

Ronnie Liu: Unity team would have lost without me
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He may not have made the state leadership line-up this time around, but senior DAP member Ronnie Liu insists that the Unity team could not have garnered their close victory if not for his backing.

NONE In fact, said Liu (right), who obtained a dismal 369 votes in last weekend's Selangor DAP polls, the Unity team should thank him for about one-third or 300-odd votes that led to it winning 8 out of the 15 seats in the leadership team.

Speaking to Malaysiakini in an exclusive interview yesterday, he added that before polling, the support was split almost evenly among the Unity team, Rainbow coalition and him, and that his open endorsement of the Unity team, albeit without invitation, led to its victory.

"If I decided to pull out from the race, the Unity team could have fallen, because by then my supporters would not be interested in the election anymore and they wouldn't understand why I should not be in the race," said Liu, who likened himself to "furniture" in the Selangor DAP.

His claim to being the kingmaker might sound like a way to posture for an appointment, but the man, who has been dubbed 'Son of the Jade Emperor' for surviving many political setbacks, was quick to soften his message.

"I have to leave it to the (state committee). If I'm invited to join I'm willing to take part. If I'm not invited, it's okay with me.

"As a veteran leader of Selangor DAP and the CEC (central executive council), there are still many platforms for me to contribute," he said.

'Jenice Lee should stay'

While Liu disagrees that he is persona non grata in DAP Selangor following a slew of corruption and crime allegations against him, he admits that this was most likely the reason why both sides of the contest distanced themselves from him from the beginning.

But this did not put off Liu, who said he decided to back the Unity Team because he believes that personalities - whom he refused to name - within the Rainbow coalition could not contribute to party stability.

"The chances of having unity and stability within the party are higher with the Unity group... I know all the players. I feel very strongly that some people should not be in the (leadership) team. If they are in the team, there will be disruptions," he said.

NONE In fact, Liu is so concerned about building stability within DAP, especially with the general election looming, that he is willing to play the role of peacemaker after what he described as a particularly "bitter fight" in Selangor.

And he has already started work on Teratai assembly person Jenice Lee (left), who received the most votes in the polls but did not align herself with either Unity or Rainbow.

This has attracted criticism, with some accusing her of buttering both sides of the bread for her own benefit.

"I called her to tell her to not even think about resigning. I said, 'It is unnecessary for you to do so. You were just elected, you got so many votes. Why should you be bothered by messages and statements here and there?'

"How many times have I been bashed like that? We never need to resign, we go on, keep going. I think she's feeling much better now," he said.

'I trusted the wrong person'

A peacemaker and a kingmaker he may be, but even Liu can see that he has yet to win over the trust of the majority of branches which did not exist when he was Selangor DAP chairperson, a post he let go after DAP's major defeat in the 2004 general election.

According to Liu, this downswing in his political career was mostly because he "misplaced (his) trust" in someone who eventually "betrayed" him.

While he refused to mention names, Liu appeared particularly defensive when asked about his once-staunch supporter and former aide Tee Boon Hock, who was sacked from the party when it was found that he was using Liu's letterhead to get contracts for his son's company.

tee boon hock lodge report against ronnie liu 230910 02Tee (right) had actively campaigned against Liu in the Selangor DAP polls, but the ever cavalier Liu said this hardly affected the outcome as candidates backed by Tee in the Rainbow coalition did not make the cut.

"I pity him. He has chosen the wrong fight. None of his people got elected. None... he campaigned from branch to branch, badmouthing me. He is irrelevant to the party... DAP members are more matured than that," he said.

Putting his trust in DAP members, Liu said his only strategy was to sit out this wave of negativity and continue running the "political marathon" with a "clear conscience".

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