

April 12, 2008

**Speech of Mr. Erlow Talatala
At the Awards Ceremony of the
Indigenous Peoples' Visual Art Show in Malaybalay City Bukidnon
April 2008**

The artist exhibitors most especially Waway Saway, Datu Nilo Gabao and Bai Norita Asian Hills Bank, Inc./ Eufemio N. Marabe Foundation, Inc. (Permission and Support), PGO –PTO (Kalinawa Art Foundation), guests who inspires us and help us liberate ourselves, Jun Jamero, the curator who encourages and told us the right path, my wife Amie and kids, Twinkle and Vincent, above all to Magbabaya - with His help this was made possible.

A representative of the *Kalinawa Art Foundation* asked me about 3 important things about this exhibit and I guessed I'm too lucky enough to convince him with my answers- I presumed. First, the artist and secondly, the subject or the artwork and finally the community.

It is very important to consider the artist who worked hard to stage this exhibit, knowing that their works are instrument of information and education. You have never seen their difficulties as they do research, worked and paint overnight at the same time work for a living. They are the last of the generations – endangered species.

Their works are also very significant in a way that it influenced the spectators and cascade a message of our culture, tradition, roots and heritage down to the next generations to come.

However, as part of the community, you are equally important. For you are our strength, our inspiration, our purpose, our family. Should you not embrace this intention, all our labors would be meaningless.

You heard the news about rice shortage. In an agriculture country whose main food is rice, it is very ironic to note that this is happening. And I have this fear that soon our culture will experience the same. There are a lot of people who are supposed to be here and hear these things but are not around. Help us tell them the good things we've experience today.

Help us tell your children, your neighbors, your purok leaders, your barangay captains, your mayors, congressmen and governors. Tell them that we are here, very much willing to work hand and hand with them.

After all, what we desire is to live properly with our culture, community, society, and environment and achieve harmony in our daily lives. Hope, next time, not only the Canadian would join us but more of the 7 tribes of Bukidnon. Congrats to all winners.

Marakul Hu Salamat and more power to Bukidnon arts.