



MMA Book Launch:

Speech by Dr Ashok Zachariah Philip, President MMA 30 June 2015

Today, we have gathered to launch a handsome book chronicling fifty five years of the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA). First, let me record my gratitude to the Prime Minister, who has managed to fit us into his busy schedule at short notice, for agreeing to officially launch this book. As I think many of us are aware, the late Tun Abdul Razak was a friend of the MMA, who officiated the opening of MMA House, and his son is continuing the friendship.

Sometimes, in the rush of our daily lives, we do not take time to reflect on where we have been. We have our eyes firmly fixed ahead of us, focused on our goals. We forget that we are not the first to travel this way. If we look at the experiences of the people who have gone this way before, perhaps we can avoid some of the traps and pitfalls ahead. This is the reason we have brought out this book on the history of the MMA. It would have been more logical or neat, perhaps, if this had been a 50th Anniversary book, but we were also guilty of looking forward too much. By the time we thought about a 50th Anniversary book, the time was too short to allow of its production. Rather than wait till the 60th Anniversary, the MMA Council decided to go for a 55th Anniversary book – perhaps out of fear that in another five years many of our pioneer members might no longer be around to see the book.

Putting this book together was no easy task, and I would like to thank the members of the Editorial Board, especially Dato' Pahlawan Gen. Dr R. Mohanadas and Datuk Dr Kuljit Singh, as well as our Hon. General Secretary Dr Ravindran R. Naidu for all their hours of hard work. Thanks must also go to our senior members and ex-Presidents who shared their memories freely.

On looking through this book, I was struck by how much things have changed, both for Malaysia and for the Malaysian Medical Association. How much we have both grown and modernised! Yet, despite all that, we still have struggles and difficulties in healthcare.

In the old days, there were too few doctors and clinics to serve the populace. Now, we have enough doctors, though not enough specialists, and there is an excellent

network of clinics and hospitals, both public and private. However, in the past we dealt a lot with infective diseases, which we could often cure. Now we deal with diabetes, hypertension and heart disease, among others, which we can with great effort and expense control, but not cure. Without a paradigm shift, something will have to give way.

Let us learn from history, both our own and that of more advanced countries. Advances and improvements in healthcare have been made not by replacing or sidelining doctors but by engaging and coopting them.

The Malaysian Medical Association is a vast repository of knowledge and experience which we invite the Ministry of Health to utilise, free of charge. As doctors, we want to ensure that our patients, rich and poor, continue to have unconditional access to one of the best healthcare systems in the world.

Prime Minister, I believe this book will show you how much the doctors and the Malaysian Medical Association have contributed to the development of the country. Let us ensure that these contributions are not just history, but the future as well.

Thank you.

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