industries, communications and agriculture which was an attraction for those who sought employment at all levels. With tin and rubber exports booming, Malaya became a land of promise for many and hence the migration of people from all over to seek their fortune, including Mahalingam.

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During his tenure in the Malayan Civil Service, Mahalingam rose to a most coveted post in the Civil Service, the Office Assistant. The Office Assistant acted as the intermediary between the British Resident and the Sultans of the Federated States of Malaya.

While the Mahalingam family were celebrating the happy event of Tuan's birth, the world was about to be rocked financially. Herbert Hoover was President of the United States of America in 1929 and by 29th of September, the stock market was well into its downward journey of the roller coaster ride it was on. The Dow lost over 500 points and on Tuesday, October 24, 1929 the Great Depression began. One week later, just as Tuan celebrated his one month of life, the New York Stock Exchange crashed ushering in a world-wide economic crisis.

In Malaya, Tuan's early years were spent in relative luxury. He was given chances and opportunities that many others of his generation merely dreamed of. One of these opportunities was, of course, horse riding. This love affair has lasted all of his life. This hobby or rather vocation for Tuan would become not only his passion in life but his ticket into a world of glamour, high society and recognition throughout the world.

It was not horse riding alone that gave him the edge over other common folk. It was also his extrovert nature, his attitude and knowledge about who he was and where he came from that gave him the basis in which to nurture his burgeoning confidence. These qualities, Tuan learned from his father. Mahalingam taught his son that the family's ancestors were said to have been advisors to Diwans of a bygone era in Ceylon. Therefore, the firm belief that the family had its origins in aristocracy and were

from the *Kshatria* (noble) caste was inculcated from the time he was a child. "Even if you are slapped, let it be by a man wearing a golden ring," was the advice given to the Mahalingam children. What Tuan understood by this was that if a person was about to be insulted, at the very least he should be insulted by someone who was of equal status to him. With all of these instructions from his father, Tuan was free to learn the ease with which he could relate to various members of royal households all over the world.

It, therefore, came as no surprise to learn that Mahalingam was a proud man. Not used to doing any form of manual labour, he thought it beneath him and his wife to carry a bag or basket. This was the work of servants. Be that as it may, Mahalingam was kind. If it had not been expressly said to Tuan, Mahalingam, by example, managed to imbibe in Tuan the idea that he must serve the people and often quoted, "Move with Kings but never forget the common touch." Every Sunday, the Mahalingam home was open to members of the public who sought his counsel, be it in matters legal or medical. Though he did not take a degree, Mahalingam was generous in providing this free service to those who needed it. Tuan remembers his father administering his own version of eye drops for cataracts to his 'patients' and writing petitions for illiterate people who had lost their jobs, the result of which was an almost immediate re-instatement. The family home in No. 8 Treacher Road Kuala Lumpur (now Jalan P. Ramlee) was designed for this particular purpose. The rooms on the lower floor were open to the public and a separate access would be made to the upper floors, which were exclusively for the use of the family.

Today, No. 8 Treacher Road is situated on prime land for it

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Tuan, with No. 8 Treacher Road  
in the background  
- note the separate staircase to the  
upper level of the house

is but a stone's throw from the famous Petronas Twin Towers. In British Malaya, the road was named after the British Resident, W. H. Treacher who, with the help of the Sultan of Selangor and other prominent citizens of Malaya at the time like Kapitan China Yap Kwan Seng, Towkay Loke Yew and Thamboosamy Pillay, opened the precursor to today's Victoria Institution (a permanent memorial of Queen Victoria's Jubilee) in June 1894. Today, these buildings house a theatrical group and although the headmaster's house no longer exists, in 1911 there was a murder committed involving the then headmaster and his family, the Proudlocks. This scandal is said to have been the basis for Somerset Maugham's short stories about the British in Malaya. By 1929, this Institution moved to its present premises in Petaling Hill (now Jalan Hang Tuah) where this august building remains undoubtedly as one of the finest school buildings in Malaysia. Its foundation stone was laid in 1893 and the school was completed in 1894.

"Aim High," was Mahalingam's motto and this permeated every facet of his household. Even the family driver was sub-

jected to this discipline for if Mahalingam, a passenger in the car, could have his sleep disturbed by the fact that his body had to sway to the side because his driver had taken the turn too sharply, the driver would be declared, "a useless driver"!

A stocky man, Mahalingam has been described as having a 'Mussolini-shaped' body. Alas, a lover of good food, Mahalingam eventually suffered from diabetes.

Respect for all religions and for members of the opposite sex were two early lessons Tuan was taught. His father always removed his hat as a mark of respect whenever there was a funeral procession. Once when Tuan playfully pinched his little sister, he was duly reprimanded by his father with, "It's a beastly act. Women are the weaker sex. Never lay a hand on a woman." Many a time Tuan has said that had he chosen the path of matrimony and had the misfortune of having a horrible wife, he would never have laid a finger on her in anger. He would probably have just lived with the misery. This fear of possibly being subjected to this terrible fate of a loveless marriage has been a life long deterrent to become a member of this noble institution of marriage.



Tuan driving his Alfa Romeo

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Tuan was not receptive to all his father's instructions, though. Altercations between father and son were common. Believing in the many rumours surrounding Tuan's disregard for his studies his father once remarked, "Well, if you don't want to study, there are many drains in K.L. for you to sweep." There was also the occasion where his father said, "I am disgusted with your wild and reckless ways". Nobody thought Tuan would even finish school. When he chose to do medicine, all were sceptical as to his diligence in pursuing this dream. At one time when he was at the receiving end of his father's taunts, Tuan replied equally angrily, "I'll keep my own German Shepherds, my own Alfa Romeo and I will be a Romeo". History would record that indeed, he achieved all of these aspirations and even more.

Where Tuan's father moulded Tuan's thoughts and ideologies, his mother, Ratna Ammal, was his life support. So attached is he still to her that he often thinks the umbilical cord was not

properly severed when he was born!



Tuan and Ratna Ammal

Ratna Ammal was born in 1898 in the village of Allevedi, Ceylon. She was her father's pet and often spoke of him. Having had her education in a Christian Missionary school, her dream was to become a teacher. She had even taken the Christian name of 'Mabel' when fate intervened and her marriage to

Mahalingam was arranged.



Marriage did not prevent Ratna Ammal from realising her dream. She did teach ... all her eight children. She insisted that all of them must know their mother tongue and she undertook the task of teaching them the Tamil language. Her rationale was that if a man forgot his mother tongue, he would forget his mother. In addition, she taught them Mathematics and Algebra. She was quite the disciplinarian and she always pinched the children when they repeated their mistakes. Tuan's mischievousness was evident even then: on one occasion, she pinched him and he fainted. She was never to know that he was feigning this but it worked for he was never pinched again.

Being a large hearted lady and completely without malice, she was most gullible indeed. This aspect of her character was to be the cause of great heartache to her and Tuan in the 1970's: it is a dark day for any person to be declared bankrupt. When this very thing happened to Ratna Ammal on 25th of January 1971, Tuan's pain knew no end and to this day, the look of disbelief at how it could ever have come to pass is still very evident on



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his face. The details of how this declaration came to be made and the impact it had on Tuan's life will be explained in detail later.

As a young lad, Tuan was already a ladies' man and it was his mother's mortal fear that Tuan would marry at too young an age. In time, she worried for quite the opposite reason for he never married at all. Indeed, when he told her he chose to pursue psychiatry, she burst out crying; she said, "Everyone already thinks you're mad with these horses and now you want to work with these mad people. Can't you be a surgeon like everyone else?"

Tuan says that when he analyses his relationship with his mother, he thinks he suffered from an unresolved Oedipus complex for he was always vying for his mother's attention. "When all these people leave you, I will be the one to look after you," said Tuan to his mother. This proved to be true for when Ratna Ammal was made a bankrupt, Tuan undertook the responsibility of looking after her up until her demise. Towards the end of her life, Tuan meant everything to her. She would not eat unless he had eaten and many times he had to telephone her if he was going to be late so that she would eat. This would be understandable had Tuan been a young lad but Tuan was already 60 years old when his mother was still fussing!

1929 also saw the birth of people who later in their own lives became famous namely, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr, Audrey Hepburn, Andre Previn, Imelda Marcos, Yasser Arafat and Anne Frank. It was also the same year the Vatican City became an independent state of 108.7 acres by 44 hectares with the Pope as its absolute ruler. In Malaya, Tan Sri P. Ramlee, one of the foremost actors, comedians, songwriters, screenwriters and film di-

rectors that this nation has seen was also born in 1929. It is, therefore, ironic that the house in which Tuan was born was situated on a street that would later be named after a legend in the Malaysian music industry.

Though not born in the same year as Tuan, there is one person who himself had something momentous happen to him in 1929. This was a person who would one day have a huge impact on Tuan's life. His name was Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj (hereafter referred to as 'Tunku'). History would record Tunku as the man who would one day lead Malaya to Independence. To Tuan, he was the man who was a friend, a confidant and indeed a supporter of Tuan and all his ideas, visions and dreams.

Born on the 8th of February 1903, in Alor Star, the capital of the state of Kedah, Tunku was the 21st son of Sultan Abdul Hamid Halim Shah. Kedah has one of the oldest royal families and it is said that it is traceable in an unbroken line over more than 1,000 years. His mother, Che Menjelara, originated from Siam and was well endowed with property in her own right and managed all of her wealth shrewdly, despite having twelve children. After his early education in Alor Star, in 1914, Tunku was sent to Bangkok under the charge of his eldest brother, now a captain in the Siamese army under King Chulalongkorn. Two years later, Tunku returned to enter Penang Free School in Penang. By 1919, he was set to go to England to further his studies. By the time Tuan was born in 1929, Tunku was already studying at Cambridge and in time, he was awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree and began to read law.

Unable to remember to exact date they met, Tuan conjec-

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tures that since the Mahalingam family moved in high social circles, they would have come into contact with members of the royal house of Kedah and in the course of time, the friendship between the families would have been nurtured and probably flourished.

In the meantime, the Second World War was looming and life was about to get more complicated for the Mahalingam clan. With eight children, the house was always busy and everyone was quite occupied. Nevertheless, the ever generous Mahalingam was about to welcome a lady, her daughter and nine children into their already full house.



Kono-Tano-San

When he was still a bachelor, Mahalingam travelled extensively throughout the Malayan Peninsula. In the town of Seremban, he had made the acquaintance of one Dr. Sasaki and his family. The family included Mrs Sasaki, their nine children and his mother-in-law, Kono-Tano-San. This lady, Kono-tano-san was fondly called 'Obasan' ['Obasan' is Japanese for 'Grandmother']. When Mahalingam married and

brought his young wife to British Malaya, Obasan visited frequently to keep the young bride company. Both women were lonely and the friendship suited them. Soon, Obasan became part of the family and when it came time to deliver her children

Ratna Ammal used to ask Obasan for help. When Obasan's son-in-law Dr. Sasaki succumbed to typhus and died sometime in the 1930s, the Sasaki family was devastated. With nowhere to go, the invitation to move in temporarily with the Mahalingam clan was accepted.

Obasan was present at the birth of Tuan and she is the person who coined the name 'Tuan'. In addition, a gift of 9 sovereigns was made to the newborn child and mother since the number '9' was so significant in Tuan's birth. Tuan has embraced this idea of the significance of the number '9' so much that he uses this number wherever possible. For example, the number plate on his cars have more often than not been '9999'. Was it mere coincidence or fate that Tuan's student number when he was later in medical school in Mysore was 459, which added up to 18, a multiple of 9?

Whilst Tuan was growing into a mischievous young lad, the world was coming apart. It was an anxious time for all. The atrocities of the Nazi regime being committed on the Jews and the utter chaos in Europe were causing upheaval and horror. In the East, the Second World War in the form of a Japanese invasion and the eventual occupation of Malaya was about to begin.

Prior to all of these, during peace-time, many Japanese men entered various parts of Asia on the pretext of a tourist visit. The story is that during their stay they would shave their heads bald and have the maps of exactly where the British troops were stationed throughout Malaya and the rest of South East Asia tattooed on their scalp. Once the hair grew back, it would cover these vital pieces of information from the prying eyes of the British and they would return to Japan undetected as spies

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with all the necessary information to mount the War. These efforts, no doubt, assisted the intelligence department in Japan for when the time came they were in a position to invade Malaya with such precision as to stun the British troops.

When suspicions of the Japanese spying were aroused, regardless of gender, age, occupation and political allegiance, the British were arresting and thereafter deporting the Japanese to their homeland. Those in Malaya fled to India to seek political asylum. Among them were Obasan's daughter and many of her children. When Obasan was threatened with arrest by the British, Mahalingam interceded and said that she could not possibly be arrested. She was neither a spy nor a threat to the British. In fact, she was so important a person to their household that she was the grandmother his children never had. Taking her away from his children would cause them immeasurable pain. Only after he had made this plea and given a surety that the above was true was she released and allowed to stay with them. This gesture was so appreciated by Obasan and in return she took it upon herself to look after and care for Tuan and his siblings as her own grandchildren. Her gratitude and service to the family would be one of the first examples of loyalty of the Japanese that Tuan would come to experience.

Of Obasan's own history, scant facts are known. Obasan hailed from the Samurai caste and originated from the city of Nagasaki, on the island of Kyushu. A proud woman, she was firm but kind to Tuan. It is only with reverence, respect and deep love that Tuan speaks of this woman. Obasan had an amazing influence on Tuan and how he conducted himself. For instance, in the manner of dress, Obasan was herself fastidious about how she looked and inculcated in Tuan the necessity to

always present an appropriate image. To this day, one can notice that, at all times, even when casually dressed, Tuan will have a handkerchief folded into the left breast pocket of any shirt he wears.

Ask Tuan about the handkerchief and one will no doubt be privy to yet another story. "This is not an ordinary handkerchief but is in fact a *furoshiki*," explains Tuan. The *furoshiki* is an oversized square cloth dyed in a variety of colours and patterns. It is used mainly for wrapping, storing, and carrying things. Its origins are in the 14th century, when powerful feudal lords used the cloth to wrap their clothes whilst they took their baths. *Furo* means 'bath' and *shiki* means 'spreading cloth'. The size of this cloth varies anything from 70 square centimetres up to 235 square centimetres. For centuries, people would lay their *futon* on top of the *furoshiki* before going to sleep. Merchants usually carried their wares inside the *furoshiki* to transport just about anything you could imagine. When the *furoshiki* was not in use, people would fold it up like a handkerchief and put it away. Made of natural fibres, in olden times *furoshiki* of a solid colour or stripes were common, while a *kamon* (family crest) or *yago* (the name of a store) was usually printed on it as the symbol of one's profession. It is customary to use a *furoshiki* with a *kamon* for weddings or celebration. Newlywed couples will give gifts wrapped in *furoshiki* to those attending their wedding reception. The knot holding the *furoshiki* together symbolises the strong union between the two families.

Later in Ireland, when Tuan attended dances, he remembers being asked why he alone seemed to be the only gentlemen present with no slush on his dancing shoes whilst everyone else had got caught in the rain and soiled theirs. He merely smiled in

reply and never revealed that in the cloak room was another quite soiled pair of shoes that he had used previously! Neither did these people know that this was the result of training from childhood by one Japanese grandmother who was almost fanatical about cleanliness. Obasan herself always made it a point to clean her shoes before entering a house. Tuan observed all of this and followed her example.

Never one to desire fame or fortune, Obasan shied away from any form of recognition. Even when the Japanese occupied Malaya, she was offered the post of Governor of a province for the Japanese thought that it was beneath her to be grandmother to all these Indian children. It would have meant a life of luxury for her but she refused the offer and instead maintained her position as the unofficial grandmother of the Mahalingam family. This reluctance for governmental posts was not an indication of cowardice. Indeed, Obasan was quite the opposite; in the name of placating Tuan, she was braver than most at a time when the people of Malaya were fast becoming disillusioned with the Japanese.

Initially, like all Asians, the people of Malaya looked to the Japanese as 'liberators' of the colonials of the British Empire. They did not mount any resistance at all to the conquest by the Japanese troops. 'Asia for Asian' was an oft heard slogan on the streets of Malaya and the rest of Asia. Soon, however, people all over Asia discovered that Japanese soldiers were not the liberators they had hoped for but were quite the opposite. They were cruel and frightening. They demanded absolute allegiance and the Asians were subjected to a new colonial power that perpetuated even more terror than the British had. During the Japanese Occupation, the police department was divided into two – the

*Tekikan* (secret service) and the *Kempeitai* (military police). Between them, the *Tekikan*, and the *Kempeitai* struck terror into the hearts of all. Of all the Asian races, it was the Chinese who suffered most at the hands of the Japanese soldiers. In the camps, the soldiers would not merely humiliate their prisoners but would also torture them prior to killing them.

The moment the Japanese Occupation of Malaya was secured, the country's infrastructure underwent a complete makeover. The name of the country was changed to 'Malai'. Japanese currency was introduced as legal tender. The official language and medium of instruction in all schools became Nippon-go (Japanese language). Though at the time, Tuan fast became fluent in Japanese, he can no longer remember the intricacies of the language. However, he very proudly maintains that he is still able to write his name in Japanese. Inflation was at an all time high and where the price of eggs which had cost 3 cents before the Second World War, was now 35 Malayan dollars.

As part of the War effort, absolutely everything was requisitioned by the Japanese army. From bicycles, to cars to even Tuan's favourite pony. This caused unimaginable heartache for the little boy, Tuan. Torrents of tears did he cry and nothing placated him. Obasan took it upon herself to do something about this and wrote a letter to a gentleman she thought was responsible for this act. She wrote to General Tojo Hideki, by far, the most powerful leader in the Japanese government during Second World War.

Born in Tokyo, on the 30th of December 1884, Tojo Hideki was the son of an army general. In 1905, he chose to study at the Japanese Military Academy and completed his studies at the army



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war college with honours 10 years later. Tojo became prominent while serving in China in the early 1930s. In 1933, he was promoted to major-general. He became head of Kwantung Army's military police in September 1935. After his promotion to lieutenant-general he was made chief-of-staff to the Kwantung Army.

In May 1937, Tojo entered government affairs as Vice Minister of War. In six months he returned to the armed services and took command of the air force. This man held extreme right-wing views; he was a supporter of Nazi Germany and in 1938, he advocated pre-emptive air strikes and strongly opposed plans to remove troops from China and Korea. In July 1941, Tojo was appointed Minister of War and his mobilisation plans strained diplomatic relations between the United States and Japan. He believed that Japan should control Asia's economies. Tojo became premier on the 16th of October 1941. From February 1944, he was also commander-in-chief of the General Staff.

Tojo's accession marked the final triumph of the military faction which advocated war with the United States of America and Britain. He approved the attack on Pearl Harbour on the 7th of December 1941 and pushed the Japanese offensive in China, South East Asia and the Pacific.

On Saturday, the 6th of December 1941, during a conference in Manila (capital of the Philippines) the Admiral of the United States Asiatic Fleet and Admiral of the British naval commander, Far East received a message that the Japanese convoy had departed from Saigon, French Indochina. This suggested that the ships were headed to neutral Thailand or to the Malaya Peninsula. This was as clear an indication as they could get at the time that War in the Pacific and South East Asia was close at

hand. The Admirals, between them ordered four American destroyers in Balikpapan to sail at open sea and *HMS Repulse* was to cancel its trip to Darwin, Australia and return to Singapore as quickly as possible. Despite all attempts, the Japanese forces managed to sail into the Gulf of Siam. Shortly after midnight on the 7th of December, a group of Indian guards at Kota Bharu spotted three large shadows dropping anchor approximately 3 kilometres off the coast of Kota Bharu. Seconds later the guards heard shells flying over their heads. The Second World War in the Pacific had begun, while the Japanese planes from Nagumo's carriers were still flying towards Pearl Harbour.

Early on the morning of the 8th of December 1941, Japanese troops were attempting to land on the shores of Kota Bharu on the eastern side of the Peninsula. By mid-day, they had successfully landed and their invasion of Malaya began. In time, they forced the British-Indian troops all the way to Singapore. The British had prepared for an invasion by sea and were stunned when the invasion and successful occupation of Malaya and Singapore was actually carried over land!

Despite the dangerous times, Tuan adapted to this situation and consequently flourished in it, with the help of his Obasan no doubt. Obasan's letter to General Tojo not only protested the terrible act of Tuan's pony being requisitioned but demanded the return of the pony to the little boy. General Tojo's stern reply to his Colonel in Malaya instructed that the pony be returned as this was in line with the motto of, 'Asia for Asians'.

The Colonel in Malaya was at the time recorded as one Colonel Tsuji. Tuan insists that the man he calls the Colonel is a gentleman known as 'Colonel Ishikawa'. Unable to substantiate this as it happened over sixty years ago now, Tuan may not be

too far off the mark for Colonel Tsuji was born in the Ishikawa Prefecture on 11<sup>th</sup> of October 1900 and went to Nagoya Yonen Gekko (Preparatory Military School). He was said to be the protégé of Colonel Takeo Ishihara who was determined to make Manchuria into one of the five nationalities living in harmony under a Buddhist paradise. Colonel Tsuji believed in this too and embraced the idea of making Asia one great brotherhood and believed wholeheartedly in the motto, 'Asia for Asians'.

As Tuan insists that the person he remembers is Colonel Ishikawa and that he was the Colonel in Malaya at the time, for the purposes of this book, the assumption will be made that Colonel Tsuji and Colonel Ishikawa are one and the same.

When he received his orders from General Tojo to return the pony, Colonel Ishikawa, wanted to meet this courageous Japanese lady and the little boy who had caused this furore which had managed to catch the attention of General Tojo himself. He made a decision to visit the Mahalingam household and this gave him a chance to see for himself where they lived, which at the time was on a six acre plot of land. Observing that the family had poultry and cows, Colonel Ishikawa seized upon a chance and negotiated a deal with Ratna Ammal. As per his orders, Colonel Ishikawa would return the pony but only on the condition there was a barter trade of sorts: Ratna Ammal was required to provide Colonel Ishikawa with a bottle of fresh milk each day. He was feeling quite under-nourished from all the lack of good food and vitamins and saw this as his golden opportunity to get free food. Ratna Ammal agreed and the deal was struck. The pony was returned and Tuan, henceforth, rose each morning and cycled to Colonel Ishikawa's residence with a bottle of fresh milk.

These daily visits caused the Colonel and Tuan to develop a friendship. The Colonel took a liking to the boy and soon, he encouraged Tuan to study medicine. Tuan sat for the entrance exams, passed and gained admission to the twinning programme in Malacca. The Japanese Medical School in Malacca had an agreement with its counterpart in Japan that students could pursue a few years of their medical studies in Malacca prior to completing the remainder of the course in Japan proper. When he was admitted to the Medical School, being only fifteen years old at the time, Tuan was the youngest ever medical student in Marei Ika Daigaku, the name given to the Medical School. The Marei Ika Daigaku in Malacca, a direct descendent of the present day Faculty of Medicine in National University of Singapore, was opened on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April in the Japanese year of 2603 (1943) in Singapore. This was relocated to the General Hospital Malacca in February 2604 (1944) and it continued to function as the Medical School until the end of the Japanese Occupation in Malaya.

Of course, when Tuan gained entry into this Medical School, Obasan was elated. She had always wanted Tuan to study in Japan. Unfortunately, her dream of seeing Tuan qualify as a doctor did not quite materialise for the Second World War came to an end in 1945, much to the relief of everyone. For Tuan though, with the end of the Second World War, his chances of graduating as a doctor from a Japanese Medical School were dashed. As was the case with many of the young people who had had to have their education interrupted at the time, Tuan had no choice but to return to school and begin again, or at the very least, pick up from where he had left. This was the first of many frustrations that Tuan would have to encounter in his quest to become a doctor.

## Nine Sovereigns

History knows Colonel Ishikawa as an extraordinary man of ingenuity and courage who declared himself immune to death by enemy action. He was cruel and barbarous. He would give orders in the name of his superiors without their authority and as expected was detested throughout the Japanese Army. Nevertheless, he was invariably right in the manner he conducted the business of fighting and was, therefore, a force to be reckoned with. As for Tuan, when making his daily visits to take milk to the Colonel, he also came into contact with the aides of the Colonel. He made friends with them as well. In time, he also became somewhat of a defender of these aides of the Colonel. When they had done something wrong and knew they were to be punished by the Colonel, they often sought out Tuan to ask if he would put in a good word for them. No doubt Tuan did and in return he got unfailing loyalty from these worried soldiers. So grateful to Tuan was one of the aides that without hesitation, this aide removed his white handkerchief from his pocket, placed it on a table and wrote in Japanese a promise to pledge his life to Tuan. Tuan says that this pledge was written in the aide's own blood and for years Tuan kept this symbol and example of the unfailing loyalty of the Japanese.

Whilst young Tuan was making friends and attending a Japanese Medical College, the rest of Malaya was in turmoil. An underground resistance organisation was formed - the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA). This organisation, originally spearheaded by the Communist Party, received its support from the Malays, Indians and British military officers who had escaped from Japanese prisons. The British themselves set up the South East Asian High Command in Ceylon (present day Sri Lanka). By 1944, British forces gradually began to return to South East Asia and made contact with the MPAJA, providing them

with weapons, money, foodstuffs and medical supplies. The decision was made by the Supreme Allied Commander, Lord Louis Mountbatten to invade Malaya and MPAJA forces were to be deployed to destroy the Japanese communications before Allied forces began to land in Malaya.



Tuan with some of the Japanese soldiers

Undeniably, the element of loyalty amongst the Japanese was again evident after the Second World War. When Imperial Japan surrendered to the Allied Command in the Far East following the atomic bombing of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, General Tojo, saved from an attempted suicide took full blame and responsibility for Japan's actions. He faced charges of war crimes by the International Tribunal for the Far East in August 1945 and kept the Emperor of Japan out of harm's way. General Tojo was sentenced to death and was hung in December 1948.

## Nine Sovereigns

In Malaya, the first people to be seen on the streets after the Japanese surrender were not the Allied troops but the 6,000 or more MPAJA guerrillas. The Japanese, however, did not surrender to these forces but waited until September 1945 before the whole of Malaya was reoccupied by the British who immediately set up a British Military Administration.

In the Mahalingam household, things began to return to normal. Obasan tried to find her daughter and grandchildren. Some of her grandchildren had already returned to Japan and she failed in all her attempts to locate her daughter. She herself never went back to Japan but continued to stay with the Mahalingam family and helped to bring up Tuan and his siblings. Like others, she had hoped that everything would return to normal now that Japanese Occupation had come to an end. People of Malaya would once again be free to walk the streets without fear of being killed. There would be no more espionage and counter espionage. The Chinese, the Indians and the Malays would continue as they were before the Second World War, working for the benefit of the British Empire. The reality, however, was quite the opposite. The light of independence had been lit all over Asia and nothing was ever the same again. As for Tuan, he was about to embark on a life long affair with a game that would bring him into contact with some exceptionally fascinating people.

## 2

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When the Japanese Occupation in Malaya began, the Civil Service ceased to exist and so, Mahalingam was temporarily out of a job. He was not keen on venturing outside of the home because it was a fearful time for all. It is said that in Singapore, five thousand Chinese had been murdered, largely at the instigation of Colonel Ishikawa, for previously supporting British colonialism. Colonel Ishikawa's speech and conduct were often insolent and his treatment of the Chinese merchants inhumane.

After hearing of all that could happen to him should he walk on the streets, Mahalingam decided that it was better to stay at home than to unwittingly risk the wrath of the Japanese soldiers. So it was that Mahalingam's tenure as Schoolmaster began and his children inevitably became his students. A voracious reader himself, he had the ability to quote phrases from the classics not only by page but by paragraph and line as well. His children were not spared the discipline of learning the ability to memorise by rote. So the practice began that when Mahalingam gave a child a book to read, a report on the book was to be presented at the 'class' of the Mahalingam siblings a week later. As a result, by the age of twelve, Tuan was already well versed in the classics from *Pride and Prejudice* to works by Shakespeare, Thomas Hardy and the Brontë sisters. The children were equally exposed to books by Eastern authors; one of the works that stands out in Tuan's mind is *Thus Have I Learnt*



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by a famous Indian Saint, Sadhu Vaswani. Tuan would not only be influenced by the author's works, he would also have the chance to meet the saint in person.

In 1945 when the Second World War came to an end, the British returned to Malaya and instituted the British Military Administration. This Administration was terminated in March 1946 and in time the former Straits Settlements, Federated Malay States and Unfederated Malay States came together to form the Federation of Malaya.

In the Mahalingam household, there was turmoil. The British arrested Mahalingam for he was suspected of having kept a Japanese spy in his house - Obasan. Extensive investigations were carried out. Whilst investigations were pending, word got round that Mahalingam had been arrested and instead of evidence of Mahalingam's alleged offences, what emerged was a petition signed by many Chinese merchants and lay people in support and defence of Mahalingam. The common strain of their stories was that far from actually committing the alleged offences, Mahalingam had given shelter to one who had instead been their saviour and gone against the Japanese Administration. Many Chinese merchants had been arrested during the Japanese occupation. Unfortunately, these souls had had jealous eyes cast upon their good fortune by their competitors and false information would be leaked to the Japanese soldiers, which would then lead to their arrest. The families of the aggrieved merchants would come in search of Obasan to get their loved ones released. Most times, their efforts were not in vain for she would steadfastly assist these families. When the time came for them to reciprocate the gesture, the Chinese rallied around and without much fuss, Mahalingam was released and vindicated.

Soon after the Second World War was over, like all of Asia, it was obvious that the momentum for gaining independence was increasing. However, by this time, Malaya provided a third of the world's natural rubber and tin and the British wanted to hang on to their dominance of these industries for as long as possible and used the utmost brutality against any form of independence movement. It is said that some 24 Chinese villagers were at one time murdered by the Scots Guards at Batang Kali, just north of Kuala Lumpur in December 1948. Many believe that there has been a systematic cover up of what really happened at Batang Kali all those years ago.

In the Mahalingam household, once he was released, things soon returned to normal. Mahalingam returned to work for the British Government. As for Tuan, his medical studies at the Marei Ika Daigaku in Malacca aborted, returned to Kuala Lumpur and back to his alma mater, St. John's Institution to begin preparing for the Matriculation exams.

This institution, which celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2004, is a school that was started as a wooden structure in 1904. By November 1906, the foundation stone for the new permanent structure was laid. In time, the number of students grew and improvements were made to the building.

