

The Taiwan Question

[1] The dead ROC regime was saved from the 1989 Tiananmen Incident

“Republic of China,” as it has been called until today by the regime in Taipei, was fortunate enough to survive from the same fate of South Vietnam into the 1980s (*1). It seemed that eventually the internationally isolated ROC would peacefully evolve to something like “Taiwan Special Autonomous Province, PRC” after Hong Kong’s return to China.

Then, suddenly, in 1989, there occurred the Tiananmen Incident. Instead of performing the task of liberating Taiwan, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) tanks showed up at Tiananmen Square—the heart of the PRC, on June 4th 1989 to crack down PRC’s own civilians. The dead ROC regime was saved from the vital mistake of the CCP leadership under Deng Xiaoping.

China’s democratization has been, and will continue to be the determinative factor for Taiwan’s security.

[2] The secret of the “Taiwan miracle”

For a short period soon after the Tiananmen Incident, overseas Chinese (especially students from the PRC) became the main focus of Chinese democratic movement, so Taipei invited many PRC overseas students to visit Taiwan to learn the “Taiwan miracle” (*2).

Some PRC students/scholars, including Hu Yaobang’s granddaughter and her husband, wrote articles praising the “Taiwan Experience” after visiting Taiwan, and some of them especially pointed out the success of the KMT “land reform,” compared with CCP’s “land reform” failure: Jiang Jieshi handsomely compensated Taiwan’s landlords and funded Taiwan’s enterprises to industrialized Taiwan, while Mao Zedong cruelly confiscated land and firms (and even worse, jailed or killed resistant landlords and business owners).

However, we soon realized that the Taiwan miracle is based on the looted assets from the mainland. The CCP would be much humane than any other governments if it took over China without a war against the U.S. in Korea (and the following decades-long sanction), a civil war with the KMT (and the lose of most China’s assets), a war against Japan, a century-long history of exploitation by foreign powers. Like Japan’s development to “rich state, strong army”(*3), this is another “Made-in-China” miracle. Indeed, it would be a miracle if Taiwan did not take off with a whole country’s wealth used for only 2 percent of the population.

Taipei never mentioned the “Taiwan miracle experience” again. It has no appealing toward the mainland people. It turns to the American public with a new propaganda of “Democratic Taiwan under the threat from Communist China.” In July 1999, Lee Teng-hui finally abandoned his former “State Unification Guidelines” (*4) and declared that the relationship between Mainland China and Taiwan was a “state to state” relationship. Lee appealed to the West to choose between a “dictatorial state” and a “democratic state.”

[3] Is Taiwan a democracy?

Taiwan is much more democratic than any other Chinese province. Almost all Chinese bless Taiwan and wish Taiwan to continue its democratic course normally and peacefully.

However, the way the people create their government does not determine whether the government is a local government or an independent state. Instead of taking advantage of PRC regime's dark image (especially on human rights) and bribing Americans (*5), Taiwan should face up to the mainland people; Instead of "freezing province" (eliminating Taiwan Province), a democratic people should eliminate the "foreign government" (as Lee told the popular Japanese writer Shiba Ryotaro): the ROC; Instead of sending the corpse of Jiang Jieshi back to the mainland, Taiwan should return the dead ROC "sovereign" or the "sovereignty" and the looted assets (for example, the Gugong National Museum, the KMT party assets) to the mainland (*6). Taiwan also should stop its hostile policy toward ordinary mainland people (*7). Otherwise, in the eyes of almost all Chinese mainland people, Taiwan remains a banditry region, whatever democratic it is inside. Unfortunately, this is the reality of today's Taiwan, and even the opposition DPP candidate swore to become "the President of Republic of China."

In one word, Taiwan hardly deserves the name of democracy, today.

[4] Some moderate suggestions to the Taiwan question

The PRC should return its original mission of "democratic revolution" to foster democratization in the mainland before unifying Taiwan (*8).

In principle, Taiwan, as every other part of China, has the right to be autonomous or to become independent (*9). However, Taiwan cannot not be forcibly separated from China (*10). Taiwan should stop relying on foreign powers militarily. Foreign powers will not bring true and permanent security for Taiwan.

The U.S. should respect the 1972 Sino-American Shanghai Communique in which the U.S. acknowledges "that there is but one China and that Taiwan is part of China" and declares that "the U.S. government does not challenge that position." The U.S. should also respect the 1982 Sino-American Joint Communique in which the U.S. agrees to reduce and, ultimately, stop arms sales to Taiwan. Washington should learn how to deal with other country's internal affairs beyond military buildups.

Remembering the origin of the Taiwan question, Japan's "minimal moral stance" is not be involved into a conflict with China over Taiwan for whatever excuses (Asai Motofumi, former director of Japan's Foreign Affairs Ministry's China section).

