

Japan has to repay its moral debt to Taiwan

By Huang Chih-huei 黃智慧 /

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As a child, I used to look forward to the "glorious" month of October. However, as I grew up, I came to realize that the Double Ten National Day, Taiwan Retrocession Day and the birthday of Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石) were all in fact depressing holidays for a colonized people.

If the Japanese government hadn't abandoned Taiwan, Taiwanese wouldn't have to suffer all these painful memories. However, after World War II, the defeated countries -- including Germany, Italy and Japan -- had to give up their colonies without preconditions. Even the victors, such as the US, the UK, France and the Netherlands, were not excepted, as they had to relinquish control of a majority of their colonial territories.

I believe there are two reasons for that.

First, these countries had promised their colonial territories they could declare independence if they helped them win the war.

Second, imperialist ideologies had lost legitimacy during the second half of the 20th century.

Numerous colonies in the Arab world and north Africa subsequently declared independence after the end of the second world war.

With Portugal's assistance, East Timor also declared independence during the last years of the 20th century and then joined the UN.

In the same way, Taiwan helped Japan during World War II, but Japan was among the defeated countries. It was understandable then that Japan was unwilling and unable to help Taiwan declare independence as it was destitute, lay in ruins and was occupied by Allied forces.

Nevertheless, when the Japanese government signed the Treaty of Peace between the Republic of China (ROC) and Japan in 1952, Tokyo agreed to let the ROC government continue to stay in Taiwan, forsaking the moral responsibility it should have taken for its former colony.

The ROC government, along with its military, was exiled to Taiwan.

The regime set up a colonial government with the objective of amassing capital and resources to build up its strength and mobilize all Taiwanese to help it reclaim China.

During the Cold War, Japan continued to support the ROC regime as it sought to counter the rising power of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). In doing so, Tokyo blatantly ignored the pathetic fact that Taiwan was being colonized yet again.

Despite the repression under the ROC regime, Taiwanese have gradually been able to make their own voices heard.

They have generously tolerated the ROC regime as the country has gradually moved toward democratization.

Now that Taiwan is trying to join the UN under a new name, what role should Japan play?

An expert on global strategies, Hisahiko Okazaki, has warned Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda's Cabinet not to interfere in Taiwan's bid to join the UN.

I would like to remind Japan that it has a moral obligation to actively help Taiwan gain UN membership.

Not only did Japan fail to take moral responsibility for its former colony Taiwan, but it also stood by and watched Taiwanese being colonized again.

Taiwan refuses to be a colony ruled by the People's Republic of China.

If Japan continues to stand by China's side, then it can only expect Taiwan to launch a campaign against it sooner or later.

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