

Spewing poison on Chinese lacking 'multiracial spirit'

MalaysiaKini.com

May 11, 2013

By Lim Teck Ghee

COMMENT As part of its media onslaught on its Malay readership and aimed at provoking an extremist and emotional Malay response to the outcome of the recent elections, Utusan Malaysia has now found its academic champion.

In comments which were front-paged by the newspaper, professor Khoo Kay Kim was quoted as saying that the Chinese do not understand the importance of unity as their racial sentiments still burn strongly since the community first came to Malaya.

According to Khoo, the Chinese do not have the multiracial spirit that national leaders have always tried to push for. "Many among them do not think of Malaysia as their own country; instead they always feel like they are being colonisedThat's why their racial sentiments are still very strong."

During another time and coming from another person, few people would have paid much attention to these comments, which were provided without any evidence or substantiation.

But the comments are not from any ordinary person. They come from an academic - a member of the Chinese community - who has reached the pinnacle of his profession in the country and whom to the Malay readers of Utusan must be speaking the truth about the racism in the Chinese community and their lack of love for the country.

The comments were also made in the supercharged environment of the election aftermath. Given special prominence by Utusan, they are likely to be widely disseminated in the Malay community.

This is why the comments by Khoo should not go unrefuted or unchallenged. This is why he should not be permitted to get away with either an inconsequential waffling or discreet follow up silence.

While he may have found support from the Utusan staff, which is intent on proving its case that the country's Chinese community are unworthy citizens, Khoo needs to explain his views further to the rest of the country and made to answer for their veracity, falseness or untruthfulness.

Where's the research backing?

As any student of history or other social science enrolled in a second or third year course at the undergraduate level learns, historians need to explain their findings or assertions with reference to the methodology they have used to collect data and other information from their research.

They should also explain how they have drawn inferences or general conclusions from their research work on the subject and synthesised their findings into their major conclusion.

The following are some initial questions for Khoo to respond to:

1. What research have you recently conducted on the Malaysian Chinese to make the assertion that "many among them do not think of Malaysia as their own country; instead they always feel like they are being colonised". Please provide details of papers published arising from your research which explains the methodology (sampling; use of qualitative or quantitative methods, etc) and the findings.

2. What is your evidence that the Malaysian Chinese do not understand the importance of unity and that their racial sentiments burn strongly? Are you citing findings from your own study or from other studies? Please clarify and provide references.

3. How do you explain the term "multiracial spirit" and what research have you conducted to uncover that spirit whether in the Chinese, Malay or other communities that can be used as comparison.

Finally, a charitable view of Khoo's comments as printed by Utusan is that the paper may have edited his remarks or misquoted him. If so, he needs to come out with an explanation and clarification of what he said or meant at the interview and to get Utusan to publish the correct version. Otherwise, these foolish and ill-advised comments will only lead to the further demonisation of all Chinese in the country.

No attempt to correct misquote

In the latest development, Prof Khoo has stated that, "I said that each ethnic group still tends to look at itself and does not understand each other. It's not just the Chinese but the Malays and Indians too".

He has also claimed that he had criticised all races for being too inward-looking.

It is necessary to point out that Khoo has not denied the specific statements on the Chinese attributed to him - statements which could not have been imagined or concocted by the Utusan reporter interviewing him. These statements will still require explanation from him including along the lines of the questions posed above.

Furthermore, his claim that his comments to Utusan have been taken out of context need to be resolved between him and the paper. So as not to mislead Utusan readers on the alleged Chinese lack of multiracial spirit, a clarification as well as apology by the guilty party to be printed on the front page of the paper is very much in order - not further waffling on how the different races sit at separate tables in restaurants.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/229832>