

# Have faith in nation

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## Learn from MCA founder Cheng Lock, Ong advises

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**MALACCA:** Never give up in times of difficulty and have faith in your country – these are the values the Malaysian Chinese should learn from Tun Tan Cheng Lock, the founder of MCA, said its current president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting.

“Tan was firm in his stand – this is our country and we are the children of this country, even when Malaya was still fighting for its independence and the future was still uncertain,” Ong said in his speech at the start of the commemoration service for Tan at the family’s private cemetery at Kampung Musai here yesterday.

Tan passed away on Dec 13, 1960.

An MCA delegation led by Ong and his deputy Datuk Seri Chan Kong Choy attended the service.

“We should learn from him to have confidence in our country, never give up on ourselves and never lose our determination under any circumstances,” Ong said.

“This is more so when we are facing pressures and challenges or

when someone makes remarks which send shockwaves through the Chinese community.

“No one should question the status of the Chinese in Malaysia nor can anyone challenge the rights that we enjoy under the Constitution such as freedom to learn Chinese, religion and culture.”

Describing Tan as the political father of the Malaysian Chinese, Ong said that without Tan there would be no MCA today.

As the first president of the MCA, Tan had worked hand in hand with Tunku Abdul Rahman and MIC president Tun V.T. Sambanthan to form the Alliance government to fight for Malaya’s independence and promote racial harmony to develop a nation.

Ong said that history records showed that Tan was honest, responsible, down-to-earth and worked within the Alliance government to look after the interests of the Chinese community.

“His leadership and principles are still relevant today and the MCA will continue to lead the party and the community toward racial cooperation and harmony in order to develop

the country and progress,” he added.

Apart from making the ceremony an annual event for the MCA, Ong said this was one of the events it organised to kick start next year’s 50th National Day celebrations.

Tan Siok Choo, a granddaughter of Cheng Lock, conveyed the family’s deepest gratitude to Ong and other MCA leaders for initiating the commemoration of Tan.

“The commemoration will ensure the values he espoused, and the causes he championed, will be perpetuated, particularly among young Malaysians,” said Siok Choo, who is the daughter of Tun Tan Siew Sin, also a former MCA president.

“Unity was another objective that Cheng Lock cherished and as MCA president he said one of the MCA’s basic aims was the making of Malaya as one country, one people and one government,” she said.

During the commemoration service, Cheng Lock’s family members – daughters, granddaughters and great-grandchildren – and Ong placed flowers and joss sticks on his grave.

Other members of the MCA dele-

gation were vice presidents Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek and Datuk Seri Dr Fong Chan Onn, youth chief Datuk Liow Tiong Lai, women’s chief Datuk Dr Ng Yen Yen and state MCA liaison committee chairman Datuk Wira Poh Ah Tiam.

Chan then read out an oration.

Also at the ceremony were other leaders from the Chinese community like Datuk Sim Mow Yu, Chan Swee Yen and Datuk Yang Chien Chu.

Siew Sin’s wife Toh Puan Lim Cheng Neo, 85; Cheng Lock’s daughter Agnes, 86; granddaughters Siok Choo, who was accompanied by her husband Walter Cheah, and Siok Lee, and his other great-grandchildren were also present.

Soon after paying tribute to Cheng Lock, the group proceeded to pay tribute to Siew Sin, whose grave was also located in the same cemetery.

Earlier, the MCA delegation visited Cheng Lock’s ancestral home at 111, Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock, where Siok Choo gave them a tour of the house and showed them various photographs of Cheng Lock.