

The family of DATO' ZAKIAH HANUM had its roots in the Malay state of Kedah. Like many others in the state, including members of the royal house, ZAKIAH and her kin have both Malay and Thai ancestry and, she notes, "maybe some Indian and Arab blood too." This reflects the fact that, unlike the majority of Malays, her ancestors were urban folk. For generations they dwelt in or near the royal capital of Alor Setar. Many made their careers in the sultan's service as minor officials in his vast palace complex. ZAKIAH's maternal great-grandmother, for example, was, in effect, a lady-in-waiting at court. Evidently she was often present when the young people of the household were regaled with stories and legends of the Malay past. Some of these she recorded, and among the family heirlooms prized especially by ZAKIAH is a manuscript of a tale written partly in her great-grandmother's hand.

In the early twentieth century Kedah was incorporated within the British Empire, along with several other more or less autonomous kingdoms on the Malay peninsula. As one of the Unfederated Malay States, Kedah hosted a rather light British administration. Many responsible positions continued to be filled by Malays. ZAKIAH's maternal grandfather, Ismail, was a senior customs official. An exceptional man alert to the economic changes rapidly overtaking the Malay states and connecting them to the world outside, he shrewdly invested in both land and foreign stocks and bonds.

Abdul Hamid, ZAKIAH's father, also held a respectable position in the state government as a clerk in the land office. He married Ismail's only child, Che Yah. Zakiah, who was born on 15 September 1937, was the fifth of their nine children.

ZAKIAH HANUM, whose nickname has always been ANUM, grew up in a rich milieu of Malay tradition and Muslim piety, amidst a large household of family and servants where, Kedah-style, there was much uninhibited talk and laughter. As a girl she feasted on a cornucopia of family lore and classical Malay yarns spun by her maternal grandmother, the family's master storyteller. She also absorbed the advice of her father, a civil servant through-and-through, who taught his

children to do things properly, according to correct procedure. He was also a religious man, a graduate of Alor Setar's elite Muslim academy, Maktab Mahmud. He saw to it that his five girls and four boys were well versed in the tenets and scriptures of Islam. When the family's regular Koran teacher could not come for appointed lessons, Abdul Hamid conducted them himself, much to the consternation of the children because he drilled them sternly in the proper pronunciation of Arabic.

In 1942 war disrupted the family's comfortable routine. Alor Setar was directly astride the Japanese army's route from Thailand into British Malaya. Hoping to avoid danger, Abdul Hamid evacuated his family by foot to a large riverside house in the interior, only to be confronted there by the invaders arriving by boat. A small detachment of Japanese soldiers camped briefly beneath the house. ZAKIAH's mother resourcefully protected the household's women and girls by rolling them up in mattresses and mats until the soldiers moved on.

Although only five at the time, ZAKIAH remembers the fear and excitement of the early wartime days and events such as having to bow low to Japanese sentries, who in turn rewarded the children with packets of sugar. All in all, the occupation was not as unbearable for the ethnic Malays as for the Chinese population: Malay lives were rarely threatened. Moreover, halfway through the war Japan ceded Kedah to its ally, Thailand, which then assumed control of the state administration.

Meanwhile the local men, including ZAKIAH's father, organized patrols to guard the neighborhood at night and oversee other essential community activities. English-language schooling was unavailable, of course, but for a time ZAKIAH attended a local Malay school. There she mastered Jawi, the traditional method of writing Malay words using Arabic letters, a skill she carried with her to adulthood.

ZAKIAH's formal education began in 1947. Kedah was now back in British hands and English-medium schools had reopened, among them the Kampong Baru Girls' School, which had been founded in prewar years to provide a British-style education for the sultan's daughters and other girls from Kedah's ruling elite. An old palace had been converted into a schoolhouse for this purpose. ZAKIAH was among the first beneficiaries of the school's postwar acceptance of commoners. At Kampong Baru (subsequently renamed Sultanah Asma) Girls' School, most of ZAKIAH's teachers were expatriate Britons. She and her fellow students followed the Cambridge Syllabus in preparation for examinations that were both set and graded in England. The school had only a few Malay teachers, three of whom ZAKIAH remembers distinctly: Tom binti Abdul Razak (Mak Tom), who subsequently

became Malaysia's leading woman educator; Dato' Kontik Kamariah, now a very successful businesswoman; and Noordin Hassan, who thrilled her with his lessons about European art and later became a renowned playwright. She keeps up with all of them still.

