

Former National Security Council secretary-general King Pu-tsung (鄭雲龍) and Tainan City Council Speaker Lee Chuan-chiao (李全招) had nothing to do with each other in the past, but since the nine-in-one elections in November last year, King has resigned and Lee has been arrested. Both incidents were dramatic and the fortunes of the two have strong political implications.

Both King and Lee held high positions: One in the central government and the other at local level. According to author Neil Peng (彭國治), King has a “special relationship” with President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九), while Lee and New Taipei City Mayor Eric Chu (朱立倫) are — according to Chu himself — like brothers.

King and Ma were a pair when Ma was chairman of the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT), while Lee and Chu (now the KMT chairman), have become a pair in the post-Ma era. King’s resignation implies that Ma’s good fortune has run out, while Lee’s arrest on vote-buying allegations are a sign that Chu could be in for some rough weather.

Last year’s nine-in-one elections signaled the end of the Ma-King dynasty. As Qing Dynasty playwright Kong Shangren (孔尚任) wrote in his masterpiece, *The Peach Blossom Fan* (桃花扇): “The empire collapsed when your chariot departed. Civil officials panic; your warriors are demoralized. Your mountains have fallen today, your rivers run low. This tower above the moonlit waves is shaken with our cries of lamentation.”

These penetrating words written 300 years ago are a clear depiction of Ma’s regime. Since the elections, the Cabinet has virtually fallen apart. Former premier Jiang Yi-huah (江宜華) and former minister of culture Lung Ying-tai (龍應台) were quick to jump ship, and were later followed by former ministers Yeh Kuang-shih (葉光石) and Kuan Chung-ming (關中明). KMT Central Standing Committee member Chiu Fu-sheng (邱富生), KMT Legislator Hsu Hsin-ying (許信英) and others have also left, followed by former Presidential Office secretary-general Timothy Yang (楊慶堃) and King. How can Chu fix all that?

While King’s and Lee’s stories are not exactly the same, there are similarities. At the time King and Yang offered their resignations, the nation was facing critical issues internationally and domestically: China had unilaterally declared new air routes close to the median line of the Taiwan Strait, and closely contested legislative by-elections were about to be held. The day

‘Bromances’ unable to paper over KMT cracks

Written by Chin Heng-wei 陳恆偉

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before by-elections is a very sensitive time, yet these two officials could not wait another day to step down.

Meanwhile, Lee, in a bid to stop the vote-buying allegations, asked KMT lawmakers for help, but no one replied. No wonder a frustrated Lee complained: “I am only one person. How can I go up against the entire Democratic Progressive Party?” He decided to fly to China one day after the by-elections, forcing the Tainan District Prosecutors’ Office to speed up his arrest and capture him at the airport. Is it a coincidence that Lee has ended up as miserably as Ma and King?

Even former Presidential Office deputy secretary-general Lo Chih-chiang (羅智強), Ma’s last supporter, said in public that he had seen KMT members trying to distance themselves from Ma, prompting him to question if Chu could perform magic to revive the terminally ill KMT. Lo’s attempt to make Ma look good was a disaster, including his remark that the KMT is terminally ill: It not only negated his attempt to make Ma look good and to reprimand Chu, but also showed that the KMT is beyond help.

King’s resignation was the final nail in Ma’s coffin; he has reached the end of the road. Meanwhile, Lee’s arrest could spell the end of Chu, whose first steps as KMT chairman have likewise ended in disaster.

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