



# EASTERN PROMISE

VIOLET YONG WUI WUI  
BY Grace Chin

PICTURE COURTESY OF VIOLET YONG

LOOK EAST FOR DAP's rising star, the ambitious 28-year-old lawyer from Kuching, Sarawak, Violet Yong Wui Wui. Yong's initiation to politics began as a child. As a first-hand witness to politics, she tagged along with her parents, active DAP members, to party activities and while they helped with canvassing during state elections.

She girded herself with a law degree from the University of Melbourne and party leaders have her poised against the four-termed incumbent of Pending, Datuk Sim Kheng Hui from the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP), for the next General Elections in 2009.

Yong is preparing for her debut by working the grassroots at Pending as well as in other constituencies. MP Boot Camp entails everything from tending to drains, local council problems, to making press statements every week.

With currently only one Opposition state assemblyman in Sarawak, Yong has her work cut out. However, she thinks they have been silent on amending the laws on land title renewal, which affects a few hundred of her constituents, who have no assurance of being able to renew their land titles despite those being valid for only 20 more years.

'What the current state assemblymen say in public is, Don't worry, it will be renewed. I think an oral promise is not good enough, we need to see it in law, and we need to see it implemented.'

Yong heads the party's Women's Affairs department. 'We had no Women's Affairs department before, and perhaps women who came for assistance did not find us as approachable. I use my office as a base for people who need advice, usually about filing divorce petitions. These are mostly young women who face problems in their marriage. It is very difficult to get child maintenance sometimes, and the law needs to be friendlier towards women in this aspect.'

It's too early to make out the shape or form of any women's movement in Sarawak, she says. 'The affected women [here] are mostly in the inner areas which are hard to reach. The natives are quite far behind, and although we have also seen very capable characters in our state government, I think they are few. The government should engage women to venture into the more important fields, not just in politics. Nevertheless, I think there is less gender bias in Sarawak.'

Yong opines that the Barisan has many capable women who have not been given the opportunity, because of 'fogeys' who refuse to step down. She reckons herself a 'cili padi' and draws inspiration from Hillary Clinton and fellow party member Fong Po Kuan.

'Being in Opposition, no doubt that we will get a lot of "bombs" that will not stop at just "budak kecik!" I can foresee a lot of criticism and difficulties ahead but I hope that I will persevere and withstand the test.' ■

## WOMEN IN THE POLLS

First women Cabinet minister: Tan Sri Aishah Ghani, Cabinet Minister for Social Welfare (UMNO, 1969)

First woman Minister: Tun Fatimah Hashim (UMNO-Johor, 1969)

First state assemblywoman: Khadijah Sidek (PAS-Dungun, Terengganu, 1959)

First woman Opposition Member of the Parliament: Chong Eng (DAP-Bukit Mertajam, 1995)

KL's most elected woman Member of the Parliament: Datuk Seri Sharizat Abdul Jalil (UMNO-Lembah Pantai, 1995, 1999, 2004)

Youngest woman senator: Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz at age 31 (UMNO, 1974)

Youngest woman Member of the Parliament: Fong Po Kuan, at age 28 (DAP-Batu Gajah, 1999)

SOURCE NST ARCHIVES, HARAKAH DAILY

## COMMUNITY CHILD CARE CENTERS (AUGUST 2005)

The Prime Minister announced at the Women's Summit 2005 in August 2005 the launching of a RM1.2 million grant to jump start the establishment of 10 community child-care centers, as well as an RM180.00 per month subsidy to those in the lower income group.

SOURCE NST ARCHIVES

## CHINESE NATIONALS STRIPPED AND FORCED TO DO SQUATS

Three Chinese nationals alleged that they were stripped naked and forced to do squats while in police custody on 3 November 2005 at the Sungai Buloh and Petaling Jaya police station. Housewives Gu Xiu Hua and Yu Xeu Zhen, and a college student Wu Xiao Hua also made several damaging claims: that money belonging to one of them was stolen during their detention; that a policeman gawked at one of them and commented on the breast size of another.

SOURCE NST ARCHIVES

## CONSTITUTION OF MALAYSIA ARTICLE 8 (2)

Except as expressly authorized by this Constitution, there shall be no discrimination against citizens on the ground only of religion, race, descent, place of birth or gender in any law relating to the acquisition, holding or disposition of property or the establishing or carrying on of any trade, business, profession, vocation or employment.

In 2001, Article 8(2) was amended to formally list gender as a ground for non-discrimination, although the recommended amendments by Women's Aid Organization presented in their paper proposed to include both "sex" and "gender."

The paper was prepared for the Ministry of Women and Family Development by (Women's Aid Organisation (WAO), International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAP Asia Pacific), All Women's Action Society (AWAM), Women's Development Collective (WDC), Sisters In Islam (SIS) and Women's Crisis Centre (WCC) Penang)

SOURCE WOMEN'S AID ORGANISATION

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