

SPEECH BY TAN CHENG LOCK ON THE 27TH FEBRUARY 1949.

AT THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE PROPOSED MALAYAN

CHINESE ASSOCIATION AT KUALA LUMPUR.

MALACCA, 22nd February 1949.

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National emancipation and progress can only be won at the price of personal efforts and must be attained by definitely organized and carefully concerted endeavour. Success needs to be achieved; it cannot be granted or conferred.

It is in that spirit and primarily with that end in view that representatives of the Chinese Community from the various component parts of Malaya have assembled here to-day to launch into existence a political organization on a Pan-Malayan basis with the twin fundamental objectives of bringing about cohesion and unity among the domiciled Malayan Chinese of all classes and promoting inter-racial goodwill, harmony and co-operation for the sole good of this country and its inhabitants as a whole.

The people of Malaya can only constitute a Nationality if the different Communities making up its mixed population are united among themselves by common sympathies and fellow-feeling and reconcile themselves to living together in peace and harmony under equal rights and laws.

Hence it is a matter of supreme significance and an indispensable necessity that a basic purpose of this organization must be the attainment of inter-communal understanding and friendship, particularly, between the Malays and the Chinese, the two major races which form between them about 88% of the population of Malaya.

It is a truism that the improvement of economic conditions is the surest road to political harmony, and on the principle that a wise man bends his attention to what is radical, this organization and individual members of the Chinese Community should do their level best to help and co-operate in the movement to accomplish the economic uplift and advancement of the mass of the Malay people, who in the sphere of economics are not so proficient and may be rather backward.

The Chinese in Malaya have come to stay and must Wake up and Unite not only among themselves but also with the Malays and other communities to make this land, which feeds, nourishes and sustains us, one country and one nation and the object of their loyalty, love and devotion.

All Chinese, who cannot acquire it automatically and who intend to make Malaya their permanent home, should qualify for and acquire Malayan citizenship by application, thereby completely identifying themselves with the interests of this country. Experience has shown that whenever aliens are treated as citizens they become citizens whatever may be their religion or race. The tie of kinship between dwellers in a new country and an old must diminish in intensity and in political importance with every passing generation.

Practically every European State is multi-national, and Switzerland and Canada provide encouraging examples of the multi-national State which combines freedom with unity. So there is no valid reason why the peoples of Malaya cannot be welded into one nationality, if they wish to be so.

The measure of the success of our new organization will be in direct proportion to the high quality of its leadership and to the degree of the support and participation of the masses of the Chinese population in its life and activities.

The decisive sign of the elevation of a nation's life is to be sought among those who lead or ought to lead. The test of the health of a people is to be found in the utterances of those who are its spokesmen and in the action of those whom it accepts or chooses to be its chiefs. What are the best men in a country striving for, and whether the best men in it are small or great? The destiny of Malaya depends in a substantial way on the quality and character of its leaders.

The good life can best be realized in the good society. The good man cannot stand aloof from public affairs but must take part in politics. From the Greeks onward and since Confucius preached his wise and timeless social precepts especially in reference to Government the main current of thought has been that the Kingdom of Heaven is at least partially for political action to create, and it is the duty of leaders of the

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return to their country of origin taking with them all their riches begotten in this country.

So let us be up and doing before it is too late and get on with the formation of the proposed organization and work hard and be in dead earnest to make it a gigantic and enduring success it deserves to be. "Set about difficult things while they are still easy; do great things while they are still small", says our Sage, Lao Tzu.

On this memorable day when the Malayan Chinese for the first time in the history of this country have met at this gathering representative of the Chinese of the whole of Malaya to decide upon the question of banding themselves together into a strong and compact body for the purpose of pursuing the objects outlined in the proposed Rules and Constitution and aiming at achieving the sole benefit of this country in collaboration with the other Communities, I have the greatest pleasure in formally proposing the Resolution standing in my name viz:-

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*I now propose that the following resolution be adopted:
It is resolved that this meeting approves the formation of the Malayan Chinese Association.*

Sau Chen

MCA Resource Centre