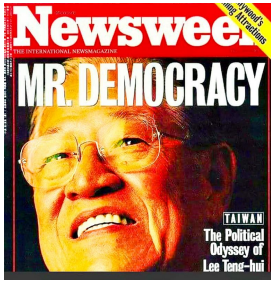


Former president Lee Teng-hui dies

Written by Taipei Times
Friday, 31 July 2020 04:33 -



Former president Lee Teng-hui, who passes away at 97 in Taipei yesterday, is pictured on the cover of Newsweek magazine in 1996.

Photo: Screen grab from Facebook

Former president Lee Teng-hui (李登輝) passed away at 7:24pm yesterday at Taipei Veterans General Hospital. He was 97 years old.

The hospital stated the cause of death as septic shock and multiple organ failure.

Lee had been hospitalized there since February, when he choked on a mouthful of milk at home. He was later diagnosed with pulmonary infiltrates and aspiration pneumonia.

The hospital said that Lee had been treated with antibiotics, but that his health had not improved, as his advanced age and diabetes had inhibited his immune system and led to recurring infections.

During his hospitalization, Lee underwent daily kidney dialysis, which removed electrolytes and excess liquids, so that nutrient solutions introduced via intravenous drip and blood infusions would bring him strength.

The hospital said that Lee's body would remain at the hospital until Lee's wife, Tseng Wen-hui (曾文惠), and his family, could make further arrangements.

Yesterday, when a doctor announced Lee's passing, Tseng was by his side, the hospital added.

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During his lifetime, Lee underwent 12 stent procedures, 11 for his heart and one for his vertebral artery — installed when he was 92 years old.

Lee had been diagnosed with colorectal cancer in 2011 and underwent a colectomy to remove the tumor that year. In 2007, he was diagnosed with cataracts, and had an intraocular lens inserted in 2013.

President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) expressed her deep sadness at Lee's passing, and instructed the Presidential Office and other government agencies to offer Lee's family whatever assistance they might need.

Presidential Office Secretary-General Su Jia-chyuan (蘇嘉全) said that Taiwanese should thank Lee for choosing democracy at a critical time in history, leading the country out from under the shadow of autocratic government.

Former president Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) also offered his condolences to Lee's family through his office, while affirming Lee's contributions to Taiwan's democratization.

Ma believes that while Lee's political ideas underwent major changes after he left the presidency, history would render a just and objective evaluation of Lee's career, the office said.

Taipei Mayor Ko Wen-je (柯文哲) yesterday posted a photograph of him visiting Lee at the hospital in May last year.

Lee is most admired not only for his political achievements, but also for his life philosophy, which is full of wisdom, Ko wrote on Facebook.

Lee allowed the nation to smoothly evolve from an authoritarian regime to a democratic one, and he was able to withdraw from the political scene at his peak, Ko wrote, describing Lee as a "hero of the era."

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