The patron saint of the St. John's Institution is Saint John Baptist de la Salle. Hailed as an educational reformer and the father of modern pedagogy, John Baptist de la Salle was born in Reims on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 1651 and died some 68 years later on Good Friday in the city of Rouen, France. The eldest child of Louis de la Salle and Nicolle de Moet de Brouillet, John took a degree of Master of Arts, rejected a career in law and accord-

ingly received the tonsure on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 1662. By the time his parents passed away in 1672, the young man was but 21 years of age and was forced to leave the seminary as he was now the head of the family and had siblings to look after. While organising his family affairs, he did not relinquish his religious studies all together and by the 9<sup>th</sup> of April 1678, he was ordained as a priest by the Archbishop of Reims.

During this time, de la Salle sought the guidance of one Nicholas Roland, canon and theologian of Reims. De la Salle became occupied with carrying out the last will and testament of Nicolas Roland who instructed him that John should seek the help of Father Nicholas Baree who would guide him on how to help the poor. It is no great injustice to say that whilst Father Baree was concerned with the education of the children of the poor, de la Salle was concerned with the welfare of the teachers of the poor.

In building up his Institute, de la Salle relied heavily on his faith in God and upon Providence. In so doing, the foundation for the Christian Schools all over the world was laid. De la Salle faced tremendous difficulties in the beginning. This was the time when there was abject poverty and poor children could not understand what they were being taught for the medium of instruction was Latin and not the vernacular.

The object of his Institute was the Christian education of youth and the cultivation of that spirit of faith, piety, mortification and obedience which would characterise all its members. Through his free schools, his zealous teachers would implant in the hearts of the children the seed of virtues which would tend towards the regeneration of both the pupils and parents. De la

Salle is especially identified with the 'Simultaneous Method' of teaching. By this method, the pupils are graded according to their capacity, putting those of equal ability in the same class, giving them the same text-books, and requiring them to follow the same lesson under one and the same teacher. This is explained in the following manner – all the pupils of the same mistress shall have each the same book, in order to learn and read therein the same lesson; so that, whilst one is reading a text in an audible and intelligible voice before the mistress, all the others, hearing her and following this lesson in their books at the same time, may learn it sooner, more readily and more perfectly.

John Baptist de la Salle longed for the approval of the Pope for his institution but he did not live to bear witness to the seal of approbation by the Holy See which only happened on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February 1725. De la Salle was canonised in 1900 and his feast is celebrated on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May each year.

In St. John's Institution, Kuala Lumpur, the statue of John Baptist de La Salle was installed in 1925. By 1948, there were feeder schools called La Salle Schools in the suburbs of Kuala Lumpur like Sentul, Brickfields, Peel Road and Klang. In this year too, Tuan completed his exams and was named the Best All Round Student. For his achievements, he was presented an award which carried the title of 'Sir George Maxwell Scholar'. This prestigious award no doubt helped him in later years. In the photograph taken at the time, it is no mistake to conclude that Tuan and his brother graduated in the same year for after the Second World War, rules were lax as to which class each student would be placed. Perhaps his enrolment in the Japanese Medical School helped to accelerate his achievement at the Institution. Nevertheless, he tells the story that the Christian Brothers at the school

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were so fed up of his obsession with riding and horses that they considered him a useless brat. Never did they think that he would ever accomplish anything. So they took it upon themselves to brainwash him into working hard. "One of the Brother's locked me up in the Chapel and made me write 'make me a doctor' 100 times. After this I had to do my homework. Only then was I allowed to go home. The first time I did this, I took so long, I missed riding for the day. After that, I worked so fast that I made sure I finished by five so that I could spend time riding my horses."



Tuan standing 4th from the left in the middle row  
and his brother is 1st from the right in the same row

In the same year that Tuan matriculated, Tunku was to realise one of his own dreams as well. In 1930, after passing three papers but failing miserably in the fourth in his Bar Finals exams, Tunku returned home. He joined the Kedah Civil Service and was soon appointed as Assistant District Officer in Kulim. He married a lady called Meriam who unfortunately, passed away after contracting malaria just after delivering their second child.

He then married one Violet Coulsdon but this marriage ended in divorce some years later.

In his professional life, Tunku as a civil servant abhorred authority when the rules seemed unreasonable. He soon developed a good relationship with all those around him and rose to become the District Officer. In this post, he was most popular with the people but not at all with those in authority.

As for his Bar exams, Tunku tried again and in 1938 he passed his Part 1 exams. The Second World War began however and once again, he was summoned back home. Stationed in Kulim, he was once again the favourite of the people but not the authority and soon a transfer was ordered to Alor Star. When, in 1943, the states of Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan and Trengganu were returned to Thailand, to rectify the injustice caused by the Treaty of Bangkok of 1909, Tunku was appointed as Superintendent of Education of Kedah. In Alor Star, as he was given little to do, he found a new vocation and that was to set up a welfare group dedicated to collect money and food for the returnees from construction of the 'Death Railway'. The 'Death Railway' was a construction that was the idea of the Japanese. They wanted to build a link all through Asia. The fact that there were returnees at all was triumphant for in most instances, many families who had had their men go to work on the 'Death Railway' never saw their beloved again. In the meantime, Tunku became part of the Malay nationalist movement to gain independence for Malaya. After the Second World War, efforts to gain Independence were intensified and perhaps becoming a little fed up with the politicking, he left for England in January 1947, determined to complete his legal studies. Finally, after many years from when he began his legal studies, in December 1948, Tunku was called to the Eng-

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lish Bar and was made a member of the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple.

Tuan relates that at around this time, an exceptional story of a meeting between two individuals who would one day share the glory of being the first Prime Ministers of their respective countries took place in the town of Alor Star. Unsure of the exact date, Tuan says that sometime in 1930s, before the Second World War began, Jawaharlal Nehru had travelled to Malaya intent to speak to the members of the Indian community here on the idea of Independence for India. However, he got nowhere and returned to India dejected. In 1946, he returned and this time, he was taken to the sleepy town of Alor Star, which at the time, had nothing much except the one single road. The object of the visit was to meet Tunku and seek his assistance in garnering some support for what Mr. Nehru had to say. Being a member of the royal household, cognisance was given to Tunku's guest from India and people, including the British officers stationed there, listened to what Mr. Nehru had to say. Many years later, when the two countries had become independent nations, Tuan was present when the two men met again and he relates the conversation between them, almost verbatim. It went like this:

"Sir, I must commend you for obtaining Independence in India," said Tunku to Mr. Nehru.

"No, it is you I must commend. You obtained Independence for Malaya without any bloodshed," replied Mr. Nehru. "I must also thank you for giving me that chance to speak all those years ago in Alor Star."

After the Second World War, whilst Tuan was set on the

path of becoming a doctor and his future looked bright, Obasan was entering a state of depression. She had lost all contact with her daughter and her nine grandchildren as a result of all the events that had happened during the Second World War. She was also becoming old and frail. Unable to travel, and in reality without any wish to do so, she continued to live with the Mahalingam family long after the Second World War ended. In time, her health deteriorated and on 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 1950, she passed away.

It is over fifty years ago that Obasan passed away and yet, the memory of her is very much alive. Tuan takes great pride in her existence in his life and uses any opportunity at all to venerate her name. For instance, in 1988, when he was the President of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress of the Asian Chapter of the International College of Psychosomatic Medicine, in the souvenir pamphlet there is a dedication to Obasan which reads 'In Memory of Konotana Nagasaki Kyushu (Obasan) from the Mahalingam Family, With Fond Memories'.



Obasan shortly  
before her demise

Despite her misfortune at having lost all of her family it must be said that Obasan is indeed fortunate to have found in Tuan, not only a kindred spirit, but one who genuinely loved her. This last photo of Obasan is one he keeps, not in an album hidden in a cupboard, but framed and proudly displayed for all



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to see. Placed next to a photo of his mother, his butler is instructed to switch on the light each day after sun-down, as is Hindu custom, as a mark of remembrance to the dead. One can only conclude that for one single person to have touched his life so, she must have been special.



Tuan at Obasan's grave in the Japanese cemetery, Kuala Lumpur

After her demise, Obasan's grave was tended to by Tuan's parents until he took over from them.

Whilst the world began its reconstruction and recovery in the aftermath of the Second World War, Tuan, a young man of 19 commenced a love affair that was to last him to this day and bring him unparalleled honour – the game of Polo.

Before Polo however, Tuan had already been riding since the age of four. His deep respect for horses is evident from an article he wrote entitled *Ride a A Hobby Horse to Health ... So Hop On To An Equus-Able & Disabled* which stated as follows:

It is not surprising that the Arabs, among the greatest horsemen in the world, would have their own version of how their superb breed of horses originated. The first HORSE, they believe, was created out of a handful of the south wind by ALLAH, who declared: "Thy name shall be Arabian, and virtue bound into the hair of the beasts of burden inasmuch as I have made thy master thy friend. I have given thee the power of flight without wings, be it in onslaught or in retreat. I will set man on thy back that shall honour and Praise me and sing Hallelujah to My Name."

Never was a promise more brightly fulfilled and its first rider was Ishamael, son of Abraham and first ancestor of BEDOUIN.

## **Horse in War and Peace**

In the Arab world, the Prophet Mohamed, May Peace Be Upon Him, instilled his people with his own respect for the influence of the horse on war. In consequence, the Arab cavalry horse developed in step with the burgeoning Saracen Empire, a formidable force then to be reckoned with.

The story of the horse in war is a brave one. Paradoxically, now that its day is past, many soldiers feel mankind has lost, in this age of mechanized combat, a valuable dimension of feeling and sacrifice inspired by the selflessness, loyalty and affection of man's oldest military ally. It is heartening to note that our government has, through our Prime Minister's influence, introduced Calvary and Mounted Units into our Defence and Enforcement Forces.

## **Horse In Art - Literature - Films**

There is little doubt that one of the chief roles of the horse in Art - Painting, Literature, Films is that of servant, companion and prop to the ego of man. Consequently, by an odd transference, we ascribe to it the virtues and qualities we most admire in ourselves - Courage, Loyalty, Intelligence and Diligence - and it is as the embodiment of these that it has been so often praised by poets and painters. To these qualities are added the horse's own beauty, speed and strength, so that what we are frequently moved by in both art and literature, is actually a centaur-like being that combines all the advantages of both man and beast.

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### **Horse, Man and Leisure**

Man has a long standing and very special relationship with the horse which continues to flourish in many ways. A historical account of man's long and intimate relationship with the horse in work, war, play, literature, art and the human imagination, has left an indelible mark on the psyche of the individual to act psychologically as an "Ego Booster" or physiologically as a "Steroid Stimulant" which is normally released only under stress.

For thousands of years, up to the present day, man has associated the horse with wisdom, courage, loyalty, strength, dignity and mystery. "A Man on a Horse is like a King on His Throne". This has been embedded in the subconscious and has played a paramount role in the behaviour, conduct and aspiration of a person. Consequently, Horse has been linked with POWER, POTENCY, RANK, COURAGE, VALOUR, STRENGTH, VIRILITY. Etc., etc. ALL WITH POSITIVE POTENT PROWESS. So any person who rides this formidable majestic creature is subconsciously projected with one or more or all of these attributes ubiquitously.

### **Horses and Personalities**

Hence, Horses have always been closely related to heroes and heroines of the past. Knightly figures, such as St. George always had a faithful charger. While Marengo, Napoleon's fiery steed, inspired almost as many legends as his master. He was the Emperor's inseparable companion in victory and defeat. Bucephalus, the favourite charger of Alexander the Great, was dear to him all his life. When the animal died he built the City of Bacphala, over his grave in the present day Pakistan. The great Marathi warrior Sivaji was only a pint-sized man, but he was an invincible and relentless warrior when he fought on his favourite mount. Richard III in Shakespeare exclaimed "A Kingdom for a Horse". Sai Baba of Shiridi had a beautiful white horse called "Shama Karuna" that used to dance when it led the procession on ceremonial occasions. So did the Maharaja of Mysore who rode his dancing white horse at Dasara Festival. It is said that if not for Kanthaka, Lord Buddha's favourite Horse who took him across the Bhagirathi River with one jump, we may not have Buddhism.

### **Horse and Politicians**

In modern day President Carter and Reagan often went to

their ranch to ride and rest, recoup and ruminate on horseback and forget their political problems. Our Prime Minister Dato Sri Mahathir too has taken to horse-riding in a big way though it was once whispered that he was allergic to any form of exercise or sport. As busy as he is, he still finds time to "giddy-up" especially on a Sunday morning and chase it up with a leisurely breakfast. After his cardiac surgery, people cannot but admire that he rides with greater vim, vigour and vitality. Now many Malaysians, young and old, men and women are taking to horse riding more enthusiastically without trepidation. The first Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, the late Mr. Senanayake was a keen horseman who rode every morning at Cinnamon Gardens despite being a brittle diabetic.

### **Horse A Super Athlete:**

Every equestrian activity from shows and events to racing, rodeo and polo will demonstrate those qualities of breeding, stamina, speed and courage which such great animals need to reach to their peak in the respective fields. ...

For Tuan, even more exciting than mere horse riding was playing Polo. It is said that the word 'Polo' is derived from the Tibetan word for willow root, 'Pulu', which means 'a ball'. This game was started over 2,500 years ago. Persia's Emperor Darius III sent a young Alexander the Great a polo mallet and ball, with the message to set aside war and play this game. The game was known as 'Chaugan' which means four-a-side. It is the Moghul Emperor Babur who was largely responsible for introducing this game in India and history has it that modern Polo originates from the Indian subcontinent. The British cavalry officers and tea planters founded the Silchar Polo Club in 1859 after they were introduced to the game by the inhabitants of Manipur. The Manipuris, who are said to live in the northern mountains of India, had already been playing this game for the last two hundred years. Today, the oldest polo club in the world is the Calcutta Club, which was founded in 1862. From India, the British army and naval officers soon brought the game home

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to Britain and to all parts of the British Empire and beyond. Today, Polo is played in some 77 countries around the world and is also recognised by the International Olympic Committee. Unlike any other game, (for instance car racing) Polo is the only game in the world where the human's partner is a living being.

In Malaya, the game of polo was introduced in the Straits Settlements by the British armed forces in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This game attracted the attention and support of the Royal Houses of Johore, Perak and Pahang. The first Polo club, the Selangor Polo Club was founded in Port Swettenham (now Klang) in 1902.

In 1911, the Selangor Polo Club moved to Kuala Lumpur where it was believed to have been housed at the British Military Administration's property at Gurney Drive. In 1946, in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War and in the midst of the British Military Administration, the young man Tuan, became a member of the Selangor Polo Club.

Early in the 1960s, with gentle persuasion from the Pakistani High Commissioner to Malaysia, General Sher Ali Khan, himself a keen Polo player, Tunku granted the Selangor Polo Club a lease of 26 acres of state land amidst old, disused tin-mining pools in the area known as Ampang Hilir. This club stands to this day and is still the club that Tuan is a member of. The Selangor Polo and Riding Club celebrated its centenary recently with a polo tournament at the club's grounds located amidst lush tropical greens at Ampang Hilir in Kuala Lumpur. It was a royal affair. The present Sultan of Pahang was the guest of honour and his son, the Crown Prince of Pahang captained the Royal

Pahang team. This tournament came to a fitting conclusion for the Pahang team took the coveted trophy home. The Royal Pahang Polo team currently holds a prestigious position as one of the five best teams in the world. For Tuan, it was a moment he treasured for he was witness to the third generation of the members of the Pahang royalty to play this game. Indeed Tuan's very own ties with Polo were linked to this family.

In 1948, Tuan learnt Polo from none other than the late Colonel His Royal Highness Paduka Sri Baginda Sultan Sir Abu Bakar Riayat ud-din al-Mu'azzam Shah ibni al-Marhum Sultan Sir Abdullah al-Muhtasim Billah Shah, Sultan and Yang di-Pertuan of the State of Pahang (also referred to as 'Sultan Sir Abu Bakar'). He was the Sultan of Pahang from 1932 until his demise in 1974. Tuan speaks fondly of this man who taught him Polo and with deep humility he acknowledges that he still learns from the Sultan's children and grandchildren to this day.

Playing Polo for all of his adult life, Tuan has come into contact with Royal families all over the world. In the chapters ahead it will no doubt be revealed that as Tuan began to travel to all parts of the world, he lived true to his father's motto of, "Move with Kings but never lose the common touch"!

In years to come, his continued passion for and involvement in this game has earned him many an accolade, the most cherished ones being the Clipping of the Golden Jubilee in 1973 by the Maharaja of Mysore and later the Clipping of the Diamond Jubilee in April 1998 by His Royal Highness the Sultan of Perak. The former event was for 25 years of playing polo and Tuan received a Gold Bracelet. Tuan tells that this bracelet had the royal seal of the Maharajah embossed on it but unfortunately

## Records

a local goldsmith did not understand the significance of this and when repairs were required he flattened the royal emblem of *gandaberunda* - a mythical bird with two heads.



Tuan, in his Polo gear

The Clipping of the Diamond Jubilee was an event that was celebrated for Tuan's achievement for 50 years of playing polo. This very special occasion took place at the Iskandar Polo Club. This venue was chosen because Tuan has a special connection with this club and its history. Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the above named Sultan Sir Abu Bakar was desirous of marrying Princess Fatimah, a princess in the neighbouring state of Perak. A condition was placed by the then Sultan of Perak that he would only consent to this marriage if Sultan Sir Abu Bakar learned the game of Polo. The Sultan did learn to play Polo, married Princess Fatimah and today his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren still carry on playing the game. The Sultan of Perak at the time was one Sultan Iskandar and it was after this Sultan that the Club in Perak's royal town, Kuala

Kangsar is named after. However, as future members of the royal family of Perak did not take as keen an interest in Polo, the club was rarely used. That was until Tuan returned and revived the Club. With the permission of the then Sultan of Perak, Sultan Idris Shah, Tuan transferred the name of 'Iskandar Polo Club' to the club that had till then been known as 'Queen Hussars Polo Club'. Today, this Iskandar Polo Club lies surrounded by lime stone hills and is, to Tuan, one of the best polo grounds. At one point in time, he was also the chairman of this Iskandar Polo Club.



Tuan at the Iskandar Polo Club with its scenic natural landscape

The gentlemen performing the task for the occasion of 'Clipping of the Diamond Jubilee' in the photograph on the next page is Duli Yang Maha Mulia Paduka Seri Sultan Azlan Muhibbuddin Shah, the present Sultan of Perak. A lawyer by training, His Royal Highness had an illustrious career and subsequently became the 5<sup>th</sup> Lord President of the Federal Court. His distinguished career in the legal field was cut short when he ascended the throne of Perak state and in time he became the King of Malaysia.

At the time that Tuan received this award from His Royal Highness, the Sultan of Perak, it was public knowledge that Tuan was already 68 years old and hence one of the oldest Polo play-



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ers in the country if not Asia. What indeed would history say of a man who at seventy four years old at the time of writing still actively plays a game he so loves. Alas, what is age where passion for this most enigmatic game reigns supreme in one's very fibre and soul?



His Royal Highness, the Sultan of Perak and Tuan at the Clipping of the Diamond Jubilee for Tuan's achievement for 50 years of playing polo

Tuan agrees that win or loose, Polo is a sport which gives all the players, a chance to have fun. It is a rigorous sport where team work between the players and tactics is perhaps equally as important as the skill involved in riding horseback at speed. Like the player, the horse is also an athlete in its own right. It has to be well taken care of, and its strength and endurance have to be built up in preparation for a tournament. In fact most polo players are dedicated horsemen who work closely with their horses.

"Polo is a game that depends 80% on the horse and 20% on the player," says Tuan. He continues to say, that each time one plays Polo, one is courting death. The sheer thrill of playing Polo requires split second precision and the horses too need to

be able to stop and turn immediately. "I ride regularly to keep fit. For most people, the challenge in playing Polo is the risk involved. However, playing Polo helps to build discipline and keeps you trim. In addition, it is also one of the best cures for insomnia. After a game of Polo one simply does not have the energy for anything else," he explains.

A visit to the stables for Tuan is never complete without taking along something for his beloved horses to munch on. The moment he steps out of his car, his beautifully kept horses begin to neigh and he reciprocates their affection so readily by calling to them in terms most endearing indeed. "Where will I get such affection from a woman? Any time of the day I come and they are glad to see me. No complaining, no accusing. Just love," justifies Tuan. Even if he is away from his beloved horses for a mere week, he says that he is told by others about the depression these darlings of his go through!

In short, Polo is a game that involves four players in each team - the Forwards, the Wings, the Centres and the Backs. Played on a polo turf that is no more than 300 x 200 yards, the goal posts are 8 yards apart. A full game is normally 6 chukkas, with each chukka lasting 7.5 minutes. Each player is handicapped from -3 up to 10 goals according to his estimated goals during a 6 chukka match. As the game is quite aggressive, the rules too are designed to prevent injury to the ponies and players. Number 1 is the attacking player, number 2 the midfield attacker and 3 the pivot man and number 4 the defender. When a goal is scored, the teams change sides to attack in the opposite direction and to resume play, the ball is thrown in by an umpire at the centre of the field.

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Each player is given a handicap by a committee in his Polo Club and in Malaysia, individual handicaps are ratified by the Royal Malaysian Polo Association. The lowest handicap for a beginner is -4 and as he improves, his handicap is adjusted upwards. Tuan's handicap is -1.

A player must control his horse with his left hand holding the reins and a whip. In his right hand, he holds the mallet. Polo is an intense game where speeds of up to 40 miles per hour can be reached and the athletic ability of both horse and man is taxed to the maximum. It has been said by many that the speed, the agility of the riders, their courage to lean far out of the saddle whilst at full gallop make this game of kings and king of games a sport exciting to watch and no less exciting to play. Indeed, Tuan quotes from a stone inscription found in the polo grounds of Gilgit, north of Kashmir, India, "Let other people play at other things – the king of games is still the game of kings."



Tuan with, amongst others, members of the Calcutta Polo Club and Dr. Mahathir when they were invited to Malaysia to play Polo

This was a photo that was taken when the members of the Calcutta Polo Club came to Malaysia to play. Tuan describes the invitation extended to the Calcutta Polo Club to play in Malaysia as a 'return of the Indian connection'. He says that the fact that the then Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohammad was supporting these events was in part to do with the premier's 'Look East' policy which had, as its mission to learn from the experiences of Japan and Korea in the building of this nation. The secret of these Asian countries, said Tun Dr. Mahathir, lay in their remarkable labour ethics, morale and management capability. What was implied in this was that a concentration of the Western world was not going to benefit Malaysia and if we are to succeed at all, we (as Asians) must learn to support each other.

Tuan's love for horses is infectious and it is no surprise that in time, he managed to bring to the sport one who himself has become a rider of great caliber:



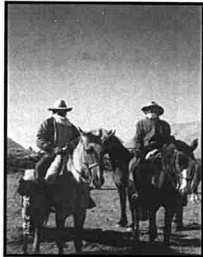
Tuan with Dr. Mahathir

Tuan once said "My happiness knew no measure, when our present Prime Minister YAB Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir

## Records

Mohamed [as he was known then], evinced enthusiasm in riding, at a relatively late age. Despite his heavy busy schedule, he joined us to learn to ride regularly at Selangor Polo & Riding Club and today he is a "virtuoso who rides with great vim, vigour and vitality". He is the most senior rider in the country and I am the next. I have still not stopped persuading him from taking up polo, which I am sure he will do, if he puts his mind to it. He is an example for our young and old, and both able and disabled equestrians to emulate. He recently made headlines by taking part in the Marathon Ride in Argentina".

In February 2004, Tuan took part in an expedition organised by the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohammad. This was an adventure that Tuan says he would never have undertaken had he known what he was in for. He was invited by Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohammad to accompany the former Prime Minister of Malaysia on an expedition through the Andes, Mendoza, Argentina. In all of his life Tuan never thought that he would be able to go through such an experience. "There were times during those five days when we were sitting in the saddle and the horse was walking on razor sharp terrain. On either side there were ravines and one missed step and it would be the end," says Tuan with a certain amount of trepidation still evident in his voice. Not only did they have to en-



Tuan is on the left and Dr. Mahathir on the right with the Argentinian terrain in the background

dure gale force winds, it could become hard to breathe since the air at such high altitude was thin. "But I tell you, I was witness to Tun's [Dr. Mahathir] indomitable will to lead. There were three generations, Tun, his son and his grandsons. The courage this man has is amazing. If they say I am brave playing Polo at this age, Tun is even older than I am and he undertook this expedition. I was deeply honoured to have been included. There were times I was sure I would never return alive and was quite prepared to say my final prayers."



Tuan standing with Dr. Mahathir and his 2 grandsons mounted on their respective horses in the background

However, it is a grave mistake to think that it is only Polo that interests Tuan. His Curriculum Vitae has a separate section for Polo and another for 'Equine Activities'. Together, the entries take up almost two pages and reads as follows:

- Keen amateur jockey in local turf.
- Promoted Equestrian Sports in Malaysia
- Committee member of the Perak Turf Club and committee member of the Royal Malaysian Polo Association.
- First to introduce Riding for the Disabled in Malaysia and currently the Founder Member and Vice-Chairman of Riding For The Disa-

## Records

- bled Association (RDA) of Malaysia.
- Involved in the setting up the one and only Stud Farm in Malaysia in Tanjong Rambutan, Ipoh.
- Chairman of the Equine Rest and Recreation Madhuban Ranch, Stables and Spelling Station.
- Committee Member of Perak Turf Club.
- Member of Totalisator Board of Malaysia (a financial body that controls the Malaysia turf clubs).
- Keeper of the STUD book of Malaysia.
- General Affairs Chairman for 'Pesta Sukan Berkuda Untuk Keluarga 1990' (at the request of the then Prime Minister of Malaysia YAB Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohammad).
- Chairman of the Malaysian Paralympic Equestrian Committee.
- Committee Member of Malaysian National Animal Welfare Foundation (MNAWF) and presented a talk on Pet Therapy on Nov 15 2000.
- Organising Chairman of two Horse Extravaganza Shows under the Equine Council.
- Organising Chairman of 2<sup>nd</sup> National Horse Show held at Perak Turf Club from 22-25 October 2000.
- Represented Malaysia and Singapore at: -
  - 23<sup>rd</sup> Asian Racing Conference from 23-28 February, 1993 in Manila
  - 24<sup>th</sup> Asian Racing Conference from 23-30 January 1995 in Hyderabad and Bombay, India
  - 25<sup>th</sup> Asian Racing Conference from 15-27 January 1997 in South Africa



At the time of writing this biography, a momentous event has just taken place. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 2004 Tuan's name was entered into the Malaysian Book of Guinness Records as the oldest Polo player in the country. Indeed, it would not be amiss to say that, at seventy four years of age, he is probably the oldest Polo player in the world. This is an astounding achievement by all accounts. To Tuan, although he acknowledges all the accolades and probably even revels in them, he says that he is just doing what he enjoys. He will continue to do so for as long as he can. This philosophy of life though simple is not possible to follow through without an element of courage. If anything at all, the following chapters will reveal the life and a man who lived as he chose to live and in so doing he broke many a record.



## Discovery of India

By 1951, after the 'trial-run' at the medical school at the Marei Ika Daigaku, certain of his ambition to become a doctor, preparations were made to commence medical studies in Australia. The reason for choosing Australia had to do with the fact that some of his other siblings had moved there and were beginning to establish themselves in their new country. One of the pre-requisites of entrance into an establishment that offered tertiary education in Australia was a medical examination. Tuan subjected himself to the examination and assumed that all would be well. Unfortunately, when the report was released, it came as a shock for Tuan to read that he had a calcified spot on his lung. Even worse was the fact that because of this 'condition' admittance into an Australian college would be denied. Tuan was quite dejected by this rejection. When entry was denied, he had to start thinking about other avenues to study medicine.

In the meantime, he began his short-lived career of teaching at a school. This new career was more out of necessity than a deep desire to teach. True to his intentions to be a Romeo, he had taken to driving his father's luxury car around town. No doubt, he received all the attention he sought. However, Mahalingam was not amused and told his son that he would not finance this pursuit. If Tuan wanted to take his father's car out, he would have to pay for the petrol. So Tuan looked for a job and landed one as a teacher in one Mahatma Gandhi High School in

Yap Kwan Seng Road, Kuala Lumpur.

As was his nature, very soon after joining the staff at the school, he began to socialise and made the acquaintance of one Mrs. Pradhan. In time, Tuan and Mrs. Pradhan discovered that they also moved in the same social circles. Once Mrs. Pradhan came to know of Tuan's predicament in obtaining admission into an Australian college, Mrs Pradhan suggested that he seek the medical opinion of some physicians in India. She herself was from India and she knew of someone who might be able to help Tuan with his condition.

So it came to pass that armed with a letter of reference from Mrs Pradhan to her father, a retired judge by the name of Mr. Gupte, and his certificates, Tuan left for India. He arrived in Bombay, Maharashtra, India on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 1951 after a journey of some three weeks by sea.

With the assistance of Mr. Gupte, they went to meet one Dr. Coyajee and there, Tuan was told that this calcified spot would not endanger his life. Indeed the good doctor suggested that Tuan forget about going to the West to study and that with his good marks, he could get admission into one of the local colleges and thereby study medicine in India.

Could it be coincidence or merely providence that Tuan's life in India would be spent in cities that history records as the base of two main challenges for India before the British Empire was firmly established? These cities were Poona and Mysore. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century when the British were slowly gaining a foothold on their vision of an empire one protagonist of power were the team of Haidar Ali and his son, Tippu Sultan whose base was

## Discovery of India

Mysore. Tippu Sultan expanded his empire in the South of India all the way to the Maldives. When Tippu Sultan of Mysore was finally defeated by the British in 1799, there were only the Marathas left for the British to fight. The Marathas had their base in Poona and Shivaji, the greatest of the Maratha warriors expanded the kingdom until it covered almost all of north India. However, the rivalry amongst the Maratha chieftains was their downfall and so it came to pass that when they were overthrown individually by the British, the new colonials consolidated their empire and were now the new masters of this ancient land.



Tuan at the site where Tippu Sultan was found

Known as the Queen of the Deccan, Poona is an old city situated on the confluence of the *Mula* and *Muthat* rivers. A historical city, Poona has had various communities living together for years and is famous for its historical, social, and cultural importance.

