

❁ Head of State and Islam



“Islam did not introduce monarchy but merely tolerated it. In Islam, the Head of State is the Head of the Government as well as the Religion.

He is regarded as a successor to the Prophet. He must be learned in the teaching of the religion. He is elected by consensus. He has the final say in matters of State as well as religion. He determines the law where it is not clear, in consultation with other scholars. He leads the prayers. ”



—**HRH Sultan Azlan Shah**
The Role of Constitutional Rulers



“ It is your duty, having been trained as lawyers to ensure that at all times the supremacy of the Malaysian Constitution is maintained. No matter how expedient it may be to anyone in power to follow a certain course of action, at no time should any action be taken which is inconsistent with the provisions of the Constitution, or I may add, against the spirit of the Constitution. ”

—**HRH Sultan Azlan Shah**
Law and Globalisation: Some Perspectives

13

Law and Globalisation: Some Perspectives

Selected Speeches as Royal Patron of
Malaysian Students' Law Society in the United Kingdom and Eire
1986–1997

✿ Challenges to law students

1986

*I*ndeed it is a great honour to me to be invited this evening to attend the Annual Dinner of KPUM.¹ May I also take this opportunity to thank your Society for inviting me to be your Royal Patron. With both Tun Suffian and I being the patrons of your Society, your Society may soon have all the retired Lord Presidents of the Federal Court of Malaysia (now called Supreme Court) as your members. Maybe, now that all appeals to the Privy Council have been abolished, your Society, it would seem, by appointing retired Lord Presidents could be considering the setting up a new court to replace the Privy Council in London.

It not only gives me great pleasure to be here with Malaysian law students, some 8,000 miles away from home but also to have amongst us my friends, Lord Bridge and Lord Ackner from the

¹ Kesatuan Penuntut Undang-Undang Malaysia.

House of Lords. Many of you here will probably know that Lord Ackner has recently been appointed as a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary to join Lord Bridge in the House of Lords. I am sure that all of you will join me in extending our felicitations to His Lordship and wish him many happy years in the House of Lords. With Lord Ackner and Lord Bridge in the House of Lords, Malaysia now has two close friends in the House of Lords.

Many a time I have been asked whether I have had any regrets on leaving the law to become a Sultan. In all honesty I can tell you that it is on occasions like this, where I am amongst distinguished jurists and among law students, that I have my moments of regret. It is for this reason, too, that I cherish a gathering like this where I am given the opportunity to be with law students, judges and lawyers.

Legal training: Bond between Malaysia and England

The United Kingdom and Ireland have been the training ground for most of the judges and lawyers in Malaysia. Presently, all the judges in the High Court and Supreme Court of Malaysia, except for two, had received their legal training in England. So, too, the present Attorney-General of Malaysia. The first three Prime Ministers of Malaysia have all been lawyers trained in England. The 200 most senior practising lawyers in Malaysia have all been from one of the Inns of Court including two from Ireland. Even with the establishment of law schools in Malaysia, especially so with the limited number of places available, Malaysian students still need to resort to British institutions for their legal training.

In this respect, the contribution provided by the British Government, and in particular the British law schools towards the development of legal training of Malaysians cannot be denied.

Relevance of English Law

I may also like to point out that it is essentially in the field of law that the greatest bond between England and Malaysia remains. It is for this reason that even though certain laws in Malaysia have been modified to suit local needs, English law, particularly case law, continues to play an important role in the legal system of Malaysia. Hence, judges, lawyers and students in Malaysia eagerly await the arrival of the *London Times* or the *All England Law Reports* to find out what judges like Lord Bridge or Lord Ackner have decided in a recent case. To many of you, of course, any recent decision of the House of Lords, especially just before your examination may cause a certain amount of trepidation. A recent decision would mean an extra case for you to analyse, digest and to remember for your examinations. For as you very well know, the chances of an examination question being set on a recent important decision by the examiner is very likely.

Career options

Most of you here on completion of your studies would, within a year or two, be returning to Malaysia. I am also certain that the majority of you have plans to go into practice. I would personally implore some of you to consider joining the Judicial and Legal Service or the universities as academicians. I understand that both the Judicial and Legal Service and the universities are encountering great difficulties in filling their vacancies, especially since the lure for practice amongst young lawyers is great. The country needs the services of many of you, especially either as magistrates to overcome the backlog of cases or as law teachers to train the future lawyers of the country.

