

**PAS praised for respecting Chinese culture**  
**MalaysiaKini.com**  
**February 1, 2012**  
**Wong Teck Chi & Low Chia Ming**

While the Malay right-wing group Perkasa has come into fire for distributing 'white ang pow' in their open house programme, Islamic party PAS has won cheers among Facebook users for respecting Chinese culture during Chinese New Year celebrations.

A few photographs of the opposition party's Chinese New Year programmes have gone viral in Facebook, especially a picture that depicts a grassroots leader from Mersing, Johor, giving an ang pow to a pork seller.

Other photographs that have gone viral include Selangor PAS exco member Iskandar Abdul Samad giving an ang pow in front of a pork stall and a "green lion" performance at an open house function held by Perlis PAS.

(Green is the symbolic colour for PAS.)

The Facebook users were comparing PAS with Perkasa, praising the opposition party for its open-mindedness and understanding of Chinese culture.

"This is a scene which MCA will not want to see, its Islamic state claims will be useless," says Denise Yee on Facebook.

"Mersing PAS division chief (Roslan Mamat) and Cempaka state assemblyperson (Iskandar Abdul Samad) are greeting happy Chinese New Year to a pork seller and distributing Chinese mandarin, they didn't distribute 'white ang pow' to Chinese community," he says.

No problem for Chinese to eat pork

When contacted by Malaysiakini, Roslan Mamat seemed surprised to learn that his picture was circulating on the Internet, and he thanked the Facebook users for their praises.

The 51-year-old businessman said the photograph was taken when he and other Pakatan leaders were distributing ang pow, Chinese mandarin oranges and Chinese New Year cards to the people at the Mersing market on Jan 21, two days before Chinese New Year.

Asked why he didn't evade the pork seller, who is deemed not "halal" by certain Muslims, Roslan explained that this is because Islam never forbids non-Muslims from taking pork.

"There is no problem for Chinese to eat pork, only Muslims cannot eat pork. We must respect Chinese culture and this is their right.

"Only Umno and MCA people will twist the facts, claiming that when PAS grabs power, they will not allow Chinese to eat pork," said Roslan.

He added that this was the first time the Pakatan divisions were holding such programmes together. However, PAS leaders have been visiting and greeting the Chinese community during the last couple of Chinese New Year celebrations.

Green lion dance at state headquarters

Meanwhile, Perlis PAS chief Hashim Jasin said it was not the first time that the party had invited a 'green lion' to perform at its function.

Hashim said PAS had in fact featured lion dance performances at some of the party's dinner functions in Arau and Sanglang in the last two or three years.

However, he said, this was the first time (Jan 29) that the party and its supporters held the Chinese New Year open house event and invited a 'green lion' to perform at the state headquarters.

It is understood that the 'green lion' is from a sports club in Kedah.

Asked why they wanted a lion dance performance, Hashim explained that they were following the Kelantan PAS government's footsteps, which always held multi-cultural performances.

"Not only Chinese, the Malays also like lion dance performances. It is very attractive," he added.

Asked if the performances were held to gain the support of the Chinese community, he admitted that the people would be able to see how PAS interacts with different religions and races, contrary to the claims made by Umno that PAS will "chop Chinese hands and legs" if it gains power.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd  
<http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/187963>