

The Puzangalan Children's Choir, whose members are Paiwan Aborigines and whose name means "hope" in Paiwan, performed the national anthem during President Tsai Ing-wen's (〇〇〇) inauguration ceremony. The choir had been invited to a choir festival in China's Guangdong Province next month, but after their inauguration performance, they were told that the invitation had been withdrawn because China thought that their "status" was "too sensitive."

From the viewpoint of Taiwanese Aborigines, one wonders what crime these Paiwan children have committed by performing at the presidential inauguration. Cross-strait problems and the independence-unification issue notwithstanding — what aspects of life that the 23.5 million people living in Taiwan are engaging in, such as going about their daily lives, studying or paying taxes, can be disconnected from this nation or its government?

What does the children's participation in the inauguration ceremony have to do with the Chinese government? Taiwanese Aborigines are not related to China, either genetically or historically. We are Austronesian, not Chinese.

On top of that, these lively, adorable Paiwan children did not actually perform the "national anthem" in the traditional sense in that they sang in their Paiwan language, not Mandarin.

The question to pose to the Chinese government is this: Must Aborigines choose the time and venue before they can sing their own songs to avoid the epithet "sensitive status?"

China has always seen itself as a great nation with a population of 1.3 billion, yet the way it likes to handle things seems to be the very definition of narrow-mindedness.

Aborigines have lived in Taiwan for at least 8,000 years. Through our age-old music, with every note and melody, we give witness to the beauty of this land and its oceans that have nurtured these peoples for thousands of years.

However, the tyrannical Chinese government, as well as the very few pro-unification supporters

## Protecting the essential culture of Taiwan

Written by Omi Wilang 吳明

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in Taiwan, decided to forsake China's greatness and ruthlessly hurt the innocent souls of a group of Aboriginal children.

As the tyrannical cold-blooded China-centered imperialism exerts its power, China has deprived itself of a veritable feast of Taiwanese culture and music. The cancelation of the Puzangalan Choir's performance is China's loss.

In recent years, with the help of some people in Taiwan, China has arranged for visits by Taiwanese Aboriginal groups. There is nothing wrong with interaction between the citizens of two nations, but a problem arises when China aggressively deploys its unification game plan to make Taiwan one of its "provinces" or "districts."

Music and art are, as they should be, borderless. The heavenly music of Taiwanese Aborigines is the voice that represents the nation's most essential culture. It is also an asset that belongs to the whole world.

Advanced countries should fulfill their responsibility to safeguard and treasure this asset, and they should not trash it or kill it in such a barbaric and uncivilized manner. Apart from its economy, what else is left in China?

*Omi Wilang is a pastor at the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and secretary-general of the Indigenous Peoples' Action Coalition of Taiwan.*

Translated by Ethan Zhan

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