ZAKIAH claims to have been a naughty student, trading jokes about her teachers behind their backs, but academically she excelled. Hers was the first class from Sultanah Asma to sit for the post-Form Five Cambridge examinations; she achieved the only First (superior grade) by the school's participants.

The following year ZAKIAH entered Methodist Boys' School of Penang (which now accepted girls) for the advanced secondary course known as Form Six. She lived in Penang with a distant relative, Sharifah Bee, a widow and successful businesswoman. Despite having a large household, Sharifah Bee took delight in the company of her bright young houseguest and urged her to discuss her ideas and problems. ZAKIAH was impressed that "she always wanted to know my views, which is very unusual for a Malay woman." After a year and a half of rigorous schooling during the daytime and serious discussions with Sharifah Bee at night, ZAKIAH qualified for entrance to the university, half a year ahead of schedule and, again, with a First.

The years of ZAKIAH's education paralleled the emergence of a powerful nationalism among the Malays. Her father was one of the activists in the years following World War II who worked to induce Britain to abandon its original blueprint for decolonization, the Malayan Union Plan. This plan, the activists believed, denied Malays the special status that accrued rightfully to them as the traditional inhabitants of the peninsula—as opposed to the Chinese and Indians who arrived during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—although they accounted for little more than half the population. The new plan, calling for a Federation of Malaya, accorded Malays more power and, unlike the Malayan Union Plan, retained cherished features of the old society, including the system of sultanates. The United Malays National Organization (UMNO) was responsible for achieving this turnabout and remains the dominant political party in Malaysia today; ZAKIAH's father was a founding member in Kedah.

ZAKIAH admits frankly that the great anti-Malayan Union Plan rallies were, to her, merely *pesta* (parties) and confesses to having been more or less oblivious to the momentous political evolution occurring around her. Even during her university days (1957-61)—as Malaya achieved independence under the leadership of Tunku Abdul Rahman*:

*RMAF Awardee in Community Leadership, 1960.

a prince of the royal house of Kedah, and a time when many of her classmates were swept into student politics—ZAKIAH gravitated to the drama club and other apolitical activities. Her decision to major in Malay studies reflected a deep attachment to her cultural, rather than her political, identity.

ZAKIAH was among the two hundred students in the first class to matriculate at the University of Malaya's Kuala Lumpur campus, which was still under construction. After a year of making-do in classrooms and a hostel at the Technical College—where the women students caused quite a stir in the formerly all-boys school—the class was transferred to the university's campus in Singapore. The students returned to Kuala Lumpur only after adequate facilities had been completed. ZAKIAH finished her student career there. In retrospect, moving about was a small price to pay for having been among the pioneers of the new institution.

ZAKIAH and her Malay classmates—who constituted less than half the university's student body—have played a role of disproportionate importance in the evolution of their newly independent country. Many today are senior civil servants and department heads. "It is a great advantage to work with your friends," ZAKIAH reflects.

ZAKIAH completed her Bachelor of Arts degree with Honors in 1961. As a recipient of a Kedah State scholarship she was expected to return to Kedah and enter public service. But administrative posts were the domain of males, ZAKIAH soon learned, and women degree holders were expected to teach, a career she did not desire. When the state failed to offer a single alternative, she sought and was granted permission to look for a job elsewhere. The first interesting opening was in the national Public Records Office, which had advertised for someone trained in Malay Studies to be assistant keeper of Archives. With her parents' blessing, ZAKIAH applied and was selected. Returning to Kuala Lumpur, the national capital, she was soon embarked upon her wholly unanticipated life's work.

Malaya's Public Records Office had been established on 1 December 1957. Its staff of five or six was headed by an expatriate Briton, Tan Sri Mubin Sheppard (a former colonial official and subsequent Malayan citizen) who, as director of museums, was also responsible for archives. Since neither he nor his staff were particularly experienced in archival matters, he set about finding appropriate outside training for ZAKIAH and another new recruit.

ZAKIAH found herself enrolled in a year-long course at the National Archives of India in New Delhi where she acquired the skills of her

profession. Working side-by-side with Indian archivists, she learned how to clean, preserve, evaluate, catalogue, and store documents and to understand the use of the archives in historical research. She was thrilled by the richness and scope of India's vast collections. Even though Malaya's collections paled by comparison, she now looked forward to the challenge at home.

