

The rape of Taiwan

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
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At the drop of a word by a pugnacious superintendent, the young protesters were suddenly handcuffed and brusquely forced to the ground by police officers before being dragged away, some screaming in pain, others at the brutality with which their peaceful sit-in had been broken up.

The dozens of activists, many of them veterans of other campaigns in recent months, were in Yuanli Township (元里), Miaoli County, to support local residents who oppose a controversial wind turbine construction project that has been forced upon them by an intransigent county government.

Amid the commotion, the superintendent, who earlier had been caught on film saying he “doesn’t understand the law,” warned the protesters they could be charged under articles 304 — causing, by violence or threats, another person to do something they have no obligation to do, or preventing another person from doing something that they have the right to do — and 306 — unlawfully entering a dwelling or structure of another person, the adjacent or surrounding grounds, or a vessel belonging to another — of the Criminal Code. Articles 304 and 306 carry a maximum of three years and one year imprisonment respectively.

Some of the protesters who were arrested were on the site; others, including the leader of the residents’ association, were nearby. By late Monday, an injunction had been issued against 14 of them.

This is the state of affairs under Miaoli County Commissioner Liu Cheng-hung (劉成宏). Last year, 300 Miaoli police officers used unprecedented force against protesters, several of them elderly, who were protesting against the construction of a funeral house in Houlong Township (後龍). Several sustained injuries.

How the National Police Administration can countenance such behavior is beyond comprehension.

Contrast those recent events with the case of Liu Zhongkui (劉宗貴), president of Great Dragon Century, a Chinese cultural and arts management firm, who earlier this year was allowed to

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leave the country despite allegations that he had sexually assaulted a 20-year-old female employee at a hotel in Taipei (he reportedly gave her NT\$250, along with an order to keep her mouth shut, after forcing himself on her). Rather than investigate or even question Liu Zhongkui, the Taipei City Police Department facilitated the escape of a possible criminal, who could have faced up to five years in prison (ironically, there are echoes of Article 304 in this).

Surely, President Ma Ying-jeou's (馬英九) administration's "goodwill" policy toward China does not entail turning Taiwan's 23 million people into servants of the Chinese. Surely it does not mean that Chinese visitors with political connections can behave as they see fit, rape Taiwanese women and not suffer the consequences.

How much longer will Taiwan look the other way when Chinese break the law in Taiwan, steal from hotel rooms, repeatedly vandalize natural parks and monuments, collect intelligence or relieve themselves in the middle of an international airport? If it continues like this, the Chinese could be excused for thinking that they own the place and rule Taiwan.

This must stop. Now. Police can no longer be allowed to be complicit in a system that cracks down on innocent Taiwanese who are fighting for the future of their country, while allowing Chinese visitors to get away with murder.

Chinese are not above the law, and Taiwanese are not below it. Anyone who thinks otherwise, people like Liu Cheng-hung and whoever allowed Liu Zhongkui to escape, should bear the full consequences for their views. Taiwanese have been obsequious for far too long. It is time to grow a spine.

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