

This nation belongs to Taiwanese, not the KMT

Written by Lee Min-yung 李敏勇

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Had it not been for Taiwan, the Republic of China (ROC) would have perished on Oct. 1, 1949, when it was ousted by the People's Republic of China (PRC). Despite that, the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT), the fragments of a past China, hijacked Taiwan and continues to talk about its "glorious restitution" of the nation, words spoken to justify and consolidate its colonial rule. However, it was only able to take over and then occupy Taiwan thanks to the Allied Powers, and after that it continued to benefit from the Cold War era.

This means that for the KMT, Taiwan and the ROC belong to the party. The so-called "party-state" has become a colonial doctrine, and fundamentalism has become a kind of cultural doctrine that it has fed to KMT members and others who the party has brainwashed. In the past, dissidents were charged with colluding with the Chinese Communist Party, and now they are accused of pushing for Taiwanese independence. Everyone understands that the party-state is a parasite and that its existence is dependent on Taiwan's lack of independence.

Under these circumstances, the KMT sees a transfer of government power as the termination of both party and state, even if it is still called the ROC. During past KMT rule, no Taiwanese could be its presidential candidate, because Taiwanese were seen as "loyal subjects" of the Japanese emperor and they could therefore not be national leaders according to the party-state ideology. However, the democratic movement and the 1996 direct presidential election reversed the party's principle that "a gentleman (the ROC) and a thief (the PRC) cannot coexist." Since then, the KMT claims to love Taiwan when it gains power and turns to China for comfort when it loses power, treating the thief as its father. Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石) and former president Chiang Ching-kuo (蔣經國) must be turning in their graves; but they are dead and cannot interfere with the living.

In the KMT's colonial party-state ideology, high-school history and civic education are tools for brainwashing students instead of cultivating their knowledge and manners like in a normal country. Taiwan's democratic development began after Chiang Ching-kuo ended the Martial Law period in 1987. Former presidents Lee Teng-hui (李登輝) and Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁) untied the colonial knot during their terms in office. The KMT saw this as attempts at "de-Sinicization" aimed at removing the fetters of the party-state, and it was worried that the absolute rule of the party-state would no longer continue to exist, as Taiwanese were awakening.

After President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) brought the KMT back to power in 2008, he adjusted the high-school curriculum guidelines. However, this time around, the situation deteriorated, as the guidelines were adjusted behind closed doors in a wicked attempt at adding the KMT's doctrine

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in preparation for losing power for a second time. By forcing through the adjustments, which violate procedural justice, the government angered high-school students and caused them to organize, while also attracting a lot of criticism from the public. It seems the KMT is busy digging its own grave.

The KMT colonial authorities want to fetter and restrain young people, but they are in fact being fettered by their own ideology, as it restricts their thinking. The curriculum controversy is proof of this, showing that if the ROC continues to be obsessed with China and fails to promote a transition to localization, the guidelines will put a period at the end of its history.

The KMT is no longer able to control Taiwanese, as people have gradually reshaped the nation from a shared community into a republic of free people. The nation belongs to its people, not to the KMT.

Lee Min-yung is a poet.

Translated by Eddy Chang

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