

Former president Lee Teng-hui (李登輝) on Sunday said something that pierces right to the crux of the problem facing Taiwan.

“We are not afraid of China’s deliberate acts to belittle Taiwan; on the contrary, down deep in our hearts we cannot belittle ourselves. Some people — entrapped by the ‘Greater China’ mindset — have lost [the horizons of] selfhood, lost expectation; not knowing what course to take, [they] succumb to the Chinese communists’ hegemony and are brought over by shortsightedness and lured by profits,” Lee said during a dinner gathering with Taiwanese expatriates in Okinawa, Japan.

Indeed, taking into account Taiwan’s history of colonization by the Dutch, Ming Dynasty general Cheng Cheng-kung (鄭成功), the Qing Dynasty, the Japanese and the refugee Republic of China government, one cannot help but wonder whether the experience of Taiwanese being reduced to second-class citizens has had a lasting effect on their mindset — whether it is why many have lost their voice and forgotten that they can demand due respect for their nation.

A case in point is the campaign initiated by Taiwanese civic groups to appeal for the national team to compete at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics as “Taiwan” instead of “Chinese Taipei.”

Instead of openly supporting the movement so that Taiwanese athletes would not be subjected to such an absurd name, the nation’s very own Olympic committee has shown itself content with the ridiculous and insulting name “Chinese Taipei,” trying to keep a distance from the campaign.

The Democratic Progressive Party government has shown the same lack of zeal in the matter: In September last year it wasted an opportunity when it opted not to change the committee’s name when reviewing amendments to the National Sports Act (國民體育法).

In another example, US Representative Dana Rohrabacher on Wednesday proposed a resolution in the US House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs calling on the US government to ditch its “one China” policy and resume diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

## Self-respect gains respect

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As a free and democratic nation, Taiwan deserves to be recognized and treated with respect as an equal member in the international community, and Rohrabacher's proposal to normalize US-Taiwan relations ought to have been welcomed unanimously. However, some responded by ridiculing Rohrabacher's proposal while others dismissed it as an "impossible dream." That is truly pathetic.

It appears — as evidenced by the "Greater China mindset" Lee mentioned — that a national Stockholm syndrome that critics have long pointed to has made Taiwanese so prone to adopt the beliefs of their "captor," in this case China, that many Taiwanese, either consciously or unconsciously, are aligning their mindset with terms defined and dictated by China, without realizing that deep down in their hearts they are the ones denying and belittling themselves.

This type of mentality is exactly what Beijing is counting on in its continuous attempts to degrade Taiwan internationally and it is regrettable to note that such a mindset has taken hold not only on the public, but also of government officials, as indicated by various incidents in which officials have refrained from boldly demanding the correction of Taiwan's name at international events.

There is an urgent need for Taiwanese and government officials to understand that self-respect gains respect.

Only when Taiwanese start believing in themselves and, in Lee's words, if they do not lose the horizons of selfhood can they project an air of confidence and demand rightful treatment and due respect from others for Taiwan's status as a sovereign nation.

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