

Attempted cheating: Ex-head of Chinese cultural group jailed

He used his position, control over 3 firms to inflate donation sums for grant applications

15

Number of months' jail that Lui Wai Leong, 45, has been sentenced to for inflating the donation amount by \$261,852. Another charge of attempted cheating, which involved inflating the donation amount by \$70,000, was taken into consideration.

Dominic Low

A former president of the Chinese Cultural Association who tried to cheat a government fund that awards grants was jailed yesterday.

Lui Wai Leong, 45, who pleaded guilty to one count of attempted cheating on the same day, had used his position and control over three companies to inflate the amount of donations received by the association.

He then instructed his staff to use these sums in two applications to the Cultural Matching Fund,

which would have given the association more than \$1 million in grants, court documents show.

Yesterday, the State Courts sentenced him to 15 months in jail for his crime, which involved inflating the donation amount by \$261,852.

One other charge of attempted cheating, which involved inflating the donation amount by \$70,000, was taken into consideration.

In all, the applications claimed that the association received donations totalling \$1,389,106. According to court documents, the fund did not disburse any grant to the association. It was not stated in court how the ruse was uncovered.

The association is a registered charity that promotes Chinese culture and preserves traditional heritage values.

The Cultural Matching Fund, set up by the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, matches, dollar for dollar, cash given by private donors to registered charities in the arts and heritage sector.

Court documents state that Lui had instructed Seah Bee Hong, 38, then a member of the association's governing body, to apply to the fund in May 2014 and September 2014. The donation amounts were inflated as the association's funds had been indirectly used for some of the donations, the court heard.

For the September application, Lui transferred some of its funds to three companies he controlled at that time. He then instructed the companies to donate the money to the association or transfer it to people who were also told to donate to the association.

Such "round-tripped" donations are deemed invalid for making claims from the fund.

The court also heard that Lui had instructed Seah to use the names of members of the association's governing body for some of the donations stated in the September application. These members were not aware that their names were used.

For attempted cheating, Lui could have received a maximum of five years' jail and a fine.

Seah's case is pending.

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