

Takemizu Mori Education Trust
Launching held at Royal Selangor Golf Club
Saturday, 20th November, 2010

The founding members of the T. Mori educational trust fund, namely:

Lee Tak Suan, Tan Sri Tay Ah Lek, Datuk Wong Chee Kooi and Pong Wah Cheong and your beloved spouses, members of the pro-tem committee, members of the T. Mori family, fellow alumni of MBSKL, Datuk-Datuk, Datin-Datin, distinguished guests and friends, ladies and gentlemen.

Let me first express my sincere gratitude to the founding members for inviting me and giving me this honour and privilege to address you at the launching of this trust fund. Tonight is a momentous night marking another very important milestone in the annals of our beloved alma mater, the Methodist Boys' School, Kuala Lumpur. This year marks the 113th year of our school's existence and we are one of the oldest schools in Malaysia. Through her portals have passed generations of students who have contributed immensely to the growth and development of our country. There has never been any doubt that MBSKL ranks among the best schools in Malaysia, providing quality education and producing citizens whose contributions effectively prospered our country and many other countries to which our students have chosen to live.

What are the reasons for this success story?

From a humble beginning starting in the upstairs of a bicycle shop in the then Batu Road, then migrating to an abandoned pork market in Malacca Street (given permission by the then Kuala Lumpur town board) we have now a prominent home on Petaling Hill.

Yes, we have well-equipped facilities with compatible information technology, central server, wifi compatibility etc. etc. and recently two new wings completed under the centennial commemorative project. For this we owe Dato' Lee Tak Lum. After a lapse of several years since we celebrated our centennial in 1997 and almost forgotten, he took the initiative to revive the project.

In my perception, what makes our school great is not only the brick and mortar. The real substance is the human element - the people, students, teachers, staff, alumni, parents, supporting friends and the public. MBSKL has become what it is today because over the years principals, students, teachers, parents, the church and the alumni association have toiled and endeavored to create, with their contributions, a culture and tradition of loyal support, giving us our physical structure and more importantly a spirit of oneness among us.

Tonight we see another great effort which will go down in the history of our school, the laying of a foundation of support which will certainly go towards enriching the culture and tradition of a unique nature. The founders of this trust began their noble work in helping their alma mater in 1999 when they were informed of a need to repair the roof of the hall. Their first commitment of RM250,000 paved the way for more to come.

Following that they began to invest in academic development of deserving cases. In their eyes, deserving cases were not those with high excellent achievements, but those who are under-privileged with good enough results to obtain places in local tertiary institutions but unable to do so because they will not rank among those who will be awarded scholarships and neither will their families be able to finance their studies. Their aim to help such students to achieve their objectives for a better life and spin out of the circle of poverty is indeed noble! This is much in line with the core of Methodist education and much in the hearts of our pioneer missionary forefathers. What is more, they have won over support so tremendously that they have approached the target of one million ringgit to start this trust fund.

There are wider objectives that they envisage to incorporate into this trust fund. These include financing courses to train teachers in MBSKL and later expanding to others, in the teaching of English, sponsoring hot meals for students who cannot afford to have decent meals, helping defray expenses like special or extra-curricular fees and other financial needs of the school.

Allow me to ask. "How many schools in this country, be it national schools or any other type of schools have such noble and comprehensive support from alumni as our MBSKL?"

The establishment of this trust fund is indeed a historical milestone in the annals of our beloved MBSKL which, tonight, sees another solid brick built into her rich edifice of culture and tradition which ranks second to none. Naming this fund after our beloved principal, Mr. Takamizu Mori or

fondly known to us as Mr. T. Mori, is a wise and most appropriate choice. Most of us here tonight know Mr. T. Mori. To many of us, our lives have been touched by his true dedication to educate the students of MBSKL in particular and students of the country in general. Many of Mr. Mori's deeds were not confined to MBSKL alone. His colourful life and charitable heart took him into activities which served the nation, the youth and sports in particular, in ways which few can compare.

Mr. T. Mori is a true blue MBSian. He came to Malaya with his parents, a sister and a brother in 1908. He joined MBSKL in 1918 and did brilliantly in academic studies and in almost every sport played in the school; winning an award to study at the Raffles College in Singapore. He completed his Diploma in Arts and returned to his alma mater to teach in 1931. Except for a break between 1941 and 1945 when his whole family was incarcerated by the British Government, he faithfully served MBSKL as teacher, senior assistant and principal until he retired in 1969.

