



A TOKEN OF APPRECIATION: Tan Yew Sing, president of INTI, presenting a souvenir to Yang (right).

A quest for knowledge in new economy

UNIVERSITY is an entity that is important and is a catalyst for economy development, said nuclear physicist and academician, Professor Yang Fujia, in his public lecture organised by INTI Foundation in Kuala Lumpur recently.

Referring to the remarks made by the Minister of Transport, Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, Yang agreed that Malaysia had moved from an agricultural-based economy to a digital industrial economy and the shift towards a digital and knowledge-based economy had brought about a remarkable change in the role of university today as a catalyst for economy development.

Citing the example of Japan, he expounded on how a small country such as Japan was able to set a landmark signature in the world economy by exporting cars to the United States.

He discovered that the growth of small companies and the emerging of

successful chief executive officers from universities were the prime factors that led Japan to be a world leader in the automobile industry.

The three key elements comprising knowledge of the economy, understanding the use of capital or operation of monetary and being well-versed in the regulatory conditions were found to be contributing factors to Japan's success.

As most of the small companies established by graduates were IT-related, he acknowledged that it was the small and middle enterprises that played an important role and incidentally, they were also high in creativity. In fact, it was seen that certain countries encountered a higher number of blue-collared workers dominating the economy scene as opposed to the white-collared.

He also cited the advanced experience of Finland. Through Nokia, Finland has developed its higher education and consequently become a

pioneer in the global sector of information and communications.

He also mentioned three advantages of the British educational system: strict regulation over university administrations, student-oriented policies and an emphasis on the globalisation of higher education.

"In a knowledge-based era, for profound exchanges and communications, every country has to cherish an insight into others' culture, history and social background and the internationalisation of higher education will help reach this goal," he said.

Meanwhile, he said, becoming a good scholar meant that curiosity and enthusiasm were even more important than economy. Curiosity would raise new questions that led to the development of new ideas and complex problems solving, he continued.

For students to meet the demand of a rapidly changing world, he said they must have a broad knowledge and be liberalised in their thinking.