

To Be Whole, Taiwan Must Shed Itself of its KMT Carpetbagger Legacy: Part I

Written by Jerome F. Keating Ph.D.
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Taiwan has many problems, not only with its economy but even with its democracy and identity. In the past two years Taiwan's economy has gone nowhere but down under President Ma Ying-jeou; his 6-3-3 promise is at best a country wide joke. The Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) from its one-party state days up to the present still controls the Legislative Yuan. For this reason it maintains tremendous leverage, and its possession of the stolen state assets can go unchallenged. Thus, the KMT can continue to place party interests before Taiwan's national interests. Or put another way, the KMT only protects Taiwan's interests if they protect the KMT interests. This is the root of Taiwan's problems and what Taiwanese still have not yet grasped. The KMT is a carpetbagger party that exists to serve its carpetbagger interests and preserve the Constitutional fantasy that perpetuates its carpetbagger rights.

Carpetbaggers? Yes, that word is a pejorative term dating back to the post Civil War Reconstruction times of the United States. It depicts those Northerners who went south for their own advantage. However, the word has taken on additional meaning today; it applies to any outsiders, especially politicians, who as opportunists and exploiters seek a position or success in a new location. Today in Taiwan, the pejorative sense of that word not only still applies, but it has an ironic twist. In the United States, the carpetbaggers were the victors in the Civil War; in Taiwan, the carpetbaggers were the losers and they were coming to a land that had nothing to do with that Civil War.

The KMT carpetbaggers' long history is well known. They started coming to Taiwan, and exploiting the land and the Taiwanese after Japan lost World War II in 1945. Leading them was Chiang Kai-shek's appointed and greedy governor Chen Yi. For the next forty some years, the carpetbaggers enjoyed the protection of Martial Law in Taiwan as all of the key government positions went to KMT loyalists. The lifting of Martial Law and the later disbanding of the Garrison Command only took away the carpetbaggers muscle, but that was not enough. The Legislative Yuan and National Assembly still contained KMT members elected in China in 1947; they had come to Taiwan for refuge and new opportunities.

Death got rid of some of those 1947 carpetbaggers, but it was the Taiwanese Wild Lily protests in 1991 that helped to get rid of the larger slew. Because of those protests, and as an effort towards democracy, Lee Teng-hui forced those elected in 1947 to finally resign some 44 years later. But that still was not enough.

At this point, do not make the mistake and say all waishengren are carpetbaggers. Many waishengren who fled China seeking a better life in 1949 were killed, tortured and/or

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imprisoned on Green Island; they suffered under Chiang Kai-shek and his successors just as much as Taiwanese. To tell the carpetbaggers, one must look at their positions; who financed their degrees; who groomed them for one-party state office; how do they benefit from the stolen state assets; what are their attitudes towards that land across the Strait that the KMT lost in its Civil War? What are their attitudes to the outdated 1947 Constitution that not only claims that Tibet, Mongolia and Xingjian still belong to the Republic of China but justifies the *raison d'être* of their carpetbagger positions? How do they feel about Taiwan as Taiwan? Taiwan's current president claims that he does not recognize the People's Republic of China, yet he allows its flag to be flown in Taiwan and takes down Taiwan's flag, where is his heart?

The Legislative Yuan remains full of KMT carpetbaggers protecting their own party interests; in the last elections the KMT candidates received some 54 per cent of the vote, yet because of gerrymandering, they were able to gain 75 per cent of the seats; do they use that majority to benefit Taiwan or themselves? Because of the KMT majority, ECFA has never been given true national scrutiny.

The November elections approach; now is the time for Taiwanese to awaken their consciousness; now is the time to finish the process and finally get rid of the carpetbaggers who dream of a different land and who seek to perpetuate carpetbagger privilege. Though the KMT still possesses a large monetary political war chest from ill-gotten gains, in a democracy they can be voted out, one by one, position by position. Only then when this is done and when all the KMT carpetbaggers are gone will the country of Taiwan have a chance at wholeness, identity, and a true imagined community.

Source:

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