Changes in the legal profession

For those of you who will be practising law, may I remind you that the legal profession in Malaysia is facing some of its greatest challenges in recent years. Much has been written and spoken about the conduct of some lawyers in the profession. Whatever it is, you should always bear in mind that the legal profession has always been regarded as a noble profession, comprising men and women of high integrity and bound by the high standards of professional code and conduct. The long-tested traditions of the English Bar, which most of you are familiar with, should be emulated when you become a member of the Malaysian Bar.

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Duty to society

Furthermore, you should always bear in mind, that as a member of the legal profession you have a duty towards society. By the very nature of your training and as a member of the legal profession you have the duty to ensure that the rule of law is always upheld.

Duty to uphold the Rule of Law

You should always remember that in Malaysia where we have a written Constitution, unlike England, it is the Constitution which is supreme and not Parliament. The Constitution in bestowing certain

powers upon individuals and institutions charged with duties under our system of government expressly provides certain limits upon the exercise of any such power.

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It is therefore your duty, having been trained as lawyers to ensure that at all times the supremacy of the Malaysian Constitution is maintained. No matter how expedient it may be to anyone in power to follow a certain course of action, at no time should any action be taken which is inconsistent with the provisions of the Constitution, or I may add, against the spirit of the Constitution.

It is your duty, as expressly provided for in the Legal Profession Act to uphold the cause of justice without regard to your own interests, uninfluenced by fear or favour. ...

Democracies

20 February 1988

The Raja Permasuri and I would like to express our appreciation for your kind invitation to attend this function here tonight. For the second time in three years, it gives us great pleasure to be with you

at this annual event of your Society. We have travelled a long way to be present for this occasion and, as Patron of your Society, I hope I have succeeded in manifesting more than a passing interest in its affairs.

Much water has flowed under the bridges of the Thames since I addressed you two years ago. At home in Malaysia, we have passed through a rather distressing period as far as the country's economy is concerned and the recession about which I spoke to you then has not abated, at least not as far as the tin industry is concerned. The share market, which is an indicator of the health of the country's economy, has remained dismal for the greater part of this period.

The Rukunegara maintains our democratic way of life. It is a foundation for the creation of a just society and to ensure a liberal approach to the varied cultures and traditions of the unique mixture that constitutes modern Malaysian society.

Entrepreneurs, investors and other hopefuls are setting great store by the Year of the Dragon and, as one born under the benign influence of the Dragon myself, I earnestly hope that the mythical creature will be able to draw them out of the doldrums.

Elsewhere on the Asian continent, many countries preparing to enter the last decade of the century are finding democracy a goal as difficult to attain as economic success. From countries as far apart as Pakistan and South Korea and regimes as different as Mainland China and the Philippines, the people of Asia are fighting to achieve or maintain democracy in ways as varied as the nations.

That Malaysia is able to find peace and stability in a continent of chaos and instability is to a large extent due to the smooth running of our governmental machinery under the aegis of the Rukunegara to maintain our democratic way of life. It is a foundation for the creation of a just society and to ensure a liberal approach to the varied cultures and traditions of the unique mixture that constitutes modern Malaysian society.

System of government in Malaysia

We have a system of government where the legislature, executive and judiciary are each given their own powers in their own demarcated spheres of activities. The Constitution requires that the legislative, executive and judicial powers be separated to the extent necessary to prevent the emergence of tyranny from the concentration of too much power in a single person or institution.

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It is unnecessary for me to dwell at length on this principle of power sharing by the three components of government but it is worth emphasising that the three branches of State were never designed to compete with one another, but rather to complement each other. The best results are derived by the three branches of government running harmoniously alongside like the forces of a troika.

Each is essential to the structure of the State in the same way each side is essential to the structure of a triangle. Without the three branches working in harmony, a modern state such as ours cannot exist, much less function. Within its own sphere of authority, each branch is free to carry out its function but subject to the Constitution and the law.

