

Tsai vows to issue apology to Aborigines

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Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) presidential candidate Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) yesterday said that, if elected in January's presidential election, she would issue an official apology to the Aborigines on behalf of the government.

She added that she would also push forward reforms of Aboriginal policies on the basis of "equality, dignity and autonomy."

Tsai, who is one-quarter Payuan on her grandmother's side, criticized the government for having "failed to take into account the plight of urban Aborigines," quoting the lyrics of Aboriginal singer Panai's song Wandering as a commentary on Aboriginal policies.

"I bid my farewells to my home by the mountain, holding back the tears," she said.

Tsai pledged that if elected she would "apologize to Aborigines on behalf of the government for the tears that they have shed."

She said she has a "special emotional bond" with Aborigines because of her ancestry, adding that she had been "heartbroken" to hear from Aboriginal elders that they are losing their cultural heritage due to a widening generational gap and that the elderly remaining in their traditional communities lack proper care.

DPP legislative candidate Walis Pelin said the party's Aboriginal policies would restore Aborigines' rights to their ancestral lands and guarantee real autonomy, adding that the state must use its resources to preserve Aboriginal languages and cultures.

DPP legislative candidate Chen Ying (陳瑗) said the central government should accommodate Aborigines' annual ritual feasts and holidays by providing longer vacations so that Aborigines can return home to practice their culture.

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