

Tsai Ing-wen needn't apologize: Lee

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Former president Lee Teng-hui (李登輝) yesterday said Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Chairperson Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) did not need to apologize for the controversy caused by her pension savings account that provides an 18 percent preferential interest rate.

Lee said reform of the system must be fair and just and the focus must be on the system, rather than on individuals collecting the dividends.

"The crux of the problem lies in the system," Lee said. "Tsai has taught at National Chengchi University, served on the National Security Council and in the Cabinet as vice premier. She has every right to get the 18 percent preferential rate on her pension and she cannot be blamed for opting to take it."

Lee made the remarks during a question-and-answer session before he and his wife, Tseng Wen-hui (曾文惠), met Taiwanese golfer Yani Tseng (嚴妮) at their residence in Waishuang Creek (外雙溪), Shihlin District, Taipei.

Lee said some public servants received the 18 percent preferential rate for their savings because their monthly salaries were low in the past. A high interest rate helps them have a better life after retirement.

However, conditions have since changed and public servants today have higher salaries, while bank interest rates are as low as 1 percent, he said.

If the administration wants to fix the problems caused by the 18 percent preferential interest rate, it must adhere to the principle of fairness and impartiality, and focus on the system rather than on individuals, Lee said.

When asked whether he collects the 18 percent preferential rate on his pension savings, Lee said he never does. During his 50 years of public service, Lee said he served as the head of state for 12 years. Although his monthly allowance was halved after the legislature amended

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the Statute Governing Preferential Treatment to Retired Presidents and Vice Presidents (總統副總統退職優待條例) in 2001 to NT\$250,000 a month, the money was enough to support him and his family, he said.

Lee said the Examination Yuan should tell the public whether President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) and Vice President Vincent Siew (宋楚瑜) collected the money accrued from their savings at the 18 percent preferential rate before they were elected to their current positions.

“It is an old system,” he said. “The Examination Yuan should make public related information so the Presidential Office will not continue to bicker with the DPP.”

As to whether the time a public servant served the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) should be included in their time of public service, Lee said the services should not be mixed together.

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