In his tenure in MBSKL he has touched the lives of many students, colleagues and staff under him. He is well-remembered for his no-nonsense approach in administering discipline. Recalcitrant students had felt the sting of his canes which he used with fairness and justice. Frequently when I meet up with students who had a taste of his cane, they recollect with humour and even gratitude that they got their just desserts. I have not encountered anyone who went under his cane, recount their punishment with grudge or resentment. On the contrary, the recollection inevitably is with a sense of happy recollection. Not long ago I met a former student who is a grandfather now, lamented; "Mr. Yong, why schools do not appoint headmasters like Mr. Mori now, eh? When we played truant he caned the daylights out of us and before caning ask us which cane to choose also!" Yes, many students express their gratitude to Mr. Mori for his fatherly care for us, especially those who were under-privileged whom he noted and went out of his way to care. We have heard that on many occasions when he spotted students who were not in the tuck-shop during interval he would ask them why. He had a keen eye to spot needs. Out of his own pocket he would give out money so that they can have a snack. Indeed the hot meal programme was started during his tenure.

With the growth of student population in the 1950s and 60s, the school was literally bursting at the seams. We had 16 floating classes and all pure science classes had to use the laboratories as home rooms. Even the school hall was partitioned to be used as classrooms. Rising to this

challenge, he launched a campaign to build a new block of 6 classrooms, teachers' room, art room, geography room and an air-conditioned library with a canteen in the basement level. This is the T. Mori block. As usual, we had very little help from the government, but the alumni rallied and Mr. Mori's good friends generously donated classrooms to ensure that the project was completed. One of the classrooms was contributed by the late Mr. & Mrs. Navaratnam, the parents of Datuk Rasmah Bhupalan who is with us tonight.

During his young days, Mr. Mori played almost every sport that was played. He played football and rugby for the state of Selangor and Malaya. I was told this anecdote of his rugby prowess. In a game between the All-Blues (all Asian players) against a team of Mat Sallehs, the latter just could not deal with a nippy forward who was running rings around the big clumsy Mat Sallehs. It was a wet and muddy field at the Padang. To fix this nippy and cheeky forward, they got together and jumped on him every time he got the ball. In one of the tackles there was a whole pile of Mat Sallehs on top and as they peeled themselves off, T. Mori's face was almost 6 inches in the mud but emerging unscathed and cheekily grinning!

Mr. Mori was a faithful and dedicated member of the YMCA giving his time and whole-hearted support to serve the youth. He was president of the KL YMCA for many years and also headed the national YMCA. His dedication and his sincerity in serving the YMCA persuaded him to sacrifice his own financial security by mortgaging his home to provide finance to build the block which we now see standing at Brickfields.

When his active playing days were over, Mr. Mori did not cease to serve society. He was very much involved in the Football Association of Selangor and Malaysia as their secretary and council member. He was also a member of the Juvenile Court, visitor to the Sungei Buloh leprosarium and a member of the Malaysian Youth Council.

When our first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman needed to go on official visit to Japan, Mr. T. Mori, being a personal friend, was appointed liaison officer and interpreter. Appropriately his services were recognized by our Yang di Pertuan Agong who awarded him the KMN and the Japanese Imperial Government awarded him the Order of the Sacred Treasure of Japan.

And so it is very right and appropriate that we name this fund the T. Mori Education Trust Fund for its objectives are very much after the heart of Mr. T. Mori.

Tonight, while we pay tribute to and honour a great man, a true son of Malaysia, an exceptional and outstanding MBSKL alumni, we must acknowledge and express our heart-felt gratitude to Mrs. Mori snr. and to members of the family.

Mr. Mori had given his life to serve us. Many of us are what we are today because of his sincere service and sacrifice. We thank Mrs. Mori because without her understanding and willingness to bear long hours and many days of loneliness at home, holding fort in raising her lovely family and giving him her support, we could not have benefited from his sacrificial dedication. We are indeed honoured that the Mori family are able to be with us to share this momentous event to name this trust fund after Mr. Mori. From the depth of our hearts, we say a very sincere “thank you” (arigato gazaimazu)

To all of you who are present tonight, allow me to say a big thank you.

To the founding members of this trust fund and all the pro-tem committee members and all those to have contributed and pledged to contribute to this trust fund, I want to say a sincere thank you. We all love our alma mater and one way or another we have been blessed as students of MBSKL

MBSKL has achieved the school of excellence status.. It is what it is today because in a very big way it is due to the loyalty and love of the alumni. Tonight you have concretely manifested this with positive action. You have enriched the tradition, culture and spirit of MBSKL and truly make it Malaysia's Best School!

Thank you, God bless and **GO FORWARD MBS!**

Yong Chee Seng

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