

Activist cleric goes on trial over demonstration

By ELIZABETH NG

LIBERAL activist and Sha Tin District Board member, the Reverend Fung Chi-wood, went on trial yesterday following a pro-democracy demonstration in Mongkok in January.

Fung, 33, denied three charges of collecting donations without a permit, failing to produce an identity card, and obstructing a policeman in the execution of his duty.

Senior Inspector Hon Wung-

lark, the officer on crowd control duty for the January 6 demonstration, told North Kowloon magistrate, Mr Robert Edwards, he knew Fung had applied unsuccessfully for permission to use a loud hailer and also to collect donations.

But when he went to the office of the Professional Teachers' Union in Nathan Road before the march, he saw people with loud hailer and a donation box about to set off.

He asked Fung for his identity

card but his request was allegedly ignored.

Inspector Hon said the procession started off at 2.05 pm from Shantung Street with about 10 people wearing white T-shirts bearing the words "Democratic political system".

Fung appeared to be the leader. He was the only one using a loud hailer to ask for support and donations from the crowd, he said.

During the procession, he said, he saw passers-by putting

\$10 bills in the donation box on about four occasions. He warned Fung to stop because he had no licence to collect, but the cleric was not co-operative, he said.

Questioned by senior Crown Counsel, Mr Christopher Coghlan, the officer said he was unable to say exactly how many people took part in the demonstration.

As the group was marching along Nathan Road, he told a police constable to check the

identity of those wearing white T-shirts.

However, Fung used the loud hailer to tell the marchers there was no need for them to show their identity cards to any police officer, Inspector Hon said.

Cross-examined by Fung's counsel, Mr Martin Lee QC, leading Mr Wong Hin-lee, the inspector admitted he did not have a warrant when he went to the office of the Professional Teachers' Union.

He said he wanted to find out

how many people were taking part since no licence for the assembly was required as there were less than 20 people.

On seeing the loud hailer and the donation box, and knowing that no permit had been granted, he was convinced that a breach of the law was about to occur, he said.

Inspector Hon admitted that in his personal opinion, they were trivial offences, but denied he should wait until they were committed before taking action.