

Dong Zong sees MOE conspiracy in Chinese teachers shortage
The Malaysian Insider
March 25, 2012
By Lee Wei Lian

KAJANG, March 25 — The United Chinese School Committees Association (Dong Zong) today accused the Education Ministry of compromising Chinese education by “deliberately” not training enough Chinese school teachers.

Dong Zong president Yap Sin Tian said this was so the government could send in those without SPM Mandarin qualifications to fill the gap.

Yap also said at a protest rally here that the ministry’s apparent motive was to cause a gradual change the identity of Chinese primary schools by shifting the language of administration and medium of instruction.

“The Ministry of Education has deliberately, for a long, time failed to train sufficient numbers of teachers for the Chinese primary schools,” he told a rally of over 5,000 this afternoon.

“Then, purporting to resolve the teacher shortage problem in Chinese primary schools, the ministry began to send a large number of teachers, without required Chinese language qualifications to the Chinese primary schools.”

Yap alleged that key officials in the ministry were holding to a monolingual education policy, which he said was not in line with a multicultural and multilingual society.

He added that the ministry has been saying it needs to gather more information before any remedial action can be taken.

“In reality, the ministry is in possession of the most complete and up-to-date information on this matter,” he said.

“And yet, for the last 30-40 years, the problem has remained unresolved. Therefore, it can only be concluded that the ministry does not intend to settle the problem not because of lack of ability but because of lack of will.”

Yap noted that, in 1968, the then education minister said in Parliament that there was a shortage of 1,172 teachers in Chinese primary schools, and subsequent ministers have since been promising that the problems will be resolved.

Among Dong Zong’s demands made during the rally were for the government to remove teachers without SPM Mandarin qualifications from Chinese schools, including those teaching Bahasa Malaysia and English. It also wants special conversation courses for Mandarin teachers who had previously taught English or Bahasa Malaysia for three years or more.

Additionally, it is seeking a review of the present training system with the possible establishment of special divisions to train language teachers for Chinese schools and with SPM Mandarin as a minimum qualification.

The group is also pushing for a new Education Act to recognise schools from various mediums of instructions and to safeguard their existence.

In a press conference following the rally, Deputy Education Minister Datuk Wee Ka Siong acknowledged that the shortage of teachers was a problem and said that the government was giving it immediate attention.

"Of course we know this needs immediate attention; that's why the Cabinet formed a committee (to look into it)", he said.

"We will study each of their resolutions and demands and consider it. We have come up with strategies."

He urged patience as the solution needed to be a holistic one.

"We need to identify the root of the problem. If we don't know the root, how are we going to solve it? We cannot concentrate on one side and ignore the other side," the MCA Youth chief explained.

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/dong-zong-sees-moe-conspiracy-in-chinese-teachers-shortage/>