Dad’s sacrifice reaps reward

LOVE UNLIMITED:
He quit job to care for disabled daughter, who graduates with a masters

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TWENTY years ago, Ng Ee Kiong was forced to quit his job as a lorry driver to care for his disabled daughter, who suffers from spinal muscular atrophy.

Due to her medical condition, Ng Ee Kiong, now 28, is wheelchair-bound and depends on the assistance of others to move around.

As Nyok Ping was too heavy for her mother to carry around, Ng had to juggle between sending her daughter to school and selling kuih at markets and coffee shops to eke out a living.

However, his sacrifices paid off when Nyok Ping graduated with a master’s in economics and business from Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) here yesterday.

“I cannot walk. My hands could not carry anything that weighed more than 5kg. But my family, especially my parents, continued giving me endless encouragement.

“My father made many sacrifices for me because he is a responsible person.

“He quit his previous job as a lorry driver and resorted to selling kuih to attend to my needs.

“My father never neglected my other siblings,” said Nyok Ping, who is the third among five children.

Yesterday’s occasion was extra memorable for Nyok Ping’s family.

Her younger sister, Nyok Hua, 26, also graduated, but with a master’s in corporate business administration.

The two sisters were among 4,276 graduates at Unimas’s 20th convocation ceremony, which was officiated by Yang di-Pertuan Negri Tun Abdullah Taha Mahadzir.

“I’m happy,” said Ng after the ceremony.

“However, when I think about how tough the journey was and the difficulties that my daughter had to face, I’m still sad.”

Earlier in his speech, Taha said the rural community in Sarawak was not neglected by the state government and that equal attention had been given to the youths in providing quality education.

“What can benefit the rural community and bring them forward is education.

“I believe that education is the most powerful tool to eradicate poverty,” Taha said.

“(When I was the Chief Minister), the state government was committed to further developing the education industry and ensuring children, even those in the rural areas, could enjoy quality education,” he added.

As a result of the state government’s unrelenting efforts, Taha said, many students from the villages and longhouses were able to further their education at universities.

At the ceremony, former deputy chief minister Tan Sri Alfred Jabu Numpang was awarded an honorary doctorate (Transformation of Rural Community) for his contribution in improving the livelihood of rural folk.

Present during the ceremony was Unimas vice-chancellor Professor Datuk Dr Mohamad Kadir Suaied.

Ng Nyok Ping, left, and sister Ng Nyok Hua, celebrating their achievements with parents, Ng Ee Kiong (right) and Soo Yik Chiew, at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak’s 20th convocation in Kota Samarahan yesterday. Pic by Che Rani Che Sin