

KMT's past crippling the nation's free future

Written by Lee Min-yung 李敏勇
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What is stopping Taiwan and China from establishing friendly state-to-state relations? Only if Taiwanese keep this question in mind can they avoid being ensnared in the Chinese Nationalist Party's (KMT) idea of China.

Taiwanese must think about it, as must the Chinese. Relations between Taiwan and China cannot be based solely on the political calculations of the KMT and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The issue calls for a global historical perspective and progressive thinking.

If Taiwan and China agree to exist as separate independent states, the nations can live together in friendship and peace.

The brotherly relationship between the US and the UK is a good example. Plenty of Taiwanese live in the US, and more Chinese are doing the same. The US broke away from Britain by winning its War of Independence and later built a close friendship with the UK.

In the past, relations between Taiwan and China were entangled in the enmity between the KMT and CCP. The struggle between the "Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石) clique" and "Mao Zedong's (毛澤東) bandits" scattered China's blood and tears onto the soil of Taiwan.

Chiang used to say that "gentlemen and bandits cannot coexist." Now, the Republic of China (ROC) and the People's Republic of China have swapped roles, with the former looking more like an outlaw on the world stage. The CCP seems to be waiting to finish off the KMT's ROC, which it sees as a "false China."

Where the two sides once stood as enemies, they now make use of one another, yet the CCP's goal of eliminating the ROC remains unchanged.

What if Taiwan were to emerge as a new nation, other than the ROC? Could the Chinese revolution, which the CCP believes it has yet to finish, become finished when the old history comes to an end? Would history be clarified without the clouds of confusion stirred up by the

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KMT's idea of China? At last, the curtain could fall on the disputes between the two political parties, which have had such an unsettling effect on Asian and world history.

Would that not be a worthy new choice?

It depends on Taiwanese will. It depends on whether they are able to break free of the KMT and its constraints. For the original Taiwanese — Aborigines and the descendants of early Han settlers — the colonial syndrome has written a sad history. For the more recently arrived Taiwanese, their colonial syndrome — that of fleeing and living in exile — is a bitter story, too.

Maybe we should think about how the US gained its independence. Were the founding fathers of US independence not British colonialists and their descendants? Yet they broke away from Britain, in the name of freedom. In creating a new country and the American dream, they also brought a new enlightenment to the British empire.

Only when the ROC is relegated to the pages of history can the sadness and bitterness of history be brought to a close, and not only for Taiwan. China, too, will see a new political climate when that day comes.

The KMT, out of its own self-interest, will not willingly let go of the nation, and that is Taiwan's predicament.

Human life comes to an end, but the cycle of life and death can lead to the birth of a nation. Only when it is born as a nation can Taiwan escape from its post-war history, in which the sad story of its original inhabitants and the bitter story of the exiled newcomers have been intertwined. Only then can Taiwan embark on a truly friendly and peaceful relationship with China. Only then will China be able to behave as, and be seen as, a truly civilized country.

It can be done, so why hold back?

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