

Kee Thuan Chye, *No More Bullshit, Please, We're All Malaysians*. Kuala Lumpur: Singapore: Marshall Cavendish, 2012. 401 pp. ISBN 9814382019.

In *No More Bullshit, Please, We're All Malaysians*, Kee Thuan Chye offers insight into a range of sociopolitical issues that impact contemporary Malaysia. Although most of the multigenre work in this volume appeared previously in various publications, compiling Kee's work allows the reader to gain a greater sense of key topics over a period of several years. On the other hand, readers who may not be as familiar with the nuances of Malaysian politics and its political figures will need to do some homework.

The items in *No More Bullshit, Please, We're All Malaysians* once ran in online sources or papers such as MalaysianDigest.com, *Free Malaysia Today* or *Penang Monthly*. Kee also pulls snippets from his plays, including *The Swordfish, then the Concubine*, not to mention noteworthy poems and talks. One poem, "A Change is Going to Come," was performed at a dinner at the Petaling Jaya Civic Centre; another published talk took place at a human rights forum.

Kee organises the pieces by thematic, not chronological, order, taking care to note that earlier works still hold relevance in today's Malaysia (103). Some of his work, including one poem and a play, were written at least partly in the 1980s. Other pieces ran as late as the end of 2011, but most appeared in the early twenty-first century. While some sections dwell on leaders Mahathir Mohamad and Najib Razak, others focus on religion, race, the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC). Kee devotes another portion of the volume to sex (chiefly the news on Anwar Ibrahim). The work culminates with several interviews, which offer details on Kee's career as a journalist and writer, not to mention his reasons for taking a stance on specific issues.

Throughout the volume, Kee urges his leaders and readers to encourage Malaysia to achieve its pinnacle. Kee's bold tone inspires readers to sit up straight and to be self-conscious of their actions. In his preface, Kee mandates, "Together, we can do our bit for a better Malaysia" (9).

Kee demonstrates these high standards for his countrymen and women in an interview: "I don't believe in all that hoopla of flying flags during Merdeka month.... What's inside you is what really matters" (380). He expects his countrymen and women, whom he deems Malaysians (rather than describing them by race), to fulfil their roles in helping Malaysia to reform its media and government. He pushes for an inclusive and united Malaysia, denounces censorship, encourages writing in English and calls for a reformation of

affirmative action policies. He grits his teeth at issues that exploit the raw racial and religious sentiments of the people

Again and again, he pommels those who undermine Malaysia's potential. No one, not even the political parties or the prime minister, is exempt from patriotic duty. For example, jubilant at first, Kee praises the success of the March 8, 2008 events: "Malaysians finally woke up, as if from a spell, cast by the wizard called Barisan Nasional, or from a stupor, induced by the shock of May 13 [1969]" (63). Later, and more solemnly, he wonders if the March 8 events were "a flash in the pan" (81). He urges, "We have to keep the March 8 spirit alive" (83).

Woe to the individual or organisation that obstructs Malaysia's destined path. Kee calls Najib Razak, the prime minister, "a coward, a passer-of-the-buck, and a man with a slippery tongue" (288). He argues that the "MCA is no longer a political force" (192). He also calls Umno, on multiple occasions, pussyfooted.

In one section, Kee emphasises the government's role in instigating the racial tensions in Malaysia (122). He states, "The Government favours one race and marginalises the other races" (122). He also argues, "Nowhere is it stated that Malaysia is an Islamic state" in the Constitution, and criticises government leaders who suggest otherwise (123). He demands that political parties stop promoting the "culture of fear" (81). He explains, "Energy should be concentrated on [national problems that need to be urgently solved], instead of spent on distracting us from them" (265).

Some of Kee's compiled works, especially those on political figures as Samy Vellu, may prove inaccessible or difficult for non-Malaysians to grasp if they aren't mired in political names and policies. However, the careful reader will gain a greater understanding of topics such as censorship; they will also have an opportunity to learn more about a variety of parties including the MIC (Malaysian Indian Congress) and the MCA (Malaysian Chinese Association) and their key players. Including the interviews at the beginning of the volume might help readers who are less familiar with Kee's ideas and Malaysian politics.

One case in point concerns the issues surrounding Bersih. As of press time, Kee could not present the complete story of Bersih; *No More Bullshit, Please, We're All Malaysians* discusses Bersih 2.0 and touches on the July 9, 2011 rally without really delving into the full history, past and present. After the publication of *No More Bullshit, Please, We're all Malaysians*, Kee writes about the April 28, 2012 rally for *Malaysian Digest*, noting that many more attended Bersih 3.0 (Kee, "Let's Tell"). More recently, Kee discusses the high court's ruling that Bersih's requests are not unlawful.¹ Issues such as these underscore the evolving

¹ Kee Thuan Chye, "A Right and Significant Verdict on Bersih," 25 July 2012. 15 September 2012. <<http://www.malaysiandigest.com/opinion/73771-a-right-and-significant-verdict-on-bersih.html?q=opinion/73771-a-right-and-significant-verdict-on-bersih.html>>.

nature of Kee's work, and perhaps call for a second volume in years to come. Kee himself recognises the pattern of recurring current issues, noting that his play, *1984 Here and Now*, staged in 1985, covers issues that "are still with us today... the same political abuse is being perpetuated..." (31).

The only way we can break this cycle of repeating history is to become aware, and Kee presents us with this scintillating volume as a study guide.

Pauline T. Newton
Southern Methodist University, Texas, USA