

Over the past few years, China has been pushing for exchanges between the education sectors on the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. Many Taiwanese school principals are eager to be given the Chinese government's luxury treatment and are falling over each other to visit China, as if they were surrendering to Beijing.

I am a junior-high school principal, and I have led students in three different exchange trips to Japan. Although I had to pay for my own trips without receiving even a subsidy, I was still delighted by each trip, because these were all equal exchanges: We were treated with respect, it was all a matter of cultural education purely for the purpose of learning and there were no ulterior political motives or bad intentions.

China is throwing money not only at Taiwan's education sector, but also at its arts groups, elected representatives, and borough and village wardens as well as temple operators and even organized crime. All kinds of pro-China organizations that promote unification are the targets of Beijing's dollar diplomacy.

The phenomenon is partially the result of the Taiwanese's greed for small gains.

However, there are also other aspects to this state of affairs that all Taiwanese should be aware of and that require in-depth discussion.

First, do other nations also enjoy the same kind of preferential treatment that China offers Taiwan? If they do not, then such exclusive treatment is abnormal and Taiwanese must all become aware of this.

Second, is China treating exchanges with Taiwanese as state-to-state exchanges or is it treating visiting groups as domestic in a bid to create the impression that Taiwan is a part of China?

Faced by such brainwashing, Taiwanese might become numb and gradually come to see the

Buying off gangsters, politicians and temples

Written by Chen Chi-nung 陳其南
Wednesday, 27 February 2019 04:44

two sides as belonging to one country. Beijing is trying every means to achieve this goal, and Taiwanese must stop pretending that they do not understand this.

Third, China has zero tolerance to religion, and it is therefore beyond comprehension that it financially supports temples in Taiwan. It is precisely because religion is deeply rooted in people's hearts that religious groups are able to so easily mobilize large crowds. Once they are entangled with money, temple operators receiving Chinese funds will naturally become followers of the Chinese Communist Party and serve as its mouthpieces against the Taiwanese government.

Fourth, China is violating human rights and shirking its responsibility to fight crime in collaboration with the rest of the world. It even colludes with organized crime in Taiwan by funding the operations of criminal organizations and attacks on pro-Taiwan groups to promote unification. This highlights China's strategy of entering into alliances with the minor enemy against the major enemy.

The values of Taiwan's cultural and educational sectors, politicians, temples and gangsters have all been different in the past, but tragically, they now all share common ground when it comes to the issue of receiving Chinese funds and preferential treatment.

Chen Chi-nung is principal of Shuili Junior High School in Nantou County.

Translated by Eddy Chang

Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2019/02/27](#)