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I have had the opportunity, at another occasion, to mention that much can be achieved when the twin lawmakers, Parliament and the judiciary, work in harmony, united by that common philosophy reflected in the Constitution. It therefore behoves the judiciary to be ever sensitive to the paramount need to refrain from trespassing upon the province of Parliament and that Parliament would be similarly sensitive to the need to refrain from trespassing upon the province of the judiciary. It would be a breach of convention for the one to express a view on the wisdom or otherwise of proceedings taking place in the other.

Sultanate in Malaysia

En passant, I might also mention that the history of the Sultanate has been a long and illustrious one, and in view of the Sultans' contribution to the many facets of life in the country, their position and role has been reinforced in the Constitution and they are regarded as the bulwark and guardians of the Rakyat.

Sir Ian Gilmour, politician and author, in his book, *The Body Politic*,² regarded as one of the best books written in modern times on the British Constitution, says this about the British monarchy:

Legitimacy, the acceptance by the governed of the political system, is far better aided by an ancient monarchy set above the political battle than by a transient president, who has gained his position through that battle Modern societies still need myth and ritual. A monarch and his family supply it. There is no magic about a mud-stained politician.

Sir Ian was probably echoing the sentiments of Walter Bagehot,³ godfather of the English Constitution, who expressed this long ago about the British monarchy:

Above all things our royalty is to be revered, and if you begin to poke about it you cannot reverence it... Its mystery is its life. We must not let in daylight upon magic.⁴

Anglo-Malaysian relationship

As I have observed before, the strongest bond of Anglo-Malaysian relations lies in the field of education. This is the result of a process of nurture begun at the dawn of the present century, for at the moment more than 30,000 young Malaysians are enrolled in British schools, colleges and universities, the greatest number of Malaysian students in any country. With this obvious preference on the part of students for a British tertiary education, it would be a source of considerable support and encouragement to the students if the fees could be maintained at a competitive level, thereby also ensuring

2
Hutchinson, London,
1969.

3
1826–1877

4
*The English
Constitution*, 2nd
Edition, 1873, page 76;
now republished by
Cambridge University
Press, 2001, edited by
Paul Smith.

for these institutions themselves a continuous enrolment, with the distinct possibility of an increase in numbers, in the years to come.

The message that I wish to impart to you already appears in the official programme. But I would like to add, if I may, that you should avail yourselves to the opportunities of education in this country to your best advantage, achieve your academic goals by passing your examinations regularly and returning home at your earliest opportunity. There is much to be done at home for the country and, I feel certain that the establishment of your own individual careers must be of particular importance to you as well.

Strengthening links

10 February 1989

The Raja Permaisuri and I are delighted once again to be here with you this evening. As the Patron of your Society, I am indeed very pleased to see so many of you here. I understand that some of you have travelled quite a distance to attend this function in London tonight.

I do appreciate that it is no easy task for a Society like yours to organise a function like this or for that matter to cater for the needs of your members when so many of you are dispersed throughout the country. Yet, I am pleased to note that despite the distance and in most cases, the cost involved, so many of you are present here this evening. This gives me the added pleasure of being present here tonight. As most of you would know, the Raja Permaisuri

and I have travelled from Malaysia specially to attend this annual function of your Society. May I at this stage take the opportunity to congratulate your President, the members of the Organising Committee and the many others who have put so much effort in organising this evening's function.

Student organisations like yours play a very important role in fostering close ties and relationships. This is specially so when such organisations are established to cater for students who are studying abroad. Through the activities of such societies, you are able to identify yourselves or to have a sense of belonging with your country. It further helps you to maintain and strengthen your links with your country. In some cases, too, these societies give you the opportunity to share the problems, anxieties and joys encountered by you as an overseas student. I myself have experienced such a feeling when I was an overseas student (like you) studying in England.

I must, however, caution that you should not confine yourselves to a society which only caters for Malaysian students. Most of the universities and colleges in which you are studying also have their own student organisations. You should also participate in some of their activities. Only in this way would you be able to exchange ideas on a transnational basis. Otherwise, there is the danger that you may become too insular in your general outlook.

