



*A Labour Movement That Cares*



## SCTU Marks 60 Years Of Learning

By **Nicholas Lee**

The Singapore Chinese Teachers' Union (SCTU) celebrated its 60th anniversary on 28 September 2013 with a seminar cum luncheon for its members. Gracing the occasion was Minister For Education Heng Swee Keat. Some 350 guests came together to reflect on the teaching and learning of the Chinese language, and to discover the future developments of Chinese education in Singapore in light of the rising importance of the Chinese language globally.

Participants got to hear from two keynote speakers - Korean Professor Maeng Jooeock and Singaporean creative advertising talent Lim Sau Hoong - and also got to listen in on a panel discussion themed 'Chinese Language Teaching And Learning: Beyond The Past And Towards the Future'.

In her opening address, SCTU President Lian Hwee Eng remarked: "As a person celebrates 60 years of age as a



Panel discussion on "Chinese Language Teaching and Learning: Beyond the Past and Towards the Future"

hallmark in his life, SCTU's journey in the past 60 years has not been easy." She took the opportunity to thank the many people who have supported the union in its journey. "Because of your support and work, we can come together today to celebrate the union's 60th anniversary," said Madam Lian. She also shared that at the recent U Summit in August, SCTU was awarded the U Breakthrough Award for its efforts in recruiting members.

Mr Heng also shared the Ministry of Education's (MOE) plans to launch a kindergarten to enable children to start learning languages at a younger age. He added that studies have shown that children are better able to learn languages at a young age when they are exposed through listening and speaking the language.

He also urged for more partnership between schools, parents and community partners to create an environment which is conducive for the learning of the Chinese language, such as injecting cultural elements inside and outside the classroom to enhance the learning of the Chinese language. "The key is how to make these partnerships more extensive, more sustainable, so that more students benefit," said Mr Heng.

Speaking to reporters, Madam Lian shared that the union had deliberated how best to hold a celebration for its 60th anniversary. She said: "We wanted a platform for our union members to benefit and learn from experts in the teaching of the Chinese language, which is why we decided to hold such a seminar." She suggested that for the Chinese

language to be embraced by more Singaporeans, restrictions for the study of Higher Chinese should be eased. "Some students may be good in Chinese, but as their results for English or Mathematics is not good, they are encouraged to forgo Higher Chinese," she added.

Some 40 members of the SCTU will attend the 6th International Chinese Teaching Forum in Kunming, China, in November this year as part of the 60th Anniversary celebrations. The forum, initiated by the SCTU 10 years ago, aims to provide local Chinese educators with a platform to enhance their professional standards.

As part of the union's efforts to 'Do Good' for its members, the SCTU also gave out book prizes to 56 members' children. These book prizes, partially funded by the NTUC U Care Fund, were handed out by local philanthropist Mah Jia Lan, SCTU Advisor and Member of Parliament Baey Yam Keng as well as NTUC Deputy Secretary-General Heng Chee How.