

**SPEECH BY TUN DR MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD AT THE KYUSHU  
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**“My Expectations of Japanese Business Persons  
– What they can do for Asia”**

Thank you for this opportunity to speak on a very important subject which will be relevant to the role you will play in the future as Japanese businessmen in Asia.

2. Business is about making money. But we are now more conscious about corporate responsibility to the public. This is because we realise that without the public no business can be successful. We would not have a market, we would not make profits.
3. I think you will agree with me the richer the market the more you can sell and the more profits you will make. Poor countries with poor people make poor markets and little profits for business people.
4. In Malaysia we coined a slogan “Prosper Thy Neighbour”. It is the opposite of the common English saying, “Beggars Thy Neighbour” which means that you become prosperous by making your neighbours poor – by taking their wealth to enrich yourself.
5. We think this way to wealth is bad. It would cause bad feelings, conflicts and even wars. We would rather see our neighbours rich so that we will have no confrontation by them, and their domestic problems will not spill over into our country. Instead our neighbours will provide us with a good market for our products.
6. Actually it was the Japanese business people who influenced our philosophy. Very early after independence Japanese corporations invested in our country. They set up plants to manufacture industrial products more cheaply by taking advantage of our low-cost labour and our disciplined workers.
7. Japanese investments created jobs and stimulated our local businesses and industries. Very soon Malaysia became more prosperous. Japanese manufactures were then able to export their products to Malaysia which had become a good market.
8. Clearly by prospering us through your investments, you have created a rich market for your companies to sell your products and make a second profit.

9. We noticed this and we thought that since Malaysia is a producer of a lot of products, if our neighbours are helped by us to become rich than we will be able to sell our products to them, thus increasing our exports and foreign exchange earnings and prospering our people.

10. But the benefits did not stop there. When neighbours are poor their domestic problems tend to spill over into our country. For example their unemployed workers would enter our country illegally. If they cannot find work they may resort to crime.

11. Malaysia was not a capital exporting country. We were not able to set up industries in neighbouring countries so as to create jobs for their people and prosper them. What we did was to provide free training for them in the skills which will help them to develop their country. We trained them in administration, in development planning, in budgeting and in certain technologies which we possessed. When we could we also invested. We had expertise in estate management and we developed their agricultural sector.

12. Gradually they became more prosperous and provided us and other countries with a good market. There is also less spill over of their domestic problems into our country.

13. As you can see "Prosper Thy Neighbour" is not charity, is not altruistic. It is really enlightened self interest. By helping others we are actually helping ourselves.

14. I do not know whether you realise that by investing in Malaysia and prospering it you are prospering yourselves. But if you study your Malaysian experience I am sure you will agree that this was what happened. It follows that anything you do for your neighbours which can enrich them will enrich yourselves more.

15. So what can you do for Asia? You can help Asia develop and prosper. You can do this by investing. You can also do this by upgrading the skills of other Asians through education and training. You can transfer your labour intensive industries to the low-cost countries. You can implant your work ethics among the workers of these countries, in particular your stress on high quality, on time delivery etc. In fact whatever you can do to prosper Asians, your closest neighbours, you should do.

16. When people of different countries and races meet there would be a clash of cultures. This may make it difficult for people to cooperate and benefit from their contact with each other.

17. To avoid this negative effect both must learn about each others cultures. Japanese companies wishing to invest abroad must acquaint their staff with the

cultures of the people they are going to work with. When there is a need for them to learn Japanese work ethics and discard their old attitude towards work, it is important that this is done with proper regard for local customs and traditions.

18. Clearly there is a lot that Japanese business persons can do for Asia. If you can imagine an Asia that is uniformly prosperous as Europe is prosperous, then you can be sure that Japan with its inventiveness, its skill in the application of new technology to innovative products, will find a rich market in Asia and will become even more prosperous than today.

19. Finally I would like to stress the importance of Japanese relations with China, a very large part of Asia. We cannot be carrying the baggage of history forever. Japan should be willing to admit its mistakes in the past and to apologise for them. China and Korea should be satisfied with the Japanese admission and apology and should stop raising the matter over and over again.

20. With that Asia would become a peaceful place and would be able to develop its full potential and play a meaningful role in prospering the world. A prosperous Asia and a prosperous world would reduce international tensions and conflicts, would bring peace to the world.

21. That is what I expect of Japan and the Japanese people, in particular their business people.

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