

Although China calls it “novel coronavirus pneumonia” and the WHO calls it “COVID-19,” everyone in Taiwan, from officials and the public to the media, is avoiding these names and sticking with the familiar “Wuhan pneumonia.”

This is not because Taiwan is not a member of the WHO, or because the WHO has morphed into a “Chinese Health Organization” — “Wuhan pneumonia” is the right word because it fits the facts.

In Western countries they have an expression: “If it looks like a duck, swims like a duck and quacks like a duck, it probably is a duck.”

“Novel coronavirus pneumonia” originated from Wuhan, China, no matter whether it came from a market that sells wildlife meat or the Wuhan National Biosafety Laboratory. Wuhan has by far the largest number of confirmed cases of the virus and the highest number of deaths from the disease.

There is nothing discriminatory about calling it “Wuhan pneumonia” — it is just a reflection of the facts.

As Japanese lawmaker Hiroshi Yamada of the Liberal Democratic Party said in a committee meeting: “Given that the novel virus comes from Wuhan in China, allow me to call it Wuhan pneumonia.”

Wuhan pneumonia has exposed the lie of China’s “rise as a great nation.”

The *Wall Street Journal* went so far as to label China the “sick man of Asia.”

In contrast, Taiwan’s disease prevention has proved much better than China’s. The important

NHI resources must be protected

Written by Chin Heng-wei 陳恆偉
Sunday, 15 March 2020 07:36

thing is that Wuhan pneumonia has made Taiwanese realize just how different Taiwan is from China, not only with regards to their political systems, but also in their degree of civilization.

The true meaning of the abstract phrase “a common destiny” has become apparent in people’s daily lives.

Three or four years ago, singer Huang An (黃安) sparked controversy when he came back to Taiwan to be treated under the National Health Insurance (NHI) program, despite having lived and worked in China for many years.

Now there is a new controversy about Chinese children who have one Taiwanese parent, and who want to be evacuated to Taiwan and likewise benefit from Taiwan’s NHI system.

Incidents such as these have caused Taiwan to take the path of self-identification. It is ironic that Wuhan pneumonia should be a turning point in Taiwan’s history.

Those half-Taiwanese Chinese children, whom the media collectively call “*xiao ming*” (小名), and Huang have inspired calls for the National Health Insurance Act (國民健康保險法) to be revised.

It is true that NHI resources would be the main concern regarding such amendments, but they also involve the less obvious factor of national consciousness.

The *xiao ming* controversy signals the formation of a Taiwanese national consciousness. Many people agree that those people could choose which nationality they preferred, and that if they did not choose Taiwan, they should have to make their own arrangements and pay their own bills.

As for the so-called “Huang An clause,” it represents the consolidation of this national consciousness.

NHI resources must be protected

Written by Chin Heng-wei 陳恆偉

Sunday, 15 March 2020 07:36

Huang has lived in China for years and earned tens of millions of New Taiwan dollars each year as an entertainer, but he only paid the minimum NHI premium to enjoy the scheme's welfare benefits. Besides, he has frequently insulted Taiwan and acted like a guard dog for Chinese authorities.

It is important to amend the law to resolve the injustice and unfairness of Chinese and people like Huang enjoying the benefits of NHI resources.

The amendments would shut the back door that was opened under former president Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) for Chinese citizens to qualify for NHI coverage.

Amid the Wuhan pneumonia outbreak, an opinion poll published by the Taiwanese Public Opinion Foundation (台灣民意基金會) found that 83.2 percent of respondents identified themselves as Taiwanese, while only about 10 percent identified as either Chinese or Taiwanese and Chinese.

These results demonstrate the collective consciousness of Taiwanese, and highlight the big difference between Taiwan and China.

The Huang An affair has dragged on for a long time. Only now has it been brought out into the open along with the *xiao ming* problem. It is high time these problems were dealt with.

Chin Heng-wei is a political commentator.

Translated by Julian Clegg

Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2020/03/15](#)