Once Tuan was given a clean bill of health by the Indian consultants and told that the calcified spot would not in any way endanger his life he was set to further his education. Before

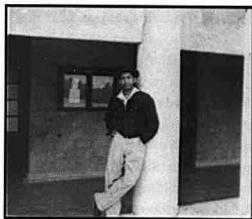
he could think of making any preparations to return home to Malaya and thereafter to Australia or even proceed to the United Kingdom to study, he was persuaded by Mr. Gupte and his friends to stay in India. So it was that an application was made for Tuan gain admittance into N. Wadia College, in Poona. Situated on the Bund Garden Road, the N. Wadia College was started in 1932 with only with a handful of 250 students. Today, the college has over 3,000 students. In no time at all, Tuan completed his 'Intermediate' which was a pre-requisite to medical college. With his very good marks, he managed to secure a medical seat at the prestigious Poona University.

Unfortunately, even before the first term at the University could be commenced, jealous eyes were cast and complaints were made that as Tuan was neither a Maharashtrian nor a domicile of Maharashtra, he had deprived a true Maharashtrian of a seat. Even if he were a domicile, the closest he could be would be a south Indian. His record, however, showed that Tuan was in fact the 'grandson' of Mr. Gupte and hence rightfully a Maharashtrian. Suspecting something amiss, the counsel of the good Judge was sought as to how this man came to deceive all and say that he was the grandson of Mr. Gupte. Mr. Gupte, having quite a sense of humour of his own, answered the University's questions in the following manner, "Well, when he arrived, he brought with him a letter of introduction from my daughter. She said "Look after him. He is my son." Now, my daughter has gone to better places [unfortunately, Mrs. Pradhan had by this time passed away], so I cannot ask her if this is her child out of wed-lock or not. She says it's her son and so I accept it's her son and therefore, my grandson."

Needless to say, this explanation and attempt to circum-

## Discovery of India

vent the rules were not acceptable and unfortunately, the decision was made that Tuan would have to give up his medical seat until a resolution could be reached about this issue by the powers that be. Not one to waste time, he utilised the scholarship that he had obtained and went ahead to pursue a degree in Bachelor of Science.



Tuan at the N. Wadia College

If it is assumed that college life was hard for Tuan, sadly this would be a mistake. To the contrary, it was a time of discovery. He lived in the hostel yes, but had all his meals in the Ritz Hotel. Thanks to this privilege and to his connection with the Guptes he was always in good company and being no bookworm, he soon made the social rounds and came into contact with some of the most interesting people of that time. One of them being Sadhu Vaswani, the man whose book, *Thus Have I Learnt*, Tuan had read all those years ago during the Second World War.

Sadhu Vaswani was a Saint who hailed from Sindh in northern India. Born on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November 1879, he was a brilliant student at school and university. After he had completed

his post graduate examination, he was appointed as Professor in the Metropolitan College in Calcutta. When he was forty years of age, his mother passed away and with his only link with what he called 'earthly existence' ending, he dedicated his life to the service of God. One of the earliest supporters of Mahatma Gandhi's *Satyagraha* (a policy of passive resistance to British rule in India) movement, he was a staunch believer in Independence and wrote profusely about this subject.

In 1933, the good Saint started the 'Mira Movement in Education' which today has its headquarters in none other than Poona. In 1962, he started the St. Mira's College for girls because of his belief that to unfold India's true destiny, women had to play an important part in it. The saint dedicated his life to one of service and to Tuan, this was another re-affirmation that this would be the path he should emulate in his own life. His father, Mahalingam, had by virtue of his own practice, inculcated in Tuan that it was a path of service to the people that he should take and in this saint he found his father's words repeated. Later on in his life, Tuan was to serve his patients in a manner that many other physicians and psychiatrists worldwide are in awe of.

One of the most endearing stories of all about the Saint is the one that is dear to Tuan: it is said that Sadhu Vaswani was so ordinary that no man who knew he was in his presence realised that the man was a saint. Nevertheless, the angels knew. So one night, the angels visited him and asked him, "Oh Saint, what is your desire?"

The Saint smiled and said, "I have no desire, I have but the longing to love the Lord to distraction."

## Discovery of India

"Ask us for something that could make you happy? Shall we give you wealth?" they asked.

The Saint answered, "Wealth is worry! What shall I do with it?"

"Then we shall give you power over men," reasoned the angels.

"Power is poison. I have no need of it!" replied the good Saint.

"Then we shall give you the power to read people's minds, of knowing their innermost thoughts and secrets," tried the angels again.

"I read the Book of the Heart," replied the Saint, "That is enough for me. It contains the whole science of loving!"

Once again the angels tried, "We will give you the prophecy of knowing what the future holds and hides," suggested the angels.

"There is no future for me," was the simple answer of the Saint, "and there is no past. I live in the present."

One last time they tried, "We will give you the power to heal," said the angels.

"The Name of my Master is a Healer," answered the Saint.

Seeing that nothing could placate this Saint, they left him

but not before blessing the shadow of the Saint that whenever it was behind him, it would radiate health, happiness and peace to all on whom it fell. However, should the shadow fall in front of him none of this would happen, so as to not make him aware of this gift!

More often than not, when the Saint was to deliver the *Satsung* (speeches) at his weekly Friday meetings, the Ritz Hotel was packed with an audience. On one particular Friday evening, a lady walked into a hall and as there was no seat available, Tuan gave up his seat for this lady. That was the starting point of a life-time friendship with one Aruna Desai. Aruna Desai is the niece of Sir Kikabhai Premchand of the famous group of Premchand Roychand & Sons, a firm that grew into an important finance house, a private bank to Princely Houses and States and a market maker in bullion and foreign exchange.

For Tuan, this is a friendship that is dear to him. He has remained friends with Ms. Desai and says that she has had a profound influence on his life for she used her influence in society to help Tuan when he needed it most. She would use her position in soci-



Ms. Aruna Desai

ety to help put him in contact with people he would not normally have had a chance to meet.



Of his friendships with women, Tuan thinks he is most fortunate. He has come into contact with some of the most beautiful women in his time. Quite naturally, this bachelor, who is a man of considerable means, has many a time been the centre of attraction. "The details between a man and woman are no one's business," is Tuan's reply to anyone who questions him about the intimate details of his friendships with women. With that comes the end of any conversation regarding this topic. To his credit he has maintained a 'kiss and never tell' policy. Nevertheless, his silence on this aspect of this life has only added to the queries, controversies and speculations surrounding this still very eligible bachelor.

It is with some surprise that he wonders why a woman would want to marry him even at this age. It has to be explained to him that with his title of 'Tan Sri' [equivalent to 'Lord'] and his bachelor status, he has become quite in demand. If a woman were to marry him, it would be tantamount to instantaneously being called 'Puan Sri' [equivalent to 'Lady'] and many a window of opportunity would be opened to this lucky woman. If the title alone does not attract a woman to him, the oodles and oodles of charm that he heaps on a lady are enough to convince her that she has met the man of her dreams. But she would be a fool to try to tie him down with marriage.

Mention the word 'marriage' to Tuan and immediately he will begin to laugh. "I have no more money left with all this litigation [family disputes] and all. I am looking for a rich woman to look after me," says Tuan. He can no longer be bothered to counteract all the allegation made and has allowed speculation about this aspect of his life to run somewhat wild. He gives an example of a lady [again, no names mentioned] who has, for the

last twenty five years asked him to marry her. This, however, is in private. To the public, he has allowed her to pass the rumour that it is he who is after her and she rejected him. He says that he has let it be and not bothered to contradict this fact because he would like to preserve her integrity.

Many a person would have retreated into a shell with the accusations that have been levelled against him regarding women but instead of avoiding the subject and becoming a recluse, he almost revels in it and continues to make sure that he is surrounded by beautiful young women at all times. This is perhaps the testament to the theory that marriage was never an important aspect of his life. Make a mere mention or criticism of his career practices and you will receive a barrage of defences and comments. However, criticise him for his so-called 'romantic misdemeanours' and he will just laugh at you; and yet, through this banter about his love life, Tuan is serious when he says that had any woman ever really known him, they would have known that he was so afraid of marriage. His freedom and ambitions meant more to him than the thought of being tied down to one single person. However, to the many people who ask him if he wants to marry, he replies, "I went to the astrologer the other day and he told me that I will get married. Only the girl has yet to be born and maybe, she will never be born in my lifetime!"

It was also through Ms. Desai and her connections that he was involved in horses and the cinema in India. There were film makers who needed experienced riders to become extras in their movies and of course Tuan rose to the occasion. This was a practice that he would continue even as a medical student in Mysore.

It was not just riding horses alone that Tuan was inter-

ested in. It was also in breeding them. In time, he came to meet a man who would be the founder of a company that would one day become very well known in the equine industry. The man was none other than Soli Poonawalla. Tuan says that when he first met Soli Poonawalla, he had 5 horses and 20 chickens. At this time, when breeding horses in India was in its infancy, Mr. Poonawalla established The Poona Stud Farm in 1946 and today, this stud farm, renamed the Poonawalla Stud Farms, breeds Indian thoroughbreds which are used in the international arena. Tuan maintained this friendship with this man and his descendants. It was also the point at which the seed for an idea to create a stud farm in Malaysia was sown in Tuan's mind. For this dream to work, he made sure that when Tunku visited India sometime in the 1950s, he took him for a visit to the Poonawalla Stud Farms.

The main reason for Tunku's stopover in Poona was actually to make a visit to a place called Pimpri, a suburb of Poona. India has one of the biggest pharmaceutical industries in the developing world with its roots in Pimpri. In the 1950s, a penicillin factory was started in Poona and it was this establishment that Tunku was interested in visiting. Penicillin was the antibiotic given to the drug discovered by Sir Alexander Flemming. A doctor with St. Mary's Hospital in London, he served throughout the First World War as a captain in the Army and when he returned was elected Professor of the School of Medicine and Emeritus Professor of Bacteriology later on. Having a keen interest in natural bacterial action of the blood and in antiseptics, he continued to study throughout. In time, he discovered the bacteriolytic substance he named Lysozyme. Continuing his studies, he devised sensitivity titration methods and assays in human blood and other bodily fluids. It was in 1928 that he accidentally discovered that mould had developed on a staphyloco-

ccus culture plate and the mould had created a bacteria-free circle around itself. He investigated further and found that a mould culture prevented growth of staphylococci. He discovered this when he was investigating the influenza virus and named this new substance, 'penicillin'.

On the way to visit the factory, Tuan says that Tunku related a story about how Sir Alexander Flemming is said to have saved Winston Churchill twice in his life. The first was when they were young and being mischievous, Mr. Churchill was thrown into the pool. Unfortunately, Churchill did not know how to swim and was soon in deep trouble. Fleming, seeing the boy, dived into the pool and saved him. Years later, when Mr. Churchill was in the Caribbean, he could not take the heat and humidity and so began to take his clothes off. Unfortunately, when night fell, he assumed that his state of undress could continue and soon developed a terrible cold. He was in quite a bad way until it was suggested that he should try this new treatment called 'penicillin'. Lo' and behold, Mr. Churchill recovered.

Once Tuan graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree, he was set on his path to becoming a doctor, but not in Poona. He had gained admission in an equally prestigious University and that was in the southern Indian city of Madras.

After the Second World War, the leaders of Asia decided that a plan was needed to revitalise the economically ravaged countries and help rebuild them. The Colombo Plan, which resulted from these leaders' deliberations, was the first multilateral effort in foreign aid in Asia. The key donor countries were Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Britain and the United States, and the organisation included Asian members of the Common-

wealth like India, Ceylon and Pakistan. The Colombo Plan began in July 1951. Assistance was given in the form of educational and health aid, training programs, loans, food supplies, equipment, and technical aid. Originally conceived as lasting for a period of six years, the Colombo Plan was extended several times until 1980, when it was extended indefinitely. The organisation's headquarters are in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

One of the recipients of assistance from the Colombo Plan was Tuan. Once he obtained his Bachelor of Science degree, he was awarded a seat for medicine in Madras Medical College. He was nominated as Cultural Scholar under Government of India's Technical and Co-operation Scheme of the Colombo Plan in 1955. Unfortunately, Tuan found Madras not at all to his liking. The humidity got to him and he sought the help of Ms. Desai to assist him to find another place to study. Using her influence, it was conceived that there was a seat available in the Mysore Medical College. However, this was no easy application for the final determinant of entrance into this University was its Chancellor, His Royal Highness the Maharaja of Mysore, Shri Sir Jaya Chamraja Wadiyar Bahadur.

The kingdom of Mysore has an interesting history. The name Mysore is derived from *Mahishasura*, the name of the monster killed by the goddess *Chamundeswari*. Mysore has



Tuan at the Statue of Mahishasura

had the honour of being the capital or at the very least a key city, of many the ancient empires of India from the Chandragupta Mauraya to the Kadambas, the Pallavas, the Cholas and Vijayanagar empires. Mysore became independent after the fall of the Vijayanagar Empire in 1565. In 1687, the Moghuls captured Bangalore from the Bijapur Sultanate and gave it on lease to Chikkadevaraya Wadiyar of Mysore, eventually selling the city to the Mysore rulers for a mere five lakh rupees.

For a short period one Hyder Ali usurped the kingdom and after he and his son Tippu Sultan's rule, the kingdom was returned to the Wadiyars by the British in 1799. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Bangalore grew from a mere military station into a flourishing administrative centre. Mysore State acceded to the union in 1947 and Maharaja Sri Sir Jaya Chamraja Wadiyar, became Rajpramukh (governor).



One of the palaces of Mysore

The audience that the Maharaja granted to Tuan was inside one of the many beautiful palaces of Mysore. Magnificent buildings, these ochre-coloured extravaganza of domes and

arches, turrets, colonnades and stunningly intricate sculptures and 3-D effects of the many paintings are a synthesis of Hindu and Muslim culture. The old palace was partly destroyed in a fire and in 1911, the palace was restored.

When the Indian states were reorganised on a linguistic basis by the States Reorganisation Act of 1956, a new Mysore State (renamed Karnataka in 1973) was formed to unite the Kannada-speaking areas of the country and Bangalore remained the state's capital.

The Mysore Medical College began its teaching facilities in the year 1924 and is the oldest college in the state of Karnataka. Started by Maharaja Sir Krishnadevaraja Wadiyar, predecessor of Maharaja Sri Sir Jaya Chamraja Wadiyar, the story of this University begins in 1917. Although the college was called 'Mysore Medical School', it had its beginnings in the town of Bangalore in 1924 with 16 pupils. At the behest of the Maharaja Sir Krishnadevaraja Wadiyar, the College was shifted from Bangalore to Mysore in the year 1930 and to this day, the main building of this College still stands. Over the years, this College has grown in stature and the respect that its graduates have garnered all over the world is a testament to its high teaching standards. Tuan tells that when a candidate is admitted to the College, he is immediately addressed as "Doctor". The ability to gain entry into the College alone was held in such high esteem that it was not necessary to wait the six years to be addressed in such a manner.

During the audience with the Maharaja, besides the brilliant marks, the clinching factor that ensured his admittance was the fact that Tuan agreed to exercise the Maharaja's horses

each day! This meant participating in the Mysore Lancers Core at the Lalita Mahal palace each week day and during the week-ends, he would take part in the Maharaja's Mounted Cavalry. This was no task to be undertaken lightly for one Captain Krishnan, who was the Commander-in-chief, once told Tuan in Kanerese, "If you don't ride these horses for nine days, then it is like not riding them for nine years." Tuan says that this instruction has remained with him to this day and so, he makes it point to ride his horses as often as he can.

Alas here too in Mysore, admittance into medical school, though secure, was not without its challenges and difficulties. Upon admission, he was told that he would have to wait another six months because he "did not have Chemistry". This irked him no end. At the time, he was staying at the Modern Indo Hotel and when he received the news that his entrance into medical school would be further delayed, in complete frustration, he went to front desk of the hotel and told the proprietor that he was checking out the next day and was going home to Malaya. In the next moment, he looked up and above the counter was a picture of Sai Baba of Shirdi and a sense of calm began to descended upon him.

The story of Sai Baba begins in early 18<sup>th</sup> Century, in the village of Shirdi, Maharashtra. He was found seeking shelter in a mosque and as no one ever found out his religious allegiance, his true origins were never known. This anonymity gave a unique facet to what he said. People began to give him food, which he shared with everything alive and was perpetually a pauper. He soon began to share his thoughts as well with the people who came to hear him speak. In time, he had a following and the village became a centre of pilgrimage. His beliefs encompassed



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the uniformity of religions and he never distinguished people by colour, creed or faith and in time became a saint. To the Hindus he was orthodox Brahmin. To the Muslims, as he was living in a mosque, he was a Muslim. To the Parsis, he was the sacred fire worshiper and his life was a living manifestation of the Sermon of the Christ and of the Eight-fold path of the Buddha.

When Tuan inquired about this picture of Sai Baba, the proprietor of the Modern Indo Hotel was most flabbergasted that this picture should have been hung there at all and shouted to one of his staff to remove it. In the process, Tuan had calmed down somewhat and listened to and followed the advice of the proprietor of the hotel to extend his stay and witness the festival of *Dasara* of which Mysore is world famous for.



The Maharaja of Mysore on the golden *howdah* at Dasara

*Dasara* is a ten day celebration sometime in the month of October or November each year. It celebrates the victory of good over evil, marking the slaying of the demon *Mahishasura* by the goddess *Chamundeshwari*. The palace and city are lit up for these ten days and the entire city has a festive air about it. The highlight of the festivities is the *Dasara* procession held on

*Vijayadashami*, the tenth day. It is led by elephants carrying an idol of goddess *Chamundeswari* seated in a golden *howdah*. At the time when the Maharaja was still very much in power, he would take part in this procession on his very own *Jamboosavari*—the royal procession. The procession weans its way from the Maharaja's palace to the parade ground and then back to the palace. It was a magnificent sight to see the Maharaja, seated on his golden *howdah*, festooned with pearls, atop a majestic elephant. The Maharaja would look resplendent in his royal robes and a gold-embroidered turban, on which a diamond-studded brooch was pinned to a tassel of silken bristles which spread out into a fan shape.

Tuan's experience of his first ever *Dasara* festival was to coincide with another experience that would have a lasting impression on his life. The day after the proprietor of the Modern Indo hotel advised Tuan to stay and witness



Tuan inside his room in Modern Indo Hotel

the *Dasara* festival, Tuan had completed breakfast when he came upon the picture of Sai Baba of Shirdi he had noticed the day before. As the picture lay in the dustbin, Tuan picked it up, cleaned it and took it to his room and hung it on the wall. This was a new room given to him... in the servant's quarters. It was the time of *Dasara* and Tuan was forced to give up his previous suite because a celebrity was due to arrive and the hotel needed the room. With not much choice, Tuan accepted the room change and began to settle in.

The very next morning after he had noticed the photo of the Saint above the manager's desk, a scarlet coloured Cadillac had pulled up in the porch. Out came a big burly man from Andhra Pradesh who was annoyed because he was missing his man servant. He came to the servant's quarters looking for this man and when he saw the newly hung up picture of Sai Baba, he stopped in his tracks and prostrated on the ground and paid homage to Sai Baba. When he finished, he went immediately to the hotel proprietor and demanded to know who it was who had put this picture up. The proprietor told him, it is this man from 'the island' [Malaya, though a Peninsula, was referred to as 'the island' by most Indians at the time]. Tuan was introduced and immediately, he insisted that Tuan go with him to meet Sai Baba. The Sai Baba he was to meet was not Sai Baba of Shirdi, but Satya Sai Baba, the re-incarnation of Sai Baba of Shirdi.

Sri Satya Sai Baba was born Satyanarayan Raju in 1926 in the village of Puttaparthi, Andhra Pradesh, India. After experiencing a series of strange events, he claimed that he was the reincarnation of Sai Baba of Shirdi who had died some twenty years earlier. He has since become renowned as a miracle worker through his power to heal.

Tuan agreed to go with this man from Andhra Pradesh and off they went in the scarlet coloured Cadillac to the village of Puttaparthi, where Satya Sai Baba lives. The journey to this village was quite something – no proper roads, and cobbled all the way, it was a bumpy ride. It was certainly no mere one to two weeks visit with this Saint; Tuan took a liking to the life in the ashram and stayed there for three months. So enamoured was he by Sai Baba that he sat on a hill and observed the Saint as he went about his daily musings. His exact thoughts were,

"Why should I study medicine when this man does *chantra-mantra* and the people are OK. It's better for me to stay here and learn this from him."

For three months he stayed in the ashram. He met Sai Baba's parents and enjoyed the simple life. After three months, however, Tuan was beginning to wonder if this Saint even noticed him. Many people had come, received an audience with Satya Sai Baba, obtained their *darshan* ('gift of God') from the Saint and left. Tuan had still not even spoken to the man. Eventually, Sai Baba spoke to him and said, "What are you doing here?"

Upon being told that Tuan was actually a medical student in Mysore Medical College and was on the verge of giving up his studies, the good Saint told him that Mysore Medical College seats were difficult to get and he should go back. When Tuan protested that he had already missed three months and was sure to face difficulty in gaining entry back into the college, Tuan was reprimanded and told to go back. Indeed, the good Saint also said that in time, Tuan would be invited to the West.

On hand to make sure that Satya Sai Baba's words were followed to the letter was the man who had brought Tuan to Puttaparthi in the first place, the gentlemen from Andhra Pradesh. He insisted that since Sai Baba had said that Tuan was to return to Mysore, he must provide the transport. Unfortunately, his scarlet coloured Cadillac was under repair ... probably because the shock absorbers were no longer working. Nevertheless, a taxi was arranged for and Tuan was ferried back to Mysore and indeed to the very steps of the Mysore Medical College itself.

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As expected, the welcome that Tuan received from his college professors was anything but warm. Displeasure that Tuan had just disappeared for a period of three months without explanation, assumptions were made that he had spent his time in the company of ladies of the night at the infamous Brigade Road. When the truth was revealed though, Tuan was immediately forgiven and his tenure as medical student in Mysore Medical College was secure. Apparently, his Professor was also a Sai Baba devotee who was keen to help Tuan. The Professor made sure that the laboratory was kept open after hours so that he could finish his practicals and therefore catch up on all that he had missed out on.



The Maharaja of Mysore, Maharaja Sri Sir Jaya Chamraja Wadiyar  
with some of the international students.  
Tuan is in the background, seventh from the right

In time, Tuan became the President of the International Students' Association and through this office, he came to meet some of the most exciting and interesting people of the era. The International Students' Association would organise dances, musical festivals and charity events from time to time the purpose would be most honourable indeed. The monies raised from these

events were often to assist a foreign student in paying his fees or some other dues. This student organisation was most fortunate for it had the support of the sovereign and therefore many an invitation to an artiste through the office of the International Students' Association had the support and patronage of the Maharaja himself.

One of the people whom Tuan met during his tenure as President of the International Students' Association was none other than the famed *sitar* player, Ravi Shankar. This photo with Tuan was taken over forty years ago but was only recently autographed by Ravi Shankar. With tongue in cheek Tuan says that Ravi Shankar refused to sign a more recent picture – his reasoning was that it was not fair that Tuan had hardly aged at all in his looks and the contrary was so of the famed *sitarist*. He wanted to be remembered by Tuan as a young man!

Ravi Shankar, was born on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April 1920 in Benares, India. Music was part of his life from the beginning. Once his father and brother left India for Europe, it was only a matter of time before Ravi Shankar followed them. When he joined his brother in Paris, his education in the symbiosis of Indian music and western culture began. In 1938, he returned to India and came under the tutelage of Ustad Allaudin Khan where he learned to play the *sitar*. He has won many an international accolade in the field of music.



Tuan and Ravi Shankar

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The Platinum Jubilee of the Mysore Medical College notes as follows:

"The royal family was very much concerned about the health of their citizens hence they built this [the Krishnarajendra Hospital] hospital. The last ruler of Mysore, Sri Sir Jayachamraja Wadiyar was once treated in this hospital when he got injured while hunting in the forest is an anecdote.'

The ruler was not only a patient there but he was insistent that the Medical College and the hospital receive international recognition. Therefore, whenever there was a chance for the Medical College to get exposure, the ruler encouraged it. Many a time, top quality doctors were invited to the Kingdom for their sabbatical, which of course gave this inquisitive and intellectual ruler a chance to meet some of the foremost men in the field of medicine. These visiting doctors also gave the Maharaja a chance to learn about his own endocrine problems. Tuan says that despite his size, the Maharaja was a first rate horseman whose stables housed some of the most extensive number of horses in the country.

Another factor about this particular Medical College is that it is affiliated with 'GANA' [the Graduates Association of North America]. This affiliation has been of great benefit to its students for a perusal of the Platinum Jubilee Souvenir shows that over six hundred of the graduates of this College have succeeded in obtaining positions all over America. For Tuan, this affiliation was to be of enormous benefit to him when in later years, he himself went to America to further his interests in psychiatry.

Already acquainted with Jawaharlal Nehru, Tuan, in his capacity as the President of the International Students' Associa-



Tuan with Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru

tion, was pleased to welcome India's first Prime Minister to Mysore. Among the other Heads of State to visit Mysore during Tuan's time in Mysore was the first King of the newly independent Malaya. The King and Queen of Malaya made an official visit to India in 1961 and Tuan was the unofficial translator for the Queen when she needed to obtain souvenirs from local vendors. During this visit he also came into contact with one who would have an impact on his career when he later returned to Malaysia, Tun Dr. Ismail bin Dato Abdul Rahman.

Tun Dr. Ismail had a part to play in the history of how Malaya obtained her Independence. When Tuan left Malaya in May 1951, Malaya had just emerged from the Second World War. Under the British Military Administration, the Federated and Unfederated States of Malaya together with Penang and Malacca were united under a central government, the Malayan Union. The Malay Sultans were not at all pleased by this and threw their support behind the newly formed United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) founded in March 1946. As a result of widespread opposition, the Federation of Malaya Agreement was put into practice in February 1948. Unfortunately, there was still dissention and in the end a state of Emergency was declared on



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the 18<sup>th</sup> of June 1948 which was to last for the next twelve years.

During his time in London in 1948 Tunku found that although he felt that the best political solution for Malaya lay in merging the races, the other students there were divided on whether the Malays and Chinese could live side by side as members of a united nation. The conclusion was made that there was really no alternative except unity. These thoughts came in the wake of the August 1947 partition of India and Pakistan and the bloodshed that had occurred.

Once he returned to Malaya, Tunku and his team began to work towards Independence for Malaya. Realising that the British would only grant independence to a Malaya that was united and that co-operation with the Chinese was a pre-requisite to Independence. Tunku then began to endeavour to find the best-suited men in the country to assist in this sensitive job. One of the men chosen was one Tun Dr. Ismail bin Dato Abdul Rahman who became the Minister of Natural Resources. After much negotiation and discussion with everyone concerned, The 'Merdeka Agreement' was signed on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 1956 whereby Malaya would gain its Independence from British rule on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 1957. According to the Constitution of the new country, there would be a Constitutional Ruler elected every five years from among the nine hereditary rulers and General Elections would be held every five years for a Prime Minister. Parliament would be wholly elected, composed of a House of Representatives of 100 members and a Senate of 23. Citizenship was to be a birth-right and Islam was accepted as the State religion but freedom of religion was to be enjoyed by non-Muslims. The non-Malays accepted that for a few years, Malays would be given special privileges with regard to land reservations, quotas for

admission to public services, businesses, scholarships and education. At midnight on the 30<sup>th</sup> of August 1957, as the clock boomed the first strokes of the new day, the Union Jack was lowered and the Federal Flag was hoisted. Malaya had her Independence. In the morning of the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 1957, Tunku, as the first Prime Minister of the Federation of Malaya accepted from the Duke of Gloucester, the Constitutional Instruments by which the Federation of Malaya became a sovereign country.

Tun Dr. Ismail bin Dato Abdul Rahman became Malaya's first Ambassador in Washington and Malaysia's representative to the United Nations. In time he would prove to be of invaluable help to both Tunku and Tunku's successor Tun Abdul Razak. When Tun Razak became the second Prime Minister of the country, Tun Dr. Ismail bin Dato Abdul Rahman became the Deputy Prime Minister. Unfortunately, the career of this politician was abruptly cut short when he suffered a heart attack and passed away on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August 1973.

When Tuan first met Tun Dr. Ismail bin Dato Abdul Rahman, Tuan was a newly qualified doctor. However, throughout the coming years, he kept the friendship going and many a time, when he returned for his vacation, he made it a point to visit Tun Dr. Ismail and this continued interaction was to hold Tuan in good stead for the future.

As for the Mysore Medical College, Tuan was about to come to the end of his time there. Nevertheless, his connection with the Medical College ran so deep that he has continued to keep his link with the people there going. So strong was his connection with them that when the time came to produce the Souvenir copy of the Platinum Jubilee of Mysore Medical College, he

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readily contributed to this celebration and is duly acknowledged as one of the persons who contributed over Rs. 10,000.00 and above.

In a recent speech delivered off the cuff at a ceremony to bid farewell to the Indian High Commissioner to Malaysia, Her Excellency Mrs. Veena Sikri, Tuan spoke about the time he had spent in India and how much he had learnt there. He said, amongst other things, that it was India that had given him a chance when others had rejected him and how grateful he was to the country. He was also grateful to the Maharajah of Mysore for the continued friendship and said that he had enjoyed his medical studies. After his speech, when a member of the audience complimented him on how well he had spoken, his reply was "it came from the heart." He had not only achieved his dream of becoming a doctor he had discovered a land so rich and steeped in history that he prospered in it. He grabbed at every opportunity to meet the most enigmatic people of the time and unlike most other students who had merely used their University years to study and nothing more, he had discovered India. In so doing, he discovered himself. "Sometimes, when I read about the things I have done, I think to myself, 'That's not me. It's a mad man,' and yet I know that it's me. It's like a dream," says Tuan. "No wonder people think I am eccentric," says Tuan as he acknowledges another one of the comments made. Yet, is it someone who is eccentric or just a person who took every single opportunity made available to him and maximised his experiences to create such wonderful memories? Still, his time in India was but the beginning of a life on adventure. He was about to discover the world and psychiatry.

