

A-bian did not admit guilt, beg: son

Written by Taipei Times
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The Presidential Office received a letter from jailed former president Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁) last week, office spokesperson Ma Wei-kuo (馬偉國) confirmed yesterday, but she declined to reveal its contents.

Ma made the remarks in response to a report in yesterday's edition of Chinese-language *Next Magazine*, which said that in the letter addressed to President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九), Chen termed himself "a man of sin" and "a wrecked person," and said that he was "in no position to ask to be released from prison."

The magazine said Chen gave words of encouragement to Ma Ying-jeou, who recently stepped down as KMT chairman after the party's losses in the Nov. 29 elections, but still faces calls to resign the presidency, saying he did not consider it necessary for Ma Ying-jeou to quit.

The magazine said it had learned that the former president did not think the KMT's rout in the elections should be attributed to Ma Ying-jeou.

When asked to comment, the Presidential Office said that, as per established practice, the office has handed the letter over to the Ministry of Justice, which is in the process of reviewing Chen's latest petition for medical parole.

The ministry on Tuesday formed a 15-member team to evaluate Chen's latest request for medical parole, with seven of the medical experts recommended by the Chen family, as suggested last week by Minister of Justice Luo Ying-shay (羅英祥) after the Agency of Corrections rejected Chen's earlier request for parole.

According to *Next Magazine*, Luo has instructed the Agency of Corrections to approve Chen's application for medical parole as long as the team signs off on Chen's medical condition, which can be expected by the end of the year.

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Chen was convicted of corruption and sentenced to 18-and-a-half years prison in 2008.

The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and Chen's supporters have vigorously renewed calls for medical parole on the grounds of his deteriorating physical and mental health after the Nov. 29 nine-in-one elections.

Later yesterday, Chen Shui-bian's son, Chen Chih-chung (陳智雄), responded to the magazine's report, which he said insinuated that his father admitted guilt and was begging the president to grant him mercy in the letter.

Chen Chih-chung publicized contents of the letter postdated Dec. 8 on Facebook, saying that it "had nothing to do with confessions of sin and begging for mercy."

"We must solemnly clarify [the report]," he said.

According to Chen Chih-chung's Facebook post, the letter read: "I did not write the letter to you to ask you to release me. In this place, I am treated like a wrecked person, a man of sin, and in no position to talk."

Chen Chih-chung said on Facebook that his father said the KMT's rout in the election did not warrant Ma Ying-jeou's resignation as president after he had stepped down from his role as KMT chairman because former president Lee Teng-hui (李登輝) did not resign his KMT chairmanship when the party was defeated in the mayoral and commissioner elections of 1997.

Yesterday evening, after visiting the former president at Taichung Prison, DPP Legislator Wu Yi-chen (吳宜珍) quoted Chen Shui-bian as saying that he often wrote personal letters to Ma Ying-jeou, but he did not apologize nor beg the president to release him.

Wu added that Chen Shui-bian told her that the situation he is in is inferior to a beggar.

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According to Wu, in the latest letter to Ma Ying-jeou, Chen Shui-bian encouraged him to respond to people's demands, citing the examples of former Japanese prime minister Yoshiro Mori and former South Korean president Kim Dae-jung, who both saw their parties continue to rule even after their approval ratings had dropped to less than 10 percent, Wu said.

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