

During his meeting with Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Chairwoman Hung Hsiu-chu (洪秀柱) last week, Chinese President Xi Jinping (习近平) — who was recently named part of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) "core" — said that "1.3 billion Chinese will not agree to Taiwanese independence. We are determined, able and prepared to handle the problem of Taiwanese independence. If we do not handle that, we will be overthrown."

It was as if the future of the CCP depends on which direction Taiwan takes. Was Xi saying that to threaten Taiwan, or was he trying to conceal his insecurities? If Taiwan really is that important to China, the CCP is extremely vulnerable.

Chinese would not overthrow their government simply because it cannot prevent Taiwanese independence. Chinese are happy with their government as long as they have enough food to eat and clothes to stay warm. Indeed, since ancient times, their philosophy of life has been that "it is better to be a dog in a time of peace than a human in a time of war."

However, under the strict rule of the CCP, even when deprived of sufficient food and clothing, Chinese have not rebelled like the military officials Chen Sheng (陈胜) and Wu Guang (吴广) did against the Qin Dynasty.

When Xi attended the G20 summit in Hangzhou, China, earlier this year, surrounded by international representatives and enjoying their attention, a family tragedy took place in the Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture in Gansu Province: A young mother named Yang Gailan (杨改兰) killed her four young children before killing herself with poison. Several days later, her husband also committed suicide by taking poison.

A reporter investigating the case said that the mother killed herself and her children because they were extremely poor and had no government subsidies to cover their basic living expenses. The way they lived was akin to those who lived during the Great Famine between 1959 and 1961. According to locals, the family was struggling to make ends meet.

"Their children had no clothes, so in the winter they stayed close to the fire and in the summer they ran around naked. Three years ago, the family had government subsidies, but township

and village governors later terminated them,” one villager said.

Another said that “they could not get any more subsidies because they had three cows. They relied on two of them for farming, and the third one was a calf. They could not sell them for money.”

For people living in pain like Yang, Taiwan is too far away to mean anything. Their life would not be any better if Taiwan became part of China, nor would it become worse if Taiwan announced its independence.

The CCP sees itself as the guardian of Chinese territory, perhaps because it is the only excuse it can use to justify its legitimacy. However, since the party took power, it has lost much territory which it claims is “sacred and inviolable.” When China lost the Battle of Guningtou in Kinmen, which ended its attempt to invade Taiwan, there were no angry Chinese trying to overthrow the Chinese government. When Mongolia joined the UN with the support of Russia and gained status as an independent nation, nobody in China tried to subvert the CCP. When former Chinese leader Mao Zedong (毛泽东) decided to give Vietnam an island in the South China Sea, nobody rebelled against that decision. When former Chinese president Jiang Zemin (江泽民) signed a secret pact with Russia which gave away several hundred thousand square kilometers of controversial land near the Sino-Russian border, still nobody in China tried to overthrow the CCP.

Why does Xi appear so threatened by the possibility of Taiwanese independence?

Xi is not worried that Taiwanese independence would prompt Chinese to overthrow the government. He only wants unification across the Taiwan Strait because it would allow him to rise to the stature of Mao. As Mao wrote in one of his poems: “Great men will rise in our time.”

Xi wants to be one of those great men, but he cannot achieve that without annexing Taiwan. He has condescended to meeting with the KMT because he wants the party to help lead the way for the CCP in Taiwan.

## **Xi's greatness depends on Taiwan**

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