

Claiming equality as a normal state

Written by Peng Ming-min 彭明敏
Tuesday, 07 January 2020 08:42

On Jan. 2, 1970, 50 years ago last week, I disguised myself and escaped Taiwan. This year also marks the 56th anniversary of the publication of the *Declaration of Self-Salvation of the Taiwanese People* (台灣人民自救宣言).

It saddens me that the other coauthors of the declaration, Hsieh Tsung-min (謝宗敏) and Wei Ting-chao (魏廷朝), have passed on, leaving only me.

I was able to escape a difficult situation with the aid of foreign governments, international non-governmental organizations, foreign missionaries and well-known academics who, in the spirit of chivalry and human rights, accepted me, protected me and helped me rebuild my life in exile.

Looking back at this benevolence is unbearable and fills me with eternal gratitude.

My comrades have passed away, and I am also an old man. I want to make a sincere appeal in the spirit of the *Declaration of Self-Salvation*.

Two-thirds of a century have passed since the end of World War II. The world has changed, Taiwan is democratizing, and the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT), which implemented political terror and persecuted Taiwanese under the protection of martial law, is in decline and no longer capable of oppressing Taiwanese.

China has risen in its place and makes territorial claims on Taiwan that constitute a serious threat. Using every possible means, it issues verbal attacks and military threats and will not rest until it has annexed Taiwan.

Fellow citizens, we must once again realize that democracy, freedom and human rights are not God-given rights, but were won by the sacrifices of those who came before. They are priceless assets that belong to all Taiwanese.

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We must protect them with our lives, for the sake of the current generations and for all generations to come.

A look at the situation in Xinjiang today tells us that a Chinese occupation of Taiwan would be the end of the nation.

Our elected leaders and representatives must boldly and courageously say “No” to China. Taiwanese must come together and express our determination to protect our freedom, democracy and human rights.

This is my urgent call to future governments:

First, never yield Taiwan’s independence and sovereignty.

Second, we live in a politically and jurisprudentially abnormal and hypocritical Taiwan. This has gone on for too long.

We must urgently create a normal state, by promptly calling a conference to found a new nation; using our collective intelligence to create a Taiwanese constitution, a new national title, a new national flag and a new national anthem; announcing the founding of a new state; and removing the word “China” from every public and private institution, company, organization, school and street.

Third, the educational system should be founded on identification with Taiwan.

Fourth, judicial reform and transitional justice have become empty slogans. Both require a forceful new start to build public trust in the judiciary, uphold justice and boost public morale.

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Fifth, current so-called “exchanges” with China are but a matter of suzerain China supervising its vassal state Taiwan.

The enemy enjoys freedom of speech in Taiwan, giving it free rein to promote unification, and the enemy’s national flag is displayed downtown as people wave it openly during street demonstrations.

However, Taiwanese traveling to China dare not even mention the words “Republic of China” or our president’s name, not to mention the words “democracy” or “freedom.”

This is absolutely unfair. Taiwan claims to be sovereign and independent, but the reality is that this sovereignty is being dragged through the mud and trampled on.

It is a matter of national humiliation.

Future governments must insist on equality in their “exchanges” with China. Whatever China is allowed to do in Taiwan, Taiwan should be allowed to do in China, and conversely, what Taiwan is not allowed to do in China, China should not be allowed to do in Taiwan.

Citizens of the enemy state visiting Taiwan should not be accorded freedom of speech. That a government is unable to implement even such a commonsensical policy is unheard of in normal countries.

Sixth, future governments must make it clear that Taiwan belongs to the ranks of democratic nations, such as the US, Japan and European countries, and work to win the support of democratic nations.

Seventh, future governments should apply for entry into the UN under a new national title. If

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unsuccessful the first year, another application should be made the next year and the next, even if it takes three, 10 or 50 years until the application is successful.

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