## 4

### **No Sunday, No Monday, No Birthday**

"Do you know the colour of the textbook cover?" asked Tuan's lecturers in Mysore Medical College, thereby implying that Tuan never studied. Tuan was anything but insulted by this, for most of the time he really did not know the colour of the textbook's cover. He hardly studied throughout the year but two to three weeks before his exams were to commence, he would suddenly realise that studying needed to be done and that was the time he would go into a massive state of panic. He gives an example by way of analogy of how disorganised he would be before the exams and how he studied. Imagine he is looking for someone's telephone number. He has to go through both his diaries because he cannot remember in which diary the address is listed. Compound the problem by imagining that none of the entries are where they are supposed to be because an entry for a person whose name begins with 'A' may be under 'P'. He is looking for this telephone number while talking on the telephone to "this important Minister" or "that important His Excellency". Somewhere in the chaos, the desired telephone number is found and given to the person who asked for it. This person will not necessarily be the person on the other end of the telephone line but a third person, waiting patiently for the number. This chaos, however, seems to apply only to trivial things like phone numbers and addresses.

At Mysore Medical College, this completely disorganised

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persona he presented belied the razor sharp mind he possessed. When it came to medicine, he was fortunate in that once he had read a paragraph, there would be no necessity to revise. "I have a memory like a computer and I was very lucky; whatever I would read would come out in the exam," says Tuan. For example, once during his viva he was asked to give an example of a disease that affected the liver. Tuan cited Wilson's Disease. The technicalities of this disease, the necessary treatment and so on would be explained in detail by Tuan. "This disease is also called hepatolenticular degeneration and is caused by defective biliary excretion of copper. Hepatitis, and eventually cirrhosis of the liver would be the eventual outcome. There would also be a Kayser-Fleisher ring (green or golden deposits of copper in Descemet's membrane of the cornea) and this is a sure sign that a patient is suffering from Wilson's disease," says Tuan in one breath. No doubt, over forty years ago, examiners, who had been well aware of Tuan's extra-curricular activities and expected him to be lost for an answer, would be pleasantly surprised and impressed with Tuan's answer. Of course, with use of such sophisticated terminology, he would not only pass but pass these exams with flying colours. Not to let him get off that easily, the rather unflattering comment would be made, "You became clever overnight didn't you?"

Although Tuan passed all of his exams with flying colours, at home in Malaysia, Mahalingam and Ratna Ammal were receiving reports that their son was whiling away his time and not attending lectures. After his extended stay in the village of Puttaparthi and absence of almost 3 months from medical school, they were easily convinced when the suggestion was made that he had dropped out of Mysore Medical College all together. The reports ranged from him spending all his time either with the

horses or women or in certain circumstances both. Not once did the report go that he was busy studying. Indeed, this was probably the truth for in Mysore, a tremendous amount of Tuan's time was spent exploring the countryside on horseback and also leading an active social life. The Modern Indo Hotel soon became a hub of visitors, but not always of the two-legged human kind.

On a typical day at the Modern Indo Hotel, Tuan's morning would begin with a visit from an extremely important character – the royal elephant. Tuan can no longer remember the name of this elephant but says that he felt as if Lord Ganesh [the deity that Hindus believe is the remover of all obstacles] himself was coming to bestow his blessings on Tuan. The royal elephant would be taking his daily exercise through the city together with his mahout. These elephants, become groomed to be in the service of the royal household were to part of the *Dasara* festival. The elephant would love these visits for it would receive its daily reward from Tuan, a coconut.



Tuan and the mahout  
sitting on top of his daily  
"Morning Visitor"

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These elephants were not born in captivity but were captured under the *Khedda* system. This would be a huge operation of sorts involving a hunt and several days would be spent in the country. Tuan had many times accompanied these expeditions and explains that an elaborate trap consisting of ten to twenty deep ditches are dug and covered with leaves. The men will then drive these wild elephants with the help of loud noise and disturbance into these ditches. Once the elephants fall into the trap, they are starved and rendered weak. When tame, with the help of other already tamed elephants, these new ones were enticed out of the ditches, captured and sent for training. To an untrained eye, the manner in which these beasts are captured may sound cruel. However, the reverence with which elephants are treated in the state of Mysore is legendary.

These elephants were not considered merely as beasts of burden but were given royal status. Apparently the Maharaja himself would overlook the training of these animals. When it came to *Dasara*, the procession of these elephants was quite a sight to behold. In the last years of the procession when the Maharaja was still involved in it [the Maharaja is now no longer involved in the procession], there were five elephants in particular that were important : Biligiriranga, Rajendra, Drona, Arjuna and Balarama.

The first, Biligiriranga, was a majestic beast and the Maharaja was particularly fond of this elephant. After the *Dasara* festival the elephant would return to the forest to live until its services were next required. Rajendra was caught in 1971 and was the last elephant to serve the Wadiyar dynasty. While Biligiriranga was virile and strong, Rajendra was said to be quite romantic and never himself found his true love! Drona, named

after the great guru of the Pandava Princes of the Hindu Epic, *Mahabharat* was said to be a good learner because he was able to adjust his muscles selectively and manage the weight of his burden. This elephant had two mates, Kokila and Shanti. Unfortunately, poor Drona electrocuted himself when he pulled down the cable while trying to eat the tree he was trying to uproot! It is said that just like a celebrity, he was mourned in state. Arjuna, though groomed as the successor of Drona, was destined not to fulfil his role. One day whilst Arjuna was crossing the road he was startled by the noise of the cars. In the chaos that ensued, he trampled a trainer and killed him. This unfortunate incident led the people to decide that Arjuna was most unfit to carry out his religious duties. Hence he never quite fulfilled his royal functions though he was considered a most able candidate. Balarama, took over from Arjuna but sadly lived in the shadow of Arjuna.

Besides these, there were the companion elephants as well. There was Bharat who was groomed as Balarama's alternative. Then there was Gajendra who was an expert in assisting to capture new elephants. Mahendra was said to look after the welfare of his oft drunk mahout.

In time, Tuan began to feel that his room in Modern Indo Hotel was becoming a little cramped. He needed a new place where he could house his two new friends, his Alsatis. Tuan was on the look out for another place to live. What kind of establishment would suit a man of Tuan's interests? It was most certainly not the hostel on campus. Tuan says that the hostel was stifling for interaction between men and women was forbidden and this would have just put paid to all his social activities. Besides, no student hostel could accommodate his two Alsatis, Rama and Sita. When Tuan says that these dogs meant every-



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thing to him, he is not joking. They followed him everywhere. When he attended his lectures, the dogs would wait for him outside the lecture hall. Many a person has laughed at his anecdotes about how close he is to these dogs and puts these stories down to Tuan's over-active imagination. Laughter stops when Tuan shows them the photo of him riding on his bicycle down the main street of Mysore City with these two dogs by his side.



Tuan with Rama and Sita in Mysore

Half-way through his search for other accommodation, Tuan chanced upon the proprietor of one 'Greens Hotel'. Although Tuan was informed that there were no rooms proper for him, the proprietor was willing to let Tuan have the attic which opened out onto a terrace. No one wanted this room. It was said to be haunted and the story goes that at one time, a man had committed suicide by hanging himself in that room. For Tuan, this ambience of the existence of the paranormal was exactly what he was looking for. Besides, he conjectured that his two body-guards [Rama and Sita] would be more than enough protection from any possible harm.

Even from an early age, Tuan has had an interest in the paranormal. His earliest memory of encountering the paranormal was when he, as a young boy, and his siblings had gone on a picnic by the river. There was a young girl from Ceylon who had been employed to look after the children. Although they had all been warned not to go too deep into the river, this girl made one last visit there. A crocodile attacked her and the last they saw of this girl was her struggling body being dragged into the river by this animal. When the adults were informed, the decision was made to call a *bomoh* [a Malay witchdoctor] who specialised in conversing with the crocodiles to try to locate the girl's body. It was necessary to find the body so that no allegation could be made that the family had somehow murdered her. The *bomoh* came, sat down by the riverbed, summoned the crocodile which duly came out of the river and 'told' this *bomoh* where the girl's body was. When investigations were made, the body of this girl, minus her leg, was indeed where the crocodile 'said' it was. The fee that the *bomoh* asked for was not money or food. Just salt and tobacco and the *bomoh* was a happy man.

Where every other medical student had to do dissection in the dissection hall or designated study area, Tuan devised his own methods. Imagine this. A man dies and his body is placed in the mortuary ready to be claimed by his family the next day. Over night, his body is stolen. The next day, across town someone is spotted weeping next to a covered corpse. The complaint is that there is not enough money to pay for the cremation and, therefore, the need to beg for money. By evening, enough money has been collected and by night, the body has been abandoned by the roadside and the supposed weeping relative is nowhere to be found. This was quite a common occurrence, says Tuan, at the time.

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One terminally ill gentleman did not want this to happen to him when he eventually died. So he asked Tuan to buy his body. With the money that Tuan gave him, he would be able to settle the few debts he had remaining and also die peacefully knowing that his body would be used for gaining knowledge rather than being abused. Tuan agreed to this and so a deal was struck. When the time came, this man's body was taken to Tuan's room in Greens Hotel where Tuan studied and carried out dissection of the cadaver. To Tuan, there was absolutely nothing amiss in this. Indeed, he feels that he was fulfilling the promise he made to this gentleman and saving him from the fate of being abused. Strangely after this, the attic was no longer considered haunted. One wonders whether, after seeing Tuan dissecting this corpse, these lost souls fled the room to better places!

Due to his growing sense of disillusionment with everything around him, primarily the difficulty he had to get into medical school in the first place, what with entering medical school during the Japanese Occupation, then again in Poona, then again in Madras and only then in Mysore, Tuan decided that it was time to take things a little easy. He was fed up of his family questioning his every move and speculating about his medical studies. He decided that it was perhaps time to relax and try a different occupation. What better way to begin than to quote poetry and espouse to be like none other than Omar Khayyam. Ask Tuan today and he will recite the famous quote from the *Rubaiyat* with ease:

*The Moving Finger writes, and, having writ,  
Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit  
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,  
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it.*



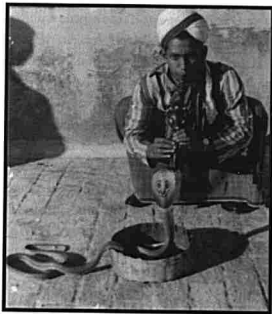
Tuan impersonating Omar Khayyam

However, quoting the verses of the *Rubaiyat* alone was not enough. He had to look the part and live as he thought Omar Khayyam did. He bought the outfit and of course, he could not omit the *hookah*, his unique smoking device. Originally, the *hookah* came from India but it was quite crude in shape for it was made of coconut shells. When it was introduced to Persia and the Middle East, the practice caught on and in time the *hookah* of today's design is said to have originated in Turkey over 500 years ago. Made by skilled craftsmen, the fresh tobacco leaves used is mixed with dried fruit pulp, flavoured molasses and honey. The tobacco can come in a variety of flavours including apple, apricot, strawberry, cappuccino, mint and cherry.

Smoking the *hookah* and doing nothing much but lazing around all day involved too much expenditure as there was no income. Tuan needed to generate some revenue. He decided that that the only establishment that would justify his present state of mind would be to join a circus! He told his family this and he achieved the desired effect; his people were lulled into a false sense of security in the belief that he was failing medical school.

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Being a member of a circus on its own did not generate an income. He needed a craft and learning to tame lions and tigers was far too difficult. He needed a mobile but small animal and one he could train in his own time. Add to the other occupants of his room in the attic of Greens Hotel namely, the ghost, the cadaver and his two Alsatis, Tuan soon introduced the new-comer, his pet cobra. Tuan had decided to become a snake charmer. Training began and each day, this snake would be fed with an egg and marrow and Tuan would play his gourd flute to begin charming it.



Tuan, the snake-charmer

Once he was adept at this art, he began to entertain his audience and found them most appreciative. The income was no less lucrative. There were adults and children alike in his audience and all were awed by the sight of this cobra dancing to Tuan's tune. Tuan explains that although the snake would appear to dance in response to the music, it was actually unable to

hear this music. Snakes do not have a sense of hearing and, therefore, cannot hear sounds in the same frequency band as humans. In actual fact, the snake is reacting to the movement of the gourd flute. Despite the fact that the thought of a medical student alone indulging in this art is in itself eccentric, one must give credit to Tuan for snake charming is an art that is usually passed from father to son. Tuan learnt this art all by himself. Of course, this was before the time of the Indian Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 which banned the keeping of snakes as pets.

To prevent the snake from biting and poisoning Tuan, its fangs had been removed. The life span on this reptile would then be drastically reduced and it would live no longer than a few months. So it was that when the snake eventually died, so did Tuan's career as a snake charmer come to an expected conclusion. With that phase of his life over, he left the circus and again began to pursue medicine diligently ... but not quite.



Tuan with his pet tiger

One day, he was invited to participate in a *Khedda* operation which lasted between one to two weeks. Once the elephants had been captured and were in the process of being tamed, Tuan took part in a hunt and chanced upon an injured tiger cub. Tuan did not have the heart to kill the cub or let it survive on its own. He brought it back to his

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room in Greens Hotel. The tiger cub lived, chained of course, on the terrace of this hotel. He nurtured it and helped it to recover. Even better still, Tuan taught the animal to drink milk from a bottle, all on its own and after it had recovered fully Tuan gave the animal to the zoo. The exact story was re-

peated some time later but this time, with a pet leopard. The affinity that Tuan has with animals is no strange thing. He says that he enjoys training these animals and is always amazed by their intelligence.



Tuan with his pet leopard

Never far away from his thoughts were his horses. As he had agreed to exercise the Maharaja's horses each day, he was obligated to travel to the royal stables each morning. These were situated across town and having to get there and back in time for lectures on a bicycle was proving to be a little difficult. He



Tuan seated on his Lambretta

wrote home for some money and when he received the required amount from his mother, he bought a Lambretta. With this, Tuan was mobile and able to fulfil all his obligations to the Maharaja.

Despite a life full of animals and adventure, Tuan was very ambitious where his career in medicine was concerned. He had decided very early on in his medical studies that the area of medicine that he would specialise in would be psychiatry. Since this was a branch of medicine that was not yet offered in Mysore Medical College, Tuan decided look for an institution in Bangalore, where he could observe and study psychiatry.

Besides, although he was living outside campus, Tuan felt stifled by the imposition of rules regarding the mixing of sexes in Mysore Medical College. If a man merely said "Hello" to a woman, it would be tantamount to a scandal in the Medical College. This restriction of Tuan's lifestyle was not at all to his liking. He craved a social life and so each weekend he made his way to Bangalore. There he rented a room from a kindly lady who did not mind him bringing along his beloved Alsations. She was even willing to look after him whilst Tuan socialised and began networking for this future in psychiatry.

Each time he visited Bangalore, he would make it a point to visit NIMHANS [the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurological Sciences] which was affiliated to the Mysore University. Tuan was soon known to all at the Institute including one Professor G. M. Carstairs. The son of a Pastor, Professor Carstairs was born in India and naturally had an affinity with India. He went back to England to study medicine and in time, he took up psychiatry in Edinburgh. Nevertheless, his attachment to India was so strong that each year, he made it a point to return to work at the Institute for a few months. He would be based in NIMHANS.

This Institute was a result of the Government of India's



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Tuan and  
Professor G. M. Carstairs

recognition of the necessity to initiate and develop educational facilities of excellence for the training of personnel in all important branches of mental health. In 1946, with all of this in mind, the All India Institute of Mental Health was established and was affiliated to the Mysore University. This Institute started with the two post-graduate courses in Psychiatry and Medical Psychology from January 1955. In time this expanded to include Psychiatric Social Work, Neurosurgery, Neurophysiology and Biophysics, Psychiatric Nursing and neurosurgical Nursing. The objects of this Institute were to do the following:

- Developing Mental Health services from grass roots level to an international one.
- Training professionals and non-professionals in the field of Mental Health.
- Developing programs and service models in Mental Health Care and specialised ones in Child Mental Health, Community Mental Health, Family Mental Health and in other related fields.
- Conducting continuing medical education programs.
- Providing services to include non-psychiatric disorders, half-way homes and elderly persons.

- Focusing the work in the areas of Psychiatric Epidemiology, Psychiatric Classification and other areas related to major mental disorders.
- Developing national and international collaborations for research group.

When Professor Carstairs saw Tuan's dedication to psychiatry and realised his ambition to become a psychiatrist, Professor Carstairs encouraged him. Regretfully, Professor Carstairs was unable to offer Tuan a position at Edinburgh University but there was an alternative. Professor John Dunn of University College Dublin was on the look-out for someone to assist him and Tuan was invited to apply for the post. Nevertheless, Tuan was forewarned that working for Professor was not going to be easy. In Professor Carstairs words, "There will be no Sunday, no Monday and no birthday!"



Tuan with the first King and Queen of Independent Malaya on the occasion of Their Majesties' official visit to India in 1961

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Nevertheless, Tuan grabbed the opportunity. Tuan was awarded an exchange fellowship presented by His Royal Highness the Raja of Perlis, when the King was on an official visit to India and the University of Mysore in 1961. Tuan was on his way to Ireland.

Later, a scholarship in the name of His Royal Highness the Raja of Perlis was created for students scoring excellent results in the field of Psychiatry at the University of Mysore.

As forewarned, Professor Dunn was a hard taskmaster and was relentless in the dedication to psychiatry he required from his students. With Tuan, however, Professor Dunn found a student who was perhaps even more dedicated to psychiatry than he himself was. Despite the negative perception that had been given about Professor Dunn, Tuan soon began to realise that he enjoyed working with and for this man. Tuan had agreed to stay in the resident's quarters and so it was that he was always on hand to assist the Professor. Tuan also never once missed his clinics and soon he gained the reputation of having an unquestionable dedication to his work and patients. It worked well for both men - Tuan loved psychiatry and Professor Dunn had found an assistant whom he could trust.

In consideration for his dedication, Tuan was provided with some amazing opportunities by Professor Dunn. For example, although by virtue of the fact that Tuan's degree was recognised by the General Medical Council, Ireland had its own register and to be able to fully assist Professor Dunn, Tuan's name would have to be recorded in this register as well. To do this he would have to be a local graduate. So Professor Dunn encouraged Tuan to obtain a local degree and so it was that Tuan was awarded a

Licentiate of the Apothecaries Hall Dublin (LAH) in 1963. In time Tuan was registered with the Irish Medical Council as well. In the next three years, Tuan proceeded to obtain the following qualifications:

- Diploma in Psychological Medicine.
- Licentiate of the Pharmaceutical Society Ireland.
- Diploma in Licentiate of Midwifery (L.M. Rotunda) with special emphasis on Affective Disorders, Puerperal Psychosis and Psychosomatic Conditions associated with women.
- Diploma in Child Health with special emphasis on Paediatric Psychiatry.

Tuan says that although Professor Dunn was portrayed to the world as someone who was always serious, he did have a unique sense of humour. For instance, as his house was next to the golf course, he often took his dogs for walks there. Invariably, the dogs would ease themselves somewhere on the golf course. The members of the management committee of the golf course decided to take some action and they wrote a letter to Professor Dunn to request that he control his dogs in some manner. After the third letter of warning, the members of the management committee called for a meeting to ask Professor Dunn to explain his lack of action. Professor Dunn's reply was, "Well I showed the dogs your letters but they still don't seem to be doing anything about it!"

By the summer of 1965, Tuan was secure in his position in Ireland and was happy in his chosen field. He got to meet very interesting people and in his spare time he rode his horses daily and had joined the Westmeath County Hounds when through

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no effort on his part, Tuan's reputation as the rising star of psychiatry was about to be catapulted into the international arena. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of June 1965, after a hunt, Tuan was relaxing in a pub called Hunter's Moon when suddenly there was a loud sound and when everyone rushed out, it was apparent car that a had crashed into a truck load of cattle. In the commotion that ensued, once it was discovered that Tuan was a doctor, his assistance was required and he went to the aid of the victims. He saw that two ladies were already dead and there was another man, alive but haemorrhaging badly. His injuries were being exacerbated by his heightened concerns and anxieties for the two ladies, who Tuan later realised were his wife and pregnant daughter. Tuan went to the man and started to calm him down. Tuan held the man's hand and spoke to him in a quiet manner. He told him that he would count to ten and that this man would go to sleep. In effect, he hypnotised the man and Tuan had to repeat this procedure many a time during that journey to the hospital. The reason he gave for bringing the man out of the hypnotic state many times was because he needed to check if the man was still alive.

By the time the patient arrived at the hospital he was calmer and the management of the patient was taken over by the doctors there. A decision was made to perform surgery to stop the haemorrhaging and naturally, the doctors consulted Tuan to ascertain some history. The anaesthetist was unwilling to give the man any sedatives as he did not know what Tuan had administered. When they found out that Tuan had administered no drugs to the patient but merely hypnotised him, they were not pleased. They insisted that Tuan was lying and refusing to divulge the medication he had given to the patient. Tuan stood his ground and the surgeon took down Tuan's details with the intention of

reporting him to the Council. The operation proceeded without anaesthesia being administered.

The next morning, the surgeon rang Tuan to explain that he was stunned by what had happened during the surgery. The patient had not complained of any pain at all during surgery. The patient himself confirmed Tuan's story that he had not administered any drugs to him and merely held his hand throughout the period.

When Tuan visited the man later in the hospital, he discovered that the patient was one Mr. Leonard Hart, a bank manager. He was ever so grateful to Tuan and since his condition had stabilised, he was clam enough to understand and accept the tragedy that had befallen him and his family. He had lost his wife, his daughter and unborn grandchild in that accident. Nevertheless, he was more than grateful to Tuan for what he had done. He wanted to offer Tuan some money but Tuan declined any payment at all.

As for reporting the matter to the Council, quite the opposite happened. The surgeons were so dumbfounded at what had happened that they called for a press conference and explained this new technique of hypnosis and how it had helped in this surgery. To Tuan, this incident was one of the many examples he says that proved to him how much integrity the doctors in Ireland of the time had. They did not once take the credit for the successful surgery but indeed gave credit where credit was due. The result of this was that Tuan was now a celebrity for the story appeared in all the local newspapers and Tuan began to receive congratulatory telephone calls from all over the world including his family friend, Tunku, now the Prime Minister of Malaya.

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Proof of Tuan's dedication to his patients is evident from excerpts from the following letters written by various colleagues of his:

Westmeath County Council  
County Hospital  
Mullingar  
8<sup>th</sup> July 1963

...I cannot speak too highly of the way in which he carried out his duties. He was meticulous in the examination of patients and in carrying out all instructions concerning their care. His sense of responsibility was equalled by his kind approach and at all times he was courteous. He is a favourite with both the Medical and Nursing Staff in the hospital.

I am sorry to see Dr. Mahadevan leave our hospital, but have no fear for his future in whatever branch of medicine he chooses to specialise in. He proved himself not only to be a hard working doctor but a most agreeable colleague who carries with him my very best wishes for his undoubted success.

Signed  
Patrick J. Mangan,  
M.R.C.P.I., D.P.H., D.C.H.,  
Barrister-at-Law



Tuan at a dance in Ireland.  
Patrick Mangan is the gentlemen standing on the extreme left

St. Brigid's Hospital  
Ardee  
Co. Louth  
2<sup>nd</sup> September 1966

It gives me great pleasure to testify to the Professional abilities and high ethical standards of Dr. M. Mahadevan whom I have known intimately for approximately 2 years.

He attended this Hospital initially as a post-graduate student while working for his Diploma in Psychological Medicine, and I thought so highly of him both as a Doctor and a pleasant and agreeable colleague that I later asked him to join our staff.

He has brought credit to our Hospital and fulfilled the expectations we had of him in every regard, and I have no hesitation in recommending him to the Royal College of Physicians as a person of suitable character to take part in the examination for Membership of the College.

Signed  
James J. Wilson  
Medical Superintendent

Perhaps it is the desire to know anything and everything about his chosen career that has set him apart from others. For example, as a general standard, it is safe to say that most doctors are interested in the future of medicine and medical technology. However, how many are interested in practices in their chosen fields in times past? This was exactly what Tuan was interested in and he decided to investigate the medieval practices of mental illness and conducted research on the patron saint of mental illness. This task was to take him on an adventure that had ironic conclusions.

The origins of the patron saint of mental illness lie in the story of a girl called Dymphna and the town of Gheel in Belgium. Dymphna was the daughter of a pagan Irish chieftain named Damon, and a beautiful devoted Christian woman. Both



## **No Sunday, No Monday, No Birthday**

Damon and Dymphna were grief stricken at the death of Dymphna's mother. Damon's sadness was so great that he began to suffer from a form of mental illness. He began his quest to find another woman as beautiful and good as his late wife to marry but no such woman could be found. Then still suffering from mental illness, Damon realised that the only woman in Ireland who was as beautiful and good as his late wife was their daughter, Dymphna. In his madness, he decided to marry her. Of course, Dymphna said 'No.' When Damon continued to insist, she ran away across the sea to Belgium with the help of an elderly priest, Saint Gerebran.

Damon pursued her and found her in the town of Gheel and demanded that Dymphna surrender to him. She refused and he threatened to kill her. She replied that she would rather die than commit incest. The moment after he had beheaded Dymphna, he is said to have had an immediate recovery from his mental illness and a realisation of what he had done made him seek redemption. He began to repent for his sin.

The spot where Gerebran and Dymphna were killed became a shrine and is now known as a site where there are miraculous healings of the insane and possessed. Today, the blessings of Saint Dymphna are invoked when those suffering from nervous and mental illnesses seek help. When the old church of Saint Dymphna in Gheel was destroyed by fire in 1489 it was replaced by a new church which was consecrated and still stands today.

Treatment centres and a fraternity under her name sprang up around the town of Gheel. Under Dymphna's Sainly patronage, the inhabitants of Gheel have been known for the care they

have given to those with mental illness. By the close of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, an infirmary was built. Today the town possesses a first class sanatorium and is one of the largest and most efficient colonies for the mentally ill in the world. Gheel was one of the first to start a program where the insane inhabitants lead normal and useful lives in the homes of farmers or local residents. The strength of Dymphna's cult is evidenced by this compassionate work of the people of Gheel for the mentally ill at a time when they were universally neglected or treated with hostility.

At the conclusion of this visit to Gheel, Tuan was not to know that what he had learnt would someday become that basis of what he would one day create in Malaysia. More immediately though, when he returned to Ireland and reported his findings to Professor Dunn, it was to both their astonishment to discover that the house that Professor Dunn lived in was in fact called 'Dymphna'. In addition, Tuan discovered that the feast for Saint Dymphna was celebrated on 15<sup>th</sup> of May each year which coincided with the feast celebrated for yet another Saint, Saint John the Baptist de la Salle, the patron Saint for St John's Institution, Tuan's old alma mater.

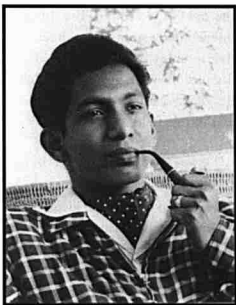
In 1966, Tuan was appointed as a Consultant Psychiatrist at St. Brigid's Hospital, Ardee with a clinical attachment to Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda and Queen's University, Belfast, Windsor House for one year. For Tuan, this was the culmination of a dream. He had become what he wanted to be and life was going very well. Since he was now a Consultant Psychiatrist, it was also important to look the part and what better way than to emulate Sigmund Freud.

Sigmund Freud was born on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 1856 into a

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family that was full of enough complexity and confusion to give him ruminations on the individual mind and its connections with others. By the 1920s, although he had become a household name, he was beginning to suffer from cancer. There was no relief from this and on September 23, 1939, he finally demanded of his physician a lethal dose of morphine.

In very simple terms, Freud held that the different functions of the mind operated at different levels. He divided the mind into id, ego and superego which Freud deduced from his studies in hypnosis. The conscious level is the level on which all of our thought processes operate. Below this level is that of the pre-conscious. Below both of these levels is the realm



Tuan in his Freud impersonation

of the unconscious. The ego banishes the urges of the id to this level, where they cannot cause mental anguish but are still perfectly capable of causing great anxiety.

The dynamic interaction between the id, ego and super-ego, with each contending for as much energy as possible, illustrates the importance of the functions of the mind. A man who invests most of his energy into the cravings of his id will act and live much differently than the man whose guilt-inspiring super-

ego consumes most of his energy. This constantly changing balance and interaction between the various functions of the mind, in Freud's theory, determines personality.

Tuan was able to travel the length and breadth of Europe and visit all the exciting Institutes. The discussions he took part in were not merely about Freud but also other notable people in the field of psychiatry like Jung, Adler and Rank. These were intellectually stimulating times for Tuan who found that he was free to enjoy many sojourns at institutes all over Europe. The discussions were lively and he felt able to discuss the complexities of psychiatry with people who were equally as excited as he was in this field.

In time, he was ready to expand his wings ever further and ventured to America. In this, he had the full support of Professor Dunn who would give Tuan three months each year to go to America to visit various institutions and study techniques that were being applied there. Tuan had obtained the necessary medical credentials and was eligible for appointment to an approved United States internship or residency and once again when the window of opportunity was opened to him, he had absolutely no hesitation in making full use of widening his scope of experience. Tuan would go to the United States each year for a specified time, study the new techniques they had discovered and in time, he would return to Ireland and apply them for the benefit of his patients there. The source of finance for these trips came not from Tuan's own pocket but from various other means. One source was from an anonymous donor who paid him US2,500 per month for two years to pursue his studies in America. To this day he has never found out who his benefactor was but suspects that it was none other than his patient, Mr. Hart.

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Birthdays came and went and time passed quickly for Tuan. To Tuan, he was having the time of his life. He met interesting people and enjoyed a lifestyle that many envied. When he eventually visited America, he would come to meet the person who would become his mentor, friend and peer in psychiatry. This was none other than one Professor Chester Pierce.

## Raped by Sociopaths

"The lamp was lit and to this day, the fire is still burning," says Tuan of his mentor, Professor Chester Pierce. Once he obtained the ability to do an internship in America, Tuan made it a point to keep track of Professor Pierce's career. Every time Professor Pierce was to give a lecture, Tuan would make it a point to attend this lecture. In time, Professor Pierce began to notice this young psychiatrist and the tables were turned – every time Professor Pierce was to give a lecture, he would inform Tuan in advance so Tuan would make arrangements to attend. This could be in any part of the world and Tuan would be there.

