

Education shows Ma's obstinance

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
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In President Ma Ying-jeou's (馬英九) New Year's Day address marking the Republic of China's centennial in 2011, he pledged "to create a sounder educational environment for our young people" and stressed that "education is the cornerstone of national power and children are our hope for the future."

So much for flowery language.

Little did Taiwanese know that four years later, the young people touted by the president as the nation's "hope for the future" would be greeted by his government with barbed wire and cast-iron doors as they sought to make their voices heard.

Student groups from high schools nationwide have, of their own initiative, collaborated to hold forums and stage protests against the Ma administration's controversial changes to high-school social studies guidelines.

The students appealed to the Ministry of Education for talks, saying the modified curriculum stems from the ministry's failure to maintain procedural justice and that changes made to history textbooks reflect a "China-centric" view.

However, instead of listening to the students' opinions, the ministry appears to be bulldozing through the adjustments so they are implemented in the academic year that begins next month.

While the students ought be congratulated for manifesting the purpose of education, which is to foster their ability to think critically and act correspondingly, the Ma government ought be ashamed for not only failing to adhere to transparent policymaking, but for displaying unbridled arrogance in forcing Ma's way no matter what.

Sadly, this total disregard for the fundamental principle of public governance is not new for the Ma administration.

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The same absurd abuse of power was also displayed by the Executive Yuan's 21-member Referendum Review Committee, which exists only to screen people by rejecting proposals backed by hundreds of thousands of signatures and disenfranchising people who seek direct participation in public decisionmaking.

While Taiwan might be a democratic country, the Ma government leaves no room for discourse on public affairs, let alone participation.

Instead, it brutally forces its own will regardless of any opposition.

"If we do not stand up today, we will not have a chance tomorrow to stand against the government's injustice," protesting students said outside the K-12 Education Administration building in Taipei on Monday.

While some have sought to smear the protesting students by accusing them of acting as a tool of the opposition, the students clearly know what they are doing and it appears they would not be easily swayed by any political party, be it the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) or the Democratic Progressive Party.

With the government turning a deaf ear to the protests and remembering Ma's 2011 address, many are becoming more convinced that the purpose of the ministry is to serve a specific ideology.

They arrive at the conclusion that the Ma government, clinging obstinately to its course, is rotten to the core; incapable of being a government that listens to, has respect for, or engages in dialogue with this nation's citizens.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2015/07/16](#)