

During Chiang Kai-shek's (蔣介石) time in charge of the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT), it was defined as a fascist party.

Some of the characteristics of fascism are: fanatic patriotism, nationalism and collectivism, leader worship and absolute individual dictatorship, anti-communism and an emphasis on armed battle.

After fleeing from China to Taiwan, the KMT under the leadership of Chiang and his son Chiang Ching-kuo (蔣經國) displayed these characteristics even more clearly and used it as the standard for “educating” Taiwanese.

The part of this “education” that had the most far-reaching impact was nationalism. It stressed the nation — or the country — above all and placed it at the center of all history and daily life. It did not teach individualism and liberalism built on a democratic foundation, and it did not foster a modern citizenry based on democratic and human rights values.

Despite this, the party's nationalism was not a nationalism with its roots in Taiwan — a Taiwanese nationalism; instead, it was a political illusion, a Chinese nationalism built on identification with a land that was no longer theirs.

“Chinese nationalism” is a political term, created after the 1911 Xinhai Revolution, and not an academic concept that can be empirically or concretely deduced.

Long after it left its homeland and arrived in Taiwan, the KMT still wanted Taiwanese to identify with this political myth and continued its big nation propaganda about the abundance and size of China. In short, the main characteristics of this kind of education were the removal of all things Taiwanese, an empty awareness about a “big nation,” and contempt for freedom and human rights.

When I was studying at Chengchi University's education department 45 years ago and

KMT's contributions to the CCP

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Saturday, 02 December 2017 06:28

advocated democratic education and called for the freedoms of expression and association, I was attacked by other students in the department who said that for the sake of the nation, we should not put too much emphasis on individual freedom.

I was expelled, while my classmates became teachers and school presidents, and continued to “educate” our next generation.

The two Chiangs have passed on and the pledge to “wipe out the communist bandits” has proven a failure, and the only thing left to the KMT is Chinese nationalism.

Fascism, an ideology of the extreme right, used to be diametrically opposed to communism, but there are overlaps between the two: They both stress collectivism, and oppose individualism and liberalism. As someone has said, there is only a thin line separating fascism from communism.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which used to rely on the rise of the third international — also called the Communist International or Comintern — and the call for workers of the world to unite, long ago stopped advocating that working men have no country and has departed from communist ideals.

For example, 1 percent of households in China possess 33 percent of the nation's total wealth, while the bottom 25 percent of households only possess about 1 percent of total wealth. What kind of communism is that?

The CCP, which the KMT used to call “traitors,” is now beckoning Taiwan with calls for “Chinese nationalism” — the same idea that the KMT used for so many years to brainwash Taiwanese. As the CCP strays from the communist path and the KMT has abandoned its attacks on the CCP, it is becoming clear that the two are a great match.

It is not strange, then, that a host of retired generals who have sworn to “eradicate the communist bandits” are flocking to the “communists” to receive instructions.

Some have even said that the “KMT and the CCP armies are both Chinese armies.”

Freedom House lists Taiwan as a free country, but there are still people who do not value universal rights, such as freedom and human rights, and instead set off chasing their big nation pipe dream.

The Taiwanese independence movement must be the world's easiest independence movement to promote, because Taiwan already enjoys de facto independence from China. At the same time it must also be the world's most difficult independence movement to promote: Because it has been restricted by the long period of KMT nationalism and big nation ideology, many people still maintain their superstitious beliefs in “Greater China” and pay no attention to freedom and human rights.

This is what Erich Fromm has called “escape from freedom.”

The draft headline for this article was “The KMT's contributions to China,” but since the fundamental character of the KMT is of no benefit to China's democratization, can it really make much of a contribution? After all, if China does not democratize, its growing economic power will in the end be of no benefit to its long-term development. This is why in the end I decided for “The KMT's contributions to the CCP.”

The existence of a democratic and free Taiwan is beneficial to the democratization of China, but the Chinese nationalism of the KMT has made great contributions to China's one-party dictatorship.

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Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2017/12/02](#)