The training program in New Delhi was rigorous and stimulating and left little time for recreation and sightseeing, aside from quick weekend jaunts, for example, to the Taj Mahal in nearby Agra. Despite this ZAKIAH adjusted happily to Indian life. Lodging with a family named Gupta, she learned to speak Hindi and developed an affection for many Indian ways. Her first foreign country, India helped ZAKIAH to see her own land in a different perspective. Whereas India's history and civilization were vaster and richer, ZAKIAH observed that in India human suffering occurred on a scale unimaginable in Malaya. "I tell my children," she now says, "that if you survive living in India, you can survive living anywhere." As for ZAKIAH herself, she thrived and made lifelong friends whom she still visits whenever she can.

After thirteen months and a diploma in archives administration, ZAKIAH returned to Kuala Lumpur and the Public Records Office. She became section head for the Archives Division—that is, curator for materials twenty-five years old and older. During her Indian sojourn, Sheppard insisted that she write him at least once a month with details of her program and with ideas for organizing the collection of documents that he was amassing from throughout the Malay Peninsula (a requirement ZAKIAH today imposes on her own trainees). Now, under the strict and meticulous Sheppard, she set out putting her practical lessons and ideas to work.

She and her colleagues began by going from one government department to another, gathering up old records lest they be discarded carelessly or lost to neglect or the elements. They made plans for the new Records Center, which was opened in 1965, where the growing flow of documents could be reviewed, cleaned, preserved, and stored. A bindery was later added, and a microfilm unit. To establish clear procedures for the disposition of records once they were no longer active, a records-management system was set up that integrated the rest of the government with the Public Records Office. The latter was renamed the National Archives when Malaya became part of Malaysia in 1963.

The archivists set up training programs to teach government record handlers how to follow the new procedures and how to organize their paperwork. At the same time, the staff helped draft a National Archives

Act to give the activities of the Archives a basis in law. It was approved in 1966 and requires all government departments and agencies to transfer their documents and records to the National Archives after twenty years. For three years or so during this pioneering period Dr. F. R. J. Verhoeven (a Dutch archivist) was lent by UNESCO as consultant to the Archives and, as Sheppard's retirement approached, to train a Malaysian civil servant to lead it. Step by step Malaysia's new National Archives took on the organization, the skills, and the technology of a modern facility.

As head of the Archives Division of the National Archives, ZAKIAH specialized in older materials; Records Division handled recent documents. But as a key staff member in a small organization, ZAKIAH was also involved in its general endeavors, particularly those having to do with evaluating incoming documents and with training. In time some members of the pioneering team left to take jobs in international agencies or universities or accepted higher-ranking civil service positions. ZAKIAH, however, stayed the course. She became deputy chief of Archives in 1970 and in 1977 was named acting director general; she was confirmed as the latter in 1980. One of her first acts was to ban smoking in the Archives.

By this time ZAKIAH's private life had undergone major changes. Tagging along with her older sister and her friends in university days, ZAKIAH had met Mohammad Nor bin Ismail, a sports enthusiast, student activist, and her husband-to-be. Mohammad Nor was from a deeply religious Selangor family and had studied at the prestigious Malay College of Kuala Selangor. After receiving his degree in 1960, one year ahead of ZAKIAH, he had entered government service. They did not marry until 1964, however, because civil service rules discouraged women from marrying during their probationary years. Indeed, doing so required one to resign, although one could be retained "on a temporary basis." ZAKIAH prudently waited until she was confirmed in her position, in August 1964, before marrying in December of that year. By the time she became acting director general in 1977, three children had been born to the couple: a son, Mukhlis, in 1966; a daughter, Farha, in 1969; and a second son, Haiz, in 1971.

As head of Malaysia's burgeoning archive system, ZAKIAH has presided over a diverse empire of paper and artifacts. Among them is a copy of a letter dated 1403 from an imperial Chinese emissary addressed to Parameswara, the founder of the great Malay sultanate at Malacca; the original is in Holland. The Archives' oldest original items date from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when Portugal, and later Holland, ruled in Malacca; these include rare maps and records from some of Southeast Asia's earliest Christian

churches. Of political interest is the eighteenth-century letter in which the Sultan of Kedah ceded the island of Penang to the English East India Company, thus inaugurating the British period in Malayan history.

