

Are we on the brink of a new 228?

Written by Lin Yun-mei 林雲美

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Taiwan today faces a repeat of the tragic 228 Incident that took place 63 years ago.

Following the end of World War II, the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) government sent Chen Yi (陳儀) to head its occupation of Taiwan. Chen, his underlings and the armed forces under his command plundered Taiwan at will, with no notion of the rule of law.

Then came the Jiangsu--Zhejiang banking and commercial conglomerate (和成銀行), which unscrupulously took essential goods from Taiwan for sale in Shanghai and Hong Kong. This resulted in shortages of the goods needed for everyday life in Taiwan, and in unprecedented poverty and hardship.

What the Taiwanese could never have expected, however, was that the KMT government in Nanjing would dispatch troops from China to Taiwan to end protests with a massacre, indiscriminately killing many innocent victims from among the nation's prominent citizens and stifling demands for the rule of law.

The KMT imposed a "White Terror" on Taiwan during 38 years of martial law. Nevertheless, throughout this time countless people struggled bravely for democracy and freedom. Under the presidencies of Lee Teng-hui (李登輝) and Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁), Taiwan's people at last enjoyed a taste of the rights they craved.

Nearly two decades of democracy and freedom in Taiwan have made it an object of envy for many people in China and Hong Kong. For the KMT and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), on the other hand, Taiwan's democratic experience is a great threat, because for dictatorships the call for democracy and freedom is the biggest taboo.

That is why the KMT and CCP have connived in using the media they control to abuse Taiwan's freedom of speech to destroy the reputation of Taiwan's past democratic governments.

KMT candidate Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) won the 2008 presidential election with a call to "look after our bellies first." Since being elected, however, Ma has not only failed to revive Taiwan's economy, but even allowed Taiwan's scientific, technological and agricultural know-how, the key to its wealth, to be transferred unimpeded to China.

Ma welcomes Chinese tourists, subsidized by the Chinese government, to visit Taiwan, with the promise that their spending will save Taiwan's economy.

Ma's actions have harmed Taiwan, but they are in line with his political goals. He has marginalized Taiwan's economy to the extent that it has no choice but to rely on that of China. As a result, it is becoming no more than a link in China's economic chain.

More than that, Taiwan is becoming a part of China in a political sense. This is entirely in keeping with Ma's dream of "eventual unification." Taiwanese are very worried about the critical

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loss of sovereignty that Ma has intentionally brought about.

However, there is a minority of people in Taiwan who sing the praises of reliance on China.

How many peoples and how many countries, since ancient times, have shed their blood and fought wars to win their independence? How many nations have upheld their independence, even at the cost of being poor? Taiwan is a self-sufficient country, but our government is willing to give up its sovereignty and allow it to be annexed by a big power. That big power is none other than China, a country where power is highly centralized and that is notorious for bribery, corruption and cruelty.

Our rulers are rushing to push our small but beautiful Taiwan and its people, who have grown accustomed to democracy and freedom, into the abyss. What can we call them, if not fools?

As Ma and his ilk do all they can to promote unification, the inhabitants of Taiwan find themselves on the brink of a new 228. If China's People's Liberation Army sets foot in Taiwan, its aim will be to exterminate not just one person or one set of people, but Taiwan's entire way of life.

That is because Taiwan's democratization has made legality, openness, freedom, respect for human rights, and protection of the environment the standards of social behavior in politics, religion, economics and every profession, and this overall way of life is in conflict with China's centralized power.

The bloody historical record of the CCP's rule over China and Tibet shows the dire results awaiting the Taiwanese after unification. Standing as we are on the brink of a new 228, the Taiwanese public should unite and make our voices heard. We must expose the connivance between Ma and his Chinese counterpart Hu Jintao (胡錦濤) and resolutely resist annexation by China. That is the only way to prevent a repeat of the 228 Massacre.

Lin Yun-mei is the daughter of 228 Incident victim Lin Mosei (林墨生).

TRANSLATED BY JULIAN CLEGG

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