

Protests greet Ma at Academia Sinica

Written by Taipei Times
Friday, 18 April 2014 09:00 -



Former Financial Supervision Commission chairman Shih Chun-chi, right, protests outside the Academia Sinica during President Ma Ying-jeou's visit to the institution in Taipei's Nangang District yesterday.

Photo: Liao Chen-huei, Taipei Times

Several hundred researchers at the Academia Sinica shouted appeals first made by the Sunflower movement at President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) yesterday when he visited the nation's most eminent national research institution for an international conference about the Diaoyutai Islands (釣魚台) issue.

While Ma was giving the keynote speech at the conference, Chen Yi-shen (陳宜生) and Shiu Wen-tang (蕭文堂), associate research fellows at the college's Institute of Modern History, and Paul Jobin, an associate professor at the University of Paris Diderot, silently held aloft posters with messages for the president.

The posters read: "Taiwan's future, the people decide (台灣未來, 人民決定)," and "Cross-strait agreements, legislative oversight (兩岸協議, 立法監督)."

"It is a good occasion to have the president look at what people have to say because apparently he did not listen to them at all" during the Sunflower movement, regardless of his recent pledge to reform the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT), Shiu said by telephone last night.

Jobin said he attended the conference because he was interested in the topic and hoped to listen to exchanges of views between Ma and academics from Japan, China and Hong Kong.

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“The reason I joined with my colleagues who prepared the banners was that I feel concerned for young people. They are so brave and committed to democracy in Taiwan, but were disregarded and treated badly by the government, which is trying to indict them,” Jobin said to the Taipei Times by telephone.

He added: “I feel like we are going back to the nation’s bad times and I am concerned about the things that are going on in Taiwan.”

Jobin said he totally agreed with Ma’s reaction when former Japanese prime minister Yoshihiko Noda said to the UN in September 2012 that “there exists no issue of territorial sovereignty” over the Senkaku Islands, as the Diaoyutai Islands are named in Japan.

“President Ma said that: ‘Unless the relevant parties recognize that the dispute does exist, a resolution cannot possibly be reached.’ That is a very nice way of thinking. However, for the service trade agreement with China, he does not recognize there is a dispute. I hope he can act in accordance with his words,” Jobin said.

Jobin said that he was disappointed to see Ma leave after his speech without speaking with participants at the conference.

“I know he is a very busy man, but he could have stayed for five or 10 minutes. I think this is an indication of the way he understands democracy: He speaks a lot himself, but he does not listen to others.”

Kevin Chang (張其成), an associate research fellow at the Institute of History and Philology, said that there were 300 to 400 researchers, staff and students at a protest targeting Ma when he arrived at the Academia Sinica.

“It’s the first time in the country’s history that the Academia Sinica has assembled in a rally against a president,” Chang said.

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They were led by sociologist Chiu Hei-yuan (邱毅) and held sunflowers and banners while chanting slogans, including: “Restore constitutionalism, defend democracy (恢復憲政, 捍衛民主).”

At one point after Ma had arrived, Chiu shouted at the police, who were trying to ward off the protesters and media: “This is the Academia Sinica, not the investigative bureau.”

Source: [Taipei Times - 2014/04/18](#)