Cross-cultural exposure

It should not be forgotten that one of the major advantages of studying abroad is that it provides you with an opportunity to meet other students from different parts of the world. This provides an

excellent opportunity for you to understand the various cultures, beliefs and aspirations of other peoples. This understanding, in future years, will help you to foster closer relationships between the nations of the world. Through your discussions with students from abroad, you may also learn of their legal systems. In this way, you may in future years adopt certain aspects of other people's laws which may be suitable to us in the Malaysian context. As you know, law is not static but changes with time and circumstances. There is always a need for us to expand our horizons by looking at the laws from other jurisdictions. Therefore, considering other people's laws is the usual way to see ourselves as others see us.

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Mr President, let me now say a few words on the practice of law and the legal profession in Malaysia which most of you would be involved with on your return to Malaysia after completion of your studies here.

Relationship between Bar and Bench

In England as in many other countries, there is a close relationship between the Bench and the Bar, though each maintains its own independence. We all know too well about the independence of the judiciary. Yet the independence is taken for granted, whilst the role

of the other is often ignored or misunderstood. Let us not forget the fact that the true responsibility for the effectiveness of the judiciary lies with the legal profession which fosters and nurtures it. There cannot be an independent judiciary without an independent Bar. This tradition has been fostered so that the Bench and the Bar may play their respective roles towards the common goal of ensuring the proper administration of justice. Where there is no respect by one for the other or where the relationship between the Bench and the Bar is strained, the public perception of the profession would be tainted. I do hope that on becoming a member of the Bar, you will always continue to uphold this noble tradition.

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New trends in legal practice

The practice of law in Malaysia has until recently been confined to the practice of criminal law and the run-of-the-mill type of civil cases. However, with the rapid growth of the economy, the changes in technology and the general rise in the standard of living, lawyers are now called upon to advise their clients on certain branches of the law which have been developed only in recent years.

The increase in commercial activities in Malaysia, particularly in the corporate and banking sectors, has emphasised the need for lawyers with special skills in company law, banking law, syndicated loan documentation and international finance law. The efforts by the government to make Kuala Lumpur an

international commercial centre and to encourage more foreign investors to come into Malaysia have further contributed towards the need for specialised lawyers. Many lawyers are now called upon to advise their clients on shipping law, aviation law, petroleum law and generally on international trade law.

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You should not therefore whilst studying here be content in obtaining only a basic knowledge of the law. You now have the opportunity which many others before you did not have: most universities where you are studying now offer courses in many of the branches of the law which I have just mentioned. Some of you have the further advantage of being taught by some of the leading experts on these branches of the law. Many a successful lawyer will tell you that the practice in these particular branches of commercial law is not only interesting but lucrative as well.

I am also pleased to learn from some of you that you are studying subjects like administrative or public law, consumer law or civil liberties. These are equally important areas of the law which are also rapidly developing in Malaysia and the recent spate of applications for judicial review is an indication of the growth of administrative law in Malaysia.

Ethics

Speaking of a lucrative practice and of the desire on the part of some lawyers to be successful, I observe with disquietude that in the pursuit of material wealth, there has been a regrettable tendency in recent times on the part of some lawyers not only to violate the ethics of the profession but also to misplace the trust placed upon them by their clients by indulging in dishonest activities like cheating, committing fraud or criminal breach of trust. Such activities of these lawyers, albeit a small number, is a cause for great concern not only to the Bar Council but also to the general public. Only last month, there was the startling discovery of a lawyer who, with his conspirators, fraudulently siphoned off some RM20.2 million from Bank Negara. Then early this year, the profession suffered a further setback and damage to their reputation when one of its members was sentenced to six years' imprisonment and fined RM300,000 on a charge of criminal breach of trust.

There has been a regrettable tendency in recent times on the part of some lawyers not only to violate the ethics of the profession but also to misplace the trust placed upon them by their clients by indulging in dishonest activities.

The profession must openly condemn such criminal conduct of their members and thereby show the public its great concern with the rapid derogation of its good name as an honourable profession.

Mr President, to some of you here, I may probably have dampened your spirits by some of the observations I have made tonight. However, as these are matters which will concern you as future lawyers, I thought I will share my concern with you. ...

