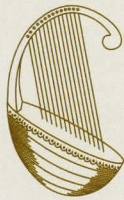


LEGACY *of the* PIONEERS

125 Years of Jaffna Tamils
in Malaysia

T. Selvaratnam
S. Apputhurai



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Foreword By

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PUSTAKA PERDANA



1012306

**Kuala Lumpur
2006**



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Rt. Hon. Dato' Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi
Prime Minister of Malaysia



PRIME MINISTER
MALAYSIA

MESSAGE

Malaysia is a nation which is unique in many ways. The diversity in the society, symbolized by race, religion and culture, mirrors the multiplicity of ethnicity in the country. But this has been a national asset providing motivation for national unity and strength for nation building.


Each community in Malaysia has a tale of its own to tell. Many books and articles have been written about them. Such literature, each fascinating in its own way, has contributed to a better understanding of the different communities which have lived in this country of ours, side by side in peace and prosperity, for generations gone by.

The Ceylonese or Jaffna Tamils - now more often referred to as Sri Lankan Tamils or Tamils of Sri Lankan origin - do stand out as a minority community with its own history and characteristics distinctive to themselves. They migrated to this country more than one hundred years ago, mainly to find employment in the British colonial government. They came to Malaya to be surveyors, road construction overseers, hospital assistants, post and railway station masters, teachers of the English language and clerks in the civil service. At one point in time, there were so many of them in the railway system that the train service in Malaya was nicknamed "The Jaffna Railway"

Generally, the Jaffna Tamils were English speaking and renowned as dedicated, loyal employees who worked hard. Today, many of them have distinguished themselves as doctors, lawyers, engineers, academicians and in the civil service, including as Ambassadors for Malaysia in foreign countries.

This book, "Legacy of the Pioneers - 125 years of the Jaffna Tamils in Malaysia", co-authored by T. Selvaratnam and S. Apputhurai, two prominent members of the community, will enable its readers to have a better appreciation of the contributions of the Jaffna Tamil community in Malaysia. I wish to congratulate the two co-authors for their admirable effort.

It is also my wish and hope that the Malaysian Jaffna Tamils will continue to work hand-in-hand with all the other communities in Malaysia in building a truly united and prosperous nation which we, and the generations that come after us, can truly acclaim with great pride.



DATO' SERI ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI

10 March 2006

