

## Tsai ruling comes as a reminder

Written by Taipei Times Editorial  
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The Taipei District Court has ruled that the former head of the Council for Economic Planning and Development, Christina Liu (劉曉蓮), is to pay NT\$2 million (US\$60,872) in compensation to Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Chairperson Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) over allegations made four years ago that Tsai was involved in the Yu Chang (游錫堃) case.

The ruling brings to mind memories of the 2012 presidential election campaign and how the Yu Chang case was aggressively pursued by President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) to damage Tsai, his DPP challenger, and how it played a crucial role in the outcome of the election. Tsai was seriously damaged by the allegations, and even though the ruling goes some way to restoring her reputation, as well as displaying the effectiveness and fairness of the judiciary, the affair still leaves a bad taste.

It is difficult not to question the delivery of justice when it comes so late. Had justice been served at the time, the outcome of the election might have been different and the nation might have gone in a different direction.

After the 2012 election, the Special Investigation Division said it found no evidence of wrongdoing on Tsai's part, but by that time it was too late.

Tsai took legal action against Liu and Vice President Wu Den-yih (吳登益) and his wife for attempting to prevent a person from being elected to office, in violation of the Presidential and Vice Presidential Election and Recall Act (總統、副總統選舉及罷免法). When it was decided that there was not enough evidence to prosecute, Tsai sought compensation in a civil suit.

Many top Taiwanese biochemists were pulled into the political vortex over the case, and people such as world-renowned AIDS researcher David Ho (何偉達) and Academia Sinica President Wong Chi-huey (翁紀鵬) became disillusioned with the nation's political environment. This set back the development of Taiwan's biochemical industry and caused many experts to lose faith in a country where industrial development was being used as a political weapon. They no longer saw Taiwan as a place conducive to their professional development.

The case shows that in smear campaigns, when legislators or government officials are

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seemingly exposing wrongdoings, it is often impossible to get to the truth of the matter quickly. Amid confusion whipped up in the media, the targets are unable to find their footing again. Reputations and elections are lost. It does not matter whether their name is subsequently cleared, for the damage has been done and the victim is left with little recourse.

The Yu Chang case has been drawn out over four years. The criminal case did not stand, and there are questions as to whether the compensation is sufficient for the damage done to Tsai and to the nation after four years of incompetent governance.

Compare this to the considerable power available to those in government. For the unscrupulous, for those prepared to resort to any ploy, what is there to stop them from using all means — fair or foul — to win an election?

During a campaign they send out their thugs and reward them handsomely with money, position, or status if they do what is required of them. When the sole priority is to win an election at all costs, everything is pushed aside: ethics, morals and character, and any sense of justice or propriety.

Even though the ruling in favor of Tsai comes a little late, it is still positive news ahead of the Jan. 16 presidential and legislative elections. It also serves as a timely reminder to the electorate to scrutinize the motifs of the powers-that-be when the mud slinging begins.

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