✿ **Developments in the field of education**

19 January 1995

Rapid developments are taking place in Malaysia in the field of education, as part of the government's objective to achieve a fully industrialised nation by the year 2020.

Besides the local institutions of higher learning, a large number of private institutions, through their various twinning programmes, now provide Malaysians an opportunity to further their higher education. Many private institutions offer courses leading to a degree from reputable universities in the United Kingdom.

In yet another move to promote higher education in the country, the government has recently announced that the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 will be amended, so as to pave the way for the establishment of branch campuses of foreign universities. I understand the University of London will be amongst the first to do so.

Legal practice in Malaysia has also become increasingly competitive. It is estimated that in 1995, over 1,000 Malaysian students will graduate with a law degree from the local institutions and several universities in the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. A large percentage of these students are presently undergoing their course of studies through the various external degree programmes offered by universities in the United Kingdom, or through the twinning programmes run by local private institutions.

Last year alone, over 700 students sat for the Certificate in Legal Practice course (CLP). This figure, of course, does not include those who have obtained their professional qualifications from local universities, or from other institutions, like the Council of Legal Education.

As a consequence, new law graduates are increasingly finding it difficult to obtain places for chambering. The Qualifying Board is currently reviewing the chambering requirement under the Legal Profession Act, so as to find other alternatives to professional training. One possible alternative is a structural professional course, similar to that conducted by several institutions in Australia.

In a separate exercise, the Qualifying Board and the Bar Council are also currently conducting studies to review the academic and professional aspects of legal education. The recognition of foreign degrees, minimum academic qualifications, and the course content of all universities are under review, so as to streamline the entry qualifications to the Malaysian Bar.

The emphasis in the future will be on the quality of the members of the Bar, and not the quantity.

The wider aim of this review is to ensure that the standard of the Malaysian Bar is maintained. The emphasis in the future will be on the quality of the members of the Bar, and not the quantity. I must point out, however, that these changes will not affect those of you currently studying here, as it will take a number of years before these proposals are implemented.

With that brief overview of the present and future changes to higher education in the country, I take this opportunity to wish all students here, every success in your studies in the United Kingdom and Eire. As Malaysia is facing an acute shortage of professionals and technocrats, I hope that on the completion of your studies, you will return home to serve the nation, equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

I congratulate the KPUM for once again organising this year's event successfully. This Annual Dinner, which has now become a tradition amongst Malaysian students in the United Kingdom, provides a unique opportunity for the students, not only to rekindle their friendships, but also to meet leading legal luminaries, like the Lord Chancellor of Great Britain, Law Lords, judges and leading professors.

I also commend KPUM, and the other Malaysian students for their initiative and enthusiasm in their participation in "The Children of the World Appeal". I am confident that under the Royal Patronage of Her Royal Highness, the Duchess of York, this worthy and noble project will be a success.

Legal training

23 November 1995

I am conscious that tonight I am addressing some of the future members of the legal profession in Malaysia. No doubt, some of you

may venture into other professions, but, I am confident that you will find your legal training an advantage.

Most of you will return to Malaysia, do your pupillage, and gain admission to the Bar. You will then become part of the legal system, and be in a position to contribute towards the development of Malaysian law. In your own way, you will be able to ensure that the administration of justice in the country works efficiently, and that it brings justice to the society which it serves. As has been said “There is no virtue so truly great and godlike as justice.”

Being a part of this system would indeed be both enriching and fulfilling. It will be a well respected role and I, for one, am indeed proud of being a part of it.

I believe that a law degree is one of the most versatile of degrees you could obtain from any university. With it, you may not only enter the legal profession, but also join any one of a number of other vocations. Many opportunities will be open to you.

In this fast changing world, with the greater acceptance of the oneness of man, countries are beginning to lose their individual importance, and are coming together in groups for economic and political reasons. It is envisaged that the countries of South East Asia are destined, as a region, to receive the largest influx of foreign capital and skill, which would in turn result in the region becoming a highly developed and industrialised one. It may not, therefore be coincidental that, at this juncture, several countries, including Australia, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea, are making overtures to the countries of South East Asia to be regarded as part of the region. I, therefore, foresee the coming into existence in this region of many multi-national and multi-purpose corporations

which would bring in tow tremendous opportunities for lawyers in Malaysia to provide legal services on an international level.

