



SARAWAK BAHÁ'Í NEWSLETTER

www.sarawakbahai.org

BE 167 `Azamat (Grandeur)

Issue 2 17 May 2010

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A surprise gift

Kapit launched its first cycle of intensive programme of growth on 27 March 2010—an occasion which took us by surprise. On behalf of the Area Growth Committee Mr. Jesion Meding wrote: “It is an historic event for Kapit to launch its first intensive programme of growth on 27 March 2010. A week prior to the occasion, the friends in the town were all busy carrying out the plan made by the AGC. During the launching, about 70 people came including a representative of the National Assembly Marilyn Lee and Institute Board Geriti Katik and Josephine. Auxiliary Board Member Bundan Liban and the secretary of the regional council Nabil Tan also came to lend their support for this exciting event. A day before the launching, the friends were divided into five teaching teams and training was conducted based on messages and guidance from the World Centre on intensive program of growth. A prayer vigil was held after the training session.

On the actual day, a training session using “Anna’s presentation” was held, followed by a preview of children’s class and junior youth spiritual empowerment programme. The program for the launching started with warm welcoming speech by the chairman of the AGC, Mr. Kayan Nyelang followed by an address by Marilyn Lee. Then I showed a presentation on the statistics and achievement of the cluster to-date before the teaching teams spread out according to the plan. The goal of enrolling 30 new believers was achieved on the first day.”

Betong made it!

Betong sealed the list as Sarawak’s last cluster to launch intensive programme of growth by Ridvan 2010. Amidst the misgiving and doubts about its readiness, the launching ceremony was marked by enthusiasm among the believers of Enteban Ulu, the host community. Several believers formed teaching teams to visit Teru Ulu and Kampung Tanjung.

A report from Mr. Asun Asir of Rumah Ganya, Teru Ulu, Betong informed that for the first time in 33 years this Bahá’í community celebrated its new year. It was a joyous occasion for all, especially for the children and junior youth who did some presentations and songs. The Tuai Rumah expressed his satisfaction and happiness that the village folks under his care showed much unity during this occasion. All the children in the longhouse attend the Bahá’í children’s classes and Naw Ruz was celebrated by all the families regardless of their religion.

The pioneers’ effort came to fruition when this small community comprising of several families showed that they were ready to participate in intensive programme of growth alongside its sister community of Enteban Ulu. Together they made it to the 18th cluster to launch intensive programme of growth on 17 April 2010.

There lived a Baha’i in the Holy Land who was very poor and did not know what to do about it. One day when he was visiting `Abdu’l-Bahá, he told the Master of his sad plight and asked what he should do. `Abdu’l-Bahá told him to go and contribute something for the Funds.

The man came away down-hearted. “I have no money,” he thought to himself, “and the Master tells me to give to the Funds. Is it possible that I did not make myself clear to Him?” A whole month went by and the poor man was worse off than ever before. He could not find a job and his last few coins had been spent. Again he went to `Abdu’l-Bahá. “Dear Master,” he said, “I am completely destitute of the bare necessities of life, and I cannot endure it any longer. What am I to do?” “I have already told you”, was `Abdu’l-Bahá’s reply.

The man went home in sorrow. He wept and prayed aloud, calling for Divine mercy. `Abdu’l-Bahá had told him to give to the Funds, and he had nothing to give. Then he looked around his room. There were still a few of his possessions left. He took them to the market, sold them and gave the money to the Funds. When he came back, he found two men waiting for him at the door. “We have been searching for you for the past month”, they said, “and today we finally found out where you live. Someone mentioned your name because we are looking for an honest man to work for us. We have very good job to offer you.” “May God forgive me”, thought the man to himself. “I should have listened to `Abdu’l-Bahá one month ago.”

Sebuyau's 8th cycle in high spirit

52 participants in 11 teams including RBC members, ABM, and NSA member, experienced the joy of teaching during the launching of Sebuyau's 8th cycle of IPG. For the first time many vehicles were seen on the road during such occasion. 3 communities were involved; Ketimbong, Bulan and the host community Belimbing Besi. Kampung Sungai Nibong, located about 40 minutes drive was their designated receptive community during expansion phase. Sharing of stories after the trip held at Tunton's residence lasted until midnight, a reminiscent of the old days when travelling teachers and longhouse folks talked until the wee hours of the morning. The only difference, now we see cars on the road instead of longboat cruising the river.

Two new members of the Universal House of Justice

A message from The Universal House of Justice dated 20 March 2010 read: "We warmly welcome Stephen Birkland and Stephen Hall as the newly elected members of the Universal House of Justice." They replaced Dr. Peter Khan and Mr. Hooper Dunbar who relinquished their membership...

And two new members of the International Teaching Centre

Following the announcement of its newly elected members, the House of Justice also announced the appointment of two new counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre. They were Chuungu Malitonga and Praveen Kumar Malik.

More on Naw Ruz celebrations

Mr. Jerah of Rumah Senggat, Limbang wrote that in their community, Naw Ruz was celebrated on a grand scale with many invited guests. Their community observed the Intercalary Days with each family taking turn to host the evening program. On March 20, the celebration in the evening started with presentations by the children. The next day, many invited guests came to partake in the new years' celebration.

In Kampung Atas, Bau, the new year's celebration was held at the Bahá'í Centre, as was in the previous years. Among the participants were many invited guests and relatives who were not Bahá'ís.

