Before leaving Taiwan, President Ma Ying-jeou (□□□) promised that his meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping (□□□) would be on equal footing. However, what actually happened at the meeting gave the impression that Taiwan was a legitimate part of China and that Ma was happy about it.

Although Ma repeatedly said ahead of the meeting that the bottom line of his cross-strait policy was the so-called “1992 consensus” — a term that refers to a tacit understanding between the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) and Beijing that both sides acknowledge there is “one China,” with each side having its own interpretation of what “China” means — and that one of the objectives was to strengthen the “one China, with each side having its own interpretation” framework, he failed to honor his words.

In the opening remarks of the meeting, Ma said that he would seek to solidify the “1992 consensus,” adding that the “consensus” refers to the cross-strait agreement on the “one China” principle — without mentioning the second part of the “consensus” that each side of the Taiwan Strait could interpret the “one China” principle on its own.

This is a serious mistake that Ma has made, and probably an intentional one.

He could not have forgotten the second part of the “consensus,” because whenever the public raises doubts about his idea of “one China,” he defends it by saying that no matter how Beijing interprets “one China,” Taiwan would always interpret it as the Republic of China (ROC), and that Beijing would respect Taiwan’s own interpretation of “one China,” despite the differing opinions.

Ma’s omission of “each side having its own interpretation” is not the only evidence that he is intentionally pushing the nation closer to China, with unification as his final goal.

Significantly, it was odd that Ma chose the occasion in which China and Singapore are to celebrate the 25th anniversary of their diplomatic ties to meet with Xi.

Normally, when leaders of two nations are to meet, they make arrangements specially for that meeting. That has been the case in previous cross-strait talks.For example, when the then-Straits Exchange Foundation chairman Koo Chen-fu (□□□) and China's then-Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits chairman Wang Daohan (□□□) had their historical meeting in Singapore in 1993, they traveled to Singapore for the sole purpose of having the meeting.

Ma meeting Xi during his state visit to Singapore was more like an emperor summoning a subordinate to meet him while he is traveling.

The arrangement for the press conference after their meeting was far from an equal footing as well.The Chinese side held its press conference first, with the attendance of China's Taiwan Affairs Office Minister Zhang Zhijun (□□□). Taiwan's news conference came afterward, with Ma hosting it.

Apparently, China did not consider Taiwan its "equal," therefore Xi did not appear in a joint press conference with Ma, as he did with British Prime Minister David Cameron when visiting the UK last month, or with US President Barack Obama during his September visit to Washington.

Xi was not only unwilling to appear in a joint news conference with Ma, but assigned the job of hosting the press conference to a low-ranking official in charge of Taiwan affairs, obviously treating Taiwan as its subordinate, like a regional government, and Ma apparently had no problem with it.

The meeting between Taiwanese and Chinese leaders could have been a historical moment, but Ma's performance — like an excited child finally getting to meet his hero — has turned it into a humiliating experience for the nation.

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