

Admit the past, KMT, and move on

Written by Jerome Keating
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“That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet” — so argues Juliet in Shakespeare’s play. Similarly, a *de facto* independent democratic nation such as the Republic of China (ROC) would remain a *de facto* independent democratic nation whatever its name.

However, there is more: Taiwan would be better off in the international community by making the needed name change.

This is the revelation once again exposed by the Chinese Nationalist Party’s (KMT) Trojan horse, the “anti-annexation” bill — a proposal that was justifiably struck down in the Legislative Yuan.

The bill would have made it illegal for any civil servant to advocate renaming the ROC, changing its territory or dissolving, absorbing or replacing it.

Changes to a nation’s name or territorial boundaries are normal things that any nation can take care of, especially when the nation has a colonial past — so why the objection?

Why does the KMT continue to resist changing the name of the ROC? Taiwan is not China and does not need to have “China” in its name to remain the democracy that it is — so why?

Taiwan has never been a part of China. True, the western half of Taiwan was ruled by the Qing Dynasty, but that dynasty was a Manchu Kingdom, not Chinese. China was only one of several territories controlled by the Manchus.

This should lead Taiwanese to ask: What historical reality is the KMT not willing to face in a name change?

The first clue can be found in the wording of UN Resolution 2758 from October 1971.

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That resolution deals with China, restoring “all its rights to the People’s Republic of China” and recognizing its “representatives.”

The resolution goes on to “expel forthwith the representatives of Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石) from the place which they unlawfully occupy at the UN.”

Taiwanese must note that it was the representatives of Chiang — the KMT — that were expelled. The name “Republic of China” is not even mentioned.

The only link that that name has with China is that it represents a losing cause, a footnote in history from when its 1947 Constitution was disallowed after the ROC lost the Chinese Civil War in 1949.

The ROC government had no right to claim China, or even Taiwan. Its representatives became interlopers — a government in exile, a diaspora. As for Taiwan, the ROC presence raised another issue, one that the 1952 San Francisco Peace Treaty never resolved.

Taiwan is still in that political limbo, because 70 years on, the US — the primary victor in World War II — remains “undecided” on its status.

However, the more devastating reality is that the representatives of Chiang were expelled from the UN — although, technically, they walked out before they could be expelled.

This is the bitter reflection in the mirror of history that the KMT seeks to avoid by not letting go of the word “China.” The KMT would finally have to admit to being a government in exile, to losing the war.

It would have to admit that its representatives came as a diaspora, as carpetbaggers, to

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Taiwan, where they set up a government in exile, lording it over the Taiwanese.

This runs much deeper than the KMT simply being unable to face that its dream of ruling China has been lost. It would have to confront why it lost the war, despite having immense advantages over the Chinese Communist Party. It would have to admit that it lost the hearts and souls of the Chinese people, to admit that its hunger for power, privilege and entitlement overcame any sense of democracy that it had.

That is the beginning of the KMT's bitter reality. No amount of saying: "Don't forget what happened in Ju" (釣魚臺), as is chiseled in Kinmen, would change that. On the other hand — for the KMT — as long as the ROC name exists, the illusion can live on.

However, for Taiwanese, the ROC name, the ROC flag and the much-amended 1947 Constitution need to go. Nations change their names all the time, typically when they want to get rid of a colonial past. Such is the case for Taiwan.

In the 1960s, when the "fake" ROC, a founding member of the UN, was still in its heyday, Italy brought a motion before the UN that it recognize "two Chinas," just like there were "two Germanys" and "two Koreas."

At the time, Chiang had enough clout that he refused to accept the proposal, but within the decade, his representatives were expelled.

The bogus "1992 consensus" is another of the KMT's Trojan horses. Made up in 2000 by former Mainland Affairs Council chairman Su Chi (蘇起), when the Democratic Progressive Party took power, the whole purpose of the fake consensus has been to perpetuate the KMT dream and to deny the reality of its loss.

When the nation of Taiwan is recognized as being separate from the continent, then there will be no place for any imagined "high-class Mainlander" status. Their true carpetbagger history will be recognized.

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Fearing this exposure, some KMT members remain fixated on being part of China. They still consider it their motherland — so much so that they would rather be lackeys to Beijing than a free people on Taiwan.

Although, even as lackeys to Beijing, they would try to claim a higher station than the one they are entitled to on democratic Taiwan. The KMT's desire for privilege and entitlement — from the 1930s and 1940s — persists in their bones, their very DNA.

So, when Taiwanese see KMT members struggling to keep “China” in the nomenclature of Taiwan, they can comprehend how badly the party wants to hide from the reality of its history.

The hidden realities involve past crimes — including the 228 Incident, the White Terror era, martial law, stolen state assets — all of which must be brought into the light of day.

Taiwanese must be conscious of these realities not only when they choose their president in next month's elections, but also in selecting their legislators.

Taiwan is their real motherland and a democratic Taiwan has no room for anyone who wishes to return to the fake privileges of another continent.

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