

## Presidential Office downplays report on gifts from CSC

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The Presidential Office yesterday downplayed allegations that President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) accepted gifts from Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Central Standing Committee (CSC) members, saying it would check whether any of the committee members gave Ma gifts.

Presidential Office Spokesman Wang Yu-chi (王郁琦) said the office established a system to manage gifts given to the president and vice president when they took office in May last year.

“It would hurt a giver’s feelings if we returned them,” he said. “So we established a system to standardize the process. It is easy to track the gifts and scrutinize the entire process in an open and transparent manner.”

The matter had nothing to do with allegations of vote-buying surrounding the committee’s election, Wang said, adding that all gifts given to the president and vice president are registered and cataloged before being distributed.

Perishables, for example, would be given to disadvantaged groups, office personnel or security guards. Historical or cultural items would be sent to Academia Historica or museums.

The office has also returned certain controversial items, such as ivory tusks, Wang said.

As of last month, Wang said, the office had received 1,906 gifts, with 1,393 addressed to the president and 285 addressed to the vice president. He said 41 gifts had been returned to the givers.

Wang said the gifts were handled by the Presidential Office and that Ma would not know anything about it unless he had personally inquired about it or if the gift was particularly special.

Wang made the remarks in response to a report published by the Liberty Times (the Taipei Times’ sister paper) yesterday that cited anonymous pan-blue legislators as saying that many committee members had given Ma and Cabinet ministers gifts before the Mid-Autumn Festival.

Twenty-eight of the committee’s elected members offered their resignations last week, accusing the party of selective investigation into gift-giving by certain members. Ma, who doubles as KMT chairman, held a provisional meeting on Thursday after the KMT revoked the election of two CSC members for giving gifts to delegates.

On Monday, Ma finalized a plan to hold a CSC by-election on Nov. 14.

The lawmakers cited in the Liberty Times article said that Ma should punish those who accepted gifts if he considered committee members giving out seasonal gifts as corrupt.

Wang said yesterday that the Presidential Office would look into whether the allegations were

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true.

Also See: [KMT suspends rights of 12 members over scandal](#)

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