Global legal services

With particular reference to Malaysia, it may interest you to know that with international trade and investment growing at a tremendous pace in the country, legal issues are no longer confined to domestic problems. It is now not uncommon for many lawyers to deal with transactions which involve cross-border problems. These legal issues touch upon more than one legal system, especially if they relate to multi-national companies.

With international trade and investment growing at a tremendous pace in the country, legal issues are no longer confined to domestic problems. It is now not uncommon for many lawyers to deal with transactions which involve cross-border problems.

With the Malaysian government's acceptance of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and its membership to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), foreign lawyers will soon be able to provide legal services in Malaysia. Malaysian lawyers, therefore, have to be more competitive in their services, not only to compete with these foreign lawyers, but also to provide legal services in foreign countries. International trade and corporate law, international finance law and intellectual property are some of the areas which will therefore become increasingly important.

Malaysian businessmen are also now investing in many countries outside Malaysia, including China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, South Africa, South America, and many others. Our lawyers should therefore be well-equipped to provide advice on a global basis with respect to the many transnational transactions entered into by these Malaysian businessmen. I am confident that our lawyers will meet these challenges and achieve an international reputation for their services.

Our lawyers should be well-equipped to provide advice on a global basis with respect to the many transnational transactions entered into by Malaysian businessmen.

Though the number of lawyers has increased in recent years, the country is facing severe shortage of qualified and skilled personnel and professionals. With the country moving towards developed nation status, the manpower needs of the country is becoming even more acute. I therefore urge all of you present here this evening to return to Malaysia to serve the nation's needs. Tremendous opportunities await you.

Public perception of lawyers

Having said that, there is one aspect of the legal profession that is causing some concern to many. This relates to the manner in which the legal profession all over the world appears to be slipping in the estimation of right-thinking people whom it purports to serve. This is a global problem and is not restricted to Malaysia or Britain. Some lawyers, entrusted by their clients with funds and assets, breach

that trust, and by so doing bring loss and misery to their clients. Other lawyers break the law in other ways, or engage in sharp and unethical practices. Some of you may have seen people wearing T-shirts which ask the question: “What do you call a thousand lawyers at the bottom of the ocean?” The answer: “A good start!”

Of course, there have always been jokes about lawyers. Shakespeare, in *Henry VI*, urges that “The first thing we do, [is for us to] kill all the lawyers”. And those of you who have read *Bleak House* will know that Dickens himself was not enamoured of the old Courts of Chancery.

If the legal profession, ancient as it is, and serving society as it does, is so honourable, why is it then attracting such an increasing amount of disdain from the general public?

I believe that part of the disenchantment of the public with lawyers is because of the increasing use of the media.

Advertising of legal services

Since 1977, American lawyers have been allowed to advertise. Surveys carried out by some of the State Bars in the United States show that the proportion of people who believe lawyers to be honest, has fallen from 65% to 14% after lawyers began to use television commercials.

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business rather than professions. There is
danger in treating law as a business, rather
than a profession.

With the advent of the Internet, there is more advertising amongst lawyers. The reputation of the entire profession suffers as a consequence. Unfortunately, it is not easy for the “man on the Clapham Omnibus” to distinguish between a good lawyer and an unethical one, and I fear that a blot on the reputation of some lawyers becomes a stain on the reputation of the legal profession world-wide.

Malaysia is now facing calls from some members of the profession to permit advertising by lawyers. We must learn from the experience of other countries. On the one hand, lawyers wish to advertise so as to reach their potential clients, but on the other hand, there is a cost to the profession if it is done irresponsibly.

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Advertising has always been the province of business rather than professions. There is danger in treating law as a business, rather than a profession. I cannot help feeling that public perception of the profession would be enhanced if lawyers are seen more as professionals, rather than businessmen.

Therefore my advice to you this evening is this: When you return to Malaysia to practise at the Bar, become lawyers who know about business; not businessmen or businesswomen who know little about the law. ...

