

Wu stands by sexist epithet for Tsai

Written by Taipei Times

Thursday, 19 December 2019 06:04 -



Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Chairman Wu Den-yih, right, speaks at a rally for KMT presidential candidate Han Kuo-yu at the Armed Forces Club in Taipei on Tuesday.

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Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Chairman Wu Den-yih (吳敦義) yesterday defended calling President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) an “ill-starred woman” (衰尾查某, literally “droopy-tailed woman”) on Tuesday, despite criticism from politicians across party lines.

Wu made the remark in Hoklo (commonly known as Taiwanese) during a rally for Kaohsiung Mayor Han Kuo-yu (韓國瑜), the KMT’s candidate in the Jan. 11 presidential election, at the Armed Forces Officers’ Club in Taipei.

During Tsai’s first term in office, the nation has seen the most murder and dismemberment cases in decades, Wu said at the rally, adding: “When we have a president who is an ill-starred woman, we must bring her down.”

Following widespread criticism from politicians over the sexist remark, Wu yesterday insisted that Tsai has brought the nation misfortune.

Under Tsai, all sectors of the economy have suffered, he wrote on Facebook.

“Has Taiwan not gone downhill? Has Tsai Ing-wen not brought misfortune to Taiwan?” Wu asked.

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Hours after Wu's remarks on Tuesday, Tsai wrote on Facebook that his language was inappropriate and that the KMT is "full of discrimination."

Personally, she can withstand the attack, but the nation should not tolerate such a negative election culture, she said.

"I find such a political culture unacceptable and we will not accept any personal attacks against women using such language," Tsai said.

She recounted many sexist comments made by KMT members in the past, including Wu last year calling Presidential Office Secretary-General Chen Chu (陳楚) "a fat sow," and former premier Simon Chang (張善政), the KMT's vice presidential candidate, last week saying that Tsai does not understand what immigrant mothers need, because she has never given birth.

Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Deputy Secretary-General Lin Fei-fan (林飛帆) and New Power Party (NPP) Secretary-General Wu Pei-yun (吳佩瑜) have both demanded an apology from Wu.

Green Party Taiwan legislator-at-large nominee Teng Hui-wen (滕慧文), NPP legislator-at-large nominee Claire Wang (王心恬), Taiwan Statebuilding Party spokesman Yen Ming-wei (顏明偉) and DPP Legislator Kuan Bi-ling (關碧玲) have all condemned Wu for sexism or being disrespectful to women.

Wu's mindset is stuck in the patriarchal culture of 50 years ago that featured great gender disparity and a male-dominated society, in which women were relegated to subservient roles, such as housekeepers, cooks and maids, Kuan said yesterday.

"Taiwan has seen movements for women's rights and empowerment, but we see the KMT has not woken up on gender equality," Kuan said.

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“It is astonishing to see the deep level of misogyny among KMT politicians,” she said.

Tsai has demonstrated that a woman president can lead the nation and be the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, she added.

Tsai has shown that she “can safeguard Taiwan and govern better than a man,” Kuan said. “This proves that it is not a question of gender.”

“Most people can comprehend this, but not the KMT elites,” she added.

The DPP Women’s Affairs Department said in a statement that “Wu’s remarks were only the latest display of the KMT’s misogynistic attitude, which includes personal attacks against women and language that objectifies women.”

“The KMT has always resorted to discriminating against women when campaigning,” it said. “Even as 2020 approaches, the KMT’s mindset on gender remains stuck in the last century. How can such a political party lead Taiwan into the future?”

“People have had enough of the KMT’s lies and discrimination. Voters should repudiate the party and its mentality of discrimination, and choose a better future for Taiwan on election day,” it added.

Asked about Wu’s remarks, Han’s campaign office spokeswoman Anne Wang (王文) yesterday said that as a woman, she also considers them inappropriate.

Asked if she hopes Wu will apologize, she said that the campaign office could not request that from Wu, but added that she respects him and believes he will do the right thing.

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Additional reporting by CNA

Source: [Taipei Times - 2019/12/19](#)