

The missed power of a name

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
Tuesday, 05 September 2017 07:24

While the nation reveled in Taiwanese athletes' outstanding performance at the Taipei Summer Universiade, the legislature on Thursday passed amendments to the National Sports Act (國家體育法).

While the long-overdue legislation has been touted as a big step toward improving the nation's sporting environment for the development of athletes and enforcing accountability and financial transparency of sports governing bodies, the Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) performance has left many people shaking their heads.

During a legislative review of the draft amendments, the proposal to change the name of the "Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee" to the "National Olympic Committee" was dropped, with the DPP saying that priority should be given to athletes' rights, rather than making a fuss over a name.

Pathetic.

It is regrettable enough that Taiwanese athletes have to compete in the international sports arena under the ridiculous name "Chinese Taipei," but it is far more frustrating, and disappointing, that lawmakers did not even try to have the nation's Olympic committee properly addressed at home. Is this not part of the rights of athletes who compete to bring honor to their nation?

People who argue that politics and sports must not mix should bear in mind that Taiwan has been subjected to using the meaningless name "Chinese Taipei" in line with the Olympic model, which is itself a result of China's political manipulation.

The Olympic model refers to an agreement reached in 1981 between Taiwan and the International Olympic Committee that only the name "Chinese Taipei" — not "Taiwan" or the "Republic of China" (ROC) — and only the Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee flag — not the ROC flag — can be used at Olympic events.

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Just because Taiwan's official delegation has to march under the absurd "Chinese Taipei" banner, it does not mean the nation's own Olympic committee has to also be called "Chinese Taipei."

The DPP's passive mentality is exactly what Beijing is counting on to continue belittling the nation internationally.

As the DPP shuns calling the nation's Olympic committee by its rightful name, it is worth noting that a group in Japan has launched a petition calling for Taiwan's national team to take part in the 2020 Tokyo Summer Olympic Games as "Taiwan," not "Chinese Taipei."

The group's effort ought to put President Tsai Ing-wen's (蔡英文) administration to shame.

Self-respect gains respect.

Now that the DPP has forsaken a chance to rectify the committee's name when it had the power to do so, what grounds does the DPP government, or the nation as a whole, have to protest against other nations calling Taiwan "Chinese Taipei" or to demand due respect for Taiwan as a nation?

It is truly pathetic that the DPP government is doing nothing and letting the image of the nation's Olympic committee be undermined through inadequate reference.

It seems the DPP government is content with issuing quiet rhetoric and expressing regret whenever Taiwan is subjected to absurd treatments at international events.

The Tsai administration's passivity is disappointing and raises the question: How does it plan to assert Taiwan's international presence and uphold the nation's sovereign status on the international stage?

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Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2017/09/05](#)