

# PM: Goh Tong a great citizen

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■ By David Yeow  
news@nst.com.my

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The atmosphere at Gohtong Villa was grim and quiet except for the chime of bells and prayer chants.

On the porch were 12 tables, each dedicated to major deities in the Taoist faith, which the late Tan Sri Lim Goh Tong subscribed to.

Goh Tong's six children held joss sticks and bowed to the altar dedicated to the Jade Emperor, while a row of priests chanted and prayed.

The prayers were conducted four times a day by members of the Sam Cheng Taoist Association.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was greeted by Goh Tong's third son, Datuk Lim Chee Wah.

After paying his respects, Abdullah proceeded to the first floor of the mansion and met Goh Tong's widow, Puan Sri Lee Kim Hua, and other children.

Abdullah, accompanied by Genting Bhd chairman Tan Sri Lim Kok Thay, later visited a picture gallery at the mansion and signed the visitors' book.

"He came to Malaysia as a young man to start a new life and succeeded beyond imagination. He made Malaysia his home and became a great citizen.

"His success story is a great inspiration, especially to the young people. Deepest condolences from my family to Puan Sri Lee Kim Hua and her children," Abdullah wrote.

Abdullah told the press he was touched by Goh Tong's humility.

"I remember he once told me that he was Malaysia's number one *kuli* (labourer)."

He said Goh Tong's accomplishments, attitude and diligence were what he would be remembered best for.



Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi offering his condolences to Puan Sri Lee Kim Hua after paying his last respects to her late husband, Tan Sri Lim Goh Tong, at Gohtong Villa yesterday. — NST picture by Fathil Asri

Former MCA president Tun Dr Ling Liong Sik, who was in tears, said Goh Tong's death was a great loss, not just to the Chinese community, but to the nation.

Besides being a corporate giant, Goh Tong was equally interested in developing the education system in Malaysia.

It is learned that Goh Tong donated more than RM20 million to the construction of Tunku Abdul Rahman College and Tunku Abdul Rahman University.

"He had a deep sense of be-

lief that the country's education system needed to be improved and more opportunities for study had to be created," Dr Ling said.

Former Bentong MP Tan Sri Lim Ah Lek remembered Goh Tong for his "never say no" to charity attitude.

"Whenever my constituents had to raise funds to build schools or to improve medical facilities, Goh Tong would be very generous in giving."

Ah Lek said as busy as the late billionaire was, Goh Tong always made time to discuss

the needs of Genting's surrounding communities.

"It is rare to find someone so rich, yet so friendly and humble. He will be very hard to replace."

Goh Tong's philanthropy was proven yesterday when a delegation from the Sinar Harapan centre for the disabled appeared at the wake.

According to its supervisor, Sabariah Abdul Latif, the centre is located at the foot of Genting Highlands in Kampong Janda Baik.

Every year, the centre's 22

disabled youths are invited for a day of fun at Genting Highlands.

"The children look forward to it every year. They would provide us with gifts, lunch and free rides at the theme park," she said.

Other dignitaries at the wake were Deputy Internal Security Minister Datuk Fu Ah Kiow, German Ambassador to Malaysia Herbert Jess, Singapore High Commissioner T. Jansudan and United Nations Association president Tan Sri Tengku Ahmad Rithauddeen.