Remoteness does not hinder the celebration of Naw Ruz. Mr. Jesion Meding, a school teacher at SK Nanga Kain along the Balleh River, somewhere three hours by boat from Kapit Town was happy to celebrate his third Naw Ruz in this school. He was probably the only one to do so in recent years. He wrote: "On 22nd March, at SK Nanga Kain, Naw Ruz open house was held. About 35 of my colleague and 20 pupils were invited. During the celebration, the headmaster asked me to give a talk on Naw Ruz. I took it as an opportunity to do a bit of proclamation on the Bahá'í Faith. Even though this was the third time I celebrated Naw Ruz in the school, for some of them this was the first time they heard about the Faith. I explained that Naw Ruz is celebrated world wide by the Bahá'í community and that the Bahá'í Faith has its own calendar. The most important thing was that my guests all enjoyed the simple meal I prepared for the occasion."

Education on Huqúqu'lláh

A group of 13 friends gathered at the residence of Dr. John Fozdar, a deputy trustee for Huqúqu'lláh For South East Asia on the morning of 26 February 2010 for the sole purpose of study and gain a better understanding on the law of Huqúqu'lláh. It was a lively session with active participation from all present. Questions were raised on how to calculate and identify properties liable to the payment of Huqúqu'lláh.

A powerpoint presentation by Mr. Tay Yang Huang on contribution in kinds was also shared. Marilyn Lee told inspiring stories about contributions to the Huqúq. Contributions should be pure and with joy.

Friends should not deprive themselves of the bounty of contributing to the Huqúq no matter how modest our income is. It was very encouraging to hear suggestions by friends that we can even allocate a part of our harvest or other agricultural products as a payment of the Huqúq. Friends, we are being showered with the bounties of God and therefore we should return what is rightfully His. Huqúqu'lláh is the Right of God.

Reported by Kong Ah Fah

The 13th National Convention

The thirteenth National Convention was held at Telang Usan Hotel from 30 April thro 2 May 2010. With 33 delegates attending in person and in addition another 30 persons including five auxiliary board members, this convention was among the most well-attended. Observers came from as far as Limbang and Kapit. On the first afternoon the main program was studying the 2010 Ridvan message led by Counsellor Irene Chung who represented the Board of Counsellors for Asia at the Convention. The first thing that came to mind during the study of the message was that, the Bahá'í community of Sarawak, after having successfully launched intensive program of growth in 18 goal clusters by the end of the fourth year of the current plan, has the bounty of being granted a “full year to strengthen the pattern of expansion and consolidation now everywhere established, in preparation for the tasks it will be called upon to undertake in its next global enterprise—a plan of five years’ duration, the fifth in a series with the explicit aim of advancing the process of entry by troops.”

Study of the Ridvan message identified and highlighted 9 different tasks as headings for consultations during the rest of the convention. All the tasks focussed on the intensification of core activities and direct teaching and last but not least the on the junior youth spiritual empowerment program. The intensification of core activities, the institute courses in particular calls for the need to have quality tutors. “The capabilities of a tutor develop progressively as an individual enters the field of action and assist others in contributing to the aim of the present of the series of global Plans...”

The election of the new National Assembly was carried out on the morning of the second day immediately after a brief presentation on the vital role of the National Assembly in each country and the corresponding responsibility of those that elect them, by the counsellor. One thing stands out was that those who elect them, in another word, the delegates of the electoral unit areas must be those who actively and consciously take part in the core activities so as to enable them to know get to know other believers whether on the local or regional or on the national level, which would in turn assist them make wise choice during the election of the National Assembly.

The newly elected Assembly held a short meeting to elect its office bearers. They are as follows: Chairman Mr. Chin Chia Chau, Vice Chairman Mr. Yong Kiong Choon, the Secretary Mdm. Kong Ah Fah, and the Treasurer Mr. Dajai Mancha. The other members were Mrs. Marilyn Lee, Mr. Tipik Ladi, Mr. Neilson Narong Singau, Mr. Robert Ting Sing Hong and Mr. Terence Tinggi Sait.

What a good leader should be...

Touching on the institute process, the beloved House of Justice had in its Ridvan 2008 message asked the friends in every continent who are engaged in th estudy of the writings for the explicit purpose of learning to apply the teachings to the growth of the Faith. Learning is only considered a success when we are able to put into practice what we learnt.

I gave my class a task of describing a “Good Leader” they know and what qualities they possess. As I was reading through an essay written by a student from Kampung Temiang in Simunjan, a familiar name caught my attention. These are the exact words the author used to describe him: He is committed to ensure unity and equality among the people of his community. He works ceaselessly to improve the lives of the villagers under his care. He made available vans for the farmers to market their goods in towns and also for seeking treatment in health clinics nearby. He looks seriously into the well being of the youngsters so that they won’t get involved in immoral activities. He is a responsible and likeable leader.”

Well friends, I think you all know who he is, a veteran Bahá'í of good standing, who steadfastly serves the Faith through the years with unquestioned loyalty. Let us all strive to achieve this standard through the eyes of others.

Shared by Kong Ah Fah

Announcement

Opening ceremony of Baha’i Centre at Long Tisam, Tinjar, Bakong cluster will be held on 5-6 June 2010.

Baha’is from neighbouring communities are all invited to the occasion.