

Self-serving ideologies have become a malaise

Written by Chang Kuo-tsai 張國燾

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Six years ago, Biyun Temple in Changhua County's Ershuei Township (二水) fell into the hands of construction company owner Wei Ming-jen (魏明仁).

Since then, Buddhist scriptures have been replaced with portraits of former Chinese communist leaders Mao Zedong (毛澤東) and Zhou Enlai (周恩來). A red banner reading "The People's Liberation Army wholeheartedly serves the people" hangs on the temple wall and China's five-star red flag flies above it.

The sound played over its loudspeakers early each morning is not the rhythmic tapping of "wooden fish" and the chanting of Sanskrit scriptures, but China's national anthem, March of the Volunteers.

How ironic it is for a temple-shaped building that still bears a religious name to spread propaganda for the atheistic Chinese Communist Party (CCP), not to mention that when Wei was in the army, he was a chief counselor in charge of ideological education.

The bizarre contradictions involved are enough to send shivers down a person's spine.

Few people have ever heard of Wei, but he is not the only person in Taiwan to get his ideology in a twist. Plenty of well-known figures have done the same thing.

Take for example Hsu Li-nung (許立群), "spiritual leader" of the New Party. When he was the director-general of the Ministry of National Defense's Political Warfare Bureau, he fervently led the troops in shouting "Down with communism."

However, since leaving office, he has repeatedly led groups of fellow veterans to China to drink wine and chat with communist generals.

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It would be hard to find anyone keener to be a vanguard of China's unification strategy.

One second Hsu and his ilk shout themselves hoarse with anti-communist slogans and the next they blow the trumpet for alignment with the CCP. That is how twisted some people's military ideology has become.

Back in the day when the Three Principles of the People were still the Republic of China's holy creed, Ma Bi (馬比) was the man who compiled textbooks to brainwash senior-high school students, but in 1981 he defected to communist China.

Despite indoctrinating everyone with the three principles, he turned out to be an apostle of communism. How contorted can a person's political ideology get?

Then there is former premier Jiang Yi-huah (江宜華). When he was teaching political philosophy at National Taiwan University (NTU), he preached to his students that "a government that fails to respond to the people's demands is an insensitive government," but later on, when he was the premier, he looked on as baton-wielding police beat and kicked unarmed supporters of the Sunflower movement.

Different job, different brain — academics, too, can suffer from twisted thinking.

Another NTU professor, Kuan Chung-ming (關中明), broke the law and the university's regulations by serving as an independent director of Taiwan Mobile Group and teaching part-time at various universities in China.

Having flouted laws and regulations, Kuan still has the nerve to call on the Ministry of Education to approve his appointment as NTU president "in accordance with the law."

This shows how warped some people's juridical ideology can be.

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How can we accept a Taiwan where military, political, academic and juristic ideologies are in such a mess?

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Translated by Julian Clegg

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