Government records of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries form the bulk of the Archives' collection, however. Aside from those sent routinely to the Archives from Malaysia's post-independence government departments and agencies to be catalogued and stored for eventual use by the public after twenty-five years, there are records of the colonial agencies that Sheppard and his co-workers salvaged from district and land offices, town councils, magistrates courts, and secretariats of state administrations. The largest collections are from the Selangor State Secretariat and span the years 1875 to 1940, virtually the entire history of Selangor as a British protectorate. Smaller secretariat collections exist from the states of Kedah, Pahang, Negri Sembilan, Perak, and Trengganu. Although depleted through neglect, deterioration, and the practice of raiding the archives for paper during World War II, these caches of original letters, dispensations, and minutes are unique sources for reconstructing Malaysia's history.

Complementing these unpublished documents in the Archives are thousands of gazettes, circulars, ordinances, court proceedings, and other official publications from the same period, plus the private papers of many actors on the political scene—British, Malay, and Chinese. Frank Swettenham's handwritten journals describing his role in the advent of Britain's expansion in the Malay states in the 1870s are there. So are the papers of Tunku Abdul Rahman who, as Malaysia's founding prime minister, reclaimed autonomy for the Malays some eighty years later.

A collection of more than ten thousand photographs spans nearly the same years, as does the collection of Malay, English, Chinese, and Tamil newspapers, which date from 1896. Besides these materials, the Archives houses treaties; correspondence, crests, flags, and coats-of-arms of Malay sultans; and the memoirs of individuals who figured prominently in the nation's more recent past.

In her earlier years ZAKIAH had a direct hand in shaping and organizing these collections. As director, she has expanded them dramatically and made extraordinary efforts to share their riches with the Malaysian public. To do so, she points out that the Archives contain much more than "just dry history."

An example is the P. Ramlee Collection. Ramlee was one of Malaysia's most beloved modern entertainers. An actor, singer, songwriter,

filmmaker, and comedian all in one, he was an Everyman with whom Malays identified. When he died in 1973, ZAKIAH asked her staff to begin collecting everything they could find about him: song sheets, recordings, costumes, photographs, movies, and personal effects. Thirteen years later when, with the gift of hindsight, Ramlee's uniqueness as a Malaysian entertainer was unambiguously apparent, ZAKIAH approached the government for funds to mount a memorial museum honoring him; she also launched a public fund-raising drive.

Private contributions for an archive or exhibition were unheard of in Malaysia at the time, yet ZAKIAH's lively campaign raised well over a million Malaysian dollars. She used the money to convert Ramlee's modest home into a museum where people could see his memorabilia and watch his films. Some two hundred thousand visitors now do so every year.

The Archives has mounted a similar memorial exhibition for Tun Abdul Razak,* Malaysia's second prime minister, who died in 1976. Aside from viewing papers, books, newspaper clippings, photographs, and mementos from his public career, visitors can see videos of his life, including his participation in his favorite pastimes—golf and speedboating. The Independence Declaration Memorial in Malacca houses a variety of materials relating to the independence movement; another memorial exhibition will soon be in place honoring independence leader Tunku Abdul Rahman. Like the others, it will contain collections and displays of documents and artifacts along with items of human interest. These permanent exhibitions are ZAKIAH's special touch and are drawing Malaysians as never before into an active dialogue with their past.

ZAKIAH is especially eager to document Malaysia's recent past as comprehensively as possible. Therefore she is emphasizing oral history. The Archives had begun collecting oral history materials in the early 1960s, when staff members recorded interviews with important figures. The enterprise has greatly expanded under ZAKIAH's stewardship, and now many of the oral history videotapings occur in public. At these "history-narrating" sessions in the Archives' auditorium, members of the audience are invited to pose their own questions. This can be a particularly exciting experience for young people who may have read about certain personalities but not seen them: "now they are seeing history in real life."

In inaugurating the history-narrating sessions in 1986, ZAKIAH decided to highlight Malaysian women. Among her first guests was her

*RMAF Awardee in Community Leadership, 1967.

own first-grade teacher from Alor Setar, Mak Tom. Subsequent sessions have featured the Japanese occupation and the Malayan Emergency, and have taped the recollections of retired colonial administrators and civil servants. One unexpected boon of this program has been the pride and appreciation of its often quite elderly guests. As ZAKIAH notes with obvious pleasure, “they find that they are wanted again.”

