

Special occasion for Onn's family

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PUTRAJAYA: The launching ceremony of a book about Datuk Onn Jaafar turned out to be a special occasion for his children and descendants as they gathered to witness the event to honour the founding father of *Ummu*.

Onn had 11 children, including six from his marriage to Datin Halimah Hussein, who was his younger brother Muhammad's widow, 63 grandchildren, 167 great-grandchildren and 61 great-great-grandchildren.

Three of his children present were Lt-Jen (rtd) Datuk Jaafar, 70, Azah, 74, and Puan Sri Norziah, 78, the wife of former Armed Forces Chief Jen (rtd) Tan Sri Mohd Ghazali Seth.

The book *Reflections of Pre-Independence Malaya* was written by Onn's grandson Datuk Mohamed Abid.

The book, launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir

Mohamad, is a recollection of Onn's struggles to uphold the rights of the Malays and his commitment to their unity and betterment.

The ceremony yesterday was steeped in Johor Malay tradition with the procession of *sirih junjung* and *tepak sirih* into the hall.

Mohamed, in his speech, said he felt compelled to record his memories of Onn.

There was also a special 15-minute video presentation about Onn.

It included an excerpt of Dr Mahathir's speech about his view of Onn as a leader ahead of his time and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's view of Onn as an eloquent speaker in both English and Malay.

Also present was Onn's most famous grandson, Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein, the Youth and Sports Minister. Hishammuddin's father, the late Tun Hussein Onn, was the nation's

third prime minister.

Onn's great-great-grandchildren, including Marisa Hasmah Mokhzani and her sister Maisarah Yasmin. Kyra Adriana Hishammuddin and Sabrina Haris, went on stage to present the book to Dr Mahathir, who was later presented with a portrait of Onn.

Onn's grandson Azhar Harun, the CEO of Cerak Mobile Technology, presented two tablet PCs loaded with the e-book version of the book to Dr Mahathir and Abdullah.

Mohamed said the book was his contribution to get Malaysians to remember those who helped shape the country.

He said he planned to translate the book into Malay by August.

"The bulk of the proceeds from the sale of this book will go to charitable organisations," he added.

The book was sold at RM50 yesterday with proceeds going to the Datuk Onn Foundation.