

Slap proves how willing the KMT is to coexist

Written by Lin Jui-hsia 林居夏

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While Minister of Culture Cheng Li-chiun (鄭麗君) was moving from table to table toasting attendees at a lunar year-end banquet in Taipei on Tuesday last week, veteran entertainer Lisa Cheng (鄭麗芳) — also known as Cheng Hui-chung (鄭惠中) — suddenly slapped her in the face.

Lisa Cheng later said that she assaulted the minister for trying to abolish Taipei's Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall.

Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Vice Chairman Hau Lung-bin (郝龍斌) in a message of support for Lisa Cheng on Facebook said: “Who gave the Democratic Progressive Party permission to uproot [the nation's] culture, brainwash the public, engage in desinicization and willfully sever its ties to its origins?”

We should really thank both Lisa Cheng and Hau — her for her slap and him for his Facebook post. Their actions should help wake the public up from its trance-like futile pursuit of reconciliation and coexistence with the KMT. This is especially true for university students who have been attentively hosting the Coexistence Music Festival since 2013.

Lisa Cheng's administering of a smack in the chops has once again revealed the KMT's true colors — a political party whose members have consistently pursued a historical narrative at odds with the policy of coexistence favored by the majority of Taiwanese.

The people who seek a path of coexistence also include so-called waishengren (外省人) — “Mainlanders,” those who came from China with the KMT after the war and their offspring. Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) Chairman Lau Yi-te (勞義德) is a good representative of this group.

At a 30-year retrospective exhibition on the 228 Incident held last year at the National History Museum in Taipei, there was a video segment that contained an interview with Lau. The interviewer asked Lau why, as a Mainlander, he lent support to the 228 movement.

Lau replied: “Once you understand the history of the 228 Incident, it is impossible not to feel

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sympathy for Taiwanese.”

If even Mao Zedong’s (毛澤東) contributions to China can be criticized as being 10 percent good and 90 percent bad [former Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping introduced the official line that Mao was “70 percent right and 30 percent wrong”], then in today’s democratic Taiwan, we should no longer pursue personality cults.

We should be even stronger in our insistence on accurately portraying Chiang Kai-shek’s (蔣介石) contributions and mistakes.

This is not a question of whether we should purge all aspects of Chiang or engage in all-out desinicization. It is about the public having the confidence to begin confronting historical truths — a matter of awakening rather than a political matter of purging all references to Chiang and desinicization.

Following South Africa’s transition to democracy, justice Albie Sachs was appointed to the Constitutional Court by then-South African president Nelson Mandela in 1994.

Sachs famously said that one country cannot have two histories and cultures.

If Taiwan is to pursue a path of reconciliation, it needs to find a way to construct a common foundation for coexistence out of two diametrically opposed historical perspectives. We need to find a way forward through the tangled web of disagreement and dissenting views.

Today Taiwan stands for democracy, liberty, the rule of law and human rights. That is a considerable achievement. We should treasure it as one.

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