



UMS students taking their oath at the Aku Berjani ceremony.

# Entering university to bring hope to aborigine community

BP 10/09/2011 A2  
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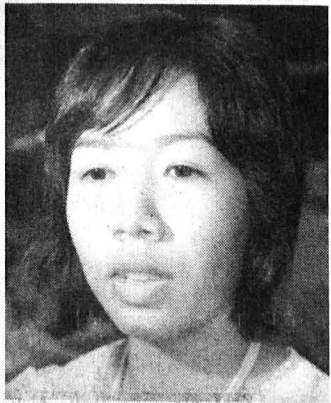
**KOTA KINABALU:** Farinah A/P Chik stepped forcefully into the grand Chancellor Hall with a renewed hope.

She promised herself that she would change the fate of her community, and for that she must bring home more than just a piece of degree certificate from the university where she had just enrolled as an undergraduate student.

When she goes back to Permatang Keledang, her hometown in Pekan, Pahang, she must bring with her a success story and more than anything else, hope.

"I want to go back and show my friends and the other youths back in my village that they too can dream big and succeed; all it takes is determination, hard work and maybe a little bit of prayer and luck. I want to give them hope," said the 20-year-old aborigine girl.

Farinah is among 4,593



Farinah ap Chik

lucky students who had been accepted to study at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) under the 2011/2012 first intake.

She arrived in the state early this month together with two other young aborigines from Johor and Perak, to study in UMS under the sponsorship of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (JHEOA).

"I will work very hard to get good results and if I have the opportunity, I would continue my studies further so that I can do more to help my family and community

later.  
"I want to be able to encourage the younger generation after me to pursue education and help change the future of the aborigine community, so that they would not continue to be left behind," she said.

The third daughter from four children said she realised that the aborigines in the country are still lagging far behind, with almost all of them still struggling with poverty.

Although a growing number of their children are making it to tertiary education, like in her village where a handful before her managed to get to universities, she said the aborigines in general are still greatly disadvantaged in many aspects - economically and socially.

Her family, like most other families in her village, barely manage to make ends meet, depending on whatever her 52-year-old father Chik Boyor could bring home from working

in a nearby factory.  
"I want the aborigine children to believe in themselves, that it is possible to change their lives, that they can change the hard life into something better," said Farinah, whose eldest brother, 25, works as a missionary for a church in Pahang.

Apart from Malaysian students from outside Sabah, UMS also received 156 international students from three countries for its new session this year, out of which 135 were from China.

Sabah leads the list for the most number of students under the domestic category with 1,549 students, followed by Sarawak with 460 and Selangor with 377 students.

The students who just concluded their orientation session celebrated an Aku Janji ceremony which was attended by Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman and Vice Chancellor Professor Datuk Dr Kamaruzaman Ampon.