

Speech by Ambassador Miyagawa On the occasion of Mini Malaysia and Japan Festival

15 March 20, 2014

I arrived in KL on 6 March with my family. I am pleased to say I was posted here twenty years ago as well. However, all the familiar sceneries from back then are gone. It is a little sad; yet, the Malaysian government and its people deserve a big round of applause in successfully modernizing the country and developing the economy.

I would like to rekindle old friendships again as I am now back in Malaysia. I would also like to exchange views on what has changed and developed in our countries respectively, and to know what has not changed and the things people still value.

The economic development in the last twenty years has changed the city's scenery into a modern one, but the charms of the Malaysian people remain unchanged – their warm, honest and kind personalities as well as their friendliness towards Japan. Malaysians value family and community ties, respect tradition, and are polite, caring and warm hearted. I am delighted that my impression of the Malaysian people from twenty years ago has not changed, even though Malaysia has gone through much development and transformation.

I would like to take the opportunity to share with you the following words which I wrote in my journal twenty years ago; *the delicious local food may not satisfy the gourmets, however, I am impressed by the various and abundant fruits, hospitality and the table manners, which shows the feelings of a people who value food and are grateful for it.*

In Bushido, there is a teaching that says “to help the weak and fight the strong”. We Japanese, especially those who were born after World War II, tend to forget this spirit. We always need to be careful not to approach the strong and bully the weak. 100 years ago, Inazo Nitobe, a Japanese who was one of the Under-Secretaries of the League of Nations, wrote a book called *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* in English. Through this book, understanding towards Japan was enhanced globally.

In the book Nitobe wrote, “like seeds of flowers traveling on the wind sprouting somewhere else, *Bushido* may disappear from Japan but would grow fine somewhere else.”

Today, *shinai* (bamboo sword) and *kendogi* (Kendo uniform) will be presented to the Malaysia Kendo Association by the All Japan Kendo Federation. I hope that we do not let the spirit of Bushido disappear from Japan, and by presenting these equipment, I

sincerely hope that it will contribute to the promotion of kendo, and that the flower of Bushido will bloom here in Malaysia.