



Lau (second from right) with some of his former students, including Idris (centre), at a STAR reunion.

Lifelong reward of positive values

By LAU HUT YEE

INCULCATING good morals, values, manners and behaviour and practising them shouldn't be something we are forced to do when going about our daily lives.

These are just the basic human values that citizens from differing families and socioeconomic backgrounds should adopt to keep the peace and harmony between one another.

It doesn't matter which race or religion we are from. If we call Malaysia our home, we should have these positive qualities that will not only add value to our lives, but to those around us as well.

I was born to a very poor family, but that did not stop me from living life in keeping with the Rukun Negara, particularly the fifth pillar - Kesopanan dan Kesusilaan (courtesy and morality).

This is crucial in developing unity, which is very important in a country like ours to maintain peace. When there is peace and understanding, it enables all races - the Malays, Chinese, Indians and others - to live harmoniously together as Malaysians.

The longer peace and harmony prevails among citizens, the stronger the sense of racial unity, patriotism and loyalty to the country that will develop out of the people's sincerity.

After all, we have no other place to call home. We become minorities when we migrate to other countries such as Australia and Singapore, which many Malaysians have done to earn a living in an environment that may not overly emphasise race and religion the way Malaysia does.

But are they truly happy there? Most probably not. It's the job that is keeping them there, not anything else. This is why there is a need for all of us to live by the Rukun Negara - for a better nation and future for younger generations.

As Sekolah Tuanku Abdul Rahman's (STAR) former Science and Mathematics teacher and chief warden for 33 years, I believe teachers play a large role in helping the youth develop positive morals, values,



For his 80th birthday in 2014, Lau's family members and former students threw him a surprise party.

manners and behaviour.

There are quality teachers who take this responsibility seriously but there are also some who have lost their devotion, which shouldn't be the case.

I remember how, during my days as an educator, I would speak every Monday before my headmaster. I'd call out the boys' bad behaviour during events or inter-school games, what they had done wrong, discipline them and explain why they should not behave in such a way.

I was always very strict with my boys and would constantly remind them to be hardworking. But instead of resenting me, they could see and feel that what I did was for the sake of their well-being and future.

As a teacher, sincerity is important and it will shine through you. Students, like my boys, will love and thank you for it.

If we want to produce generations of well-mannered and decent human beings

who have good morals, values and behaviour, the adults have to lead by example.

What we can do individually is simply be loyal to the country, work hard and do the best we can in our capacity. This is because Malaysia is a wonderful place to live and I reiterate, where else can Malaysians truly call home?

Lau Hut Yee, or better known as Pak Lau among his students, began his career at STAR, an all-boys' residential school in Ipoh, in 1957. He refused promotions due to his dedication and love for STAR. He retired in 1989 after serving the school for 33 years as a Science teacher, warden and chief warden.

Lau has received many awards, including the Tokoh Guru Kebangsaan in 1992. Former higher education minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh, who enrolled in STAR in 1968, credited Lau, who turns 86 in November, as a teacher who left an indelible mark on him.

