

Yesteryears of unadulterated love and respect
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YOURSAY 'Those were indeed the days, the real 1Malaya/1Malaysia of yesteryears, the ones that Umno-BN destroyed.'

Old school reunion - the real 1Malaysia of yesteryears

your sayTc: We have a knack for destroying good things. Our command of the English language and the education system as a whole was of a high standard until politics destroyed those.

Universiti Malaya was on par with the best in Asia, if not the world, but they had to destroy that as well.

Will we ever regain our former "glory"? I think with the current brain drain, it is a long shot.

Keturunan Malaysia: P Uthayakumar, I sincerely envy you. For me, it brings back those very fond memories of the 40s, 50s and very early 60s. How I wish those still living can still gather together the way you and your friends did... so happy and beautifully warm.

I came from Ismail English School/Sultan Ismail College, Jalan Telipot, Kota Bharu, Kelantan. Yes, those were the days, my friend... those were indeed the days, the real 1Malaya/1Malaysia of yesteryears, the ones that Umno/BN destroyed. Curse them... all of them!

Sapphire: I for one, remember such schooldays, too, in the 70s. We played together and we ate together. And when we were home from school, we fished and climbed trees together too.

In fact, when we did quarrel as boys did, the lines drawn were based on which kampung you belonged to and not according to race. After that, we played some more and made up.

The Malaysia we see today is the creation of corruption that is Umno and its vassals in BN. It is high time we remove them from power and stop the rot. We have much to rebuild after that, but it will be for a better Malaysia.

Manjit Bhatia: Uthuyakumar, as a foreigner reading your piece here, I want to commend you for sharing this very moving story. The old muhibbah among the different races in Malaysia has been all but wiped out by Umno's state-sponsored racism.

I do think, though, as you have illustrated here so well, that it has a chance to return and forge the kind of friendships and respect that you have rediscovered on your trip to your old stomping ground, Tumpat.

But what will this take? Regime change? Yes.

Foremost, however, a change in Malaysians' mindset after decades of being poisoned by Umno-BN's almost meditative and predatory lies, theft and racism. The latter can only come if the entire Malaysian education and social systems, including the domestic economy, are overhauled.

Can Anwar Ibrahim and PKR do all this? Frankly, I don't know. But, like you, I hope so - for the sake of peace, justice, equality and democratic rights and freedom in Malaysia.

Gandhi: Uthaya, your account of your childhood days with the Malays and Chinese in Tumpat reflects the unadulterated love and respect we had in the yesteryears.

With misty eyes, I wondered how you as the only Indian were able to be so popular and not tormented by hostile attitude. It's hard to believe that your classmates are eager to get you for the reunion.

I think in Kelantan, the unspoilt state, the humane touch is ever present. It's a shame that Ibrahim Ali is also from Kelantan. I suppose like in every place you would have one black sheep to smear the good name of the Kelantanese.

Sometime ago I used to get invites to visit our Malay friends but these days I seldom get them. I think the change in attitude happened in the 80s. Alas, I have no hope for Malaysians going back to those good old days.

The younger generation has no clue of your innocent schooldays. It's a pity that race mongers have taken over the country. Only prayers can save this nation.

Solaris: Uthaya not only lived in Kelantan but also in Brown Garden, Penang. He ought to share some of his memories of Penang life among the predominantly Chinese population here.

It'd be interesting to read, considering the fact that he's considered to be a racist by more than a few pro-Pakatan Rakyat/DAP supporting Chinese.

Ksn: This is a great piece from Uthayakumar for all Malaysians to remember. All these divisions in the country are creations of short-sighted politicians and fanatics with no love and loyalty for the country.

So Uthaya, please continue your fight for all the poor and the marginalised in Malaysia as it is a great fight. Things will change, at least, we should always believe in that destiny, maybe not during our lifetimes but it for sure will arrive.

Best wishes to you and your friends.

Restless_Native: Like Uthaya, I lived through the 60s school years and the recapitulation is accurate.

I think you have to have grown up during those years to understand how so very real the affection the people had for each other - yes, affection! I was barely seven when I used to gather every week with the other village boys who conducted the nightly sing-song - under one of the stilted houses.

My best friends were Malay boys and I spoke fluent East Coast Malay. They came over to my house and feasted during the festive sessions and we reciprocated. There were none of the current 'haram' attitudes towards foods.

Even the Chinese boys respected religious preferences and pointed out foods the guests should not eat.

I recall, in New York, when I attended a gathering of Malaysian students how polarised they were - Malays on one side (women separate from men, even married couples) and non-Malays advised beforehand not to bring any food. What a change.

Ng Jooi Eing: My wife's family stayed in Tumpat from 1950 till 2010, when her parents had to be uprooted to stay with their children due to old age.

In 2009, when we visited Tumpat, her Malay friend who spotted her at the market, came and hugged her and exchange greetings. When my wife went to Restaurant Nasi Sumatra besides TNB, another friend insisted on 'bagi lebih, kito ke kawe lamo' (we are old friend).

In Subang Jaya where we stay, every time during Puasa, a makcik comes all the way from Pasir Mas to sell 'nasi kelantan' for one month. When my wife bought 'nasi kelabu' and speak the 'kelate' slang, she immediately responded, 'oh, oge kito' (our people), even though we are not Malay.

Geronimo: My alma mater, SMK Jalan Cochrane, had a reunion of old boys (and girls) in 2004. One can hardly fail to notice how segregated we were.

For those from the 60s to the 70s, we were racially mixed and were having a good time, recalling the good old days with our former teachers and headmaster Ajmir Singh.

But you can see those from the 80s to more recent years were more in their racial comfort zone chatting away in BM while we were boisterously having our conversations in English (or Manglish).

These groups of recent old students did not stay long but instead decided to leave early, while the rest of us old-timers were still there having a good time till late. They discovered that they don't fit in at all. What a shame our education system has brought them up to be.

Anonymous_5fb: Uthayakumar, I thank you for sharing this piece of story with us. It's this kind of spirit that all of us must strive to revive.

With this writing of yours, I must admit I wrongly judged you before. A racist can never come out with such genuine writing. I am sorry for judging you wrongly.

I can understand how desperate you are in fighting for the poor Tamil Malaysians, but I can assure you, you won't be able to solve your people's predicaments through the HRP (Human Rights Party) platform.

Only by reviving the spirit that you and your old friends had among other Malaysians can the problems of Tamil Hindus be solved.

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