

Quiet revolution on rough ground

Written by Lee Min-yung 林敏雄
Thursday, 05 May 2016 07:44

New government, Same nation. Therein lies Taiwan's dilemma.

President-elect Tsai Ing-wen's (蔡英文) new government is taking shape. By all appearances it seems as if it means to take a conservative, steady path forward, steering clear of party politics. Anyone hoping for a major revolution is probably going to feel a little disappointed.

In January's elections, Taiwanese made their intentions clear: They gave the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) its marching orders.

It is only natural that they would have great expectations after the changing of the guard. However, what kind of new dawn can premier-designate Lin Chuan (林煥章) usher in? Will he be able to please all the expectant voters?

The 16 years and two administrations between 2000 and now, under former president Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁) and outgoing President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九), were essentially wasted years: In terms of national reconstruction and social reform, Taiwan has been treading water. The new government seems to want to embark upon a new "quiet revolution."

The quiet revolution was the blueprint for political reform bequeathed to Taiwanese from former president Lee Teng-hui's (李登輝) years in office.

It was the historical process from the 1990s that made possible the peaceful transfer of political power from the KMT to the Democratic Progressive Party in 2000. It is also Lee's political legacy.

Lee governed the nation for the KMT, but as an ethnic Taiwanese.

He set the foundations for a Taiwan after the era dominated by late presidents Chiang Kai-shek

Quiet revolution on rough ground

Written by Lee Min-yung 李敏雄
Thursday, 05 May 2016 07:44

(蔣經國) and Chiang Ching-kuo (蔣經國).

The quiet revolution achieved more than just economic success — its core values also encompassed educational reform, democratization and localization.

Nevertheless, Lee would be sure to recognize that the revolution was far from perfect.

The China factor and the problems thereof, in which Taiwan is mired, are integral to the authority and the very core of the KMT. This has held back the political reform Taiwan needs to allow it to blossom as a nation in its own right.

The reforms of the Lee years meant far more to Taiwanese than the changes introduced during the Chen and Ma administrations, when that initial momentum was lost. The post-war generation has nothing new to offer, obliging Tsai to return to the year 2000, and to start anew on the road to reform.

By choosing Lin as her premier, the new Cabinet is to start where Lee left off. Tsai wants to set off on a sure footing with her new administration.

The quiet revolution was based on Lee governing as an ethnic Taiwanese, but having the full machinery of the KMT at his disposal.

He was never able to implement his vision of China and Taiwan enjoying special state-to-state relations, leaving office before he was able to do so.

Chen's years in office were politically tumultuous, and the incoherence of Ma's administration has seen Taiwan's development stall. Tsai needs to pull off something new.

Quiet revolution on rough ground

Written by Lee Min-yung 李敏勇
Thursday, 05 May 2016 07:44

New government, same nation. Therein lies the challenge facing Taiwan.

Lee Min-yung is a poet.

Translated by Paul Cooper

Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2016/05/05](#)