

Han, Wu are the last two straws for the KMT

Written by Ling Po-chih 林政之

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In late July, the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) nominated Kaohsiung Mayor Han Kuo-yu (韓國瑜) as its presidential candidate. After that, most people, apart from Han's blindly loyal die-hard fans and including quite a lot of the more rational KMT members, did not believe that the "Han wind" could raise any more dust this year. In short, hardly anyone believes that the unpresidential-looking Han has any chance of becoming Taiwan's next president.

Han worked a miracle last year by singlehandedly saving the KMT, but he and KMT Chairman Wu Den-yih (吳敦義) are no longer celebrating. Han's view of himself as a savior is funny, and Wu's indescribable selfishness and domineering attitude are even more astounding.

Although the curtain has fallen on the sorry spectacle of the KMT's primary process, with all the fierce combat it involved, the aftermath is that the party's biggest donors have left and local factions are looking for alternatives, while party workers who shout slogans about unity are fighting among themselves. The party has sunk into a state of collective anxiety and even hysteria.

All agree that the only "miracle" that will happen next month is that the KMT will have taken just one year to waste its newly won political capital.

Han admits that he used to spend too much time on wine and women instead of attending to his proper job. When a tide of support brought victory for Han in the Kaohsiung mayoral election last year, he announced that he would quit drinking and gambling and turn a new leaf. Such weaknesses might have been permissible when Han was general manager of Taipei Agricultural Products Marketing Corp, but they are a bit too much for the mayor of Kaohsiung.

Now that he is standing for president, surely he cannot hoodwink the entire nation. Not to mention that less than half a year after taking up the post of mayor, he broke his promise to serve Kaohsiung and ran away to campaign for the presidency. His daily use of vulgar language proves that he lacks the sophistication and self-restraint required of a national leader.

Even more astonishing are the depths to which Wu has stooped.

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He moved heaven and Earth to become KMT chairman. His avowed cause was to take this tattered party that has lost its assets and luster, and lead it to rise again, but everyone knows his real motivation was his dream of becoming president. However, he did not have enough support within the KMT and his public image was not good enough.

Instead of standing in the party's primaries, he played a game of supporting Han, suppressing former New Taipei City mayor Eric Chu (蔡丁財), paying respect to Hon Hai Precision Industry cofounder Terry Gou (郭台銘) and disrespecting Legislator Wang Jin-pyng (王金平).

With all these shenanigans going on, Wang quit the race and Gou quit the party. The result was that the KMT nominated Han, the least legitimate candidate who might need to be replaced halfway through the campaign.

However, despite Wu's scheming, Han still had the support of his die-hard fans, so Wu's hopes of stepping in to replace him came to naught. Wu had to settle for the next best thing, nominating himself on the most controversial list of at-large legislative candidates. Unfortunately for the KMT, which was already lagging far behind, that controversy has made its prospects even worse.

With the result a virtual certainty, the election is now in garbage time. Han's immorality and incompetence, and Wu's bullying and selfishness are the main culprits that have ruined the KMT's prospects. Indeed, Han and Wu are the two last straws that will break the party's back.

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Translated by Julian Clegg

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