

## Ma's tangled web gives Tsai leg up

Written by Chin Heng-wei 陳恆偉

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The presidential election is almost upon us. The Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) has dredged up the Yu Chang affair again, trying to deliver a fatal blow to the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) candidate, Chairperson Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文). However, it may have backfired, and it is possible this could be the last straw, the one that breaks the back of President Ma Ying-jeou's (馬英九) campaign. He has failed to hurt Tsai and he has not done himself any favors either.

The Taiwan eNews Web site made the interesting observation that this election has been the pettiest, most negative campaign ever. True, bringing in the Yu Chang affair was petty, negative campaigning. The KMT is the governing party, so why is it resorting to negative tactics? This simply reflects its lack of positive achievements. The KMT already looks defeated — Ma is staring at the writing on the wall. Even Council for Economic Planning and Development (CEPD) Minister Christina Liu (劉松藩), who originally demanded the classified documents concerning TaiMed, has admitted that the case does not involve illegal conduct, only procedural irregularities.

Frankly, we already know nothing illegal happened, because all previous accusations — that Tsai intended to feather her own nest, violated the “revolving door” clause and abused her access to state funds — have been dismissed. This talk of procedural irregularities is either the KMT looking for an excuse to back down or an attempt to allocate at least some blame to Tsai in the absence of anything more substantial.

Is the furor over this case in the public interest? KMT Legislative Speaker Wang Jin-pyng (王金平), one of the original proponents of the Act for the Development of Biotech and New Pharmaceuticals Industry (生物技術及新藥產業發展法), spoke the truth when he said the biotechnology issue involved the fortunes of the nation, because without this legislation, investment in biotechnology and new drugs would be jeopardized. He could have gone further, though. A few days ago, Academia Sinica president Wong Chi-huey (翁生輝) said during an interview that biotechnology was to be the engine of future economic growth in Taiwan.

Following Wong's lead, another two Academia Sinica scientists involved in Yu Chang chose to stand up and cry foul at the unfair accusations against Tsai. And so we have a situation in which three academics are opposing the KMT.

The three have been obliged to defend Tsai for a very simple reason: to be witness to the facts.

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Wong said that when Tsai was vice premier, she did not know she would go on to head Yu Chang, nor could she have known she would become party chairperson, let alone a presidential candidate. Wong's point is that if Tsai was not standing in this election, there would have been none of this "implicating the innocent." Furthermore, Wong was keen to say Tsai only agreed to the position at the request of others.

Wong's involvement has shifted the focus of the Yu Chang affair away from Tsai and onto him. Who are the public to believe? Wong or the KMT? Who commands the most public trust? Oh, Ma, what a tangled web we weave.

Wong would have preferred not to have gotten involved in politics, but the Yu Chang affair has forced this apolitical figure and two other academics to support Tsai. There is a Chinese expression that means "to follow in the tracks of an overturned cart," which aptly describes the KMT's actions over the past few weeks.

First, they created the conditions for the success of the DPP's "three little pigs" campaign donations initiative by having the Control Yuan clamp down on political donations to the DPP. Next, they obliged three academics to comment on the Yu Chang affair. It is almost as if Ma's campaign team were concerned Tsai lacked resources and would not get enough votes, and decided to give her a boost, inspiring the public to donate money and getting some of the most respected academics in the country to declare their support for her.

How very sporting.

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Translated by Paul Cooper

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