Taiwanese independence pioneer Su Beng, left, speaks after President Tsai Ing-wen read a birthday card she wrote to him at a celebration of his 100th birthday on Ketagalan Boulevard in Taipei yesterday.
Photo: Chang Chia-ming, Taipei Times

Hundreds of people yesterday joined an early celebration in Taipei for Taiwanese independence pioneer Su Beng's (□□) 100th birthday, while Su urged President Tsai Ing-wen (□□□) to ensure that Taiwanese could become the master of their own nation.

The block party on Ketagalan Boulevard was organized by dozens of pro-independence groups, musicians, performers and publishers, which featured performances, speeches and a book fair.

Tsai made a brief appearance at about 5pm, joining Su on stage to give him a hug and some gifts.

She read a birthday card she had written to him: "I am thankful that you have proven to Taiwanese with your life that people can earn dignity if they persist with their dreams."

Su, a vocal supporter of Tsai during her presidential campaign, thanked her and other participants, saying that although he rarely celebrated birthdays in the decades after he left Taiwan at age 20, he felt blessed by the birthday wishes of fellow independence advocates.

Life is "worth living" with a lifelong commitment to Taiwan and its people, he said, adding that

he had achieved little over his decades of activism.

Su asked Tsai to lead her administration in line with public opinion to achieve the goal of "making Taiwanese their own master," adding that this is an optimal time to achieve independence.

"The world has changed greatly. We need to be more hard-working to understand the public while working in line with public opinion," Su said.

"President Tsai Ing-wen can hopefully put forward policies that can correspond to global trends and satisfy the need of Taiwanese," he said.

"The train of progress has started. This is the first time that Taiwan has had a female president in its 400-year history. The nation has to do the right thing and be united and persistent while preventing the Chinese Nationalist Party [KMT] from regaining power to become a leading nation on equal footing with other nations," he said.

Tsai's efforts alone cannot achieve the goal; it requires everyone's commitment, he said.

Su, whose given name is Shih Chao-hui (□□□), was born in Taipei on Nov. 9, 1918. According to the traditional Chinese way of counting birthdays, that makes him 100 years old.

He left Taiwan to study at Japan's Waseda University.

After graduating in 1942, he went to China, where he worked undercover as part of the Chinese Communist Party's anti-Japanese efforts, but eventually grew dissatisfied with the party.

He returned to Taiwan in 1949, where he founded the Taiwan Independence Association a year later.

He attempted to organize an armed resistance against the KMT, but was forced into hiding in 1951. He escaped by boat to Japan in May 1952, but was arrested and served time for illegally entry,

However, after the KMT announced he was wanted in connection with a plot to assassinate Chiang Kai-shek (□□□), Japan gave him political asylum and he lived there in exile until 1993, when he snuck back into Taiwan by boat.

He has advocated Taiwanese nationalism as a foundation to abolish the Republic of China framework.

His 1962 book, *Taiwan's 400 Year History*, is considered a landmark work of the independence movement.

Source: Taipei Times - 2017/11/06