

The Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) opinion poll results are not looking very good, but those for the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT), which is the party with the biggest chance to replace the DPP, are even more disappointing.

While the descendants of Chiang Kai-shek (蔣經國) have all retreated behind the veil of history, the KMT is still trying to stay afloat by clinging on to Chiang and his son Chiang Ching-kuo (蔣經國), presenting a stark contrast to the ongoing transitional justice process.

Faced with accusations of "Chiang worship," KMT Chairman Wu Den-yih (吳敦義) responded with a series of rhetorical counterquestions.

"Are we going to abandon our leaders, our fathers, our nation and our home altogether?" Wu asked. "Do we all not celebrate our grandfathers and fathers' birthdays? If we live well off our grandfather's wealth years after he passed away, without acknowledging his contributions, that does not appear very virtuous to me."

While Wu's response seems to make sense, it is in fact a specious assertion that reveals his admiration of the Chiangs' authoritarian regime and Wu's arrogant attitude toward democracy.

No matter in what direction mainstream opinion is moving, the KMT remains immovable, sticking to the legacy of Chiang Ching-kuo and even his father. How will they ever be able to make a comeback?

Democracy, literally speaking, means "rule of the people." If the leaders and fathers that Wu spoke of were to rule over public opinion, then that would be "fake democracy."

Unfortunately it seems the KMT still likes exercising this kind of "fake democracy," saying yes to the votes, but paying no respect to the public's choice. They want the public to continue living in the era of Chiang's "enlightened despotism," forever obedient subjects to a great leader.

## KMT is still a danger to democracy

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Before former president Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) took office, he advocated indirect rather than direct presidential elections for the same reason: People only deserve to obey and they should not be endowed with the right to exercise free will.

Years later, when Ma became president through direct elections and he “ruled over the people,” he almost subverted the core values of democracy.

The rules set by Ma, which Wu now follows, go against a political party’s obligation in a democratic country to maintain liberal democracy and the constitutional order, and to assist in the formation of the public’s political will as stated in Article 3 of the Political Party Act (黨法).

Taiwan’s community of 23.5 million people are working hard to make Taiwan a normalized country, yet the KMT insists on forcing “one China” on Taiwan and making it part of another “motherland.” The masters of the country do not want to be part of “one China,” yet the KMT treats it as a categorical imperative.

In short, the KMT’s anti-democratic doctrine is to oppose free public opinion, Taiwanese independence and self-governance. Even worse, the party despises the free will of Chinese people and is unwilling to see China become a powerful democracy.

The consensus reached by the KMT and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) that “the party-state is holy and inviolable” means that these people, who are enjoying Taiwan’s democracy, rarely express support for Chinese people, whose right to free will has been destroyed. With total indifference, they watch China’s democracy campaigners, such as author Liu Xiaobo (劉曉波), and civil rights activists being subjected to state-sanctioned violence.

Worshiping the Chiangs or paying them homage is not merely a personal habit, it also represents hatred of democracy and a preference for one-party dictatorship. In these people’s eyes, even China should remain authoritarian and never become a democracy.

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The KMT and the CCP are effectively brothers. From the view that “gentlemen cannot coexist with thugs” and the abandonment of resistance to communism to the promotion of unification, the KMT is casting off its mask of democracy. It aspires to a return to the Chiangs’ authoritarian party-state, which has already ceased to exist, to integrate Taiwan into another, existing, authoritarian party-state.

If Taiwanese people were not aware of the KMT’s dangerous atavistic tendencies during the 2008 elections, they were abundantly clear by the 2016 elections. As the party continues to speak about “the leaders,” “our grandfathers” and “our fathers,” and placing itself outside of Taiwan’s surging democracy, the political choice presented to the Taiwanese people is one between “genuine democracy” and “fake democracy.”

By contrast, the main political parties outside the pan-blue and pro-unification camps have been democratic from the start. Regardless of their different political inclinations, they at least respect the public’s free will and do not lecture the public on how to conform to a patriarchal system. These parties also acknowledge that Taiwan’s ultimate destination should not be determined by an imaginary space framed by dogma, but by its 23.5 million people.

There is a lesson to be learned from Ma’s authoritarian tendencies, while an external challenge is posed by Chinese President Xi Jinping’s (習近平) authoritarian tack.

How to make the best use of the energy provided by democracy to ensure that “true democracy” remains firmly standing is a task that the Taiwanese must take upon themselves.

Taiwan in 2016 had a chance to escape a combined attack by the KMT and the CCP. As we are faced with even more severe attempts at exhausting Taiwan, and buying off the powerful and rich, while military aircraft and navy vessels encircle the nation and intimidation increases, will there be another chance to escape chaos and set things right again?

Returning ill-gotten party assets and implementing transitional justice should be seen as ways to facilitate the KMT becoming a Taiwanese party. It is a pity that forces within the KMT pulling in different directions continue to safeguard the idea of a “Chinese Nationalist Party” and refuse to make it the “Taiwanese Nationalist Party,” not to mention a “Democratic Nationalist Party.”

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Behind a veil of equal and democratic competition, there are turbulent undercurrents surging with the help of the enemy as the forces of fake democracy and those opposed to democracy join hands to overthrow Taiwan's freedom and self-governance.

Therefore, the DPP should be putting much more effort into meeting public expectations by focusing on policies that can be felt by all Taiwanese, lest it stumble and bring about another power transition, which would set off a domino effect leading to the crash of democracy.

If the government has the guts to say "Then why else did you vote for Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文)?" it should bear the full weight of having complete control of both the Executive Yuan and legislature. Taiwan needs a strategy to protect the public's free will and consolidate the nation's self-governance and independence.

Translated by Chang Ho-ming

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