Professor Pierce had once been the colleague of another person who was himself very well known in the field of psychiatry, one Professor Jolyon West. Professor West was the head of the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences and Director of the Neuropsychiatric Institute (NPI). This gentleman only recently passed away on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January 1999 from cancer. When conducting general research on the man rather than his work, Professor West seems to have been reported in terms that are less than favourable. Indeed there are people in certain quarters who remain furious with him for what they say is a misuse of his position for his own ends. The claims laid against him include the a controversial plan to construct secret installations for the study and modification by electric shock, chemical castration and other means of the behaviour of citizens, par-

## Raped by Sociopaths

ticularly minorities. It is said that he tried to perfect the use of 'mind-control' techniques used by the Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A.). In the 1970s, Professor West formulated plans for the Center for the Study and Reduction of Violence where the program was an attempt to predict occurrences of violent behavior in specific population groups. Professor West said that the major known correlates of violence are sex (male), age (youthful), ethnicity (black), and 'urbanicity'. Dr. West considered many treatments including chemical castration, psycho surgery and experimental drugs. His critics have stated that his target groups for these experiments were young blacks with no criminal record.

However, his professional colleagues have had nothing but praise for this man. Deemed as a visionary, he achieved recognition for his research on cults and his studies of brainwashing, torture, post-traumatic stress disorders and violence. He was said to have examined one Jack Ruby following Ruby's trial and conviction for the murder of Lee Harvey Oswald and concluded that Ruby was suffering from "major mental illness precipitated by the stress of (his) trial". Professor West was also one of the experts who examined the newspaper heiress, Patricia Hearst, who was kidnapped by the Symbionese Liberation Army and brainwashed into robbing a bank. She was found to be sane to stand trial but Professor West wrote that she was "Psychologically damaged as a result of torture by the SLA". His recommendation that she receive treatment for her mental illness before her trial in 1976 was ignored. She was convicted but her sentence was later commuted.

Tuan says that even the suggestion that Professor West only targeted the minorities in his choice of subjects is ludicrous. "If he is so racist, then why did he support the career of Professor

Pierce?" asks Tuan. Professor Chester Pierce is of African American descent. In addition a civil rights activist Professor West was the first white psychiatrist to go to South Africa to testify on behalf of black prisoners during the attempt to end apartheid.

Together, Professors West and Pierce have succeeded in being recorded in history as the two people who conducted an experiment over forty years ago that can only be classified as comical if it were not such a tragedy. The experiment was all about a newly discovered drug called d-lysergic acid diethylamide, or more commonly known as LSD. The experiment would be conducted on an elephant no less. Apparently, male elephants are prone to bouts of madness and since LSD seemed to cause a temporary form of madness, the experiment was to combine the two and see if how much LSD needed to be given to the male elephant so it would go completely mad. Tusko, being the star of Oklahoma City Zoo and a male elephant was the most suitable candidate. So began the experiment by the two Professors. A record breaking amount of LSD [roughly 1,435 times the quantity one would give to a human] was given to Tusko. Instead of going mad, the poor elephant dropped dead! Nevertheless, as psychiatrists who have learned to be optimists, they did not see the negative aspects of this supposedly failed experiment; instead, they concluded that an elephant is highly sensitive to the effects of LSD which is a finding that may prove valuable in elephant-control in Africa!

Forty years after the experiment, Tuan laughs when relating this story but says with a twinkle in his eyes, "Can you imagine what they did? Just imagine the reaction of people today. I mean all those groups that specialise in cruelty to animals would have made minced meat out of them."



## Raped by Sociopaths



Tuan with Professor Cohen

Tuan was no stranger to the wonder drug, LSD. Once in Harvard he was told that to work with LSD, he had to take LSD and so he did. The person who advocated this was none other than his colleague at UCLA, one Professor Cohen. Professor Cohen was so convinced by the effects of this new wonder

drug and insisted that it was a panacea to all ailments. Tuan says that if given a chance, this man would have given LSD to a cat!

The experiments continued and in all, Tuan was absorbing all the experiences like a sponge. They proved invaluable to Tuan for later, when he returned to Malaysia, he was one of the first persons to highlight Malaysia's drug problem. In addition, in the trial of one Sarjit Singh a/l Akar Singh, he was able to give an opinion that the defendant was temporarily capable of making his defence but relapses were not uncommon because of the abuse of LSD. Sarjit Singh, a brilliant scholar was accused of murdering his elder brother at their house. However his lawyer was unable to get any coherent instructions from the accused. Sarjit Singh was talking nonsense. To Tuan this was quite understandable for he immediately recognised that the accused had abused LSD to such an extent that certain amount of brain



Sarjit Singh

damage had been caused. His opinion was accepted and Sarjit Singh was admitted to the mental hospital for treatment to enable him to recover sufficiently to stand trial.

Unfortunately, Sarjit Singh never really recovered. One night a few months later, this troubled soul, so deranged from the latent effects of LSD, plucked out his testicles. The attempt to suture back these organs failed and in time, as there was a lack of male hormones, Sarjit Singh began to develop female characteristics.



Tuan and Professor Pierce and 2 of the Professor's students, in Harvard

Professor Pierce is not without his own astounding credentials. With a string of publications, qualifications and appointments to various bodies all over the world, Professor Pierce has lectured on all seven continents of the world and is a most enigmatic man. Professor Pierce earned his BA from Harvard College and his MD from Harvard Medical School. He is Professor of Education and Psychiatry, Emeritus in Medical School, the Graduate School of Education and the School of Public Health at Harvard University. He is the Senior Psychiatrist at

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Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. For nearly twenty five years he was also Psychiatrist at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is a past president of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology and the American Orthopsychiatric Association. He was Founding President of the Black Psychiatrists of America and was National Chairperson of the Chile Development Associate Consortium. He has been the advisor to the Children's Television Workshop (Sesame Street, Electric Company) and Advisor to the US Arctic Research Commission. The above are but the few positions he holds. He has also published over 180 books, articles and reviews, chiefly on extreme environments, racism, media and sports medicine.

One of Professor Pierce's most famous comments, made over thirty years ago was this:

"Every child in America entering school at the age of 5 is mentally ill because he comes to school with certain allegiances to our founding fathers, toward our elected officials, toward his parents, toward a belief in a supernatural being, and toward the sovereignty of this nation as a separate entity. It's up to you as teachers to make all these sick children well by creating the international child of the future."

From the keynote address to the Association for Childhood Education International (Denver, April 1972).

Tuan agrees with this comment and it is no wonder that these two men should have so much in common. The similarities between them are obvious. Both are very physically active and have a dedication to their chosen branch of medicine that is astounding. Both have enjoyed success in the field of psychiatry. Where Tuan's passion for horses and riding is already well known, Professor Pierce has been an active football player. The story

goes that whilst still in University in 1947, before the school year began, a few of the Harvard football players wrote to the University of Virginia to put their football players on notice that Harvard intended to bring the 'Negro tackler' Chester Pierce to Charlottesville to play a game. There was no opposition to this. When the Harvard team arrived for the game, they were put up in a hotel, with the exception of Pierce, who was given accommodation of equal standards but in a separate building all together. The coach of the Harvard team rejected the accommodation at the hotel and transferred all of his 22 players to the same accommodation as Professor Pierce. Also when the time came for dinner, a request was made that Professor Pierce come to the dining room through a back door. Once again, this request was rejected by the Coach. He said that if Professor Pierce was to come in the back door, they all would. To Professor Pierce, in the one single interview that he gave on this subject, said that this was a great act of courage on the part of the Coach and he appreciated it. There was no necessity to make it into a bigger issue than it actually was.

The insistence on being physically fit is something that Professor Pierce says is a necessity for people whose skin is of a darker tone. This is something that will eventually result in the fact that the genes in the blacks will be far more advanced than that of the whites. He explains as follows: where the whites have made their lives easier and easier, they have also become lazy. However, a black man in the same situation has to rise earlier, walk faster and work harder because the opportunities open to the white men are not so to the blacks. The rationale behind these ideas is tied in with an understanding of the concept of racism. Racism, Professor Pierce says, is an abuse of human rights. It should be accorded the same attention as torture, ter-

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rorism and must be given international attention. Racism, he says is suffering inflicted upon the citizens of the world to conform to the submission of those whose skin is dark by those whose skin is fair. This requires the victim to be dehumanized and degraded. For example, Tuan relates an incident that occurred to both of them. When they arrived at Heathrow airport to attend a conference in London, they had to wait in line for the Customs check. The passengers before them were a potpourri of races and mostly white. Professor Pierce remarked to Tuan, "See how all the other white passengers are going through? You just watch, we will be stopped and our bags will be inspected." That was exactly what happened. When the Customs Officer asked Tuan whether he was coming into the United Kingdom for work, Professor Pierce's reply was, "You will not be able to afford to pay this man!"

Tied in with this entire episode is what Professor Pierce calls a micro-insult and micro-aggression. Another example of a micro-insult is when a white man enters a lobby of a hotel and asks the well-dressed black man to carry his baggage. The assumption is made that the black man must most certainly be the bell-boy. A 'micro-aggression' occurs when a white person edges in front of an African-American at a sales counter, despite being the second to arrive. In both instances, if the offended African-American shows ire, the perpetrators wonder why African-Americans are 'so sensitive'.

Tuan could readily identify with these incidences. Recently, when he went to a nearby cake shop dressed only in a t-shirt and tattered jodhpurs, the lady behind the counter started a conversation with him and immediately the stereotypical comments were made. When he told her that he lived nearby he was asked

if he worked for the Chinese man who visited the shop regularly to buy cakes and owned the bungalow a few doors away. Tuan answered in the affirmative. Tuan said that he did not want to even explain to her that in fact her assumption that he, being of Indian origin and, therefore, dark-skinned, could not own property and was only a worker at the Chinese man's residence was completely wrong. The reality of the matter was that the Chinese man in question was none other than Tuan's butler and it was Tuan who owned the bungalow!

Many times, Tuan says that Professor Pierce's dedication to psychiatry is almost parallel, if not more than, to his own. Indeed, one can safely say that Professor Pierce brought psychiatry into every single aspect of his life. For example, when he held the rank of Commander in the U. S. Navy, he was stationed in the Antarctica. Not one to waste time, he began researching the impact on peoples' lives when they were marooned on the Antarctica without any sun for long periods of time. In recognition of all his research, Professor Pierce has the honour of having a mountain in Antarctica, Pierce Peak, named after him.

The study of the properties of the drug LSD and its effects and learning to identify and treat incidences of drug abuse were not the only areas of interest to Tuan. Of particular interest was the problem of alcoholism. He says that at the time, in Ireland, alcoholism was at epidemic levels of which almost everyone in the Republic seemed to be a victim. Professor Dunn was keen to develop new methods to treat this condition and he encouraged Tuan to take an interest in this area as well. However, it would only be later when he was back in Malaysia that Tuan would have the opportunity to visit the infamous Synanon in Santa Monica, California. Not only did he visit this place, he lived there

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for a period of time and took part in all its activities.

The founder of Synanon, Charles Dederich, or Chuck as he was known to many, was born on 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 1913, to a German Catholic Family in Toledo, Ohio. By the 1950s, he had been through two marriages and was broke and battling alcoholism. He had been involved in Alcoholics Anonymous for two



Tuan with Charles Dederich  
and his wife

years and found it was not working. Several months later, he rented a place with US\$33.00 to start his group 'TLC' - tender loving care. It was a place open to those who had nowhere else to go. But there were strict regulations and the people had to attend Seminars. One day, a man, quite drunk, was unable to say the word 'Seminar' and 'Symposium' and the slurred version came out - Synanon. That is how the centre came to be known as Synanon. Starting as a therapeutic society between 1969 and 1975, Synanon became a social movement and alternate society and from 1975, it has served a religious purpose too.

The emphasis in Synanon was on self-reliance. Whereas Alcoholics Anonymous works with an individual's reliance on a higher being, Synanon dealt with a person's ability and desire to help himself. It was believed that "God helps those who help themselves." This principle was embodied in the following prayer

that was read everyday at the morning meeting:

Please let me first and always examine myself.

Let me be honest and truthful.

Let me seek and assume responsibility.

Let me have trust and faith in myself and my fellow man.

Let me love rather than be loved.

Let me give rather than receive.

Let me understand rather than be understood.

The belief was that one had to be completely open and everyone was allowed to state exactly how they felt. It was group psychotherapy for the whole community and served as a way to discuss organisational change. A basic Game consisted of ten to fifteen members and a Synanist to facilitate the activity. They sat in groups and had to sit apart from each other so that there could be no physical contact between them. The Game was an emotional and aggressive group meeting in which members attacked each other verbally. "You cannot rationalise. You cannot touch each other and immediately, you will begin to get an insight into a person and their defences. They will have to deal with them here and now," explains Tuan. It was an open arena for voicing and airing problems with one another en route to finding a solution. Members were free and encouraged to be honest with their feelings and frustrations. The "attack" was seen as an expression of love. It presumably helped people to see themselves as others do and compelled them to examine their own thoughts and actions. The Synanist acted as moderator and tried to help the participants find themselves and would use such tactics as ridicule, cross-examination and hostile attack to further the session. It was estimated that the typical resident participated in three to four three-hour games per week.



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At one point, his colleagues were quite worried about Tuan's obvious interest in this group. They were worried that he might be entering a cult and tried to dissuade him from getting too involved. However, Tuan was fascinated. He said in all the time he spent at Synanon, he did not lose a single cent and no harm ever came to him. He wanted to know what it was about this man Chuck that he had this influence on these people. The members of Synanon were not your ordinary robbers or alcoholics. Some of them were convicted rapists and quite dangerous. To Tuan, he said that he was not at all interested becoming a member of this group. "I have always believed that one must be like butter in water. You must take part in many things but you must retain your individuality. I wanted to meet Chuck and see what it was about this man's qualities that these people were willing to come and join him," explains Tuan.

At one particular session of The Game, Tuan was in the hot-seat and became the target and the focus of accusations. He was told to his face that he was a hypocrite because he was still smoking his pipe. Without batting an eyelid, he removed the pipe from his mouth and broke it into two. That was the end of Tuan trying to imitate Freud.

'Doing unto others what you would have them do unto you' was an important rule of The Game. Hence in the picture Tuan took with Chuck and his wife, Tuan is seated next to Chuck's wife who had her head shaved bald. What had happened was that one of the inmates had injured herself and as a result had to have her head shaved. So as not to make her feel completely uncomfortable, Chuck's wife saved her head too. The oft-made comment "Today is the first day of the rest of your life," was another off-shoot of this which basically enunciated the idea that

each person was responsible for what happened in his own life. In the late 1970s, Chuck, as a result of unfavourable court action, agreed to discontinue acting as a director of Synanon. With this loss and further unfavourable media coverage, Synanon began to disband. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 1997, Chuck died at the age of 83.

When speaking with Tuan today, he reflects on the circumstances in his life abroad as his happiest. He was able to expand his wings and though fate brought him back to Malaysia, it is not without a tinge of regret that he talks about America. He laments that when he compares his time in Malaysia with his time in America, he says that in coming home, all of his enthusiasm for psychiatry was destroyed by the conflicts of interest, personalities and varying degrees of professionalism. The troubles within the Mahalingam family which were to extend to those of the next generations added to Tuan's unhappiness.

By the late 1960s Malaya had undergone another transition and become Malaysia. Between 1963 and 1968, Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak joined the Malayan states to form Malaysia on 16<sup>th</sup> of September 1963. The formation of Malaysia was not without its problems. First came the challenge from the government of President Macapagal of the Philippines, who expressed concern at the proposed changes on its doorstep. Northern Borneo. Then President Sukarno of Indonesia viewed the formation of Malaysia as a neo-colonist plot and declared a state of 'Confrontation'. There were armed attacks launched on Peninsula Malaya and in Borneo and Sarawak.

As a result of Indonesia's President Sukarno's dream of having a bigger Indonesia which would naturally encompass

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Peninsula Malaysia and his 'Crush Malaysia' campaign, tensions were high. Singapore withdrew from Malaysia in 1965 and became an independent republic. The Confrontation with Indonesia ended in 1966 with an agreement that was signed in Bangkok. In the same year, the Philippines gave formal recognition to Malaysia and in 1967, Singapore and Malaysia helped to form the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967.

Although Tuan was having the time of his life in Ireland and the United States of America, all was not well in the Mahalingam household. Mahalingam had passed away and his eldest son, Ratnavel had to carry the burden of managing the family property. Though he had held a very prestigious post in Malaya, in the new nation Malaysia, he no longer held these coveted posts. Ratnavel turned to new avenues and began to venture into business. To obtain loans from the various financial institutions, Ratnamal became his guarantor for many a deal. As it later turned out, these loans were not being serviced and soon things began to reach crisis point when action was commenced to declare Ratnamal a bankrupt. Something was amiss and Tuan was advised by Tunku to return home to oversee these matters. This to Tuan was one of the most difficult decisions in his life. He had to choose between family and career. He chose family.

When Tuan returned home, he had applied for a post as a lecturer in what was at that time, the foremost University in the country, University Malaya. His application was rejected. What were the grounds for the rejection? Tuan was overqualified. Tuan has never forgiven them for this slight and takes every opportunity of homing in on the fact that the University could have had a lecturer worthy of Harvard but they chose to reject him.



Tuan is seated second from the left. To Tuan's left is Ratna Ammal. Ratnavel is the gentleman in the centre of the photograph and his wife is seated next to him

Since he was unwanted by the University here, Tuan decided that Malaya was not for him and began to make plans to stay permanently in Harvard. However, Tunku was livid. Tunku insisted that Tuan stay in Malaya and assisted Tuan in any way he could. Tuan was offered the post of Director of the Central Mental Hospital, the largest mental hospital in Malaya which was situated in a town called Tanjung Rambutan. It was not what Tuan wanted but as Tunku had insisted, he felt obliged to at the very least consider it. Indeed Tunku's words were "Your duty lies here ... I couldn't care less what Ireland or America does, show it here."

To sweeten this raw deal, Tunku suggested that Tuan start a horse farm next to the Central Mental Hospital. Tunku warned Tuan though, that he should buy this land privately and not keep his horses on the land of the Hospital though. This was because the previous superintendent of the hospital had done just that and there had been some allegations of misuse. Initially, Tuan was most displeased but soon he made use of what opportunities had been placed before him and in time, he blossomed. In

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hindsight, the rejection of the University was a blessing in disguise. His subsequent appointment to this post as Director of Central would become the platform upon which Tuan would create a society that Tuan is known for worldwide today.

On the home front, however, things were worsening. In the years to come, Tuan was about to learn first hand how avaricious members of his own family had become. Sure enough, how he was cheated repeatedly by many a person still annoys him enormously.

When the bankruptcy notice was issued naming Ratna Ammal as the Judgement Debtor, Tuan was most displeased. Prior to the Creditors Petition being heard at all, there were frantic attempts made to settle the outstanding amount. January 1971 was a busy month all over Malaysia for it was the time when the Chinese were celebrating their New Year. Business would come to a complete stop and there would be no opportunity to rectify a situation if things were to take a turn for the worse. Tuan began to investigate the entire issue and discovered that two cheques for the same amount had been made out to the lawyers. There was an understanding that some money would be paid to settle at the very least part of the claim to stall the Court from declaring Ratna Ammal a bankrupt. When he asked Ratnavel about this, the answer he got was an unsatisfying, "I don't know. I must have forgotten to pay them." Despite the cheques being issued to the lawyers, on the day of the hearing of the Creditor's Petition, 25<sup>th</sup> of January 1971, the Official Assignee said that he knew nothing of the monies paid and therefore in the eyes of the Court there were no attempts by Ratna Ammal to settle the amount outstanding. A conclusion that Ratna Ammal was unable to settle her debts was made and she was duly declared a

bankrupt.

Much to Tuan's horror, this was not the end of the matter. Exactly 14 days later, Ratnavel was diagnosed with a brain tumour. This, conjectured Tuan, was probably why his brother could not understand why he had issued two cheques to the same set of lawyers. This mystery had never been solved. In any event, the decision was immediately made for Ratnavel to undergo an operation to excise the tumour. It was decided that a will should be executed as well. In it, Ratnavel left all of his property to his legitimate wife, his mother and six children. The six children were not all of one wife for Ratnavel had two wives. Tuan and another brother were made executors of this will. It was necessary for this will to be executed because the outcome of the operation was uncertain – either Ratnavel would not survive the operation or even if he did survive the operation, he would be in a persistent vegetative state.

To everyone's obvious amazement and joy, Ratnavel survived the operation but he was given only a short time to live. The decision was made for a Power of Attorney to be executed in favour of Tuan and his brother so that Ratnavel's estate could be administered. Tuan also made a promise to his brother that he would look after Ratnavel's six children and see to their education.

What followed can only in hindsight be termed a tragic comedy of errors arising from a mystery that remains unsolved to this day. On 1<sup>st</sup> of March 1971, the first Power of Attorney was executed made in favour of Tuan and his brother. Tuan was not pleased about this as the entire Power of Attorney had not been executed in the presence of a lawyer and to Tuan, not properly

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done. Therefore, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 1971, he entered into an Agreement where the terms of the Agreement were that he and his brother had been given the mandate to administer Ratnavel's estate to pay and continue to pay all of his debts.

On 21<sup>st</sup> of March 1971, a 2<sup>nd</sup> Power of Attorney was executed revoking the first made in haste. In this, Tuan was to administer Ratnavel's estate. This time new Power of Attorney, this Power of Attorney was made in the presence of a Magistrate and also another psychiatrist.

To Tuan, the idea was in itself noble for all of the money was pooled into one account and from there all the debts were settled. However, the mistake that was made was that Ratnavel, in addition to Tuan and his brother, was able to manage this fund as well. It was inevitable that in time discrepancies would occur and to this day no one knows what actually happened.

Just over two years later, Ratnavel passed away on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April 1973. Unknown to Tuan, a third Power of Attorney had been executed by Ratnavel in Penang and it was dated April 1972. To this day, Tuan cannot understand how it was that a man who was no longer lucid from continued cancer treatment could have signed this Power of Attorney. Was it possible that Ratnavel, so weakened by treatment, was well enough to make the journey from Kuala Lumpur all the way to Penang (some 350 kilometres) to sign this third Power of Attorney? This is the next mystery that remains unsolved. Tuan was not aware of all this because he was, at the time, busy running the Central Mental Hospital in Tanjung Rambutan. Indeed the amount of litigation that has arisen as a result of this one Power of Attorney and its consequences is phenomenal.

Whatever assets were dissipated using this 3<sup>rd</sup> Power of Attorney remains a mystery unto this day and has been a cause of immense grief to Tuan. To Tuan, what irks him most is the complete lack of professionalism amongst the lawyers who dealt with all of his problems. After years of dealing with lawyers, he says he has an allergic reaction to them. This is not surprising when one hears the story of what happened to Tuan in another case.

One of Tuan's patients had been in financial difficulty and was depressed. He was a director of a company and needed to apply for a loan to get money to develop a nearby piece of land. A surety for this loan was required. To release the money to this aggrieved patient, Tuan had to agree to his fixed deposit being utilised as collateral to the loan. Upon the encouragement of the lawyers for the patient and their insistence that this was a clean deal, Tuan felt confident that there would be no foul play. The loan was approved and the Board of Directors managed to get the money. In time, the loan was not serviced and the bank exercised its rights under the agreement and demanded payment from Tuan. The bank took the money which had been placed as collateral, a sum amounting to almost RM750,000.00. If this in itself was not painfully amusing, Tuan discovered that one of the members of the Board of Directors was the lawyer who had advised him that this was a clean deal. The story does not end there though. Tuan sought help from another lawyer friend and an action was commenced against the bank to get his money back. Months later Tuan was sent a letter by the solicitor acting for the bank, requesting that he agree to a settlement sum of just about RM500,000.00, well below the amount owed to Tuan. Tuan did not know whether to laugh or cry when he realised that the solicitor for the bank was from the same firm of lawyers as the



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lawyer that Tuan had appointed to recover his money!

Having to swallow his pride and accept that he too was partly to blame for he had been too gullible, this experience has left a bitter taste in his mouth. Together with his loathing for lawyers, he is also equally hard on himself. In an interview, he said, "I signed away three quarters of a million ringgit like an idiot. Even with all my degrees and psychiatric training, I was lulled into a false sense of security by the lawyer's title and education. I was foxed because in psychiatry, you are taught to heal, not kill!"

With over thirty years now of dealing with lawyers and combining these with his experiences with some of his colleagues in the medical profession, Tuan has coined a new word - Sociopaths. He says, "Sociopaths are people who are pleasant, plausible, amiable, amenable, highly intelligent people. They may be doctors, lawyers, psychiatrists, politicians, priests, etc. They make friends easily; they have no conscience, no anxiety and make the same mistakes over and over and over and over again. They want things at once and at any cost and at any sacrifice. They are impulsive, impetuous and affable. They are the kink in the pig's tail and pathological liars. They operate dexterously with impunity under the umbrella of professional immunity. They are not mad, they are bad. You cannot certify this person and put him in a mental institution and cannot put them into prison until they tread the law. They are Machiavellian. They never accept blame unless their back is against the wall."

Keeping to his promise to Ratnavel, upon his brother's demise, Tuan assumed the role of caring for the needs of his six nephews and nieces. He brought them all to his home in Ipoh

and together with his mother they began to care for this family. With all of this turmoil, there was still the issue about Tuan's marital status. He had only just entered his forties and with a job as the Director of a Hospital, he was very much in demand. However his cryptic reply to them all was, "With a burden of two wives and six children and a mountain of debts, which woman would marry me?"

There is obvious regret in his voice at the manner in which he has had to deal with the problems his family has caused him. He says that they have become avaricious. It would be perfectly understandable if they were themselves poverty stricken but a number of them have achieved success in their chosen professions and have succeeded in life. And yet, when he was desperately trying to settle all the debts that had amounted, it was to his friends that he turned to. It is impossible to mention these events without speaking about one who stood by him throughout and that is Dato' Dr. Madhuri Majumdar, his friend from childhood. She bought over his house in Ipoh so that he would have the money to settle some of the mounting debts of the family. She had been there for not just him but his family as well and indeed she looked after his mother when she was ailing. "Can you imagine, after everything she has done for me, these scoundrels still begrudge her help. She and I have sat in Court and listened to people giving evidence that is so defamatory. They have become so avaricious that they are so scared that their money will go out of the family. When I was trying to settle all the debts, not one of them came to help. Where two people who were previously not even talking to each other, now in Court they will team up and say such slanderous things. Those scoundrels," criticises Tuan of the treatment that he and Dato' Dr. Majumdar have received from some of the members of his family.

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Tuan with Dato' Dr. Majumdar

True enough, Dato' Dr. Majumdar has been supportive of his every endeavour and in particular where the promotion of mental health is concerned. Most importantly, she has been part of the Perak Society for the Promotion of Mental Health from the moment it was started and is always there to assist him when the need arises. No doubt, since neither of them have ever married, their friendship has been the source of speculation for years and one is on a fool's errand to try to probe further into the details of this friendship. Tuan finds tremendous humour in the speculation that surrounds this particular friendship and he has neither denied nor admitted any of the suggestions made. He tells of the many suggestions he has heard on the topic of his friendship with this woman and the funniest he says is the one where everyone thinks that 'Madhuban', the name given to his ranch in Ipoh, is a combination of their first names.

"If only they knew that 'Madhuban' is the name given by Tunku. Madhu is honey and Bhan is Garden. Together, Madhuban is the name of Lord Vishnu," says Tuan. Tuan goes on to say that if only these people would get off the one single track their minds are on, they would come to learn that Madhuban is also the name given to the headquarters of the University of the Brahma

Kumaris Movement. Nestled high up in the Aravali mountains of Rajasthan, Madhuban is a wonderful location for reflection and contemplation. It is also here that the concept of teaching Raja Yoga was espoused and today this movement is known worldwide.



Madhuban Ranch

Tuan also made sure that at his 'Madhuban Ranch' there is a designated area for his friend, Tunku and in his memory, they have called it 'Tunku's nest'. "Since Reagan had a ranch and so do most leaders, I decided I would have ranch as well," says Tuan with pride of this piece of property he owns.

As for the legal predicament that he has had to endure and continues to endure with his family, he says that he feels that there is no better word to use than 'raped'. He makes an apology for having to use such harsh terms but he cannot think of any other words to use. He feels sad that even at this age, when most men are beginning to enjoy life, he has to defend and institute proceedings in Court. When speaking about his relatives or any of the lawyers who have betrayed him a typical sentence will be,

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"I am so busy with lawyers. Those scoundrels." Forever the optimist though, he laughs at all of this and ends with, "if I did not have my horses, I think I would have become mad with all that they have done to me."



Tuan and his guests at Tunku's nest

If the manner in which his family and lawyers have caused him grief, it would be natural to expect that his colleagues would be supportive of his efforts in his chosen speciality. Reality though is far from the truth. Tuan was to discover that sociopaths was a term that most certainly extended to people who were members of his own profession.

## 6

### Probationer

The Central Mental Hospital was by far the largest mental hospital in Malaysia. It was given the name 'Central Mental Hospital' because when the British started it, the town of Tanjung Rambutan was considered equidistant to Penang and Singapore. Tanjung Rambutan is a town about 20 kilometres to the north east of Ipoh and almost in the centre of the Malay Peninsula. When Tuan arrived at the Central Mental Hospital in Tanjung Rambutan, the entire hospital was in disarray. Built in 1910, the hospital compound was 580 acres and in 1967, for a hospital with a capacity for only about 2,000 beds, there were close to 6,000 patients. The reason for this explosion of patients was because of archaic laws which were still in practice and also circumstances arising from the Second World War.

Before the Second World War began, this was the only mental hospital in Malaya. During the Second World War, Tuan conjectures that because of the conditions of war, the inmates were probably fed rice that had been stored in lime. Eating this rice was not good for them and in time they all died, as a result of suffering most likely from *beri-beri*. The number of inmates in the Central Mental Hospital dwindled to 444 after the Second World War.

Once the Second World War was over, many of the psychiatrists and orderlies who were employed at the Central Men-

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tal Hospital came from India. They were employed under a contract of employment and having received their training in India they were most familiar with practice under the archaic Indian Lunacy Act of 1912. Malaysia had copied this Act and applied it here too. Under this Act, when a patient was certified as being mentally ill, he was admitted into the hospital and almost always never discharged as he was deemed a danger to society. It was a custodial form of treatment and there was no emphasis on rehabilitation. As the patients were hardly ever discharged, the number of patients swelled to such unbearable proportions.