 **Legal education: Looking to the future**

28 February 1997

Occasions like the KPUM Annual Dinner give me the opportunity not only to meet Malaysian students studying in this country, but also to meet some of my own friends, like the Lord Chancellor of Great Britain, the Law Lords, Judges and Professors, including my own tutor at the University of Nottingham, Professor Sir JC Smith. Your Society is indeed fortunate to have the continued support of these leading legal luminaries in this country.

As Royal Patron of this Association, I thank the Lord Chancellor, the Law Lords, other Judges and the Professors for giving their support and encouragement to the Society, and particularly to the many law students studying in this country.

Another year has swiftly gone by—for some of you, you have successfully advanced to another year in your course of studies. To others, you are a year closer to returning home. But, for all of us, the dawn of the new millennium brings about new challenges. As the future leaders of the country, you should be well-equipped to meet some of these challenges.

Malaysia in the past few years has achieved great prominence, largely because of its dynamic economic growth and policies. In the area of international affairs and international trade, Malaysia continues to play a prominent role. The chairmanship of the United Nations General Assembly is now occupied by a Malaysian. In the recent World Trade Organisation (WTO) meeting in Singapore, an

important role was played by Malaysia. Malaysia also continues to play a significant role in ASEAN.

Technological advances in Malaysia

The twenty-first century will also see the country attaining developed nation status and the hundredth year of Independence. Amongst the other developments will be the establishment of the Multimedia Super Corridor, the setting up of the new administrative capital at Putrajaya, and the completion of one of the tallest buildings in the world—the Petronas Twin-Towers.

The establishment of the Multimedia Super Corridor has attracted much global attention, as can be seen from the positive response to the Prime Minister's recent visit to the United States and Japan. Leading personalities in the world of multimedia, including Bill Gates, have agreed to serve in the high-powered International Advisory Panel established by the Prime Minister to monitor the development of the Super Corridor and to provide ongoing guidance. The Multimedia Super Corridor is intended as a catalyst to bring together world class multimedia companies to Malaysia to establish their businesses, their hi-tech operations and their research and development units.

Cyber laws

To give full effect of the implementation of the Multimedia Super Corridor, new cyber laws need to be formulated. Laws will have to be enacted to control computer crimes, illegal access, commercial espionage and theft. The Multimedia Super Corridor which hopes

to bring about a borderless trading environment and a paperless administration will result in some of the existing laws and principles being revised to accommodate these technological advances. The law of theft and the law of defamation will have to be redefined; the contractual principles relating to the signing of contracts will have to be modified; and the law relating to the registration of professionals providing services in Malaysia will have to be reviewed.

You, as the future members of the legal professions in Malaysia, will have to prepare yourselves to face these changes and challenges by acquainting yourselves with this gamut of newly promulgated cyber laws.

These are only a few of the areas of the traditional laws which will require modifications. In fact, the new cyber laws will replace many other established principles of law. The law relating to intellectual property will play an even more important role. You, as the future members of the legal professions in Malaysia, will have to prepare yourselves to face these changes and challenges by acquainting yourselves with this gamut of newly promulgated cyber laws.

Leaving aside cyber laws, I now move on to address you on two other matters which may be of interest to you.

Foreign universities in Malaysia

Recently several new legislation have been introduced in Malaysia for the establishment of branch campuses of foreign universities,

and even for the establishment of certain approved private universities. With the rapid growth in the economy of the country, the need for skilled and professional personnel has become even more acute. It is in line with this requirement that the establishment of private institutions of higher learning is being encouraged by the Government. It is my hope that in the not-too-distant future, some of the established universities in England will set up branch campuses in Malaysia.

Professional training

The final point which I would like to raise is the question of professional training. I am given to understand that because of some changes in the regulations of the Council of Legal Education, there is some concern by our students regarding their professional training, particularly in pursuing the Bar Finals. It is hoped that the Qualifying Board in Malaysia will soon resolve this matter by having further discussions with the Council of Legal Education in this country so that the present confusion prevailing over this matter maybe resolved. In this regard, the Attorney General of Malaysia, who is the Chairman of the Qualifying Board, has requested the Director of the CLP course to be present here this evening to advise you on the current status of the CLP course, as well as to the recognition of law degrees conferred by certain universities in this country.