Unlike the NATOlant of Yugoslavia (*11), Taiwan will not become an Ampoland of China.

[NOTE]

*1. As revealed from recently declassified documents of Zhou-Kissinger meeting preparing for Nixon's China visit in 1972, Mr. Zhou clearly stated that in order for relations to be established between the United States and China, the U.S. must recognize that China "is the sole legitimate government in China" and that Taiwan is "an inalienable part of Chinese territory that must be restored to the motherland." And Mr. Kissinger said, "As for the political future of Taiwan, we are not advocating a 'two Chinas' solution or a 'one China, one Taiwan' solution." Rather, he said, "The political evolution is likely to be in the direction which Prime Minister Zhou Enlai indicated."

*2. I was also invited by ROC Administrative Yuan (Cabinet) to visit Taiwan. However, I refused to sign a humiliating statement which was required for all Chinese from "banditry areas" to enter Taiwan, and I lost the opportunity to enter Taiwan, until today. This is one reason I began to keep myself from the mainstream

overseas Chinese democratic movement when I realized that most of my democratic “comrades” have visited Taiwan under the same condition.

*3. For example, after the 1894-95 Sino-Japanese War, Japan robbed Taiwan from China and forced China to pay the amount of silver equivalent to Qing Dynasty’s three-year revenue, which is the direct reason of Qing’s bankruptcy.

*4. The ROC created the guidelines when Lee Teng-hui had not dominated the ROC/KMT regime. The guidelines listed “freedom”, “democracy” and “being wealthy” as the condition for (actually, obstacles to) unification. I wrote a review for the guidelines after I was invited to (ROC’s Mainland Affairs Committee Chairman) Huang Kun-hui’s speech at a conference in Tokyo in 1992. See “Nationalism and democracy of China,” *Democratic China*, September 1992, Tokyo.

*5. "They tried to compensate for their lack of access to top executive branch officials by cultivating members of Congress and their staff, governors and members of state legislatures, officials of important U.S. cities, and key media decision makers. They invited large numbers of national and local political figures to visit Taiwan (Bill Clinton made four visits while governor of Arkansas). They strengthened Taiwan's links with American universities and think-tanks, sponsored a large number of academic conferences at which Taiwan's problems were sympathetically discussed, and hired public relations firms to spread favorable publicity about Taiwan and to lobby members of Congress." (Ralph Clough, former director for Chinese affairs in the Department of State) On the other hand, the mainstream U.S. media always sends misleading messages to the American public by repeating such biased tone “Taiwan, which China considers a renegade province,” as if referring to “Kuwait, which Iraq considers a renegade province.”

*6. One of Jiang Jieshi’s aid, Chen Guofu, suggested that Taiwan contribute the mainland 10 billion USD for the PRC’s agreement “not invading Taiwan.”

*7. For example, when Yi Jin, a nameless democratic activist fled from the mainland to Taiwan, his legs were beaten broken by Taiwan’s police. There is little doubt that an “independent sovereignty” in Taiwan would become the first enemy of ordinary Chinese people. On the other hand, Taiwan bribed some famous figures to control and split overseas Chinese democratic activity.

*8. See my article on the relationship of China’s democratization and Taiwan’s future (*Overseas Students*, 1996), posted at <http://cpri.tripod.com/cpr9697/taiwan.html> (in Chinese B5).

*9. The CCP’s early documents all supported the freedom of other minority peoples within the Qing Dynasty to establish their own nation-states and Mao Zedong declared himself the Chairman of “Chinese Soviet Republic” in 1931. When Mao was interviewed by Edgar Snow in Yan’an in 1936, his answer to Snow’s question on the point indicated openness to independence for Taiwan: “and if the Koreans wish to break away from the claims of Japanese imperialism, we will extend the more enthusiastic help their struggle for independence. The same thing applies for Formosa”. See <http://cpri.tripod.com/cpr2000/taiwan-election.html> (in English) and <http://cpri.tripod.com/cpr2000/taiwan.html> (in Chinese GB).

*10. As a convenient comparison for "voices of the 21 million people," how many American people have a chance to hear any voice from Chongqing’s 30-million people? While most Americans never know even the name, Chongqing was ROC’s capital during the war against Japan’s invasion. Without the backing of 98 percent people, the PRC regime has lost the battle on Taiwan. It cannot even bring the new the Taipei regime to the negotiation table based on the “one China” principle even though Wang Daohan, the chairman of the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS), said that “one China” stands for neither the PRC nor the ROC.

*11. I am indebted from Jean Bricmont, “Why we still need to be anti-imperialists?” posted at: <http://cpri.tripod.com/cpr2002/bricmont.pdf>.

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