

Taib has done much for S'wak Chinese, says SUPP
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Sarawak Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud has done a lot for the Chinese community in the state in his 30-year administration.

State minister of environment and public health Wong Soon Koh said lately "some ill-intentioned people with different political agenda" had begun to twist this fact.

He said it had all started when Taib had recently said after trying his best to serve the community over the period, he still did not know "what more" they wanted.

"This is what he had actually said.

"Now besides the ordinary people, some of those with stature in Chinese NGOs, those with high position tend to believe the claim that he has not done enough," he told reporters in a two-hour interview touching on a number of subjects at his office in Sibu today.

He said in trying to discredit Taib, they were trying to discredit the Chinese leaders in the state cabinet as his "puppets" and "stooges".

"Taib is a fair leader not only to the Chinese but 26 other ethnic groups in the state.

"He is always close to the ground. He takes the people's interests very close to his heart," Wong, who is expected to defend his Bawang Assan seat for the fifth time in the coming state election, said.

He said Taib's contribution to the Chinese community was very notable in education, in giving land for the construction of temples, reviewing land premiums for residential and agricultural land.

"For example in Sibu, he has given land for the construction SJK(C) Thian Hua in SibuJaya, the SJK(C) Thian Chin in Permai and the SJK(C) Su Lai.

"He has also given a RM200,000 grant to the Sacred Heart Chinese Primary School and grants of RM250,000 each to the SMK Methodist, the SMB Sacred Heart and the SMB St Elizabeth where the majority of the students are Chinese," he said.

Taib had also given land for the construction of the Hwei Ann Methodist Church and the Tien Ann Temple at Oya Road, he said.

On the land, Wong said Taib had reassessed and reviewed the premiums for residential, agricultural and commercial properties to make their current rates one of the lowest, if not the lowest in the whole country.

Wong, 68, who is also the deputy secretary-general of the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP), denied claims that the party's elected representatives had failed to bring issues and problems affecting the Chinese to the attention of the state government.

"We have done our best. Some had been resolved and others have yet to be resolved.

"We cannot be too self-centred or too pre-occupied with our own community's needs, as we live in a multi-racial, multi-religious society," he said.

"We have to be careful as a demand from one community can bring a counter- demand from another. This may result in countless counter-demands from the rest.

"When this happens, it can breed inter-racial ill-feelings, discontentment and chaos which we must avoid at all cost," he said.

In the BN, there was this spirit of power sharing, of consultation and of joint responsibility, Wong said.

"Taib as the head of the family ensures all communities are being taken care of as much as possible. We discuss regularly and decide collectively," he said.

- Bernama

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