

Taiwan, Asia's Supposed Voldemort, That-Which-Must-Not-Be-Named

Written by Jerome F. Keating Ph.D.
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Shades of Harry Potter, but the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) continues to place Taiwanese in the Chamber of Secrets. Secrets? Yes and we are talking about more than just Ma Ying-jeou's refusal to provide any transparency on ECFA, the mythical savior to salvage his failed economic policies. As he gives the farm away, Ma wants Taiwanese to blindly trust his last ditch speculation. No the greater secrets we are talking about are the way KMT leaders enter into discourse with China. Whenever the subject of the nation state of Taiwan comes up, it is treated like the Voldemort of Asia, "That-Which-Must-Not-Be Named."

KMT Chairman Wu Poh-hsiung is the most recent example. In his meeting with Chinese President Hu Jintao, Wu said that he comes from and represents "that island over there." That island over there? Like an uncultivated savage Wu in a belittled way seeks to explain his origins before the emperor, for the nation of Taiwan must not be named in the presence of Chinese officials. That would supposedly jeopardize negotiations on the farm give-away.

Ma similarly denies stating his title of President of that which must not be named. He hides behind statements like "we won't talk about it, if you won't talk about it." And of course the last thing that China wants to talk about or admit is that Taiwan is a nation state. So Ma obliges them and prefers to go back to talking about the fiction of the 1992 consensus. Fiction is always better than reality for Ma.

Even the United States is party to this fakery. The State Department of the USA prefers to leave it in the limbo of discourse. Some sixty years after World War II, Taiwan's status is still spoken of as "undetermined." At least that is better than that which must not be named.

Past others like Lien Chan and James Soong missing the good old days of the privileged KMT one-party state have desired to keep their dinner and state invitations to China open. They have regularly refused to mention the sovereignty of Taiwan in China. That is understandable however since neither of them was able to democratically win the presidency of Taiwan in free elections. Thus they may be looking for last ditch ways to prolong their defunct political careers. Is there an age limit on being appointed Provincial Governor by China?

So the list goes on and on; no one in the KMT dares to mention Taiwan's sovereignty and its president in front of any Chinese officials or to promote its democracy there. But then comes the

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irony of ironies, the embarrassment of embarrassments, a woman, Chen Chu the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) mayor of Kaohsiung, has dared to name the unnamable and speak the unspeakable in China. And even stranger than that, stranger than fiction, she has managed to survive in the dragon's den and return to her nation of Taiwan.

What remains from this is for the rest of the world to learn that reality is better than fiction. Leave the fictional world of Harry Potter behind and face the reality of the Twenty-first Century. Taiwan is Taiwan; China is China. Dispense with the hypocrisies, dispense with the chamber of secrets; from now on, no one should be afraid to name that which must not be named.

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