

Ma Ying-jeou, the Dalai Lama, and Taiwan Part II, When is the Timing Right?

Written by Jerome F. Keating Ph.D.
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In 2008, the Dalai Lama had expressed interest in coming to Taiwan, but President Ma Ying-jeou refused him entry saying that the "timing was not right." While one might puzzle over when and why the timing would ever be right or not right for an internationally known religious leader and man of peace to visit a country, most assumed that Ma in typical toady fashion did not want to "offend" the People's Republic of China (PRC). Certainly, Ma did need China at this time. He had made a campaign promise to raise the country's growth rate from 5 per cent to 6 per cent. Regrettably in Ma's first year in office the growth rate had dropped to 3 per cent and China was the only trick that the one-trick pony had in his bag to salvage Taiwan's economy.

Ma was being a toady, but it was somewhat understandable. Ma did not want to be revealed as a poor leader, and he was getting desperate over losing face. As was said, the one-trick pony did not have any other tricks left with his simplified grasp of the economy. What choices are left for a toady?

Given the above, it was then surprising to some that Ma would reverse his decision in August 2009. Why, all of a sudden, had the timing become right?

Enter Typhoon Morakot which devastated Taiwan and clearly revealed what many insiders had already known. Ma Ying-jeou is not a good leader. He can only lead when there is no challenge, when all that is needed is posing for photos, and when the tasks are such that the toadies underneath the toady can handle them.

Ma still did not want to offend the PRC, but he now had a greater image problem within Taiwan. He desperately needed someone or something to distract from how the typhoon exposed his and his government's weak performance. Ma needed the Dalai Lama more than the Dalai Lama needed him.

Even with this, one can still wonder, does Ma not realize that the PRC can see through him just as easily as the people of Taiwan now see him for what he is? Does Ma not realize that the PRC is no less adept at recognizing a toady for what it is and taking advantage of it?

Ma continues to live in his own world, and the PRC is upset that the Dalai Lama is coming to

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Taiwan. Still Ma is saying that he will not have time to meet this spiritual leader who will help take the pressure off of Ma. How's that for timing?

Source: [Jerome F. Keating's writings](#)