One of the first things that Tuan did was to change the name of this hospital. He did not like the name 'Central Mental Hospital' and the connotations that if anyone at all were to even visit the town of Tanjung Rambutan, it immediately meant that they were lunatics. So he changed the name of this institution to 'Hospital Bahagia'. 'Bahagia', is 'Happy' in Bahasa Malaysia.

Since the governing Act for mental patients was proving to be unworkable, Tuan was also commissioned to draft a new Mental Health Act. Indeed, he and his boss did draft the Act but as there was no political will behind this Act, it has taken over thirty years for this new Mental Health Act to be ratified.

When Tuan began his career in Malaysia it was in the late 1960s. It is often said that this is the one period that democracy in Malaysia was at its most open. Open criticism of the Alliance was rife and came mostly from opposition parties like PAS (Parti Islam Se-Malaysia, originally PMIP (Pan Malayan Islamic Party) and DAP (Democratic Action Party). Political passions ran high during the general elections of 1969 and in time, violent clashes erupted between the Chinese and the Malays. There were four

days of riots which began on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May 1969. Several hundred people died and a state of emergency was declared. The National Operations Council was formulated which effectively coordinated military and police action to control the situation.

The May 13<sup>th</sup> riots, as these terrible incidents are now referred to in Malaysia, and the chaos that ensued were to have a far reaching consequence for Tuan's career. One of the first things that occurred was that as the casualties of the May 13<sup>th</sup> riots increased and the General Hospital in Kuala Lumpur ran out of hospital beds the Ministry of Health began to look outside Kuala Lumpur for more beds. It was at this time that they chanced upon the Hospital Bahagia and realised that this hospital had the capacity to hold almost 2,000 patients. Unfortunately, Tuan informed the Ministry that he was unable to discharge the almost 6,000 patients because there was no provision for community care of these patients. Tun Dr. Ismail bin Dato Abdul Rahman visited Tuan at the Hospital Bahagia as he needed to assess the situation for himself. When he realised the potential and the problems that Tuan faced, he issued an order under the National Operations Council and with immediate effect Tuan was given the authority to discharge these patients into the community, as he saw fit.

This was exactly what Tuan had been waiting for and capitalised on the new power he had. In quick succession, he discharged patients into the community and in the space of two years or so, the number of patients reduced to almost 2,000.

Playing devil's advocate here, as society at large was not prepared for such a drastic action, a situation could arise wherein Tuan's actions would completely backfire. Imagine this perhaps



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rather simple but effective scenario: an 18 year old girl, suddenly suffers from delusions and is taken to the doctor. Referred to a psychiatrist, she is told that she has a mental condition, namely schizophrenia and needs to be admitted into an institution for treatment. Once she is admitted to the mental institution, she is never discharged for she has become a possible threat to society. Along comes Tuan some twenty years later with his theories on rehabilitation and a non-custodial form of treatment. He sees no problem releasing this woman to her family and asks that they take her home. Completely ill-informed about this condition, schizophrenia, and how to treat her they accept this total stranger, now thirty eight years old, into their home as they are left with no choice. When the relatives of this schizophrenic lady abandon her entirely as they cannot cope with her condition, the finger is pointed at Tuan with the allegation that he threw these patients out on the street with nowhere to go. He is heartless and unfeeling. Tuan's good intentions back-fire and instead of praise, he gets only criticism.

This kind of criticism is not fair. In all certainty, Tuan has done anything but abandon his patients. True enough, it is a drastic move but in the chapters to come, the amazing story of his butler will put paid to any criticism of his practice. He says that he did not just release them into society, he provided the infrastructure for community care. The infrastructure he speaks of encompasses his horse farm in Madhuban Ranch, the half-way houses he established and eventually his very own home. "What I mean is this. First, I allow the patient to leave the hospital, come to the farm and learn to look after the horses. This gives them the confidence to communicate with the outside world. You must remember that we are talking about people who are not even able to speak because they are so troubled.

Then once we feel they have gained a little of their confidence, we provide them with a half-way house. What this means is that they live in boarding houses and learn to look after themselves. They are taught to do simple things like cook, clean and keep house. The families are allowed to visit them and see how they progress. Once they are able to cope with life, they can either seek occupation or return home. If there is trouble that occurs after they go back home, we are there to provide the support. Over the years, I am in contact with so many of them that now I know them so well, that I can give their family members instructions over the phone ... my version of telemedicine. This is what I have tried to do," explains Tuan.

One of the first half-way houses he established was in 22 Tambun Heights, Ipoh. It continues to be run to this day and Tuan is very proud of these people and what they have achieved.

Another event that came to pass a mere three weeks after the 13<sup>th</sup> of May 1969 would bring Tuan instantaneous fame. That was the Esther Chan trial. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of June 1969 between 7 a.m. and 10 a.m., the body of a Singaporean woman, Esther Chan was found in Johor, the southern most state of Peninsula Malaysia. There was no other Chinese resident in this area and in the wake of the riots the situation was just ripe for the speculation of inter-racial killing. It was said that the Chinese were sharpening their knives to take revenge on the Malays for this murder of one of their own.

After one month, with no evidence to the contrary, murder based on ethnicity was becoming the deciding factor until Ms. Chan's step-sister found Ms. Chan's diary in which a notation was made on the day of the murder - 'going to see Lee to get

the grant'.

One Mr. Lee was arrested and a trial for Esther Chan's murder began. It transpired that Ms. Chan was the daughter of a wealthy obstetrician and gynaecologist in Singapore and she had begun a romance with the defendant, Mr. Lee. In time, the romance blossomed and she transferred all of the considerable wealth she had to him, save for the one last piece of land.

The defence case was that Mr. Lee was suffering from a pathological drunkenness (spurious hypothetical syndrome). This was a very rare condition. The facts of the alleged murder presented to the Johor Bharu High Court were as follows:

- On the day of her murder, Ms. Chan and Mr. Lee had gone to the rest house to eat and she had a plate of *kuay teow* (fried noodles).
- It was on this day that he told her that he was actually married and had a baby.
- The baby was sick and he was depressed about this.
- At about 8 p.m. or so on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 1969, he drank of a mixture used for embrocation as he was a Tae Kwando Expert. The drink was mixture of brandy, whisky, *samsu* and an iguana floating in it. He took one gulp of this concoction and was immediately dead drunk.
- When he woke up, Ms. Chan was dead and bloodied. He conjectured that he had killed her whilst being dead drunk.
- He cleaned the house and then went to his mother's place where he said that he was still drunk and urinated in front of her.



Tuan outside the Johor Bahru High Court at the Esther Chan trial

- Then he drove to his brother's house, where he slapped his brother and told him he was growing fat.
- After this, [it was about 5 a.m. the next morning] he went back to his house, put Ms. Chan's body into his new Volvo, drove 20 miles away and dumped her body.

The Prosecution was at quite a loss as to how to proceed and asked for help from Tuan. To Tuan, the version of events as stated by the defendant did not make sense. For one thing, the post mortem showed that the *koay teow* in Ms. Chan's body had not digested. Therefore, the murder had to have taken place on the night of the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June and not sometime in the early hours of the 4<sup>th</sup> of June 1969.

Then came all the inaccuracies in the statements and evidence given by Defence witnesses and the defendant himself. Tuan's first step was to define the word 'Drunk'. According to *Guide to Psychiatry*, by one Myre Sims (Tuan had previously worked with this man), there were four stages of drunkenness:

- Stage 1 - dry and decent
- Stage 2 - delighted and devilish
- Stage 3 - delinquent and disgusting
- Stage 4 - dead drunk.

Using this 'formula' as his guideline, Tuan stated that the sequence presented by the Defence did not make sense. According to the Defence, Mr Lee was at stage 4 first where he was dead drunk. Then, he was at stage 2 when he went to his mother's house and misbehaved in front of her. Then he went to his brother's house where his behaviour in punching his brother in the stomach suggested that he was in stage 3 of drunkenness. Then when he returned home, cleaned the house and got rid of

the body, he was dry and decent which suggested stage 1 drunkenness. This swapping between stages was completely incomprehensible and impossible. Therefore, to Tuan, the story as presented by the Defence could only be a lie.

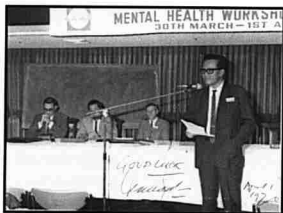
After he concluded giving his evidence-in-chief, Counsel for the Defence refused to cross-examine Tuan. The Judge, Tan Sri Othman J warned that if Counsel for the Defence did not do so, a notation would be made in the Notes of Proceedings about Tuan's evidence that it was 'unchallenged testimony'. At this point, Counsel for the Defence conceded defeat and the accused chose to admit his guilt. Mr. Lee was convicted and condemned to hang for the murder of Esther Chan.

To this date, this is the only trial in Malaysia where the accused was found guilty based on circumstantial evidence. What of all that property? It passed into the hands of the defendant's widow who by no action of hers was now a considerably wealthy woman.

As for Tuan, he had mixed feelings. For the entire period of the trial (42 days in all) his life was in danger. During this time, Tuan's lifestyle was nomadic. Each night would be spent in a different location. One night it would be Johor Bharu, one night in Singapore, one night in Kuala Lumpur and so on. Even the transport used to get to and from the Johor Bharu High Court changed from the infamous Black Maria vans to trains to cars and buses. Once the trial was over, one would expect that Tuan would be showered with accolades. Not quite. Even though he was a Consultant Psychiatrist who had relinquished his post at Harvard and become a Government Servant in Malaysia, he was still deemed a 'Probationer' in the eyes of the Ministry of Health.

He was not a confirmed medical officer working in the service of the Government. Even after he was given the dispensation to have to appear for the Bahasa Malaysia paper, he was only confirmed to go to Court and indeed paid only a medical officer's salary. He would have to wait five years to obtain the specialist allowance but his salary would still be that of merely a grade medical officer.

Tuan did get some glory though. Mr. Lee Kwan Yew, the Prime Minister of the island nation of Singapore at the time, commented, "You were the man who saved Singapore from riots," because by convincing the Court that it was a Chinese man who had killed a Chinese woman and not a member of any other race there could not be any untoward accusations made. Some thirty years later, Tuan still maintains that "even Singapore gave me more credit than my own country."



Professor Carstairs is seated in the middle.  
At the World Federation of Mental Health in 1970

Although he felt slighted by his own country, internationally though, Tuan's star was shining ever so brightly. At the World Federation of Mental Health, Professor Carstairs, who had been

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the person all those years ago to 'invite' Tuan to Ireland to pursue psychiatry, was now the President of the said Federation. In his Epilogue in 1970, at that workshop on Mental Health Trends in Developing Societies, Professor Carstairs said, "The workshop profited greatly from the contributions of its delegates, 50 delegates from 15 different countries, particularly from those of the Malaysian and Indonesian colleagues. In both of these Countries there is still an acute shortage of trained personnel; but this has only stimulated such workers as Professor Kusumanto of Djakarta and Dr. M Mahadevan in Malaysia to exploit to the full the therapeutic potential of less highly qualified personnel."

In private, Professor Carstairs told Tuan, "you have exceeded even my own expectations." Tuan was deeply honoured by this compliment given by one who had first had faith in his abilities. He needed to hear them for at the time he was in the midst of the personal turmoil of his family's problems. In retrospect, he says that to get away from all of these troubles, he channelled all his energies into his work. His *modus operandi* was to spend his time investigating and recording events locally that were then presented as papers at every international conference possible. An example of what was presented is as follows:

**"Culture Bound Reaction Syndrome"**  
Hysteria in Malaysia  
Thaipusam

This is a Hindu Festival celebrated at the beginning of spring; the Hindus usually pay homage to the Muruga, who is the Son of Lord Shiva and the brother of Lord Ganesh (the elephant God). Lord Muruga is supposed to be the ruler of Mars- the Warrior planet. He is reputed to have the power to give strength and victory over illnesses or enemies. Therefore, many who wish certain boons fulfil their obligations by

carrying the kavadi (palanquin), with Lord Muruga's portrait in it. A kavadi is sometimes balanced on the carrier's shoulders which could be pierced by metal rods. Other parts usually pierced are the tongue, cheeks, back, etc., and often lemons are suspended on threads sewn into the upper trunk of the body.

All ages from six to sixty, years, and even heptagenarians have carried the kavadi for several years. Students and youngsters do this in the hope of gaining wisdom, overcoming stuttering and becoming great orators. ...

The kavadi carrier often bathed in the river where horses and cattle urinate and defecate. The needles, spikes, spears and rods are also washed in the obviously contaminated river before being penetrated into the carrier's bodies.

They then danced rhythmically in a trance to the basic tempo of the mantra "VEL! VEL! VADI VEL!" with the people around singing chorus. Some subjects incessantly dance for about 20 miles and finally trot up the 136 steps into Batu Caves where they relinquish their kavadi and all the paraphernalia that had been inserted into them, uneventfully.

Some of the people who underwent this ordeal were not in the best of health. Some had hypertension, cardiovascular disorders and other crippling maladies. Despite their infirmities, there has not been a case recorded, to our knowledge, which resulted in:

- (i) tetanus
- (ii) haemorrhage at the sites of puncture  
(even in vascular organs like the tongue)
- (iii) there was no casualty and none collapsed at the ceremony.

## Discussion

The trance phenomenon provides food for thought. Trance seems to have certain aspects of hysterical features but with a subtle difference where the person is not only insensitive to pain but also resistant to haemorrhage and infection, despite the polluted water.

We wonder if it is possible that there is something in the psyche which can bring about this immunity to haemorrhages and infection? This provides an interesting field for further exploration.



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It has been observed that Psychosomatic yoga and Harta yoga have performed feats where functions of vital organs have been kept in abeyance and suspended animation (Mumford)

...

Although Tuan feels that to this day, his efforts and contribution to psychiatry in Malaysia have not been fully recognised within the country, he acknowledges that they were nevertheless very much recognised in the international arena. Perhaps the best example one can be given of international recognition is the letter he received from a person who later became the World Director of the World Health Organisation, one Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima. Dr. Nakajima's letter of 13<sup>th</sup> of March 1981 states as follows:

Dear Dr. Mahadevan,

I wish to inform you that the World Health Organization, in collaboration with the Government of Finland and United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC), has organized a Seminar of Public Health Problems and Psychotropic Substances – Development of a Manual, which will be held in Helsinki and Luosto from 7 to 26 June 1981.

The seminar has been organized to emphasize the need for WHO and its Member States to fulfil their obligation towards the Convention of Psychotropic Substances, 1971, and in particular to assess the public health and social problems associated with the use of psychotropic drugs.

I have pleasure in inviting you to participate in this activity. Participants will be required to prepare a country profile ...

Yours sincerely,  
Hiroshi Nakajima,  
M. D., PhD,  
Regional Director

"Even here, I was almost walked over. The Ministry of Health wanted to send someone else less qualified in my place," laments Tuan about the conflicts of personalities and profes-

sional jealousy that he encountered. Nevertheless, apparently The World Health Organisation insisted that if Tuan was not to be released to attend the Seminar then no other would be allowed to take his place. Tuan was allowed to attend this Seminar.

This invitation is but one example of many instances where Tuan has been invited by International bodies to represent Malaysia. Once again, his Curriculum Vitae has a separate section entitled 'Malaysian Delegate to International Conferences' and some of the entries read as follows:

- Study Tour of Australia and New Zealand with special emphasis on Drug Abuse, Prevention, Management and Rehabilitation Programme from April to June 1974.
- 31<sup>st</sup> International Congress for Alcoholism and Drug Dependents at Bangkok from 23-29 February 1975, Sponsored by Colombo Plan;
- Seminar of Treatment and Rehabilitation of Drug Abuse from 1-2 March 1975 at Pattaya, Thailand. Sponsored by Colombo Plan.
- 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting at the National Academy of Sciences held from 19-21 May 1975 sponsored by WHO Director Dr. George Ling. (The Committee on Problems of Drug Dependence at Washington).
- Study Tour regarding 'Drug Abuse Prevention' for six weeks at United States of America, Hong Kong and Philippines. Sponsored by WHO from 19-28 June 1975 and submitted report to WHO.

These are but a sample of the many conferences he attended not merely as a delegate but as a speaker. He travelled the globe from Sweden, to Hawaii to Japan to New Zealand and to many places. Despite all of this, Tuan is at times frustrated with the attitude of the Malaysians. It is not to say that he has not received accolades because for the past thirty years, he did receive many a commendation, namely:

- In 1970, he was decorated by His Majesty, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong for services rendered to the country in the field of Psychiatry and

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awarded the '**Ahli Mangku Negara**'.

- In the same year, he was decorated by His Royal Highness, the Sultan of Perak for services rendered to the state of Perak in the field of Psychiatry and for the change effected at the Central Mental Hospital now known as Hospital Bahagia, Ulu Kinta, Perak and awarded the '**Ahli Mangku Perak**'.
- In 1974, he was decorated by His Royal Highness, the Sultan of Perak when he was conferred the award of Dato Paduka Mahkota Perak which carried the title '**Dato**'.
- In 1988, he was decorated by His Royal Highness, the Sultan of Perak when he was conferred the award of Dato Seri Paduka Mahkota Perak which carried the title '**Dato**' **Seri**'.
- In 2001, Tuan was decorated by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong and awarded the Panglima Setia Mahkota, which carries the title '**Tan Sri**'.
- Between 1973 and 1983, he received three open letters of commendations from two Inspector Generals of Police (IGP) of Malaysia for services rendered in the field of Forensic Psychiatry at the Police College, Kuala Kubu Bahru, Drug Abuse and Associated Crimes and services to Personnel.



Tuan being conferred the award that carries the title "**Tan Sri**"

For all of these awards, Tuan is grateful but in a recent interview he gave, he said that he still feels that being a psychiatrist in Malaysia carries a certain stigma. He said that he was once told by a Sultan that if he were to give Tuan a big title, people would think that the Sultan was under his care. "You see the unpopularity of my discipline? If I was a surgeon, I would have been 'Tun' [the highest award that can be obtained by a citizen in Malaysia] by now."

Once again, not one to concentrate on negative issues, Tuan moves on and becomes very excited when he talks of his connection with the person who has at times been called the Al Capone of Malaysia, one Botak Chin. Officially known as Wong Swee Chin, Botak Chin was an armed robber who terrorised the city of Kuala Lumpur with a series of daring robberies and shoot-outs in the mid 1970s. He was arrested and imprisoned in Pudu Jail, Kuala Lumpur. When he claimed that he was mad, he was sent to Hospital Bahagia to undergo assessment to see if he was fit to stand trial.

When the criminal was brought to Hospital Bahagia, Tuan installed a closed circuit television to monitor Botak Chin. Tuan spent whole days observing the criminal. "For 18 days, Botak Chin was my breakfast, lunch, tea, dinner, supper. Not a soul had any knowledge that I observed him in this way."



Tuan with Botak Chin

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The criminal was not pleased when he found out about this covert observation of him and took it as a betrayal of the doctor-patient relationship. However, Tuan countered this by comforting him and saying that it was for 'insurance' lest the man escaped. Such was his faith in the good doctor that he accepted this honest answer.

Furthermore, such was the magnitude of the doctor's influence on this man that he was able to make a hardened criminal redeem himself. Botak Chin admitted his crimes to the psychiatrist and even trusted the psychiatrist enough to reveal that he only pretended to be mad in Pudu Jail so that he could come to Hospital Bahagia to escape. "He showed me an M-16 bullet already smuggled in despite the [maximum] security. He warned that any minute now his friends were going to get him out.'

Tuan says that in Hospital Bahagia, Botak Chin was to witness first hand the struggle that these inmates went through just to manage every day chores. It made him realise what agony these people must be enduring and this realisation had an unexpected consequence. Botak Chin admitted that he had done wrong, was willing to go back to prison and face trial for all the crimes he had committed. He was duly tried, found guilty and hanged.

Tuan's approach to all of his patients who had committed a crime was the same, "I approach [them] man-to-man, openly and honestly. I tell him you're sent by the code [section 342 of the Penal Code], so whatever you cough and sneeze will be told in court; it's for you to decide. The enforcement agencies will lull them into a false sense of security, pretending to be friendly to gain evidence in Court. But I'm neither a hired mouthpiece

for the prosecution nor for the defence, and I don't want to, at this time of my life to throw this reputation in the dustbin." It was this same approach that Tuan adopted when he was asked to admit Botak Chin. Tuan maintains that this criminal was not just any common thug, but a misguided distorted genius who was a victim of his own circumstances.

Tuan insists that Botak Chin is an example of a criminal whose formative years and bad counsel drove him to a life of crime. At the trial, Botak Chin told the judge that if he had been sent to a juvenile home instead of prison at the age of 14 for robbery, he would not have become who he was. The young lad's circumstances were quite unfortunate indeed. His mother was extorted and was beaten up when he intervened. Botak Chin did not like this injustice and so found his own way to get back. He was a clever lad for he did not harm children and therefore never robbed a place where they were. His earning from the robberies were never kept for himself but were distributed to the poor. He studied the situations and the victims thoroughly before carrying out his 'executions'. Tuan says that the word 'execution' is very important for during the trial, when he had said "the accused killed his henchmen" the criminal interrupted him and said "No, I may be a remove class boy of Methodist Boys' School but I know my English ... I executed them. I am their *taiko* (leader). If I am hanged tomorrow will the hangman be called a killer? Of course not. He's just doing his job." In the end, Botak Chin, rightly or wrongly, thought that he was on a mission to help the poor. Except that he did it the wrong way by taking the law into his own hands.

Nevertheless, when he returned to prison, it was not an end to his criminal activity. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1981, he made

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a desperate attempt to escape from his death row cell and stabbed three wardens. He himself was seriously injured. Appeals failed, no royal pardon bestowed and on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June 1981 at 3 a.m., he was hanged.

Today, much of what Tuan says about his dealings with Botak Chin is from his memory. He no longer has his written notes on the Botak Chin case. He explained in an interview, "I left stacks of files and notes from all my years of work and they burned them! It breaks my heart that so much of my life has been given to psychiatry, yet not one person in the Health Ministry has ever appreciated my efforts. I was the lowest paid head of department in the government for 10 years but I didn't mind, I didn't resign. An eccentric psychiatrist with all his degrees and I was paid RM832 a month. ... If not for Tunku, I wouldn't have stayed here."

Whatever his grouse, there were other inmates and criminals who were grateful to Tuan for staying back in Malaysia. One such person was a gentleman called Mr. Karthigesu. Apparently, Botak Chin also told Tuan that one of the reasons he had chosen to come to Tanjung Rambutan was because Mr. Karthigesu had suggested that he seek out Tuan. Mr. Karthigesu was accused, tried, convicted and then acquitted of murdering his sister-in-law, Jean Pereira.

Jean Pereira was a beautiful woman and at one time a beauty queen. She married a chemist, one Sinnapa. Unfortunately, he later died. Upon her husband's demise, her brother-in-law, Mr. Karthigesu, began to look after her and her children. In time, the couple decided to marry. One week before they were to marry, she was found dead on the Federal Highway. She not

only had stab wounds on her body but her throat had been slit as well. Mr. Karthigesu was found unconscious nearby.

The chronology of events were as follows: On the 7<sup>th</sup> of April 1979, the body of Jean Sinnappa was found in a car at the Federal Highway airport road by-pass just after midnight. One month later, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May 1979, her brother-in-law, Mr. S. Karthigesu, 38 was charged with her murder. His trial began on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1980 in the High Court. The climax of the evidence was the reading of the extracts of love letters to Jean from her Sri Lankan lover Dr. Narada Warnasurya. In four of his letters Dr. Warnasurya warned Jean that it would be disastrous if Karthigesu found out about their relationship. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of July 1980, the witness for the Prosecution, Professor G. Devadass, a consultant psychiatrist at the University Hospital said that on the night of the murder, Mr. Karthigesu was admitted to the University Hospital for observation. He was asked if he would consent to undergo a narco-analysis (truth serum) test but Mr. Karthigesu refused and was thereafter discharged. Tuan challenged this testimony on two grounds:

- The University Hospital was not gazetted as a hospital where this truth serum test could be taken.
- Indeed, since Karthigesu was admitted with head injuries, he should never have been allowed to be discharged until 24 hours had elapsed.

Tuan's evidence here irked the good Judge no end. He was furious that the Prosecution had allowed someone who had not known the basic issues surrounding medicine and more importantly psychiatry to give evidence. The good Judge insisted that thereafter, no psychiatrist with less than ten years, experience



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would be allowed to give evidence in his Court.

Another point Tuan made that befuddled the Prosecution related to the time of the murder. The Prosecution held that the time of murder could not have been when they said it was because the Prosecution had completely misjudged the time taken to go from the Restaurant to the Federal Highway. The Prosecution said it would take 45 minutes from the restaurant to where the incident occurred. Tuan did a trial run and discovered that it took almost one and a half hours.

Also when the incident occurred, Mr. Karthigesu's false teeth fell out. Now when the police were at the scene, it so happened that one of the officers picked up this item and placed it in his pocket. When the police dogs came to assist in the investigation, they smelt and followed the trail of the murderer but never went near the policeman who had Mr. Karthigesu's false teeth in his pocket. Observing the dogs, the trail seemed to end at the hard shoulder of the Federal Highway. This only made Tuan's theory that Mr. Karthigesu was not the murderer more plausible for if the murderer had been Mr. Karthigesu, these dogs would have gone and sniffed at the false teeth which were in the policeman's pocket.

In any event, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 1980, Mr. Karthigesu was found guilty of murdering Jean Pereira and sentenced to death.

Events were to take place that would turn the entire trial on its head. A sales manager, Bandhulananda Jayatilake, was one of the witnesses for the Prosecution. He too had been another of Jean's suitors. In his evidence, Mr. Jayatilake had said



Bandhulananda  
Jayatilake

he had spoken with Mr. Karthigesu. In that conversation he had shown the accused a letter by the other lover, Dr. Warnasurya, stating that the doctor from Sri Lanka wanted her convert to Islam and he would marry her. According to his statement, Mr. Karthigesu was supposed to have said, "She's a bloody bitch. Worse comes to worst I will admit it." All of this was a lie. Jayatilake said that he was bribed by the police and the Prosecution to make his false statement. For

his own crime in committing perjury, Jayatilake was sentenced to 20 years in prison.

As for Mr. Karthigesu, the Federal Court came to the following conclusion: "The totality of the effect of these various grounds of complaint including the additional evidence of Jayatilake is that, in our considered view, no reasonable jury properly directed would have found the accused guilty. In the circumstances of this case the

only course for us is to allow the appeal, to quash conviction and set aside the sentence."



Mr. Karthigesu, a free man

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What of the real murderer? No one knows to this day. Tuan's theory is that someone must have been in the back seat of the car all the time and that was the only way they could have slit Jean Pereira's throat in the manner it was committed. Somehow there was a car problem and Mr. Karthigesu was forced to stop by the side lane. He was rendered unconscious and Jean's throat was slit. After this, the murderer got into another car waiting by the highway and went to Subang International Airport, and left the country.

From his studies and observations of the criminals Tuan has come across, he agrees somewhat with the proposition that a criminal mind is influenced by one's environment, living conditions and social status. Not entirely though. In an interview he granted, he had this to say:

"Take the recent Sauk incident [where members of a cult group Al Ma'unah stole army weapons and killed two government agents]. Some of these Al Ma'unah members were from the army, who were selected to undergo the same training under the same conditions as everyone else. Why did only this handful become deviant? Likewise, of the 12 disciples, the company of Jesus Christ did not prevent one Judas Iscariot from betraying him. So what's important is the seed, the personality.

In the Esther Chan case, the murderer Lee was a bad seed in a good soil. He was a teacher, he had opportunities, and he got caught only because he was greedy for that one last grant.

The same fire that melts the butter hardens the egg. If you're butter, you'll melt; if you're an egg – like Botak Chin – you'll become hard. Datuk Seri' Anwar [Ibrahim] is an egg. The more you pressure him, the harder he gets. Any other person would have broken down [by now] ... Whom have we made him into?"

These were courageous comments to make for anyone and

yet, for anyone who knows Tuan, the division between right and wrong is firmly established in his very being. The courage and staying power he himself showed even after being a mere probationer for so long was astounding by all standards. Nevertheless, by the end of the 1970s, Tuan was no longer a probationer. He was well into his career here in Malaysia and was riding high as the Chief Psychiatrist in Malaysia. Although the challenges were always there, he took it in his stride and in time he built on his experiences and fused his talents to create organisations so unique that it would amaze people, both within the country as well as those internationally.

## 7

### Who's Mad?

The sum of all Tuan's thoughts, ideology, practices and beliefs in psychiatry can be gleaned from the messages he posted in the pamphlets which marked the occasion of the Open Day of Hospital Bahagia in 1970 and another in 1977.

In 1970, Tuan wrote:

4. MENTAL ILLNESS IS LIKE ANY OTHER ILLNESS AND CAN BE CURED IF EARLY ACTION IS TAKEN. Gone are the days when a mental asylum's main purpose was to keep 'lunatics away without much treatment in order to "protect society". It is not necessary that every person with an emotional disorder be seen by a psychiatrist. The first line of a psychiatric defence is the general practitioners and the doctors in any hospital.

5. There are many kinds of mental illness ranging from mild to severe. The less serious ones are the neuroses which can be treated at an out patient clinic by any doctor or general practitioner. The more severe kinds are the psychoses. With modern treatment and care 75% to 95% of such cases can be sent home from hospital within a few weeks or months provided such cases are given immediate treatment. Pre-care and after care of a patient is very important. The relatives and the community i.e. YOU - can play a very important part in this. Help build a healthier nation by adequately caring [sic.] for the mentally ill and preventing mental disturbances where and when you can. Help discharged patients by accepting them into society.'

In 1977, Tuan wrote:

Psychiatry is concerned with the immaturities, disorganisations and disintegrations of the Personality. Mental disease seldom kills; but the burden it places upon the patients, both psychological and economical, are perhaps

worse than those of any other affliction. Not only is the patient's life disturbed – in more serious manifestation psychiatric illness is more frightening than any other to those with whom the patient comes in contact. Further, the patient's condition is less known and less understood. This is due in part to the unnatural and sometimes disgusting aspects of mental maladies and in part because as a branch of Medicine, psychiatry had such a late beginning.

