

Minister slapped over CKS hall policy

Written by Taipei Times

Wednesday, 23 January 2019 04:55 -



Entertainer Lisa Cheng talks to reporters at a news conference at the Taipei City Council after slapping Minister of Culture Cheng Li-chiun at a lunar year-end party earlier yesterday.

Photo: Pan Shao-tang, Taipei Times

A veteran entertainer yesterday slapped Minister of Culture Cheng Li-chiun (鄭麗文) in the face, saying she was upset with the minister's attempts to "discredit" Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石) and his son, former president Chiang Ching-kuo (蔣經國).

The incident occurred at a lunar year-end banquet in Taipei attended by veteran entertainers to mark the end of the Year of the Dog, the Chinese-language Mirror Media magazine reported.

The minister was going from table to table toasting the attendees when Lisa Cheng (鄭麗文), 67, slapped her in the face and then returned to her seat, footage taken at the event showed.

Cheng Li-chiun gasped and put her hand on her cheek, looking surprised and confused.

Asked why she hit Cheng Li-chiun, Lisa Cheng, who is also known as Cheng Hui-chung (鄭惠中), said: "I had intended to slap her twice. I had been thinking about this for months... I went easy on her by slapping her just once."

Lisa Cheng said that she "had to do it," because meeting the minister was a "rare occasion."

The minister has been "ungrateful" by pushing policies to abolish Taipei's Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall and ignoring the Chiangs' contributions to the nation, she said, adding that Cheng Li-chiun "had it coming."

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The minister declined to comment on the attack when leaving the venue, but later wrote on Facebook that she did not personally know Lisa Cheng.

While Taiwanese society embraces diversity and freedom of speech, people should not use violence to express their opinion, she wrote.

Her personal humiliation was insignificant next to safeguarding Taiwanese democracy, Cheng Li-chiun wrote, urging the public not to resort to violence when discussing public issues.

Accompanied by Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Taipei City Councilor Angela Ying (鄭麗英), Lisa Cheng later told a news conference at the Taipei City Council that she had lost control of her emotions because of the ruling Democratic Progressive Party's policies aimed at "discrediting the Chiangs."

She said she would apologize to the minister, but would not apologize for her position on the memorial.

Leo Chuang (鄒光前), general manager of Chinese Television System (CTS, 中視), which hosted the banquet, said at a separate news conference that the network would sue Lisa Cheng on behalf of the minister, adding that it denounces any form of violence.

The Ministry of Culture last year held a series of workshops to discuss transforming the memorial, but has not said whether it would demolish or abolish it.

Last month, the ministry said that it had drafted two options for repurposing the memorial, which would be submitted to the Executive Yuan for interdepartmental discussions before they are made public.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2019/01/23](#)