

Chinese court releases video of Lee confessing

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Lee Ching-yu, wife of human rights advocate Lee Ming-Che, shows her arms tattooed with the words “Lee Ming-che, I am proud of you” to reporters in a hotel room in Yueyang in China’s Hunan Province, yesterday.

Photo: AP

Taiwanese human rights advocate Lee Ming-che (李明哲) yesterday confessed in a court in China to attempting to subvert the Chinese government, according to videos of his trial released by Chinese authorities, although his wife refused to recognize the court’s authority.

Lee, a community college teacher known for his pro-democracy and rights activism, went missing after entering China on March 19.

Chinese authorities later confirmed that he was being investigated on suspicion of damaging national security.

Lee said that he accepted the charge of subversion and expressed regret in videos of his comments released on social media by the Yueyang City Intermediate People’s Court in Yueyang, Hunan Province.

“I spread some attacks, theories that maliciously attacked and defamed the Chinese government, the Chinese Communist Party and China’s current political system, and I incited the subversion of state power,” Lee said, referring to comments written in an instant messaging group.

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Lee stood trial alongside Chinese national Peng Yuhua (彭宇華), 37, who confessed to creating instant messaging groups and founding an organization that sought to promote political change in China.

Lee had been involved in both, Peng said in testimony released on video by the court.

Judicial Reform Foundation executive secretary Hsiao Yi-ming (蕭義明) traveled to China for the trial, but said he was barred from entering the courtroom.

Hsiao suspected Peng was being used by authorities to help strengthen the state's case against Lee, as he was unaware of any previous connection between the two men.

"We contacted a lot of Lee's friends in China, but no one has ever heard of Peng Yuhua," Hsiao told reporters by telephone.

Lee's wife, Lee Ching-yu (李靜瑜), attended the hearing.

Before leaving for China she had asked that Lee Ming-che's supporters forgive him for anything he might say during the hearing that disappoints them.

She wrote a letter to her husband yesterday morning before the trial began, photographs of which were seen by reporters.

"I do not recognize this court. I also did not hire any lawyers," she wrote.

No one answered the court telephone when called by reporters yesterday.

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Releasing videos and transcripts of court hearings has become increasingly common in China as part of a push for greater judicial transparency and oversight.

However, rights activists said that in sensitive cases holding “open” trials allows authorities to demonstrate state power and deter others, with statements and verdicts usually agreed in advance.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2017/09/12](#)