

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER TO THE  
STUDENTS' UNION AT THE ROSEE D'OR, SINGAPORE  
ON 24TH JULY, 1965

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is a saying in Malay:

"Pisang tak akan berbuah dua kali", which, as you know, means literally that a banana tree bears fruit only once. But its deeper meaning, as a proverb, is that seldom in life does exactly the same thing happen twice. This proverb has a limited application in life.

It can probably be applied to Tunku, our Prime Minister, who has just suffered from the infliction of 'shingles', and I understand from my Doctor that if you have once in your life been afflicted by shingles, you are safe and can never have it again.

So therefore to shingles and the Tunku you can apply this proverb of "Pisang tak akan berbuah dua kali".

But, Ladies and Gentlemen, this proverb cannot be applied to my visit today to Singapore.

Don't blame me; blame the President of your Union or whoever drew up the programme because you suffered at 6 o'clock this evening from the affliction of my giving you a sort of oratorical ordeal and here now, within a short period of an hour or two, you have got to suffer infliction again from the same affliction.

I do apologise, and I hope you will suffer with patience and tolerance.

What I object to about making a speech here tonight, is that it is not so much a waste of ordinary time, but a waste of dancing time, because I always associate the Rosee D'or with dancing, joget, twist, and rhumba.

I think the fact that we can dance to any tune in Malaysia, the fact that we can twist if we like, we can joget if we like or we rhumba if we like; and the fact that we can enjoy ourselves, be happy and dance and smile, is significant of the freedom of Malaysia!

There is, however, only one tune in the world to which we will never dance; and I sincerely hope that all of you will determine never to

dance to this particular tune - the tune of that great modern "Pied Piper" and his Rats — Soekarno!

Soekarno, apparently, in Jakarta, has banned the twist!

This is tantamount to creating a complete monopoly for himself, because he is the biggest twister in the world, and obviously likes to reserve all twisting for himself.

As I have said earlier this evening, we will never succumb to Soekarno's dictatorship and I hope we will never become a nation of 'yes men'.

Sometimes you know, I cannot really understand this English language.

In English one talks about a 'yes man' implying that they say yes to everything.

But looking around here tonight at you all, particularly these very charming and beautiful lady students, with their grace, their charm, and their good looks, sometimes I think although one does not want a nation of 'yes men', it would be very nice to have a country of 'yes women'!

I believe Soekarno succeeded also in this respect — perhaps the only field in which I really envy him.

It is nice to see you all enjoying yourselves here tonight away from the University campus, and I think that one of the essential elements of a University education, is not that one should be buried in books, and studies the whole time, but should enjoy yourselves, mix freely with society, and learn as much from human contacts, as from contact with the written academic word.

And I have always felt that a University education is one which has a fine balance between academic activities on the one hand, and sporting and social activities, on the other, provided of course that one does not overdo the pleasure aspect!

I do not wish to say anything rude about your University, but I must tell you a story I heard about one of your graduates the other day.

I heard of one of your graduates the other day who walked into a restaurant in Kuala Lumpur, and I overheard two people talking about him!

He was a private student, his fees paid by his parents, and he took seven to eight years to obtain his degree because he enjoyed life, particularly the rosiness of the Rosee D'or.

Let us call him Lim!

The first speaker said, "Do you see that chap over there, Lim. He has just graduated from the Singapore University".

The second speaker replied, "I know, he comes from my kampung. He also comes from a very poor family".

The first speaker then said, "Nonsense, how can that be. You say he comes from a poor family, because he was at Singapore University for 8 years and he has just got a degree. His family cannot possibly be poor".

The second speaker replied, "Exactly; 8 years at Singapore University, with a degree in Extra Mural Studies, out every night, that is why his family is now very poor. He spent all their money!".

If you do not believe the story about your University there is a similar story about an undergraduate to another University.

The only difference is that this story is supported by bills sent home to his parents, every month, for his University expenses. His parents were fairly illiterate and did not understand the bills.

All they knew was that he was studying modern languages and a typical example of his monthly expenses for tuition fees read something like this:

French	-	\$50/-
German	-	\$50/-
English	-	\$50/-
Scotch!	-	\$250/- (at \$15/-per bottle).

Perhaps, to keep the balance, and to show that I am not prejudiced against undergraduates, I will also tell you a story against politicians! This is a true story.

There were 4 people travelling down from Kuala Lumpur to Singapore, by train, all sitting next to each other; and after a period of silence between them, with no one talking, one of them said, "We have got a long journey ahead of us sitting together here. It is only right that we get to know each other and declare ourselves".

He said, "I will introduce myself.

"I am in Government!"

I am married!

I have a son at University! and I am a Minister.

The second one said, "What an incredible coincidence".

"I am in Government!"

I am married!

I have a son at University! and I am a Minister.

The third one said: "This is amazing, here we are, three of us together".

"I am in Government!"

I am married!

I have a son at University! and I am a Minister.

The fourth person, very quiet, was sitting in his corner and did not say a word! So the other three said, "Look here, we have declared ourselves, we have introduced ourselves, we are trying to be friendly, why can't you join us in the spirit of friendliness and say, what you are, and who you are".

The fourth chap said, "I will tell you".

"I am in Government!"

I am not married!

But I have got a son!"

Then the three politicians said, "Incredible, you are not married and you got a son and what is your son?"

The fourth chap said, "A Minister!"

However, the object of this story is not to imply that all politicians and Ministers came from "bastard stock". No!

It is really intended to show you that in a democracy we can joke about ourselves and I think if anyone in Jarkarta tells this story to Soekarno, he would only tell it once on earth, and would only have an opportunity of repeating it again in the next World!

Some of us, politicians, are sincere, and fairly humble people, although occasionally our public image is distorted by the Press and by our opponents.

I am extremely happy, and I mean this sincerely, to be able to meet you all here tonight, for the second time not so much the first time, earlier in the evening, when I was stuck up on a stage like one of your lecturers, like a Member of your Faculty!

I am happy to be here with you in the Rosee D'or, where we can relax and make use of our other faculties which are much more pleasant faculties than those in your campus!

I am not being insulting to your professors or lecturers!

All I am saying is, that if I had to finish my speech with a prayer, I would say, "God give us good faculties in our Universities to teach us to learn and to be better and more intelligent people".

I would also add:

God give us the finest faculties necessary for a happy Malaysia!

- the faculty of knowing how to enjoy life,
- the faculty to be able to mix with each other,
- the faculty to be friendly to our fellowmen (and women!) and
- the faculty to preserve our freedom as free Malaysians!

Finally, Ladies and Gentlemen, there is one thing I cannot understand, and that is, why this place is called the Rosee D'or?

Every time I come here to the Rosee D'or I try and remember a quotation from Shakespeare who said something about a name of a rose!

I cannot remember the exact words of Shakespeare and I am a bit embarrass in front of such an intellectual and academic assembly, but, nevertheless, I will try and better him.

"What's in a name; that which we call a rose,

By any other name would smell as sweet,

The Rosee D'or,

Where dame and Undergraduate meet!

The degree to which, each other they, do adore!

And come together without much difficulty,

I granted by this place, the Rosee D'or,

And not conferred on them by the Campus Faculty!

Therefore, Gentlemen, only, male Members of your Union, perhaps the Rosee D'or is the address I should have given you earlier this evening!