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Discard negative customs, urges Ong

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KLANG, Thurs. - The Chinese community should do away with unproductive and wasteful customs like lengthy dinners, drinking sessions, gambling and believing in mediums.

MCA vice-president Datuk Ong Ka Ting in making the call said it was time that the Chinese took stock of their customs by dropping negative practices and traditions.

One of the customs which should be looked into was the Chinese fondness for lengthy dinners with side-entertainment and drinking sessions during functions.

"In most cases, after the lengthy dinner starting about 7pm and ending past midnight, participants leave the dinner table drunk.

"What is the point of organising such events when at the end of it the participants cannot even remember what it was all about because they are drunk," he said, adding that the time spent at the dinner could have been better utilised for other more productive activities.

Ong was speaking after opening the Selangor Chinese Checkers Competition in conjunction with National Day last night.

He said another negative tradition among the Chinese was their absolute belief in superstition and the power of the mediums.

He said that in this era of information age, such a belief should not be allowed to rule the lives of the Chinese as it could hamper their progress.

Furthermore, he said, some of the negative customs like drinking and gambling, including playing mahjong when done excessively, could create a rift between the Chinese and other races.

He said in an effort to change the negative attitude of the Chinese, the Federation of Chinese Assembly Halls with the co-operation of the MCA and other Chinese-based associations had launched the Chinese Innovation and Reform Plan.

Ong, who is the project adviser, said the rethinking exercise was to create a more positive identity for Malaysian Chinese in an effort to foster closer friendship and co-operation among the major races in the country.

The exercise, he said, would involve collecting feedback and suggestions from various Chinese organisations in the country on how best to change the negative attitude of the community besides maintaining its more positive side like being hardworking and resilient.

The exercise was launched following the call by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at last year's MCA general assembly, for the Chinese community to chart a new direction and define the Malaysian Chinese.

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