

Activists slam reports on Chen's grandson

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Media reform and children's welfare activists yesterday condemned media outlets for recent reports that violated the privacy of former president Chen Shui-bian's grandson Chao Yi-an.

"A lot of people in our society do not like Chen and his family but the children [in the family] should not be dragged into this," Humanistic Education Foundation chairman Shih Ying told a news conference. "The penalty of zhulian jiuzu should not exist in the civilized and democratic society we're living in today."

Zhulian jiuzu is an ancient Chinese penalty in which all family members and relatives of someone who committed a serious offense would be executed together.

"Whatever adults did stays with them — it's clear that the kids have nothing to do with it," said Alicia Wang, executive director of the Children's Welfare League Foundation.

She also said that when the media chases after a child, it "violates the child's privacy and exerts tremendous pressure on the child."

Shih and Wang were referring to recent media reports that the parents of some students at an elementary school in Taipei — which Chao may attend in September — said that they would not welcome Chao because he is from a "corrupt family."

The latest issue of the Chinese-language Next Magazine published on Thursday also quoted an anonymous source as saying that Chao recently drew several pictures in class of dinosaurs and of a one-eyed woman with scars from a knife.

The anonymous source was quoted in the report as speculating that the dinosaur is how Chao views his mother Chen Hsing-yu in her emotional breakdowns, while the one-eyed woman is former first lady Wu Shu-jen.

"I read the entire story, but I don't see how the author of the story proved that Chao meant to draw his mother when he drew the dinosaur," Association of Taiwan Journalists chairman Leon Chuang said.

"The author failed to follow journalists' professional code of conduct not only because of that, but also because the author has written an article targeting a child," he said.

As the Next Magazine report did not publish the drawings of the dinosaur and one-eyed woman allegedly drawn by Chao, Media Watch chairman Kuang Chung-hsiang said that "news reports are not fiction" and urged reporters not to "write with your own imagination."

Chen Hsing-yu on Thursday denied that her son had drawn dinosaurs.

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Garden of Hope Foundation executive director Chi Hui-jung warned that the media may have already violated the Children and Juveniles Welfare Act and that the groups may take legal action against media organizations if they continue to do so.

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