

New status for today's Taiwan is self-identity

Written by James Wang 王景賢

Tuesday, 26 January 2016 07:40

On Jan. 16, Taiwanese voters manifested their autonomy and determination to bring about reform through the presidential and legislative elections. In doing so, they added a new page to Taiwanese history books by thoroughly rejecting the Chinese Nationalist Party's (KMT) stale old tricks and deceit.

The overwhelming landslide victories of president-elect Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) were given rarely seen attention in the international community, which also praised the accomplishments and maturity of Taiwan's democracy.

In the eyes of the international community, the most significant aspect of these elections were that voters turned their backs on President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) and his administration, and their policy of sacrificing Taiwan's independence and accepting Chinese sovereignty.

A majority of the electorate agreed with Tsai's position on maintaining the "status quo" — the "status quo" that everyone understands and that the international community supports.

Maintaining this "status quo" means safeguarding Taiwan's status as a de facto independent nation.

The international media say it like it is, without any need for innuendo or embellishments: They are of the opinion that the outcome of the elections is a sign that identification with Taiwan has grown stronger.

The younger generation who have grown up in a democratic and free society find it impossible to accept the Chinese identity that China and the KMT are trying to shove down their throats.

The official responses from countries around the world have been to extend formal congratulations and well wishes from their top leaders. In Japan, the foreign minister issued an official statement and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe expressed his best wishes during a question-and-answer session in the Diet.

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The UK, Germany, France, Australia and Canada also issued statements through their foreign ministers or in the name of their foreign ministries, while in the US, the National Security Council and the Department of State expressed their best wishes.

Perhaps all these leaders had all agreed ahead of time to congratulate Tsai on winning the presidential election and on praising the maturity of Taiwan's democracy — the nation's third transfer of government power — the way the Taiwanese public elected their leader in free elections and how it all confirmed Taiwan's de facto independence and autonomy.

They also said that they looked forward to the continuation of cross-strait dialogue and that they hoped that peace and stability would continue to reign.

This was all a matter of “preventive diplomacy” aimed at China in a joint attempt to press Beijing to abstain from any actions that could endanger peace and stability.

During his two terms in office, Ma has pushed Taiwan from its de facto independence toward dependence on China and the idea that “one cannot say that the Republic of China exists” — both of which are dead ends.

These views run counter to what a majority of the public thinks, and in the end, voters have finally rejected them.

China must now find a way out by itself, by learning how to differentiate between de facto and de jure independence, and by stopping its interference in the de facto independence that the Taiwanese public have chosen and that the international community also supports.

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Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2016/01/26](#)