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Let Chinese remain the medium of instruction

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OUR founding fathers had the wisdom, courage, magnanimity and foresight to allow Chinese and English to be the medium of instruction in all national type primary schools for six years.

The system of national type primary school education worked extremely well until some time in the 1970s, when the then Education Minister, Datuk Patinggi Abdul Rahman Ya'akub, introduced a new national education policy and converted all national schools, except the national-type Chinese and Tamil primary schools, into Bahasa Malaysia medium schools. This saw the demise of the Sekolah Rendah Jenis Kebangsaan (Inggeris).

Had the Government allowed the SRJK (Inggeris) to exist, we would definitely have moved forward much faster, given the good foundation in English for our children. But let by-gones be by-gones, and let us acknowledge the courage and wisdom of Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in introducing English as a medium of instruction in the teaching of Science and Mathematics from primary to tertiary levels.

For the Chinese primary schools, the problem is not so much to raise the standard of science and mathematics, but the standard of English. It was therefore suggested that English teaching should be made compulsory in all Chinese primary schools beginning from Standard 1, instead of Standard 3 as is being taught at present.

In the final analysis, English and Mandarin are very useful globally, spoken in the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council. While English will help in the advancement of science and technology Mandarin, with China emerging as an economic powerhouse, is most beneficial in commerce, trade and industry.

Hence, let the Chinese primary schools continue to use Chinese as a medium of instruction in all subjects except language subjects. Do not