

Save Taiwan by fighting for Taipei

Written by Chin Heng-wei 陳恆偉
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Here is a hypothetical question: Last month, the New York Times published an in-depth interview with the pro-unification owner of Biyun Temple in Changhua County, Wei Ming-jen (魏明仁). If the temple — converted by Wei into a shrine to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) — had been in Taipei, would Taipei Mayor Ko Wen-je (柯文哲) have given the order to demolish it?

The answer is no. If this seems improbable, there is a precedent.

Qatar-based al-Jazeera last month broadcast an investigative documentary by journalist Lynn Lee (林琳) that featured an interview with the Taiwanese pro-unification group the Concentric Patriotism Association (CPA). The piece exposed the degree to which the regime in China has penetrated Taiwan.

Ko has so far taken no action and continues to allow China's five-star red flag to be brazenly waved in the streets of the nation's capital.

Why are al-Jazeera and the New York Times paying so much attention to the seemingly trifling actions of the CPA and the inconsequential Biyun Temple?

The aim is to send a warning message, not just to Taiwan, but to the world, by revealing the extent to which the nefarious actions of the Chinese are already wreaking havoc across the globe, the most naked example of which being Beijing's infiltration of Taiwan's democratic society.

Most important of all, the motive is to wake Taiwan from its apathetic torpor and shake the nation into action.

The Diplomat online magazine last month published an article by the leading light of the Sunflower movement, Lin Fei-fan (林飛帆), entitled "Will Taiwan Trap Itself Into 'One China' Again?"

The piece reflects the increasing concerns in the democratic free world about the growing threat posed by China, which was summed up neatly by the editor's preface to the article that said: "In Taipei Mayor Ko Wen-je, China might have found a useful wedge to influence Taiwan's domestic politics."

As the article goes on to say, the wedge being used by Beijing is Ko's support for China's "two sides of the Taiwan Strait are one family" doctrine.

The idea first appeared in a white paper published by the CCP in 2000, called "The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue." Since Beijing knew Taiwan would never accept its "one China" principle, it began to revamp its "united front" tactics, jettisoning the principle and substituting it with then-president Ma Ying-jeou's (馬英九) spurious so-called "1992 consensus."

After the Democratic Progressive Party took power again in May 2016, realizing that the KMT was a spent force, Beijing turned to Ko as their new poster boy for "one China" and presented the "two sides of the Taiwan Strait are one family" formula as a replacement for the "1992 consensus."

In his article, Lin expresses the concern that China's switch to this new "one family" mantra represents the start of a new phase in Beijing's "united front" campaign to infiltrate Taiwan's political system.

Ko consistently shies away from confronting his critics and has not dared to issue a direct response to Lin's criticisms, simply saying that he is "pragmatic."

Pragmatic, perhaps, but when dealing with China, pragmatism is always a one-way street ending in a cul-de-sac of accepting the "one China" principle. The same pragmatism is never reciprocated by China.

There is no evidence that Beijing views Taiwan as an equal member of its "one family."

CPA head Zhou Qinjun's (周勤軍) threat to Lee is an example of this.

Zhou has said: "I don't believe in Taiwanese people, only in 'Mainlanders,' since 'Mainlanders' have family in China."

Does Ko have family in China? He does not, so his assertion that he belongs to "one family" is nonsense. Despite this, Ko is willing to be used as a pawn in China's "united front" strategy.

Even if Taiwan were to engage in a charm offensive of goodwill and friendship toward Beijing, would it be able to win concessions from China's leaders?

During China's Cultural Revolution, there was a song titled Both Sides of the Yangtze River, which contained the lyrics: "The greatness of Heaven and Earth is no match for the benevolence of the party/your parents' love is no match for the love of Chairman Mao [Zedong (毛澤東)]/socialism is worth ten-thousand thousands/the fathomless depths of the world's rivers and the seas are no match for the deep bonds of class solidarity."

Where do pro-unification Taiwanese imagine they exist in the pecking order of China's "one family"? Even the composer of this song ended up in the 18 layers of hell.

The world's media are beginning to voice increasing concern over Taiwan's precarious position, but in Taiwan, China's five-star red flag continues to flutter in the wind.

We cannot allow Ko and his ilk to peddle Beijing's "one China" principle.

By the same token, voters cannot allow the government to get away with turning a blind eye to Beijing's imposition of new residence permits — Chinese ID cards in all but name — on Taiwanese living in China.

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The fight for the nation's capital is also a fight to protect Taiwan.

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Translated by Edward Jones

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