

SPEECH BY: DATO' SERI DR. MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD
(PRIME MINISTER)

EVENT: THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE NEW FACILITIES OF THE JAPANESE
SCHOOL OF KUALA LUMPUR

VENUE: SUBANG, KUALA LUMPUR

DATE: 18 JAN 1993

TIME:

I would like to offer my heartiest congratulations to the Embassy of Japan, Japan Club, JACTIM and everyone involved in the task of completing the new Kuala Lumpur Japanese School building.

2. I have been made to understand that the Japanese education system, in line with the globalisation of Japanese business, is now being applied to 88 Japanese schools in 55 countries and two regions. It is said that the total student population currently number over 18,000 and approximately 70 percent of it is in Asia. Japanese schools are located in every ASEAN country, with the exception of Brunei, with the population and size of the schools said to rank in the top 10 worldwide.

3. From these statistics, it is clear that the ties between Japan and the ASEAN countries are very close, meaning therefore, that Japan has a certain role to play within this region.

4. Likewise, this new school building which boasts of teaching facilities for over 1,000 students is especially reflective of the ever-closer relationship between Malaysia and Japan. It also reflects the important role of Japanese investors in this country.

5. In retrospect, the Look East Policy introduced in 1981 and the Foreign Investment Act, 1986 were the impetus for the increase in the number of Japanese investors into Malaysia. And it was also under the Look East Policy that the number of Malaysians studying in Japan increased dramatically. From a mere 147 students studying in Japan in 1982, the number increased to 3,400 students and trainees in 1992.

6. Following the rising value of the Yen triggered by the Plaza Accord of 1985 and in order to maintain international competitiveness, Japanese businesses began to shift their operations to East Asia. Malaysia became especially attractive with the introduction of the Preferential Clause for Foreign Investments in September 1986. This enabled foreign investors to own up to 100 percent of their

industries in Malaysia. With the increased investments the number of Japanese personnel and their family increased dramatically. Educational facilities for their children became essential. When these facilities were made available, this made Malaysia even more attractive to Japanese investors.

7. Malaysia launched Vision 2020 in February 1991. With this goal, Malaysia wants to achieve the status of an industrialised country with a caring and wholesome society. I am sure there is a lot that we can learn from Japan.

8. The setting up of this Japanese school in Kuala Lumpur will not only provide Japanese education for Japanese children in Malaysia, but it will enable cultural exchanges to take place between the Japanese and Malaysian children. Already sports tournaments and cultural exchanges have been organised in the Kia Peng and Taman Seputeh areas. With the appointment of an International Exchange Director, such exchanges will be enhanced.

9. Apart from the Japanese School, I was informed that the Japan Club is considering to set up a Japanese training centre for youth wishing to study in Japan. A specialised technical training centre at the old school site in Taman Seputeh will be a further contribution to the Malaysian society. With this development I expect to see greater progress in the relationship between the Japanese and the Malaysians in Malaysia.

10. I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to Japan Club and JACTIM for the many contributions they have made to the Malaysian society.

11. I now take great pleasure to declare open the new facilities of the Japanese School of Kuala Lumpur.

12. Thank you - minasama arigato gozamashita (to everyone, thank you very much.)