

TRANSLATION OF PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH IN THE NATIONAL  
LANGUAGE AT THE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF SREE  
NARAYANA MISSION ON 12 SEPTEMBER, 1965

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,

Though we are no more in Malaysia now, our way of life and the way we speak, the system of Government have not by any means changed. And I hope the people of Malaysia -- the people of Singapore know this. I hope Malaysians will slowly come to understand that this is a country which cannot be separated and divided. This is not just a map that you can take a pair of scissors and cut out and paste somewhere else. That is a thing you cannot do. And I hope what Dr. Ismail said at Canberra is correct: that a day will come when the two will come together again but in a different situation and under different arrangements. But I believe in the next few years, we will succeed.

I'm happy to meet you today and to present on behalf of the Sree Narayana Mission Scholarships not only to Indians but also to Malays and Chinese. We all belong to the same country. If the Indians are rich and Malays and Chinese are poor, then the country will face difficulty. If the Chinese are rich, and the

Malays and Indians are poor, then we will also face difficulty. We must divide equally otherwise what will happen to the Eurasians, Pakistanis, Ceylonese and others? So I believe there will not be communalism.

That is the reason when I visited India, I saw and I could understand the situation there. That country has a history that dates back to thousand of years. It is a country that has 30 to 40 languages. Nobody says that you must speak only Tamil or Hindi. That is not the way. No one says that you have to embrace Hinduism and not any other religion. There will be big trouble.

I believe that if we learn the history and life of other countries, we will benefit from it. Those who shout slogans like "one language, one race and one religion" are people who lack learning. These people do not have good eye sight: they must put on spectacles. They simply cannot hear well because they stuff their ears with cotton. If they cleaned their ears, they will know there are many languages spoken. On Sundays, you can see people going to church. On Friday, Muslims go to mosques. On Thaipusam and Deepavali, Hindus go to their place of worship. The Chinese too, do that. What is wrong with that? It is a foolish thing to force everyone to do that. I believe these people have no knowledge and if they were to learn they will slowly come to understand.

What has happened to Malaysia, has happened. But if we are not careful, we will in the future face great difficulty -- not only in Singapore. Even places around Singapore will face the same difficulty.

We do not quarrel in Singapore. What is wrong with your Sree Narayana movement? The Seventh Day Adventists are doing a good job: let them do it. There is nothing wrong with it. So can the Holy Convent. The Buddhists can also preach what they like: There is nothing wrong in what they are doing.

So I hope our neighbouring countries will slowly learn a little. We must not say that because you and I have different pigmentations of skin, we cannot work together or become friends for the interest of all. And that is my sincere hope.

12th September, 1965.

National Archives of Singapore