

# Painter set to 'balik kampung'

BY RASLAN BAHAROM

**TAIPING:** A Taiping boy at heart, abstract painter Teh Hock Aun is set to *balik kampung* after being away in Europe for over three decades.

He may not quite fit the bill of who the Government has in mind in its current efforts to lure scientists, technologists and other professionals back to help develop the country, but that does not bother him.

The former SMJK Hua Lian student enrolled at the Glasgow School of Art in 1970 and has since lectured on art in Scotland and Italy.

Teh, who is from Sungai Gedong, Semangco, believes his expertise in modern art can help push the country in general, and his hometown in particular, to greater heights.

For a start, he plans to create a large metal sculpture for Taiping reflecting the town's history.

"It will symbolise the spirit and exuberance of Taiping.

"If you go to Europe or the United States, the cities there have sculptures but what do we have here other than our Clock Tower?" he asked.

Much needed to be done to attract foreign tourists to towns like Taiping, he said.

Teh said another project that would help draw visitors to Malaysia was the establishment of a college in modern art.

"I will be happy to help the Government set up such a college here as we need artistic elements to encourage intellectuals to come to this country.

"Being a son of Taiping, I will be happy to help Malaysia build a strong reputation in modern art in international circles," he said.

Other than lecturing, Teh has held solo exhibitions in Britain, Hong Kong, the United States and Malaysia since 1982.



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DEFT MOVES: British 'tukido' champion Andrew Newall (front, at left) demonstrating some moves with Malaysian champion Chua Kok Meng, in Taiping recently.

One of his works, *Dressing up for a Wedding*, which depicts an Uighur wedding he witnessed when traveling along the Silk Road in 1999, has been acquired by the National Art Gallery for an undisclosed price.

Teh has not only made a name for himself in art but is also the founder of *tukido*, a martial art form that incorporates some of the best movements seen in the various martial arts found around the world.

Fondly called "Master Teh" by his students, he is back in Taiping now with a group of 18 *tukido* exponents from Britain and Greece for the biennial *tukido* "monsoon training" programme.

"I bring my martial arts students here so that they will discover my roots and what has inspired me not only as an artist but also as the founder of *tukido*," he said after a training session recently.

Teh, accompanied by Taiping MCA vice-chairman Ang Lee Kaw, also took the group of visitors to various tourist spots, including the Taiping Zoo, earlier this week.