

ANALYSIS : Yang's resignation leaves the DPP shaken

Written by Taipei Times

Wednesday, 11 August 2010 08:58 -

The defection of Kaohsiung County Commissioner Yang Chiu-hsing (楊秋興) from the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) has shaken the opposition party, angered party leaders and accelerated calls for the DPP to do some soul-searching.

It has also caused many to wonder what exactly caused Yang, considered a rising political star, to break from the party he joined more than three decades ago.

Born into a rural farming family in Kaohsiung County, Yang's five-star governance rating, easygoing attitude, soft-spoken demeanor and charisma represented everything the DPP hoped would help them persuade voters to choose green in the upcoming elections.

However, those hopes turned to dust on Monday when Yang waved goodbye to the DPP by using four simple words from a Robert Frost poem — that he would take “the road less traveled.”

In the same breath, he also told supporters he would never join a political party again.

His frustration with the DPP and the political process was not a one-day affair, sources close to Yang said. What upset the two-term county commissioner the most was his very public spat with Kaohsiung Mayor Chen Chu (陳菊), who took the DPP nomination after winning the party primaries.

During his announcement on Monday, Yang said that during the primaries, his election posters were taken down, his supporters hassled and he was also allegedly followed by the police during campaign activities.

“DPP headquarters failed to step in to stop this. That's why we felt the process was very unfair. At one point, I even wanted to drop out of the primaries,” he told reporters. “I told the [DPP] that they were trying to pressure me to give up my bid.”

While these accusations have been rejected by both Chen's campaign office and the DPP — which sent senior party officials down south on numerous occasions to mediate — it did not alleviate Yang's belief that not only were the odds stacked against him, but that DPP officials were biased when it handled the affair.

“He's not your average politician. He's a deeply emotional person that truly felt he was wronged and misunderstood during the party primaries,” said Jim Lee (李金生), a political analyst and Taiwanese culture professor at the National Taipei University of Education.

In one of the most damaging episodes of his competition with Chen, a number of Kaohsiung City councilors accused the 54-year-old father of two of sexism after local newspapers ran an advertisement that used sexual innuendo to attack Chen. The ads were later revealed to have

ANALYSIS : Yang's resignation leaves the DPP shaken

Written by Taipei Times

Wednesday, 11 August 2010 08:58 -

been taken out by a figure not connected with Yang's campaign.

Even after the DPP headquarters later issued an edict forbidding the use of election ads, Kaohsiung City DPP councilors continued to use TV and radio spots in support of Chen, who later beat Yang by a margin of 18 percent in the primary polls.

"During this time, Chen's campaign made some mistakes and the DPP made some mistakes, but it all added up and ended up pushing him over the edge. In the end, it was an emotional decision," Lee said.

Another factor is alleged involvement by Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) officials in the area. Speculation arose after DPP officials realized that the person who took out the damaging newspaper ads was politically motivated and well funded, although unconnected with any of the two camps.

"The KMT has been influencing the DPP primaries in one way or another and this has become quite apparent down south. I'm not even sure [KMT Secretary-General] King Pu-tung (王浦東) understands the true extent of this," DPP-spokesperson Lin Yu-chang (林育昌) said.

While these reports have been rejected by the KMT — King said he would take "personal responsibility" if the allegations could be proven — people close to Yang said his behavior after the primaries had become increasingly uncharacteristic.

Yang yesterday told reporters he conditionally supported the recently concluded Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement with China, one of the KMT's cornerstone policies that he had formerly bitterly opposed.

His remarks have confused even one of his former senior advisers, who said he was "very surprised" at the sudden shift and that he could no longer recognize Yang's way of thinking, despite serving with him in the county government for years.

"Of course he was upset after the primaries, but now he's changed and we can no longer accept his political thinking," said Han Ming-jung (韓明俊), a former political consultant with the county government.

Han resigned along with a dozen other consultants immediately after Yang's announcement.

He said that following the party primaries, Yang had taken time off to think about his next move and had been persuaded by business figures and the media. There was also the involvement of a Buddhist priest over the past month who told Yang he deserved a chance and influenced him greatly, Han said.

While the DPP said his addition to the Greater Kaohsiung elections would not put a large dent in Chen's campaign — polls by the party show she will still win by 30 percent — some DPP officials were angered by Yang's breaking of his promise to abide by the results of the primaries.

ANALYSIS : Yang's resignation leaves the DPP shaken

Written by Taipei Times

Wednesday, 11 August 2010 08:58 -

DPP Deputy Secretary-General Fred Hung (洪耀星) said Yang had told party officials that he would stay with the party regardless of whether he won or lost the party primaries and would help stump for the winner in Kaohsiung County, where he holds considerable sway.

“He told us one thing and did another ... Yang recognized that he was the underdog and his loss was unsurprising, but he had hoped that the party primaries would deal him some sort of surprise,” Hung said

In the end, what it came down to was that Yang just enjoyed his job so much that he couldn't let go and became persuaded by the other factors, Hung said.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2010/08/11](#)