Medicine in general had its renaissance in the sixteenth century; but at the period progress in psychiatry was abortive. The latter years of the eighteenth century witnesses a great philosophical movement called the 'Enlightenment'. The true birth of Psychiatry paralleled this movement. It was then that a limited number of humanitarian physicians removed chains from the insane. Even then some of them were strongly convinced that these mentally ill were intractable only because they are deprived of fresh air and of their liberty.

Chains were removed first from a small number of patients. The favourable results justified their beliefs. Release: treatment like human beings' fresh air and exercise: baths and good food; and above all Patience, Kindness, Firm Authority and an understanding search for all roots of the problems that disturbed these patients, resulted in recoveries of many who once were considered hopeless. Thus they transformed insane asylums from ignominious dungeons into instruments of therapy.

The status of a mental hospital in modern psychiatry has been changing lately and instead of being a place for custodian care it is day by day assuming the role of an active diagnostic and therapeutic centre for mental illness within the community. We have in the past few months at Hospital Bahagia started an active Community Mental Health Programme within a five miles radius of Ipoh to combat the problem of iatrogenic institutional neurosis and to be social innovators as to initiate the concept of rehabilitating the individual within society itself. Thereby we not only wish to relieve the inordinate congestion within our hospital, which will inevitably result in better Staff/Patient ratio; but also in consequence, to earn the reputation of being a progressive and active place for diagnosis and treatment for mental illness, which is at present curbed by sheer weight of exceedingly high numbers. ... At this Open Day on March 19<sup>th</sup> 1977, Hospital Bahagia could show, how all the Staff members including patients, despite countless difficulties, repeated failures and set-backs, have reached the all time low figure of 3,400

## Who's Mad?

patients in less than one year. This is the lowest figure reached in almost two decades from an average of 5,000 to 6,000 patients...

Not only in Malaysia but generally throughout the East a very considerable stigma is still attached to mental illness. Attitudes of rejection based on ignorance and fear are very wide spread. These attitudes are not confined to the uneducated, but are also shared by quite influential groups in society and even by some members of the medical and paramedical professions. Here clearly is our immediate challenge to the Patients' Welfare Association, Perak Society for the Promotion of Mental Health, Pusat Pertolongan and the Malaysian Psychiatric Association, all given birth at Hospital Bahagia within the past decade. ...

These two events in 1970 and 1977 were graced by royalty; in 1970, His Royal Highness, the Sultan of Perak, had this to say:

In the present world of infinite complexities, man is moving farther from mental soundness toward the mechanised and complicated life of tension and worry. Consequently mental diseases are fast posing a serious health problem.

The proper care of a mental patient is a difficult task which requires both considerable skill and unflinching devotion. In this venture, STAFF of Hospital Bahagia has an indispensable role to play. I am glad to note that the Pengarah and Staff have inculcated public interest and community participation for these unfortunate members of the society. It is therefore, heartening to know you are forming the Malaysian Psychiatric Association on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 1977 the same day as 'OPEN DAY' organised now under the auspices of the Patients Welfare Association of your Hospital. I had the opportunity to initiate and inaugurate the first OPEN DAY in September 1970.

I hope and trust that it will continue to serve the public and also further improve upon its teaching, training and functioning by using more modern techniques of treating emotionally disturbed individuals and conducting Post Graduate Courses with the Universities.

HRH Sultan of Perak  
Istana Iskandariah  
Kuala Kangsar  
21<sup>st</sup> February 1977

Tuan is obviously very proud of the achievements of the patients of Hospital Bahagia. Thirty years after these events, he has kept the souvenir pamphlet which was produced to mark the occasion and he takes great pride in explaining every aspect of this item. The cover design was drawn by a patient and depicts a person in the 'akimbo' position. He says this is



a normal stance taken by one who is suffering mentally. "Can you imagine, when I first went to the hospital, every corner of the room there was filled with people sitting like this," says Tuan. These people look inwards and begin to shield themselves from all possible harm. The half moon shape at the bottom is the symbol for the word 'lunatic'. And with the star in the background, there is a ray of hope for this suffering soul.

As always, there was opposition and as always, Tunku was ever by his side. It is perhaps the compassion for these troubled mental patients that comes through most with Tunku's words when he wrote an article in Malay to commemorate the Open Day in March 1977; the article was entitled "Siapa Gila?" ['Who's Mad?']. In the article Tunku says this:



## Who's Mad?

*"Dengan kehadiran orang ramai pada "HARI TERBUKA HOSPITAL BAHAGIA" maka dapatlah berbual dan bercakap-cakap dengan mereka itu. Maka tentulah mereka akan merasa bangga dan seronok. Di dalam perbualan itu harap tidak disoal mereka tentang penyakit mereka. Kerana pada mereka itulah yang sihat akal fikiran, orang yang lain itu adalah gila. ... Ingat kita sungguh juga, tapi biarlah hari terbuka itu jadi hari perdamaian antara kita sekalian. Siapa yang gila Allah sahaja yang tahu."*

[With the presence of many people at the "HOSPITAL BAHAGIA OPEN DAY" there can be conversation with them. That would make them feel happy and full of fun. In our conversations it is hoped that they will not be questioned about their illness. For to them they are of sound mind, it is the others who are mad. ... Remember this, but let the open day be a day of peace between them and us. Who is mad only Allah is to know.]

It is almost 30 years since this article was published and yet, one wonders, who really is mad ... us or them? Is it the man who is admitted into a hospital because he is suffering from the delusion that he is the rightful leader of a nation, who is then subjected to about twenty years of incarceration in a mental hospital who is mad? Or is it those uncompassionate persons who are unable or unwilling to take the time to accept, learn and help this troubled soul and think it easier to just lock them up for they are a menace unto society?

To Tuan, the answer is simple; every human has needs and desires. To incarcerate a man because he has done no serious wrong except to have a delusion is useless. It is necessary to study these people. "Observe them and ask questions. What happened to them to cause them to become like this? What was the environment that they grew up in? Is there anything that can be done to change their situation? Can the problems be overcome so that they can become useful members of society again?" says Tuan. He emphasised that he was trained to rehabilitate them

and what he saw when he first came to Hospital Bahagia was horrendous. Nevertheless, he took it as a challenge and to him these Open Days were a testament to how life could be quite normal for these troubled souls.

Another area in which Tuan took a very 'hands on' approach was that of drug rehabilitation. When he arrived, Malaysia was already in the throes of a drug addiction problem. As a result of the time he had spent in Ireland and also the various other experiences like his time in Synanon, he was able to recognise the problem of a addiction amongst people and he made it a point to bring it up at the Heads of Department meetings held at the Ministry of Health. Thirty years later, he still complains that when he told them that there was a problem in the country, no one heeded his words. "All my colleagues held meetings and said "Mahadevan has lived too long abroad. Drug addiction is a western habit and a western problem." There was also name-calling and Tuan was quite aware of the name they gave him, 'Mad Heaven'. "Every time I walked in to the meeting rooms, they would say, 'There comes Mad Heaven.' You see what I had to face?" asks Tuan.

Of course, one could always argue about the benefit of hindsight and it would be easy to say that at the time, the problem was not so acute and therefore not recognisable. Nevertheless, it is a strange thing to say for members of the medical profession since even at the time, there were already articles in the local newspapers highlighting the issue.

'Although everyone talks about the seriousness of drugs and drug addiction, it will be necessary for those concerned to take this matter very very seriously otherwise whatever moral standards we set for our youth of today will definitely

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crumble tomorrow.'

Paima Ahmad, Petaling Jaya'

This article appeared in the local newspaper as early as the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 1976 and yet there seemed to be no letting up of the pressure on Tuan. Tuan says that by this time, he was becoming resigned to the fact that every action he took would somehow be seen in terms that were negative. So instead of arguing with them all, he decided to start his own rehabilitation centre for drug addicts. This centre had its origins in his very own home in Tambun Heights, Ipoh. Once again, Tuan was assisted by Tunku in his quest to promote the entire programme. In an article entitled, *After Care for Drug Addicts*, Tunku not only highlighted the good work done by Tuan, he also gave an idea of the problems that the entire issue of drug rehabilitation faced and perhaps still faces:

I became interested and then actively associated with the Pusat Pertolongan, or Centre for the Cure of Drug Addicts in Batu Gajah, Kampung Bercham and Pusat Wanita at Tambun Heights, a house loaned for the purpose by Datuk Dr. Mahadevan. It was on the Datuk's advice that I visited the centre at Batu Gajah and it was the first contact I ever had with drug addicts.

What I saw surprised me for they were all young men and women, barely 30 years, all well educated, and no one would say from their looks that they were addicts – drugs and alcoholics. There were government servants among them as well.

It was a well-run centre under the charge of the Catholic brother in Perak, Brother James now Yacob Abdul Rahman. I was moved by what I had seen and as a result of that I got myself closely associated with the work that was being carried out.

My ambition was to put them back on their two feet and make them feel as one with the rest of the world, not despised and rejected by the society to which they rightly be-

long. I remember how at their age I was like a young colt or calf, kicking and jumping with the joys of life. ...

The danger has been that when they leave these centres they will find themselves ostracised and despised by the society. In the circumstances they have nowhere to go to, nobody to befriend them or care for them, no work to do, in fact no hopes in life for them and they wander aimlessly about and finally from sheer frustration and desperation get themselves back into the same company who introduce them to drugs.

So they return to the centres and have to go through the whole curative process once again. This is indeed a pitiful picture. Life holds for each of them no promise whatsoever except the gloomiest.

It is obvious to me that to put them in the centres and cure them is surely not the answer. Something more has to be done for them, something that can keep them off the drugs and away from the bad company who brought them to this despicable habit.

I therefore hit upon a rehabilitation centre for them, after a conversation with Dr. Lim Chong Eu, Chief Minister of Penang, a centre which can train them for careers, find them work and something to do, in other words get them properly rehabilitated to take their place in human society. Such a centre however will require a great deal of money, effort and planning. I had not thought earlier of putting into effect this scheme because I was not sure whether I could go through with it at my age.

My first idea was a club for them and Brother James who has now become a Muslim [and has adopted the name Yacob Abdul Rahman] share my interest and said he would be happy to manage this centre and so would Datuk Dr. Mahadevan, the Senior Consultant Psychiatrist and Director of The Tanjong Rambutan Mental Hosptial, who would give his expert and technical advice from time to time. But who is to run the Pusat Pertolongan if Yacob Abdul Rahman leaves? Fortunately an organisation under Government patronage, Pemadam, decided for them because they don't know where to go and what to do with themselves.

They will be invited to enter the club and for those who can afford to pay something towards their upkeep, they should be made to do so and this would help meet the cost of running the centre.

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This centre would be open to all, Muslims and non-Muslims. They can carry on as they have been doing in the Pusat Pertolongan where they have their own separate kitchen. ... The question is how to get a building for this centre with the funds available and it is not expected that property could be bought in town for a cheap price. To have a centre in the country is no help for the inmates who have to work and be close to their places of employment.

I talked to Dr. Lim again and this time he looked rather worried for according to him the Penang State Government has no building or house available.

I told him all I needed is an old house with a compound and I can construct shelter for the inmates on the cheap. The money at my disposal is not enough to enable me to buy a house or land, it's only enough to maintain these people for a time only.

So he kindly promised to give some thought to it and will bring the matter up for consideration of the State Executive Council. He obviously regretted that he had brought the idea up at all to, but he seemed sympathetic and I am sure his colleagues will be too, then they read this.

Finally a word to Dr. Lim Chong Eu and his "merry men" – 'Ah yet e'er I descend to th' grave. May I a small house and large garden have – for my friends, the scums.'

What indeed was Tuan's reaction to Tunku's idea? He was all for it and with the establishment of the Drop-in Centres and Ex-Users that he established under the auspices of the Rehabilitation Centre, he also created an Alumni of ex-drug users who could attend from time to time and indulge in group dynamics under supervision. This would help reinforce and bolster another's threatened and notable ego. Once again, after analysis, it is patently obvious that this is similar to the practice in Synanon. The experiences he gained there most certainly helped him to create a system that was both effective and useful in Malaysia. Tuan was able to use his knowledge and experience to serve his patients.

From perusing the above articles, Tuan is able to provide an anecdote and this is with regard to the issue of this chosen religion. For a start, in researching material for this book, many a person has insisted that Tuan has embraced Islam. He has even been given the name 'Mahathir' and the person who helped him to the path was none other than Tunku. "Even my butler thinks I am Muslim," says Tuan. Those who suggest this have nothing but their conviction upon which to base these statements. He says that even when he was in Ireland, at one time because he showed such an interest in Saint Dymphna and the Catholic religion, people began to think he had embraced Catholicism. To know Tuan is to realise that he would never adhere to the tenets of any philosophy or religion which would curtail his freedom. The desire to explore other religions is there but utmost is his freedom and he would never once compromise this. Nevertheless, he acknowledges that the assumptions made by people are somewhat fuelled by his own actions and no less aided by the fact that Tuan's former maid used to reply to queries from busy-bodies by saying that in the morning he spent time with his first wife and in the evening, with his second and third wives [Islam permits polygamy]. So frustrated was she at being cross examined about Tuan's private life that this was the only answer she could think of. Only Tuan and the maid knew that the so-called first wife was his horse, Tobiana, and his second and third wives were his Alsatians, Geeta and Seeta!

However, the responsibility for some of the allegations must also be laid at Tuan's own feet; he does not in anyway help his defence when at every turn, Tuan repeats 'Allah-u-Akbar'. Once again, like everything with Tuan, the reason he repeats this statement over and over again has a story behind it. He says that when he was a boy, the man who assisted him with his horses

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was a kindly old Malay man and every time the boy was about to mount his horse, this man would make this statement. Therefore, it was imbibed in him and he saw no harm in so saying.



The gentlemen at the mike is Brother James Scholer  
@Yacob Abdul Rahman

As for the man mentioned by Tunku in his article above, Yacob Abdul Rahman, now there was a man who had truly embraced Islam. Before he was Yacob Abdul Rahman, he was Brother James Scholer, a Catholic Priest. He wanted very much to meet Tunku and sought Tuan's help to arrange a meeting with Tunku. When he met Tunku, he made his desire known in that he wanted to embrace Islam. It was Tunku who oversaw this conversion. James became Yacob and since he very much wanted to take Tunku's name, he became 'Yacob bin Abdul Rahman'.

Somehow, this issue got out of hand and a presumption was made that it was a Catholic Priest who was overseeing the drug rehabilitation centre. As with every scandal, the facts got twisted and soon Tuan was in hot soup. Once again Tunku came to his aid and wrote and published another article entitled 'Kafir Menkafir' wherein Tunku chastised the critics because the big-

gest sin for a Muslim is to call another Muslim a non-believer. Tunku was of the opinion that Tuan should actually be praised for he had been instrumental in bringing one to the fold of Islam. Instead he was being chastised unnecessarily.

Perhaps Tuan's true vindication came not from these opponents to every cause and action of his but from his patients themselves. Politics and religion were two things close to Tuan's heart but rarely was ever in the forefront. Nevertheless, there were many times he was indirectly involved in these two elements. A fine example of this is his connection with a gentleman he calls "Tuan Haji".

In the 1970s, there was a Malay religious teacher in Kelantan, a state on the eastern coast of the Malay Peninsula. This man was known as Tuan Haji Omar of Pasir Mas. For short, he was called "Tuan Haji". He was held in high esteem and was involved in PMIP (Pan Malaysian Islamic Party), the opposition party in Kelantan. Tuan Haji was remanded in Brickfields prison because there was a move to rehabilitate him. Whilst in the police lock-up, he asked to see his wife. One policeman, who for no apparent reason, approached the cell and began to tease Tuan Haji. He made statements that implied that Tuan Haji's wife was too busy to visit him as she was in the hotel having 'fun' with other men.

Through the bars, Tuan Haji grabbed this man's throat and squeezed it. He refused to release his stranglehold and those who saw the incident say that it was as if Tuan Haji was squeezing a sponge. This was all that Tuan Haji did. He did not run amok. He did not beat the man. Questions remain unanswered as to why the policeman went so near the cell in the first place. The



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policeman died and Tuan Haji was accused of his murder. Pleading not guilty by reason of insanity he was then sent to Hospital Bahagia.

During his time at the mental hospital Tuan remembers how Tuan Haji asked repeatedly, "How could I, a Man of God, take another man's life?" Full of remorse, Tuan Haji needed to do something and asked the good doctor for help. Tuan decided that this man, still deeply religious, would be useful. So Tuan Haji was given access to the drug ward to administer the last rites to dying patients which gave him a reason to 'bertaubat' (seek redemption). Tuan Haji remained deeply religious and was quite the celebrity in Hospital Bahagia. On the occasion of a visit by a notable person, he told the good gentleman that he did not know which way was east to pray. Without hesitation, this gentleman removed a very valuable watch which had a compass on it and presented it to Tuan Haji.

Then came the time of the elections and when politicians came to know that Tuan Haji was in Hospital Bahagia, plans were made to utilise this expertise and an experiment was conducted. Tuan Haji was taken to a mosque and he was asked to give the sermon. So effective was he that he was released into the care of a member of the Alliance. In time, all his followers joined the Alliance and Kelantan was once again Alliance's.

As for Tuan Haji, he remained in contact with Tuan and had the utmost respect for him. He once complimented Tuan when he said "You don't have to be a Muslim. You have got *Iman*". Even when Ratnamal passed away, one of the many people who came to offer their condolences to Tuan was this religious teacher who had become Tuan's fan. The engraving in the photo is of

holy words in Arabic and at the bottom is its translation in Bahasa Malaysia which states "Dengan Nama Allah yang Maha Pemurah Dan Penyayang". This means 'In the Name of Allah who is All Merciful and Loving'. Tuan treasures this gift from Tuan Haji and like all his other treasures, it has not been hidden away in a cupboard but has a place on the wall in his consultation rooms.



The engraving given to Tuan by Tuan Haji

Who really is mad? Perhaps there is no answer to this question. This is most evident in the story of the man in the next chapter who is living proof of a rehabilitated patient of a mental institution. It is a story that underlines what Tuan believes in most about his profession. He says that in light of all the modern stresses and strains, everybody is going to need a psychiatrist. However, psychiatry is not everybody's cup of tea. One has to have a philosophical attitude otherwise one is going to be very bitter. Anything at all can be modified and to be a psychiatrist, one needs to be an incurable optimist. Being a man who has quite a short temper when it comes to inefficiency, the patience he shows towards his patients is heart warming. Add to this is the abundant compassion that is evident from the tone he uses to address them when he calls for them, makes his enthusiasm for psychiatry infectious. And yet, one is always made aware of the tremendous courage he has to have when treating these often erratic people. Treating them is one thing but Tuan lives

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with some of them and indeed one begins to wonder, who really is mad?

## 8

### The Horse Whisperer

Below is an essay written by a gentleman whose name is Lim Hong Aun.

#### Life

Actually speaking a Far Sighted Person has nothing to do with Intelligence. Its just that He or She has that Deep In-sight in Life. To cultivate such a Kind of Trait a Person has to go Thru very long periods of Suffering. When a Person has attained this Status is entirely different. Actually saying many times about The Philosopher of Life have been spoken and yet countless number of persons never learn anything much. Well, I guess, such a kind of tendency is best left Unsaid. I wonder what kind of anecdote would be the Panacea of it. There is only one thing we can set our heart at east. I. E. "Insyallah," the Arab says! Insyallah, The Arab Says. What they mean is that God by His Supreme Self and Goodness by Her Supreme Self knows entirely the Cycle of Equations of Life. So to speak, God and Goddess use the Holy Bible to speak to us. I. E. It takes all sorts of People to make The World go round. So you see, God and Goddess are The Best of All. Without Them, Things shall be very much difference in Life for Everyone of Us. This is Life.'

Lim Hong Aun is a kindly man who lives in Tuan's home in Ukay Heights. His position in the household has been elevated to one of 'the butler'. Fondly known as 'Uncle' this Chinese man speaks with a slur now for he has lost most of his teeth, moves slowly and observes all things around him with gentle eyes. Somewhere in his seventies, he leads a life that is relatively comfortable and without much care in the world. This is a far cry from what horrors he had to undergo previously.

## **The Horse Whisperer**

When Uncle was in his twenties, he was a student in Singapore. Very politically inclined, he wrote numerous essays and was said to be the premier's speech writer. Unfortunately, he is schizophrenic and was under the delusion that after the Second World War, Winston Churchill had promised him the job of Prime Minister of Singapore. He was certified and locked up in several mental institutions for more than twenty years. When he was sent to Hospital Bahagia he did nothing but sit in his room all day and sleep. Refusing to speak to anyone at all, the man had no hope of ever recovering. That was until Tuan arrived in Hospital Bahagia.

The moment the stud farm was opened in Tanjung Rambutan, Uncle was encouraged to care for the horses. Initially, Uncle was most reluctant to leave the comfort of his 'home' in the mental hospital, let alone go near the horses. Nevertheless, Tuan persevered. In time, Uncle began to groom the horses, water and walk them. Soon, Uncle started to talk to the horses, telling them his woes and sharing in their excitement for life. For the first time, he started to talk to the staff in the hospital. As his condition improved, Uncle was moved to a half-way house and slowly he was able to move freely within the community.

Today Uncle has been rehabilitated to such a point that from time to time his long forgotten sense of being mischievous emerges and he will quietly ask anyone from RM10.00 or so. It is not that he needs the money to live on for food or clothing. He would like to indulge in his habit of smoking which Tuan resolutely refuses to let him do so. If, on the off chance he does get some money, he will not be stingy. The balance money that he has after indulging in his habit will be used to buy huge amounts of eateries which will then be shared generously with everyone

around.

Just ask the question, "Uncle is still mad isn't he?" and the response from Tuan will be one in a tone injected with pure venom. "He's not *mad*. I will not let people use that word in my presence. Just look at him. We are to blame. We locked him up and made him like this." True enough, the question pops up again, "I ask again, who really is mad, us or them?" Tuan is angry when he relates the treatment he thinks that Uncle has received.

"Uncle," says Tuan, "suffers from iatrogenic institutional neuroses. Iatrogenic meaning a condition that is caused by us doctors. You see what they did to him? They locked him up for years and years. He did nothing at all every day and just sat in his room and slept. He only knew when to eat and that was it."

This Tuan says is the major injustice that has been done to those who are mentally ill. Treating them as if they are a threat to society and therefore must be locked up in prisons; they have no hope of recovery. Even if these poor souls are suffering from a minor problem, by the time they enter the mental hospital, they undergo such mental trauma that their condition worsens. With absolutely no contact with the outside world, they were made to remain in one spot and quietly go mad.

Sometimes people have even thought that Tuan is himself mad for he keeps these patients in his house, with him. But to know Tuan and his life story is to realise that he is only living as he was taught to live. Perhaps this arrangement is suitable because Tuan is also a bachelor. As he has no one to 'look after' him, Tuan says that these ever-so-faithful patients of his have taken on the task. "I ask you, which wife will agree to this kind

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of living arrangement?" asks Tuan. Then again, Tuan has a story to this; he says, "When I went to the astrologer all those years ago, he said the person I live with will have a mental problem. So you see, all these people who live with me are patients of mine." This is said with a smile and immediately his expression changes with the next sentence. "Even this ... this good that I am doing ... these silly people have accused me of being a homosexual. Just because I am not married they think I am gay," says Tuan in frustration.

Who 'they,' may be is again another secret only Tuan knows. The conversation continues and Tuan says, "I give up with all these people. You just look at the way Uncle is with me. I am so hopelessly disorganised but he will go upstairs and get me whatever I want ten times a day if I need it. Which wife will be like this?" True enough, Tuan at that particular moment needs his glasses and the house is turned almost upside down out looking for these and not one word of complaint is heard from Uncle.

"You see, all he did in the hospital was to sleep and eat. He was so scared even to talk. He refused to take any responsibility at all. Now, you see. He is living. He cooks his food, he looks after himself and he even looks after my house for me," explains Tuan about Uncle. This need for a person to take responsibility for his own actions is at the core of what Tuan believes is a healthy mental status. For instance, in a paper delivered at a conference, he had this to say:

### Forbidden Love

An Indian housewife, aged 26 years, married to a technician with 3 children, one of whom was mentally retarded suddenly developed fits. The fits increased in severity until she

was thought to be suffering from "status epilepticus", which did not respond to anti-convulsive therapy. Extensive neurological investigations proved negative. She also expressed to the nurses that she was in love with the male doctor looking after her. Her condition deteriorated until she regressed to the state in which she was bedridden, virtually paralysed and followed by blindness. She had to be spoon-fed by her mother and perambulated in a wheel-chair. She was subsequently referred to us. We advised immediate transfer to the psychiatric unit where we candidly told her that organically nothing was wrong with her. We instituted a "do it yourself" type of behaviour therapy; the staff were requested not to render her any assistance except for essential needs. All medical and auxiliary staff gave her a wide berth. The atmosphere in the ward was made anything but desirable so that she was compelled to snap out of her conversion reaction. After a few days she could see, help herself to meals and was ambulatory unaided. Within a week she persisted to be discharged, having relinquished all her defences.

Later she informed us that she had been accused of committing incest with her invalid father-in-law by her mother-in-law. She had nursed him shortly prior to his demise. She in turn also suspected her husband of having an affair with her husband's brother's wife who had been her husband's girlfriend prior to marriage. Furthermore, her husband had suggested wife-swapping with his brother and wife, to which she vehemently objected.

In short, her symptoms were of a self-destructive defensive type born out of guilt feelings:

- (1) Incest
- (2) Wife-swapping
- (3) Unrequited forbidden love all of which were ethnically and culturally taboo to her.

What is highlighted is the fact that this patient, when her circumstances became impossible, had to fend for herself and at that moment, her recovery began. She was able to take responsibility for all of her actions and in time was able to deal with all transgressions whether precipitated by her or someone else.



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Another example of the fact that these troubled souls at times refuse to take responsibility is in the manner Uncle responded to a query made. The essay at the beginning of this chapter is but one example of Uncle's work. Between tending to the necessities of Tuan, he spends his time writing in his exercise books. Poetry, essays and political ideology are his favourite topics. When asked if he would consent to some of his work being published, his reply was a passionate, "They're not mine, what. They're not mine." Tuan explains that after those many years of incarceration, Uncle still harbours a belief that he was imprisoned for a crime he did not commit. He did not want to be responsible for the authorship of his own work lest they be used against him. Tuan, on behalf of Uncle, acquiesced to the publication of the essay in the beginning of this chapter and one of his poems entitled 'Flower'.

### Flower

The Flower is The Greatest Delight in Life  
The Magic of Life that Virginity scores  
By The Light of Life that Everything is Original  
The Beauty of Life that Everything is  
By The Star of Life that Glory rides High  
Lovers They Are!  
When Magic dies hard  
The Glory of Life is the Natural Accent  
When Everything ends and Newness comes again  
The Cycle of Life never ends  
By Stars and Glory and Wonders that assay  
The Metric Fires of Life Ends  
By The Glory that Everything counts  
This is The End of The Line!  
True to Life that Nothing ends  
The Presage of Life is The Glory of Time  
Tough Life comes prematurely and goes  
The Starlight is The Glory of Life  
Life is The Flower of Everything to come  
The Glory of Flower is the Wonder of Life  
The Beauty of Flower is The Splendour of Everything.

This poem is dedicated to 'Shan'. Dr. Shan is a gentleman who assists Tuan with some of his day to day correspondence. Tuan trusts no one today for he says that he has become so disillusioned with members of his family. "When my mother was alive and staying with me, everyone walked in and out. I never stopped anyone. After she died, I came to realise that these people had been coming in and out and taking all the documents. Suddenly, I was being sued for this and that and when I looked for documents, they were not there. So after that, I don't keep anyone. I am now the driver, cleaner, secretary and everything all in one. It's like my mother said, I am now waiting like the owl," says Tuan. When he realises that not many people would know the story of the owl, he proceeds to relate a most interesting story.

One day God decided that he would give an equal life span of forty years to each of these animals – the human, the cow, the dog and the owl. The cow complained and told God, "I don't want to be the beast of burden for forty years. Half of that is enough." So, God took away twenty years from the cow and added another twenty to the life span of humans and his life span increased to sixty years. Then the dog said, "I don't want to be living for forty years, I will be like a dog in the manger after twenty years. Twenty years is enough." So God took twenty years from the dog and added another twenty years to the human's life span, thereby increasing it to eighty years. Then the owl said the same thing. "I don't want to be tooting for forty years. Twenty is enough." So once again, God took twenty years from the owl and added it to the human's life span which was now at one hundred years. "Now I am already in my seventies. I want to be like the owl. I'll just sit and toot rather than do anything else," says Tuan.

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Almost exhausted with all the constant criticism that has been levelled against him, he says that he has never really been able to make Malaysians understand his contributions to psychiatry. This is somewhat true for the issue about community care, though it is beginning to gain some momentum, has yet to be attributed to Tuan in this country. Nevertheless, once again, his efforts are not completely forgotten. "They should just read this article," says Tuan as he hands over a copy of an article that was written by Dr. Colin Brewer (Director of the Community Alcoholism Treatment Service at Westminster Hospital, London) and published in the United Kingdom:

### Community Care Malaysian style

At a time when the whole concept of psychiatric care in the community is increasingly questioned by GPs, the public and by psychiatric patients and their families, I'm happy to report that I've just seen what must be one of the most humane, admirable and innovative community psychiatric services in the entire world. Unfortunately, it is not located in the United Kingdom. ....

The scene of this heartening endeavour is Malaysia and like most useful developments in medicine, as in life generally, it is largely the work of one man - Dato M. Mahadevan. Maha is a former president of the Malaysian Psychiatric Association and hardly looks old enough to have retired a few years ago from being the superintendent of Malaysia's largest psychiatric hospital. ....

Maha and I had been working together on a medicolegal case and when it was finished he invited me to spend a couple of days at his houses in Kuala Lumpur and at Ipoh about 100 miles to the north. ....

Maha met me in the town centre as we approached his house, which like most houses of its size in Malaysia has large iron gates, he tooted the horn. Two men (and four Alsatians) rushed out to open the gates and I assumed that they were servants. So they were, but until a few years ago, both had been very chronic inhabitants of long-stay psychiatric wards.