One of ZAKIAH’s most far-reaching initiatives is her use of Radio Television Malaysia, or RTM. As part of Archives Awareness Week—instituted in 1979 by the International Council of Archives in Paris—ZAKIAH launched “Today in History.” Based on materials from the National Archives, these three-minute television and radio programs spotlight important Malaysian historic events. These mini-lessons, broadcast three or four times a day, not only give millions of Malaysians new insights into their past but are daily reminders of the existence and work of the National Archives.

Aside from “Today in History,” the Archives has helped produce several other television programs and series. “Sekali Peristiwa” (Once upon a Time) has brought oral history to television in the format of videotaped interviews in a person’s home, sometimes with young people present to ask questions. “Landmarks” highlights historical events connected with particular buildings or sites. The “Voice of Malaysia,” the government’s overseas radio broadcasting service, uses Archives-supplied materials to introduce aspects of Malaysian history to foreign listeners. Preparing such programs has become so important that in 1987 ZAKIAH created a new division within the Archives—the Historical Documentation Center.

Through efforts like these, more and more Malaysians are now aware of the National Archives and of the ways that it can be useful to them. Although university students and other researchers, including foreign scholars, still constitute the majority of archival users, one is also likely to find users from advertising, television, journalism, and law. For example, archival documents might be sought for evidence in cases involving disputed land claims.

ZAKIAH is particularly eager to attract young people. To do so she has organized National History Quizzes and routinely brings school children to the Archives itself and to the Memorials. Monday is best for such visits, since that day Memorials are closed to the general public. Before touring the exhibits the children are given questionnaires. Later, after a break for snacks, they fill them out and are invited to ask questions of an expert—a professor from the university perhaps. “At the end of that,” says ZAKIAH, “we give them lunch; we keep them very happy.”

ZAKIAH's many outreach programs complement the Archives' more routine and central functions in records preservation, storage, and management. The latter ZAKIAH has refined and made professional to such a degree that today young archivists from neighboring countries come to Malaysia for training, just as she was once sent to India, Burma, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Fiji, and Samoa—to name a few—have sent trainees. In Kuala Lumpur the trainees benefit from the Training and Community Development Service that ZAKIAH set up in 1979 to train her own staff members plus records handlers in other Malaysian government departments and agencies. ZAKIAH, however, still insists that Malaysia's budding archivists also be given the opportunity to study abroad.

From a handful of people working under Sheppard during ZAKIAH's early days in the Public Records Office, Malaysia's National Archives system today employs over four hundred people, including some sixty professionals. Many are specialists in one or another of the increasingly high-tech subfields of archives science—preservation, restoration, information management—or in one or more of the several languages represented in Malaysia's collections—Arabic, Portuguese, and Dutch as well as Malay, Thai, Chinese, and English. Staff members are evidently happy in their work; the turnover rate is exceptionally low.

Since 1982 the Archives has been housed in a new building in central Kuala Lumpur. Built with financial assistance from UNESCO, it was officially opened by Malaysia's king and inaugurated in conjunction with the Round Table on Archives, the first assembly of international archivists to be hosted in Asia. The new Archives building is architecturally distinctive. Set on a hilltop amidst a lovely park, it is a modern sparkling-white landmark. Inside, its technical and public archive facilities are unmatched in Southeast Asia. Sprinkler systems and specially designed vaults and doors protect the building's contents from fire, and in the preservation rooms technical experts use state-of-the-art equipment to fumigate, de-acidify, and strengthen old papers and books. Microfilms of vital records of government departments are stored here lest the originals be destroyed—as they were when a fire destroyed fifteen years of records of Malaysia's Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sports in 1986.

The Archives Research Hall, embellished by elegantly carved hardwood pillars, seats 120 people, and there are separate rooms for map reading, microfilm viewing, music listening, and meetings. Every service essential to the researcher is available, including photocopying, transliteration, typing, and various forms of photographic reproduction. Although fees are levied for some services, there is no charge for use of the materials themselves. More than two thousand people now use the facilities each year.

Some of the public areas resemble a museum more than a storage facility. The main exhibition hall displays documents, artifacts, and illustrations depicting the sweep of Malaysia's historical evolution, from the early centuries of European exploitation, through the Japanese occupation, to independence. In the mezzanine corridors are displays highlighting the careers of several post-independence leaders, including three prime ministers.

Building an archive of this quality required the consistent backing of the government. This did not come easily. As ZAKIAH points out, "a great lot of pushing had to be done." Her own connections in high places helped, as did the persistence and good humor for which she is renowned. ZAKIAH also quite consciously developed the Archives with an eye to attracting the attention of decision makers. "I keep telling my staff," she says, "if you do programs that people see, you are not only promoting the Archives . . . you are promoting what you do to people who matter in decision making."

