

Control Yuan to investigate Chen skit

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Control Yuan member Chen Shih-meng, right, and former Taipei Awakening Foundation director-general Yang Fang-wan speak during an interview in Taipei on Jan. 29.

Photo: Chien Jung-fong, Taipei Times

The Control Yuan is to investigate a skit staged by prosecutors in 2009 satirizing former president Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁), a performance that has raised doubts about the credibility of the nation's judicial system, Control Yuan member Chen Shih-meng (陳士明) said yesterday.

Chen Shih-meng said the skit, performed at a Law Day celebratory event, greatly affected social commentary and tarnished Taiwan's international image.

It also affected the former president mentally and physically, Chen Shih-meng said, adding that he would talk to Chen Shui-bian in person and ask him to make a statement about the humiliation he suffered.

Then-Taipei District Prosecutors' Office chief prosecutor Ching Chi-jen (卿智仁) and then-minister of justice Wang Ching-feng (王秉鵬) turned a blind eye to the performance.

They are to be summoned for questioning over possible negligence of duty, Chen Shih-meng said.

Denying speculation that the investigation was launched because of his support for the former president, Chen Shih-meng said the public should question whether erroneous evidence was

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presented.

"To say that I should stay away from this case because I was a former Democratic Progressive Party [DPP] member or former Presidential Office secretary-general is laughable," Chen Shih-meng said, adding that such talk was "a low blow."

Wang yesterday said that the Ministry of Justice only oversees matters pertaining to policy and the judiciary system, such as policies for restorative justice.

Law Day is an annual event and its planning is overseen by the secretary-general or the deputy minister of justice, Wang said, adding that the precise agenda for the event is not usually disclosed before the day.

Using creativity and satire to express opinions is a constitutionally guaranteed right, Wang said, adding that she personally did not think such a skit was appropriate on the day.

No similar incidents have occurred since, Wang said.

Ching on Wednesday said that whether Chen Shui-bian was guilty of embezzlement and corruption is based on evidence, not satire.

Chen Shih-meng said he was "extremely disappointed" to hear Ching's response, adding: "The average person, much less judge, should not mock others."

He said the right to express opinions does not include the right to humiliate others, especially a prisoner.

"Can any prosecutor enact a skit to humiliate the defendant prior to giving a verdict?" Chen

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Shih-meng said, adding that such behavior is unimaginable in the US as it would be seen as interfering with the judicial process.

Chen Shih-meng said that the event was described by longtime Taiwan watcher Bruce Jacobs in an article carried by the Economist in 2009 as a “lack of discretion” in a remarkably tasteless recent incident.”

Additional reporting by CNA

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