One was schizophrenic while the other was a quite severely retarded case of Downs Syndrome who had been a major management problem in the hospital. Their presence in the Mahadevan household was an important stage in their rehabilitation and as a demonstration of what can be done even with very sick and very chronic patients, it would hardly have been bettered.

The story was repeated at the Kuala Lumpur house where there was a younger schizophrenic patient who had at times been very violent in hospital and an older schizophrenic who was still quite deluded but able to do useful work in the kitchen. Both were on generous doses of antipsychotic medication.

Maha also runs a couple of small private halfway houses, and the Malay title of the enterprise translates rather rightfully as 'Re-entry association of the emotionally disabled'. At the 3,000-bed hospital where he used to work, Maha encouraged the patients to run productive farms and obtained some plots of land nearby for patients and their families to settle on after discharge.

He is a keen rider and ex-amateur jockey and thanks to his contact in the world of horses, several ex-patients have found regular jobs in local stables and polo clubs.

Several nurses have married patients and set up in business with time (usually agricultural) while keeping an eye on their anti-psychotic medication. Families in the area are encouraged to take patients in as an extra pair of hand with a bit of pocket money. I was shown what seemed to be quite a large fish farm run by a former patient who had learnt the necessary skills by working on a similar farm at the hospital.

Activities like these were commonplace at many British psychiatric hospital 30 or 40 years ago, but few of them now have so much as a vegetable garden to given the patients some useful work.

Undoubtedly the system was exploited at times to the benefit of medical and nursing staff, but no system is any better than those who run it, and the present one seems to be open to abuse of a rather more serious kind in that too often patients are left without any useful occupation, especially the kind which may be helpful in getting them employment in the world outside.

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I know that Malaysia is not Britain but unemployment is quite high there and although in general family ties are stronger, there is probably even more fear and mistrust of psychiatric patients that exists here and families reject their psychiatrically ill members with surprising frequency.

The only European equivalent I can think of is a Gheel in Belgium, which has a centuries old tradition of boarding out psychiatric patients with the local townspeople, but that is a very special case indeed and it is difficult to imagine a similar arrangement in Britain without a similar historical impetus.

Yet history is largely the work of mankind and Maha's legacy shows that the vision of one man, inspired by similar but somehow more pedestrian examples of therapeutic communities elsewhere, can produce results when allied with energy hard work out of normal office hours and harnessing the loyalty and approval of nursing staff. For Maha recognises that without nurses no such scheme can work. But I think he also recognises that without the political and organisational clout that often only doctors can exercise nurses are unlikely to take the initiative or are unlikely to succeed.

I shall not easily forget the sight of Abraham, the middle aged man with Down Syndrome sitting in the back of Maha's Mercedes reminding him to put his seat belts on and talking a simple childish pleasure in a ride in the country. He used to utter obscene curses when anxious but Maha has retrained him so that now he repeats an inoffensive religious phrase which seems to serve just as well. I think that's pretty innovative too, but I don't think you'll find it in any text book.

"See, at least they [referring to Dr. Brewer's article] give me that credit. Here they call me Mad Heaven," complains Tuan as he comments on the derogatory term given to him by his colleagues.

As for nurses, during his tenure as Director of the Mental Health Hospital, Tuan says that he needed to find nurses who were able to specialise in the care of mental patients. Up until then, there were general nurses and this was inadequate to meet

the needs of Hospital Bahagia. So instead of grumbling about the lack of nurses, he made Hospital Bahagia a place where nurses could be trained for this speciality. "At one point, we had nurses who came from as far away as Vietnam," explains Tuan.



Tuan with the School of Nursing of the Central Mental Hospital

Running a hospital can in itself be a tedious task. Add to this the fact that it is the biggest mental hospital in Malaysia with more than difficult patients, and Tuan's anxieties were augmented. However, he dealt with it in his own unique way and organised his department with ingenious system but which was completely out of sync with the norm. In his own words:

I wish to strongly emphasize here that every participant at Hospital Bahagia (all categories of staff), including the patients is an "administrator" in the past year. The choice of who occupies the Front Office with the title of "Superintendent: (ie the one who has superior intention) or "Director" (one who first senses and then "heads" the direction his "Followers" have really predetermined) depends not on my part speciality but on the collective coordination of the complex and complementary skills of all the basically allied professional and para professional colleagues, voluntary bodies and clients.'

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An example of this practice was what he called 'the Wednesday meetings'. In this meeting, everyone from the patients to the doctors to the shopkeepers made their way to the Hall. There all grievances and problems of any nature were voiced with the condition made that not one of these grouses would be taken outside the Hall. All problems would be aired and sorted out there and then. It was most effective and a form of self-regulation.



Tuan, Professor Reese of the Royal College of Psychiatrist (s),  
Dr. Im and Professor Reese's son

"I would never have been able to carry out my practice had I not had the support of Dr. Im and Ms. Chin," says Tuan of two people who have supported him professionally. Dr. Im was trained as a psychiatrist and to Tuan, her most important contribution to him was the fact that it was she who diagnosed his brother's tumour. "Can you imagine, we took him to this consultant and that consultant and she, in two minutes was able to make a diagnosis that there was a possible rumour," says Tuan of the woman who became his business partner. Dr. Im still runs her practice and has taken on Tuan's patients as he has made his desire known to retire all together.



Tuan and Ms. Chin in an informal picture with the Sultan of Perak (extreme right) and the Sultan's brother

To Ms. Chin, Tuan is indebted; he says, "she was my first nurse and you know, I have yet to meet a more dedicated nurse," says Tuan. Indeed, Ms. Chin is still part of the support team of Tuan's practice to this day.

Nevertheless, it must be said that perhaps Tuan is hard on himself and could be accused of not being appreciative of the recognition he does receive. For instance, in a speech delivered by His Royal Highness the Sultan of Perak at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress of the Asian Chapter of the International College of Psychosomatic Medicine at Kuala Lumpur on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November 1988, it was stated as follows:

'... Perak is again first in the country and Singapore with the introduction of its Day Care Centre. Half-way house and Foster Homes. You have perhaps heard of the Gael County in Belgium where the first Foster Homes were started and popularised, and now the area around Ipoh is known as the "Gael of Malaysia". ... Many long-stay patients at Hospital Bahagia in Ulu Kinta were rehabilitated and given job placements in the National Stud Farm nearby. Incidentally, this farm, the only one of its kind in the county, was inspired and started by the first Prime Minister DYT M Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra al-Haj. Some of the patients are doing very well in perma-



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ment employment there, and being involved in an industry of some kind have helped these institutional patients to return to society.

Few realize, therefore, that the promotion of mental health was initiated in Perak and the man who mooted and was largely responsible for much of those innovations like the Day Care Centre, the Half-Way House and Foster Homes is none other than Hospital Bahagia's former Director, Dato Seri Dr. M. Mahadevan. He is also the driving force behind the staging of this Congress and it is no surprise that he is the first Malaysian to be the President-Elect of this prestigious Congress. I am also happy to note that this conference is being held under the auspices of The Perak Society For the Promotion of Mental Health and The Re-entry Association for the Emotionally Disabled."



Tuan with His Royal Highness the Sultan of Perak at the opening of the 3rd Congress of the Asian Chapter of the International College of Psychosomatic Medicine

In 1984, when Tuan retired as Chief Psychiatrist for the Government of Malaysia, he made the following comment in an interview, "I feel I need the time to rest and conserve energy for myself." In reality though, he has done anything but rest.

The story of Uncle and the promotion of community care for mental patients is but one cause that is dear to Tuan's heart.

Another project that Tuan undertook very soon after he retired was something called Riding for the Disabled. In his message printed the souvenir pamphlet of the 'Pesta Sukan Berkuda' held between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of May in 1990, Tuan had this to say:

The philosophy of using horses for disabled people is not new. The Greeks used horses for rehabilitating wounded soldiers in the fifth century BC. In the first century AD, Xenophon stated that "The outside of a horse is the best thing for the inside of a man," which could be regarded as recognition of the value of riding for the mentally, physically or emotionally disabled.

In this century, therapeutic riding was recognised and practised by Dame Agnes Hunt, who established in the United Kingdom the first Orthopaedic Hospital. She understood the real importance of laughter and companionship in the recovery of health, and idea which was followed up by many of the hospitals caring for the wounded of both World Wars, until there are now at least 545 such groups throughout Britain, catering for all disabilities.

Mrs Liz Hartel was an accomplished in Denmark before she contacted polio in 1940. This left her with severe residual disabilities, confining her to a wheelchair at the time. In spite of this, she went back to riding, finally culminating her efforts with a Silver Medal for Dressage in the 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki. This achievement naturally received worldwide attention, focusing on the fact the **"IT IS ABILITY THAT COUNTS,"** not disability.

The concept of using horse riding to help the disabled spread throughout Europe and Asia and began in Malaysia by the Selangor Polo and Riding Club in 1988. The idea was first mooted by the visit of Rev. Sister Chiara, the Galloping Nun when she visited Malaysia in the mid-Eighties as a member of the World Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA). Before she honed the ecclesiastic life, she and her late husband ran one of the best riding schools in UK. And she had the honour and privilege of teaching equestation to Her Royal Highness Princess Anne.

When Sister Chiara visited Ipoh, in the really 80s she invited HRH The Sultan of Perak, HRH The Raja Permaisuri of Perak and their youngest daughter to visit the Diamond Jubilee

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Riding Centre outside London, which they did some after with me. They were very impressed with the good work of the RDA of Britain where the disabled children gave an excellent performance of their equestrian ability and activity despite their diverse disability. It was Their Majesties earnest desire to see that we start in Malaysia similar programmes for the disabled to realise the fun and benefits in the saddle.

In September 1988, Her Royal Highness, the Princess Royal, the RDA's very active Patron, visited RDA Singapore of which I am a member. I was kindly invited by the Chairman to meet the Princess Royal who was equally keen that we start RDA in Malaysia, if feasible in every State where there is a riding club. Incidentally, the then President of the SPRC YAM Raja Aman Shah, who was also at the occasion, decided positively without hesitation to start bravely the project in March 1988, at SPRC in conjunction with the Spastic Association of Selangor. ...

### **The Riders**

These are, broadly speaking, likely to be people with problems of co-ordination (such as eye-hand coordination), hand function, balance, head control, self-confidence and perception. As with any other therapy for such people, riding needs to be undertaken regularly and the lessons learned there need to be reinforced in other activities and situations. A gradual improvement can then be expected over a period of time. ...

Each individual derives a different sort of benefit depending on their disability, whether it is assistance with balance problems, postural training, or strengthening of inner thigh muscles or back muscles used for balance. But, I believe everyone benefits from the psychological aspects. There is a feeling of achievement, and pleasure from being in the open air and club surroundings. ...

Recognition by medical and para-medical professions of the benefits of horse riding for the disabled is not yet widespread in Malaysia. In Europe physiotherapists are much more involved, often riding behind the disabled person (eg Cerebral Palsy) ... European doctors are in the habit of prescribing riding as therapy. ...

Observing the enthusiasm that Tuan shows towards horses, riding and psychiatry one would think that he was fanatical about

it up to a point where it would not be amiss to think that these were like a religion to him. In truth, however, he is a practising Hindu and has also been practising yoga for most of his life. Once when he had a private audience with one of the members of the royal family, the instruction given to secretaries and aides was that under no circumstances were they to be disturbed. Behind closed doors, Tuan followed the instruction of the monarch to the letter and demonstrated his ability to stand on his head.



Tuan standing on his head

Prior to his retirement, his career has reached such distinguished heights that he had become the Chief Psychiatrist to the Government of Malaysia and the Head of the Department of Psychological Medicine in Tunku Abdul Rahman Institute of Neurological Sciences (TARINS) at the Kuala Lumpur General Hospital. When he retired from Government Service, it was noted that he would devote his time to ecclesiastical bodies like the Divine Life Society and the Rajayoga Centre. On the cover of the pamphlet to advertise a programme for the Brahma Kumari's which had as its theme, 'Reincarnation', the following statement was made:

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"Why a genius is born to mediocre parents is because it is not hereditary but actions performed and cultivated in previous births which determine rebirth."

To Tuan, this one statement ties in very much with his belief and theory of *rhinunabanda*, which is essentially reincarnation. He believes that everything happens for a reason and it is not real coincidence that things happen. An example of a person who embodies what is stated in that paragraph is Mozart. "Now you see, this man lived a relatively short life. Yet, he was such a genius from a young age. We choose who our parents are going to be and knowing that there is a propensity towards music in one family, we come into that family. So when we are born, so is this genius. They already have this knowledge with them and are just here to continue the unfinished work."

Tied in with this philosophy of reincarnation is the evolution of man. He is of the opinion that one of the most important items of the human anatomy is the thumb. He argues that one of the characteristics most often identified as being typically primate is the opposable thumb. The evolution of man is characterised by the presence of the thumb. The following activities would take a much longer time should there be no thumb. For example, to pick up a single piece of paper and put it down on the desk, to pick up a pencil, to open a book and turn single pages, to use a fork and knife to cut food items, to comb one's hair, tie one's shoelaces and so on. In palmistry too, the thumb represents the whole hand. The thumb is considered the centre of the will-power. It is formed by two pieces of bones. The first phalange of the thumb indicates logic and the phalange that contains the nail indicates will-power.

Indeed, it is true that if an individual's four fingers are cut off, not much harm is done. However, if the thumb is torn and there is profuse bleeding then the person might go insane and even result in his death. When Tuan once went for a hair cut, he noticed that the barber attending to him had an extremely short thumb. Tuan was immediately wary of this character and he very quickly made the decision that this man was dangerous. Even more so since Tuan was afraid that with a blade in his hand, this man was capable of anything. As it turned out, Tuan's exposition on this point was true because the barber did indeed murder someone ... using his blade.

Of particular interest is Tuan's theory on how to choose members for an enforcement agency. Tuan says that Hitler always selected his aides and soldiers by how they walked towards Hitler when they were presented to the man who had been the cause of such genocide during the Second World War. If the soldier walked towards Hitler with an open palm, he would be rejected – he could not keep secrets. The converse was no better for if he walked towards Hitler with a closed palm, he would be so secretive that he would keep secrets from even Hitler himself. The soldier had to be one who walked with his palm half open and half closed. This man would be discreet and someone Hitler could depend on.

If there is one thing at all that Tuan must be congratulated for, it has to be the fact that he has been the founder, the creator and the driving force behind the concept of community care in Malaysia. Having such a firm belief in his theory of rehabilitating so mentally tortured a human being, he set up the infrastructure by having a horse farm where these people could learn to come out of their shells. Not abandoning them once they had

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emerged from their cocoons, he created half-way houses and foster homes for these people to go regain their dignity. And if that alone was not enough, when they had no where else to go, he took some of them into his very own home. Some have even become so much a part of his life that he says that he would trust them more than his own family members.

"At this stage, I should be enjoying life. I am now past the biblical age of three scores and ten and yet, they do this to me. They sue me. They are so avaricious and I have to spend my time doing things I don't need to be bothered with. I am tired and need to rest," says Tuan when he mixes all of the problems of his family and the lack of recognition for his work together. Be that as it may, to focus on the tiny black dot on a sheet of white paper would be completely contrary to the very core of the optimist that is Tuan. In the last twenty years, Tuan has been given award after award by some of the most prestigious institutions in the world. These accolades have more than made up for the void that has been created at home.

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Continuing the link he has with Harvard, each time Tuan has had an important case, he sent them a copy of his notes. In that manner, he managed to preserve some of his life's work. His efforts have not been in vain. "Why would an international body be interested in notes sent by a psychiatrist from Malaysia?" you might ask. To understand the answer to this question, it is necessary to study the contents of exactly what it is that was sent to them. The thorough investigations he does, the reporting and analysis behind every single case presented to him is astounding. To preserve the doctor-patient confidentiality, it would not be possible to reproduce some of his notes. However, he has consented to the disclosure of a document prepared by him and presented as part of his expert testimony in Court which has, therefore, become public knowledge.

The case Tuan was involved in was a high profile case and involved the defence of 'non-insane automatism precipitated by cerebral insufficiency'. In this case, the defendant, Mr. Lee had a meeting one afternoon which stretched to the evening. A drinking session followed and at around 6.30 p.m. he telephoned his wife to tell her that he was on his way home. Only, he never arrived home. What happened was that he drove into the heart of Kuala Lumpur, fired several shots from his revolver and ended up killing a lady. He was arrested and in the prison lock up he went to sleep. The one strange thing about this entire episode



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was that when he awoke, he had absolutely no recollection whatsoever of committing this crime. His last memory was of telling his wife that he was on his way home.

Tuan's diagnosis, was that Mr Lee,

'suffered from hypoglycaemic cerebral insufficiency giving rise to metabolic encephalopathy. Metabolic encephalopathy is when the cerebral milieu is metabolically hostile to the normal function of the cerebral cortex as in hypoxia and hypoglycaemia.'

This was however, not the end of the evidence. The opinion he presented was more than thorough and perhaps the easiest way in which to present it is to reproduce it here. He said:

I must and should stress that the hypoglycaemic cerebral insufficiency is not at all a disease of the mind but a temporary dysfunction of the mind directly related to glucose metabolism.

### G1 HYPOGLYCAEMIA

#### a) Metabolism

Hypoglycaemia results from a disturbance in glucose metabolism leading to a depressed plasma glucose concentration. The characteristic clinical syndrome of hypoglycaemia includes alterations in mental functions. All tissue requires constant supply of oxygen and of oxidizable substrate. Under normal conditions, brain metabolism is characterised by an exceedingly high consumption of oxygen and an almost exclusive dependence on glucose as a source of energy.

Glucose is the primary oxidizable substrate in the central nervous system. The central nervous system is dependent almost exclusively on glucose as a source of energy for metabolism. Rates of glucose metabolism are the highest in the cerebral hemisphere and parts of the cerebellum.

onset and intensity of the symptoms. An occasional patient has no signs or symptoms preceding convulsions.

## g) Convulsion

Convulsive seizures are common with many severe metabolic disorders especially hypoglycaemic and anoxic encephalopathies. Hence the accused's defecation and micturition, would in my opinion, be due to cerebral insufficiency giving rise to hypoglycaemic encephalopathy leading to a quiet convulsion. Due to hypoglycaemia the cerebral milieu metabolically hostile to the normal function of the cerebral cortex gave rise to psychogenic disturbances. These disturbances are manifested and characterised by varying periods of altered consciousness and behaviour leading to a twilight or 'fugue' state. The end of the 'fugue' is classically associated with the individual being unable to describe how he reached the surroundings in which he found himself in; as with the accused. It is important to bear in mind that convulsions may not be obvious. The 20 to 25 minutes of deep snoring of the accused as described by Insp. T. Sivakumar at the police station is consistent with a seizure.

Hypoglycaemia despite being a medical problem may present itself with psychiatric symptoms. The accused is an anxious prone personality with obsessive compulsive disorder. Consequently, he displaces his anxiety to the heart – organ fixation. Diagnostic problems faced in dealing with hypoglycaemic patient are that it can mimic anxiety or panic attack, which also manifest in acute alcoholism. The occurrence of bizarre behaviour may draw attention away from somatic symptoms, which as it has appeared to have done so in the accused's case. – Psycho-Somatic Over-lay"

## CONCLUSION

... The Accused's state of automatism was preceded by a severe hypoglycaemia or low blood sugar attack, which had caused a transient disturbance of the accused's brain function making the accused unaware or unconscious of his acts which led to the fatal incident on that fateful day.

Tuan maintains that even though this man was suffering so when he committed the crime, he had still killed another and for that he would have to be responsible for his actions. Mr. Lee is currently serving his sentence.

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For Tuan, however, taking part in this trial had its bitter-sweet moments. Criticism of his opinion was rife. "That is to be expected I suppose but when these people think that you are just a mediocre person and treat you so; it's a little disconcerting."

Tuan's expertise was also called upon in another high profile case. This involved a boy who at the tender age of twelve years killed his tuition teacher's daughter. The defendant was a boy who for years had been attending tuition at this particular house. For years too had the teacher's daughter teased him endlessly about his weight problem and on one fateful day, he could take no more teasing. He took the nearest knife and there were several marks on her body but only one puncture mark.

To Tuan this boy was neither psychotic nor mad. He was suffering from the Freudian theory of nursed animosity which occurs at puberty. Tuan said that for six years this boy had been taunted. Two hours of tuition a week for six years amounted to 936. It was a case where it was not the assassin, but the victim who was guilty. To Tuan, it was not a sudden provocation but that there were three factors which led to this murder: there were predisposing factors, the precipitating factors and the culminating factors. Nevertheless, Tuan maintains that the boy had committed a crime and for that he would have to be punished.

After these two cases, Tuan says that he no longer wishes to take part in another case. Somehow, one wonders how long this resolve will last. Nevertheless, he is quite serious for he has become tired of the less than commensurate rewards of his efforts. "I am not asking them for money. I am just asking them to change a little," says Tuan in complete frustration. What he

means is that, for instance, the moment Mr. Lee was diagnosed as being on the verge of diabetes, why was his gun licence not revoked? Then again with the boy, why was it that when the boy was sentenced to prison, he was not remanded in a facility for boys? Instead he was sent to a prison where there were adult prisoners. Tuan fears that instead of rehabilitating him to live within the society when he is released, the boy will suffer from what he calls institutional neurosis. He also says that this was the first case where a minor was charged and tried for murder in public and there was no court assessor when the time came to sentence him.

For Tuan, these are issues that he has been raising over and over again. Once again, at the core of his beliefs for psychiatry is that there should not be an emphasis on custodial treatment of patients but more importantly there should be an attempt to rehabilitate these people.

"Whatever it is, I am landing now," says Tuan, meaning that he is at the time in his life when he feels that it would be far better to enjoy the fruits of his labour. He has worked tirelessly for over forty years now and it is time to rest. "Sometimes it is embarrassing. I walk into a room where a function is being held for some dignitary or so and almost all of the upper class people have at sometime been my patient. So sometimes it's hard. But you know, even though they know me and are in positions of power, not one of them have thought of putting my name up for a Professorship or some sort of recognition here," complains Tuan once again. Then again, where the local Universities have rejected him outright, the ones in Harvard have embraced him completely.

## The Chair



Tuan with Dr. Herbert Benson

One of the first instances was when he was invited to the Mind/Body Medical Institute of the Harvard Medical School. Tuan was interested in the ideas and concept forwarded by the Institute's pioneer, Dr. Herbert Benson. The Institute's philosophy is that:

'It [relaxation response] is defined as a series of coordinated physiologic changes elicited when a person engages in a repetitive word, sound or phrase or prayer, and passively disregards intrusive thoughts. Relaxation response practice results in decreased metabolism, heart rate, rate of breathing and distinctive slower brain waves. These changes are the exact opposite of those induced by flight or fight response.

Dr. Benson and his colleagues, working at Harvard Medical School, further defined the relaxation response and determined its clinical usefulness. In conjunction with nutrition, exercise and stress management, the relaxation response has been proven to be an effective therapy in a number of diseases that include many forms of chronic pain, infertility, insomnia, premenstrual syndrome, the symptoms of cancer and HIV/AIDS, anxiety and mild and moderate depression.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 1995, Tuan was given the honour

of being named as one of the Grand Patrons of this Institute in a Dinner held where the theme of the dinner was *Spirituality and Healing in Medicine*.

One year later, Tuan was elected as a member of the prestigious SIGMA Xi The Scientific Research Society of Harvard/Radcliffe Chapter which is devoted to the promotion of research in science.



Tuan at the 41st Convocation of Fellow of the  
American Psychiatric Association

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of May 1997 Tuan was duly initiated into the Harvard Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa, a professional fraternity in education, the chief purpose of which is to promote free public education as essential to the development and maintenance of a democracy through the continuing interpretation of the ide-

## The Chair

als of research, service and leadership and the translation of these ideals into a program of action appropriate to the needs of public education. Further on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May 1997, he was accepted as a corresponding fellow in the American Psychiatric Association (APA) at its 41<sup>st</sup> Convocation of Fellows in San Diego, California.

In 1999, Tuan received a gift of a Chair from Professor Pierce. Although it sounds rather a mundane gift it is anything but. The Chair is a Harvard Chair whereby had Tuan remained in Harvard, it was most certain that he would have been a Professor there by now. Since it was going to be impossible for Tuan to ever relinquish his hold entirely on Malaysia and go back to Harvard, the Chair was brought to him. "You would



The Harvard Chair awarded to Tuan

think that these people here would appreciate that this was happening to a citizen of theirs? No. The customs wanted to charge me something so phenomenal to bring this gift in! No appreciation, I tell you," is the complaint repeated by Tuan.

Perhaps much is not known in Malaysia about the contributions that this one man made to the establishment of community care here in Malaysia. An example of this is when news of this biography was slowly dispersed, a rather unruly man approached the author and asked, " Why are you writing of him

[Tuan]. He has done nothing. My story is more interesting." His "story" was about how he had been kicked out of his post because he had been caught in a compromising position with his secretary. How on earth could he even compare his "story" with Tuan's still baffles the author. However, it underlies a very important factor about Tuan. Though he neither admits nor denies it, it is obvious that women and love have been important in his life; however it has never been his paramount consideration. His work as a psychiatrist and his love for horses alone were enough to make him feel 'complete'. If his enthusiasm for psychiatry alone is not overwhelming, his curriculum vitae is! Of his professional memberships/fellowships, it is stated as follows:

- Mysore Medical Council, Dec 1961
- Irish Medical Registration Council, Oct 1962
- Irish Medical Registration Council (Permanent), Oct. 1965
- Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland Pharmaceutical Chemist, July 1965
- General Medical Council, U.K., 1966
- American Medical Graduates Register, Sept. 1966
- Educational Council for Foreign Medical Graduates (E.C.F.M.G), USA, 1966
- Malayan Medical Graduates Register, July 1967
- Fellow of the Australian New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, FRANZCP (Aust)
- Member of The Association of Physicians of Malaysia, 1968
- Member of The Academy of Medicine of Malaysia, 1970
- Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, FRCPsych. (London) - June, 1971
- Founder Member of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, MRCPsych. U.K., 1971
- Fellow of the Indian Psychiatric Society, FIPS.
- Founding Fellow of Pacific Rim College of Psychiatrists
- President of The Asian Chapter of International College of Psychosomatic Medicine (ICMP)
- Councilor Member of ICMP (World Body)
- The American Psychiatric Association Committee Member of the Malaysian Society for Clinical Hypnosis
- Associate Member of the Society for Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis USA



## The Chair

- Member of the Selesa Health Farm Panel of Consultants
- Member of the SIGMA Xi The Scientific Research Society of Harvard/Radcliffe Chapter – 1996
- Acting Censor of MRANZCP Examination held in Malaysia
- Member of The American Orthopsychiatric Association
- Member of The International Society of Hypnosis
- Corresponding Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association
- Made the Honorary Member of Malaysian Psychiatric Association – 1998
- Made the Honorary Founder Fellow and Life Member of Pacific Rim College of Psychiatrists – 1999

The emotion of his residual anger towards the lack of recognition is obvious when he relates another story. "Would you believe that in one recent trial that I was involved in, the opposing Counsel appointed their own rather junior psychiatrist (perhaps with five to ten years experience) to counter what I had said in evidence? And when they asked him if he was aware of my credentials, he said something like 'Yes, I have heard of him but I don't think he is qualified to be an expert.' Imagine that? Then, when they asked if this man had read any of my papers, he said he was not aware that I had presented papers. What do they think? I get membership just like that?" laments Tuan once again.

Indeed, he refers again to his Curriculum Vitae which has pages and pages that lists his publications. Some of the more interesting ones are as follows:

- MANDRX Preliminary Trial Study written in Clinical Trials Journal, Feb. 1966.
- Haemorrhage and Pin in relation to Hypnosis – observed at an accident.
- 'Use, Misuse and Abuse of Stimulants in Malaysia' at the South East Asia Psychotropic Medication Seminar in April 1973.
- 'Are the Laws on Drug Adequate For Prevention and Rehabilitation?' at the Fourth Malaysian Law Conference held from 19-20 October 1977 at Kuala Lumpur.

In the 1970s, Tuan made this comment:

Men who significantly contributed to the progress of Medicine seem to have had the following common qualities. Imagination to conceive a regimen contrary to tradition; courage to effect nonconformist procedures; and skill to carry these to a conclusion that sufficiently successful to convince doubters and to confound detractors.

In conclusion, after analysing the events of his life thus far, it is obvious that it applies in its entirety to Tuan and his achievements. In psychiatry alone, Tuan had the imagination to create a system that would be contrary to the norm and the courage to make his ideas and visions a reality. He maintained that the concept of community care had to take precedence over any other form of treatment. Then when the opportunity to exercise his ideas arose, he grabbed it and made it a reality. When the infrastructure was non-existent to carry his vision to its end, he built them from scratch – The National Stud Farm, the Madhuban Ranch are but a few projects, not because there was a need for these institutions alone but as a platform, from which his patients could begin their treatment. Even with drug rehabilitation, he recognised the problem and when the time came to create a base for the addicts to rehabilitate themselves, he loaned his own house in Tambun Heights. Once his patients or the addicts had recovered, they needed half way houses and once again, Tuan created the Re-Entry Association for Psycho and Emotionally Disabled. When his rehabilitated patients had nowhere to go, he took them into his own home! More than his generosity in sharing his home with those who are less fortunate was the fact that he had great courage in so doing. His compassion for these people shines through. Retirement does not seem to have slowed him down. Where others would have stepped back and relaxed or worse, waited for death, Tuan has

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continued in this endeavours and a testament to this is the manner in which he has started and promoted riding amongst the disabled.

To have problems within the family, politics and back-stabbing are but a norm in any family with considerable wealth at its disposal, especially in today's day and age. When rejected by potential places of employment and sued constantly by avaricious members of ones own kith and kin, most people would crumble under the pressure. However, what is astounding about Tuan is that despite all of the obvious turmoil and upheaval in his life, he remained steadfast in his goals and carried out his duties as per his professional requirements. Not once did he move from his path of a genuine interest in psychiatry and through his efforts he steadily gained recognition all over the world. By far, the creation of the Gheel of Malaysia in Tanjung Rambutan and taking in his patients who had nowhere else to go is a living example of humanity and innovative psychiatric services which has demonstrated compassion beyond what is expected of anyone. If he is to be called 'Mad Heaven' then so be it. For if one has moved with kings and yet retained the common touch as he has exemplified by his actions then it would be far better to be called 'Mad Heaven' than, God forbid, a sociopath.

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