In the early 1970s the Archives began establishing local branches, a process that accelerated under ZAKIAH's tenure as director. There are now branches in Johore (1972), Sarawak (1976), Sabah (1977), Trengganu (1978), Kedah (1979), Penang (1986), and Kelantan (1987). ZAKIAH presides busily over the entire system, shaping its development, nurturing its staff, building its collections.

It is the collections themselves that most excite her, for in becoming Malaysia's chief archivist she has become a historian: "doing the research, that's the thing I love most." Having drifted through the post-World War II years blissfully unaware of the powerful currents sweeping Malaya at the time, ZAKIAH is now drawn to that period. In these years, Malays were aroused from decades of political passivity under the British to passionate efforts to reestablish control over their own destiny. ZAKIAH has been seeking the roots of this great awakening. This led her to *Majlis*, a Malay-language newspaper that played a profound role in arousing and articulating the new Malay political awareness. In her first scholarly book, published in 1987 and called *Terchabarnya Maruah Bangsa*, ZAKIAH examined the contents of *Majlis*. By summarizing its editorials over the three-year period during which Britain's Malayan Union Plan was promulgated and then abandoned (1945-48), she showed how *Majlis* helped unite and guide Malaya's first generation of politicians, in particular the founders of UMNO. To ZAKIAH this early period of activism bears lessons for Malaysians today.

This endeavor shows how ZAKIAH's work as archivist overlaps with her role as a citizen. Having come of age just as her country did, she

is aware of Malaysia's youth and vulnerability. Although her role at the National Archives may seem to place her on the periphery of politics, through her social relations and other activities ZAKIAH is very much involved in Malaysia's evolving national life. After all, many of today's leading figures were her schoolmates. Moreover, her husband has a high social profile. Having entered government service immediately after university, Mohammad Nor rose to become general manager of the Selangor State Development Corporation. He then left government to become a private real estate developer and is also manager of the country's national field hockey team. ZAKIAH herself, aside from her job as director of Archives, has also made a name for herself as a writer and social worker.

Indeed, ZAKIAH is a prolific author of books, dramatic scripts, and newspaper articles. In *Sembang Mak Alang* (What Mak Alang is Talking About, 1985) ZAKIAH herself is Mak Alang. She brought together forty short pieces she originally wrote for Malaysia's popular newspaper, *Berita Harian*. These sketches range from childhood reminiscences to traffic in modern Kuala Lumpur and her fear of flying. She wrote them in simple, colloquial Malay in order to make them accessible to readers, even those for whom Malay is not their first language. (Malay is the national language and medium of instruction in school, but for more than a third of Malaysia's citizens it is not their native language.)

Radio Television Malaysia was so attracted to *Sembang Mak Alang* that it proposed developing a drama series based on it. ZAKIAH agreed to serve as consultant to the project but was eventually drafted as scriptwriter. Since then she has branched out to writing historical dramas. One of these, entitled "*Bahang*" and depicting the Malayan Union Period, was broadcast in 1988 in connection with Malaysia's Independence Day celebrations.

In another book, *Tradisi dan Budaya*, written for young readers, ZAKIAH described Malaysian arts and customs and, as in *Cerita Mak Alang*, retold familiar folk tales and fables. In *Asul-Usul Negeri-Negeri di Malaysia*, she explained the origins of the names of Malaysia's states. She is now working on *Senda Sindir Sengat*, a study of Malayan political cartoons from the 1920s through the 1940s, once again exploring the roots of the national consciousness. (Her interest in the subject may have arisen from the fact that her maternal grandfather had framed and hung on the wall one such cartoon, which is now in her possession. It depicts the fate of Malays should they not learn to assert themselves.) All ZAKIAH's writings, whether for adults or children, are aimed at familiarizing Malaysians with important aspects of their country's history and culture. As such, they reflect ZAKIAH's overriding concern

about the shape and destiny of Malaysian society.

