

'Freedom' key amid Dalai Lama plans

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The Dalai Lama, left, shakes hands with New Power Party Legislator Freddy Lim in Dharamsala, India, on Monday.

Photo: Yang Heng-hui, Taipei Times

The Legislative Yuan will always welcome people from any country if they are willing to help spread democracy and freedom, Legislative Speaker Su Jia-chyuan (蘇嘉全) said yesterday in response to reports that the Dalai Lama was enthusiastic about a possible return to Taiwan.

"The Legislative Yuan very much welcomes those who facilitate the promotion of democracy and freedom," Su said when asked about a lawmaker's invitation to the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader to visit Taiwan and speak at the legislature.

The Dalai Lama on Monday said he would be glad to visit Taiwan again after New Power Party (NPP) Legislator Freddy Lim (林錫山) asked him during a trip to India to speak at the Legislative Yuan.

Lim said that peace can only be achieved if people from different countries are willing to work together.

According to Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Legislator Kolas Yotaka, who also visited the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan government-in-exile's prime minister, Lobsang Sangay, said that many Taiwanese Buddhist groups had tried to arrange for the Dalai Lama to visit Taiwan, but the administration of former president Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) refused to issue him a visa.

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We hope that with a consensus from both sides and at an appropriate time, the Dalai Lama will be allowed to visit Taiwan, Sangay said.

The Dalai Lama supported President Tsai Ing-wen's (蔡英文) public apology to Aborigines on Aug. 1, saying that people should seek to resolve conflict and avoid extremist or radical criticism, Yotaka said, adding that criticism would not solve issues and would prevent true settlement.

Yotaka wrote on Facebook that the Dalai Lama said the apology was "very good."

"I think in many parts of the world, the stronger nation, when they come, they simply ignore the feelings of native people," the Facebook post said.

"Now that is eventually changing worldwide, I think; the recognition of native people's rights. So I think with that kind of world trend... I think Australian government also expressed something similar... Canada as well. So Taiwan also. I think [it is a] very good trend, I think. Good trend," it said.

The Dalai Lama was concerned over the rights of residency of Tibetans-in-exile in Taiwan and openly praised the Tsai administration's proposal to abolish the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission, Yotaka said.

The commission symbolizes Chinese authority on Tibetans and has proved to be a long-term roadblock in communication between Taiwan and the Tibetan government-in-exile, Sangay said, adding that the Tibetan government-in-exile has high expectations of the Tsai administration.

Meanwhile, Lim said he would be founding a group for Tibet in the Legislative Yuan so Taiwan would be able to speak up for oppressed people on the international stage.

The government has remained silent in recent years, despite Chinese oppression of human

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rights, Lim said. Now that the younger generation is on the rise, it is a key moment for Taiwan to start reinforcing its presence within the international human-rights community, he said.

It is a key moment to boost ties with the Tibetan society, he added.

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