

During last Saturday's presidential and legislative elections, 56 percent of voters, 3.08 million more than those who voted for the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) candidate, backed Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Chairperson Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) to be their new president. Of the 113 legislative seats, the DPP took 68, gaining a legislative majority. Not just the third transfer of political power in the history of Taiwan's democracy, it was also the first time there has been a full transfer of power — both the presidency and the legislature — to an opposition party. It is a fresh start for Taiwan's democracy.

Since former president Lee Teng-hui (李登輝) was in office, Taiwan has experienced two terms of a Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁) DPP administration, followed by two terms of a Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) KMT administration. The DPP, under Tsai's leadership, has led Taiwan into a new era.

Voters, having experienced the Chen and Ma administrations, have in the past weighed up the two leaders against one another and compared the DPP's previous time in office with the current KMT government. However, this victory for Tsai and her party, shows that voters have made a new choice.

Voters have given Tsai and her party the opportunity to run the nation with a complete majority; this is due to both a re-evaluation of the rather unfair verdict given to Chen's DPP administration in comparison with Ma and the KMT, and to the political awakening of young Taiwanese.

Chen's government, which did not have a working majority within the legislature, had to deal with boycotts by opposition lawmakers. In contrast, Ma's government, despite its legislative majority, managed to screw up all on its own.

The past 16 years of Chen-Ma governments can be viewed as an initial bumpy stretch of road along the journey to the full democratization of Taiwan. In the era of post-authoritarian politics, Taiwan has yet to display its full potential as a nation.

Ma, making use of society's reaction to the Chen administration, boasted that he was ready and that complete power meant taking complete responsibility. Ma relied on his "6-3-3" election

## No normality without left and right

Written by Lee Min-yung 李敏勇

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pledge to make the argument for a change of government. In the 2008 election, Ma restored his party to power and in 2012 he achieved a second term in office.

However, unable to adjust his policies to reflect the public's desires, Ma let voters down. His government instead concentrated on currying favor with Beijing and drawing Taiwan ever closer to China.

During the Chen administration, the KMT did everything possible to block the party's policies. Yet, when the KMT came to power, all the party did was rely on China for political power. The period from 2000 to this year are the "lost years" of Taiwan's path to democratization.

After these 16 years of neglect, the power and responsibility of a majority government that Tsai now has to shoulder is reminiscent of the DPP's groundbreaking 2000 election victory, when a whole host of problems needed to be urgently tackled by the incoming government.

The DPP has temporarily responded to the problem of Taiwan's national status by adapting its policy to maintaining the so-called "status quo," which is a result of an unholy alliance between the KMT and the Chinese Communist Party, the evil of which has yet to be rooted out of Taiwanese politics. The problem of national identity is still holding back the nation's development.

If Tsai's government is unable to transcend "one China, different interpretations" — the difference between a Taiwanese and a Chinese national identity — Taiwanese party politics is unlikely to ever attain a state of normality. Political parties should not be identified along the lines of being pro-Taiwan or pro-China, instead they should identify as either "left" or "right." After all, without normalization of the nation, how could it develop competitively along the lines of left and right?

*Lee Min-yung is a poet.*

Translated by Edward Jones

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