Another manifestation of this concern is her social work. In the late 1960s ZAKIAH helped form the women's group, Pertiwi (*Pertubuhan Tindakan Wanita Islam*, or Muslim Women's Action Society), to raise the educational level of women and children. She has been its president since 1972. Through its scholarship program Pertiwi has helped thousands of poor children finish school. Program donors may "adopt" a particular needy student, pay his school fees, and monitor his progress. Quite a few of the adoptees have entered the professions. Pertiwi has also set up a children's center in a residential area of Kuala Lumpur, complete with library, kindergarten, playground, and facilities for music and religion classes. It hopes women in other communities will follow suit.

Through yet another Pertiwi program, inaugurated in 1987, ZAKIAH has been tackling the problem of drug (*dadah*) abuse among teenagers. Although it once seemed that poor, urban Malays were most vulnerable to narcotics, now drug addiction afflicts all groups in all places. ZAKIAH's idea has been to set up colloquiums at schools where students can talk frankly with each other about drug use and related issues. The theme of these student-led meetings is self-strengthening. The approach, she points out, is not one of adults scolding young people. Instead young people are encouraged to help themselves. Pertiwi's pilot project clicked. Now, with additional funds provided by the British government, self-strengthening colloquiums are being conducted all over the country.

From her musician son, Mukhlis, ZAKIAH got the idea of bringing Malaysia's show people into the anti-*dadah* campaign. In 1987 she drew together a group of popular singers, songwriters, and musicians—rockstars excluded—to form Anda. (Anda means "you," but it is also an acronym for anti-*dadah*). Together they wrote or commissioned ten new songs emphasizing the richness and beauty of life—all of them geared, without being too explicit, to the futility of drug addiction. Anda's album was launched amidst great fanfare on Malaysian television, with Prime Minister Mahathir's wife, Dato' Sri Dr. Siti Hasmah Mohammad Ali, as official sponsor. Afterwards RTM broadcast Anda's theme song repeatedly. Proceeds from the sale of the album exceeded one hundred thousand Malaysian dollars and were earmarked for drug rehabilitation centers and related programs.

Wearing yet another hat, one that reflects her staunch Muslim upbringing, ZAKIAH has also helped organize Malaysia's popular Koran-reading contests.

ZAKIAH's many services to Malaysia have not gone unnoticed. She is the recipient of three special awards: the Setia Mahkota Selangor from the Sultan of Selangor; the Dato' Setia Di Raja Kedah from the Sultan of Kedah; and the Johan Setia Mahkota from Malaysia's king, the Yang di Pertuan Agong.

When people marvel at ZAKIAH's energy, and the sheer volume of her activities, she is quick and candid in pointing out that a household full of "helpers" relieves her of virtually all domestic chores: "there's somebody to cook, there's somebody to wash, there's somebody to drive, there's somebody to go to market, there's somebody to pay the bills." This may also be the reason, she admits laughingly as she alludes to her plumpness, that "I go on sitting and growing."

Her children are now grown, and to her pleasure two of them have gravitated to artistic fields. Mukhlis, a singer and songwriter, is also a professional landscape architect; Farha has studied art in London and plans a career in the communication arts. Haiz, on the other hand, is a budding economist but, ZAKIAH adds happily, he still enjoys music and art along with everyone else in the family.

Not surprisingly, ZAKIAH is also something of an archivist at home. Aside from saving family manuscripts, correspondence, diaries, and books, not to mention artifacts from her own life (including a piece of art from grammar school), she also collects chinaware, brassware, and traditional Malay wedding regalia.

In the matter of culture, ZAKIAH is sometimes a traditionalist, sometimes not. In her campaign to foster positive social values, she unabashedly makes use of electronic popular music and the modern medium of video. On the other hand, she is also concerned with preserving the best of Malaysia's older art forms and rues the fact that its music, dance, and art are being commercialized—to promote tourism, for example. There is a place for this commercialization, she admits, but there should also be a place for the traditional. This is why she has directed the Archives to document traditional art forms by collecting older films and recordings and by making new films on its own. This endeavor reflects ZAKIAH's "total concept" approach to archive-building, namely collecting anything that can help Malaysians gain a better understanding of their past.

To ZAKIAH, Malaysia's national archive system is not solely the custodian of historical records. Rather, properly promoted, it can actually help people change the way they think, how they approach problems. For example, she wants Malaysians to learn to "develop the discipline of authenticating facts." It is her goal to inculcate this value

in Malaysia's younger generation. For your work to be substantive, she tells young people, whether it is in business, scholarship, or the arts, you have to do your research, you have to ascertain your facts.

By giving Malaysians a modern accessible national archival system, ZAKIAH is making it easier and easier to do just that.

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