

[Youth Leaders Address Central Issues in Malaysia](#)

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Delegates at Malaysian Hindu Youth Convention Resolve to Strengthen Hindu Influence There

Rajaratnam, S. On the 20th of April, about 520 delegates from Malaysia and observer delegates from Singapore, India and Hong Kong gathered at the University Sains Malaysia in the beautiful port city of Penang for the 19th National Hindu Youth Convention, Under the auspices of the Malaysian Hindu Youth Council (MHYC). The theme: "The Universalism of Hinduism."

The functions was coordinated by the Penang Hindu Youth Organization, one of 120 branches of the HYO in Malaysia. Established about 30 years ago, the HYO, now closely identified with the MHYC, was the first national youth body in Malaysia. Through such broad-based organizations, Hindu youth in Malaysia have been able to gradually create interest in Hinduism and to develop a pride and understanding of the principles and practices of the religion. Today it is found that there is greater youth enthusiasm among Hindu youth in Malaysia than probably any other nation. The HYO addresses itself to socio-economic problems of the country as well as religious. The HYO has affiliated itself with the Malaysian Hindu Sangam, regarded as the parent coordinating Hindu body in the country.

The convention was declared open by the Minister of Works and patron of the MHYC, Hon. Dato S. Samy Vellu. In his opening address, the minister made a critical analysis of the present situation in the country and put forward the idea of setting up a "Malaysian Council of Hinduism" that is acceptable to all Hindus in the country. Among other things, the minister suggested the Council of Hinduism should have the following as its objectives: 1) uniting under its fold all Hindu temples and Hindu organizations, 2) establishing state councils on Hinduism, 3) acting as the liason body with the government on matters pertaining to the Hindu religion, 4) helping in the fixing of dates for religious occasions, particularly public holidays, 5) setting up of Hindu information centers for Hindu devotees, 6) publishing a joint newsletter, 7) establishing links with Hindu organizations in Asia, India and the rest of the world, 8) acting as a coordinating body for all Hindu temples and organizations.

A talk on the theme "Universalism of Hinduism" was delivered by Mr. K. Loganathan, a lecturer at the University of Sains. Later, a forum on "Aspects on Hinduism" was held under the chairmanship of Dr. S. M. Ponniah, President of the Malaysia Hindu Sangam.

Culture and contests: Thirumurai singing contests were held under several categories: individual men, individual women, group singing and choir group. After a number of elimination rounds, the finalists took part in the "Religious Night." All winners were awarded prizes. The Short Drama Competition was another popular event. After the preliminary rounds, the best four groups took part in the "Cultural Night." All dramas were based on religious themes, depicting the philosophy of Hindu dharma, the lives of sages and the application of Hindu philosophy in daily life.

There were also literary contests held in three languages. Oratory, debate and essay writing contests were held in Tamil, English and Bahasa Malaysia, on religious topics. Other activities for the delegates included a social get-together and game competitions, and prayer sessions were held daily.

The Deputy Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports, Hon. Datin Rosemary Chong, officiated at the Closing Ceremony. She also gave away prizes to winners in the various competitions. In her speech she called upon the youths to fight the drug menace and work toward the unity of youths.

Resolutions: During the four days of the convention, delegates deliberated on various current, important issues and came up with the following conclusions:

* To realize the need to propagate the Hindu religion and its philosophy especially in the rural areas and to take appropriate measures,

* To be aware of the non-Hindu influence and vehement propagation by other religious missionaries and to take necessary measures to ensure that the Hindus are not disillusioned,

* To carry out more religious activities by the Hindu youth organizations throughout the country, especially during this period of increased religious awareness among Hindus in the country,

* To include Hindu ethics and elements in all activities that are being organized for the benefit of Hindus,

* To send religious personalities to the rural areas who would live there for a few days and by mingling with the local residents, help them understand and inspire them to follow the Hindu way of life and to be steadfast against all other influences.

World Youth Assembly: This organization convened on the final day and studied the activities of the different organizations and the situation of Hindus in various countries. The growing problem of Hindus being converted to other religions in many countries was of first concern, and thoughts of international antidotes were considered. In view of the fact that Hindus the world over look to India for religious leadership, the services and network of the India Vishva Hindu Parishad were discussed, as a possible means to provide religious assistance to Hindus on an international basis.

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