

CURRICULUM VITAE OF DR. TOH KIN WOON

Background Information

Dr. Toh Kin Woon was born on the 21st May 1944 in Penang, Malaysia. He is married to Vera Loh Kim Yuen, a retired Medical Laboratory Technologist from the University Hospital, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur. They have 3 children and 3 grandchildren.

Academic Achievements

Dr Toh pursued his higher education at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur from where he obtained his Bachelor of Economics (Honours) (1971) and Ph.D degrees in Economics (1982). He also studied Development Economics at the University of Leeds, England where he passed his M.A. (with distinction) in 1973.

Professional Career

He was an academic at the National University of Malaysia (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia) for the most part of his career (1973-1993) and a renowned private institution of higher learning in Kuala Lumpur called HELP (1993-1995), now Help University. While at the university, he was active in research, with close to 50 publications to his credit. His research interests centered on the role of the state, poverty eradication, industrial policy and development, privatization and the economics of education. He was also engaged as a consultant to numerous international agencies like the Food and Agriculture Organization in Bangkok; the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Bangkok; the Asean Secretariat, Jakarta; United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Geneva; World Institute for Development Economics Research, Helsinki; ILO-ARTEP, New Delhi, the Institute for Developing Economies in Tokyo, and the World Bank, as well as numerous local agencies and State Governments. He was a Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Birmingham, UK; the University of Hawaii; the University of Sydney; the University of Southern Queensland; the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore; the University of the Philippines at Diliman, Manila; the Ateneo de Manila University, Manila and the University of Kyoto, Japan. He was an external examiner for the Doctor of Business Administration degree at the University of South Australia and PhD degree at the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, India.

Political Activism

While teaching at the university, Dr. Toh was already concerned over public affairs. This concern, coupled with his desire to serve the country, led him to join the Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (Malaysian People's Movement Party) in

1982. He served the party well, having been largely responsible for preparing many of the party's position papers on the economy, new villages, privatization, economic planning, labor market and ethnic integration. He was appointed a Senator, a member of Malaysia's Upper Chamber of Parliament, which he took up after his retirement from the academe in 1993. In the same year, Dr. Toh joined a 3 member parliamentary delegation to the 48th session of the United Nations' General Assembly in New York. Two years later, he was elected a member of the Penang State Legislative Assembly in Malaysia's 9th General Election. Upon his election, he was appointed a State Executive Councilor (State Minister) in charge of Education, Economic Planning and Information. He was re-elected in the country's 10th General Election in 1999 and was reappointed a State Executive Councilor in charge of the same portfolios, except Information, which was replaced by Human Resource Development, Science, Technology and Innovation. He was successful yet again in seeking re-election in the 11th General Election held in 2004 and was re-appointed a State Minister.

Dr. Toh has retired from active electoral politics and did not seek re-election in the country's 12th General Election held on March 8th 2008. In August the same year, he resigned from Parti Gerakan, after openly expressing support for Dato Seri Anwar Ibrahim, the current Leader of the Opposition, in his contest in a by-election for a parliamentary seat.

Programmes Launched

Dr. Toh brought with him a wealth of experience accumulated over 20 years of involvement as an academic and administrator at various levels of education and in economic planning to his position as a State Minister. As a State Executive Councilor, he helped in the establishment of a think-tank called the Socio-Economic & Environmental Research Institute or SERI, which has been undertaking research and consultancy aimed at enhancing the state's capacity in making informed decisions. SERI was responsible for formulating the state's Second Penang Strategic Development Plan (PSDP2 2001-2010). It has now been re-named the Penang Institute.

In 2003, he helped set up the Collaborative Research and Resource Centre (CRRC), of which he was the Chairman of its' Management Council. CRRC, which attempted to promote closer industry-university links in research and training, has since been absorbed by investPenang, an agency set up by the Penang State Government to promote investments in the State.

Meanwhile, in education, which was largely under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government, Dr. Toh also helped launch programs that focused on life-long education; education for children with learning difficulties; enhancing the academic performance of children from disadvantaged homes; developing a good public library system; promoting computer education in schools;

strengthening mother-tongue education, arts in education and promoting Penang as a center for tertiary education.

Awards

In recognition of his public services, Dr. Toh was conferred a Datoship, one of the highest honors in the State, by the Governor of Penang, in 1999. He was also awarded the outstanding individual award for human resource development by the Asian Regional Training and Development Organization (ARTDO) at its' 32nd Annual Conference held in Manila, Republic of Philippines in 2005; the Lim Lian Geok Spiritual Award in 2007 for his contribution towards promoting mother tongue education by the LLG Cultural Development Centre in Kuala Lumpur; and the CHL Lifetime Achievement Award in 2008. He was awarded a Senior Fellowship by the Nippon Foundation for 2008 / 2009 to pursue research in the Philippines and Japan and another grant to attend the Salzburg Global Seminar held in Salzburg, Austria in 2011.

Current Position

Dr Toh is currently a Fellow at the Penang Institute, a leading think-tank located in Penang, Malaysia. He is also a consultant and advisor to the Malaysian Institute of Training and Development.

Involvement in Civil Society

Although Dr Toh has retired from electoral politics, he is still concerned over the affairs of the nation. It is this concern that has driven him to continue being actively involved in civil society work. He is of the view that civil society is an important third force that can contribute towards achieving equality, justice and democracy. Dr. Toh is currently National Chairman of the LLG Cultural Development Center, which is an educational and cultural body dedicated to promoting multi-lingualism and multi-culturalism in multi-ethnic Malaysia. He is also a member of the Steering Committee of BERSIH 2.0, which has as its main objective, the struggle for clean and fair elections. Dr Toh was also a member of the 3 man Executive Committee of the 20 Year Plan of Action (POA) that calls for bold reforms to the country's many state institutions of power. He is also a member of the following committees: The True Malaysian History Campaign, Opposition to the use of Interlok as a prescribed book for Bahasa Malaysia, the Green Corridor Campaign and a Director of the Peoples' Green Coalition.