

Najib retraces late dad's footsteps in tour of Bingkor home

TheStarOnline

June 18, 2012

By DURIE RAINER FONG

KENINGAU: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak retraced his late father's footsteps by visiting a historic house here that was a crucial point in the formation of Malaysia.

Back in 1963, the then Malayan Deputy Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak visited the Balai Wayoh in Bingkor here that belonged to revered Dusun Murut leader of the interior, OKK Sedomon Gunsanad, who is also the brother of Sabah's former Deputy Chief Minister Datuk G.S. Sundang, to convince the influential local leader to support the Federation of Malaysia.

Led by OKK Sedomon, (OKK stands for Orang Kaya-Kaya, a title given to senior Dusun leaders), the community in the interior had been against the formation of the new nation then.

Najib, who ended his two-day visit to Sabah's interior yesterday, toured the house, looking at artefacts and old photographs.

He was led to a balcony where the little known but vital meeting took place between the two great leaders of that time.

Back then, not everyone could meet OKK Sedomon, not even (Sabah's founding fathers) Tun Fuad Stephens and Tun Datuk Mustapha Datu Harun.

"However, my late father was well received. Subsequently, he secured OKK Sedomon's agreement for Sabah to help form Malaysia," he said.

Najib learned that Tun Abdul Razak's humility was pivotal in swaying the community leaders' decision and in turn, the support of the entire ethnic community.

"The secret was that my late father showed the utmost respect for OKK Sedomon by calling him *bapa* (father). That created a sense of goodwill between them.

"What I learned from that is that if we can respect each other and be humble, we can achieve anything," he said.

OKK Sedomon's fifth child Ricky said Najib's visit to their family's heritage house was a momentous occasion.

"I was eight when the late Tun Abdul Razak came to visit my father but children were never allowed to roam freely when visitors were around," Ricky said.

He said about 300 family members turned up to meet Najib yesterday and witness him launching their family's Harvest Festival celebrations.

Copyright © 1995-2012 Star Publications (M) Bhd

Source:

<http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2012/6/18/nation/11500139&sec=nation>