

## Chapter III

### The Domestic Dynamic in Taiwan Politics towards China Reunification Policy

When China proposed reunification, Taiwan responded dynamically within its politic and society. After Nationalist party came to Taiwan, Chiang Kai Shek began Taiwan democratization although it needed a process in order to be accepted by Taiwanese. Later, the result of democratization by Chiang Ching Kuo made Taiwan have two major political parties, Guomintang and Democratic Progressive Party. Guomintang is a party which was brought by Chiang Kai Shek from mainland while Democratic Progressive Party was the result of reformulate the martial law in Taiwan. During the process of reunification, there were different views regarding its issue in Taiwan. These point of view are represented by its political party which represent whether to support the reunification or reject the reunification. Indeed, there is a perspective which supports the independence of Taiwan or separation from mainland China. This chapter will discuss the dynamic of the perspective towards China proposal for reunification by its political party and the perspective of the president since Chiang Ching Kuo until Chen Shui Bian.

## A. Two Major Political Parties in Taiwan

There are two major political power in Taiwan, those are Guomintang and Democratic Progressive Party. Nationalist party which introduces the idea of democracy in China brought the idea to Taiwan and developed it in 1950. However, the process of democratization needs 4 decades for local peoples to participate in politics. These political parties were representing major voters during the presidential and legislative elections. So, this part will explain the two major political parties Guomintang and Democratic Progressive Party which influence the perspective of cross strait relations.

Guomintang is the one party created based on Dr. Sun Yat Sen idea in establishing Nationalism in China. Guomintang party was an alliance between Revolutionary and Guomintang established in 1912. Revolutionary Alliance was the party which Dr. Sun established in Japan in 1905. The activities of Guomintang in Chinese mainland began when it won parliamentary in the election 1913. When Guomintang were enjoying the parliament, Yuan Shih Kai (former of imperial government) threatened the supporters of Sun in southern Chinese. Guomintang party still survived but Dr. Sun failed to create democratic state.

After Dr. Sun Yat Sen died, the leadership of Guomintang was succeeded by Chiang Kai Shek. The power of Guomintang in Mainland China did not last long, because He had to fled due to defeat against the Red Army (the troops that will be called as People's Liberation Army, this party will be led by Chinese Communist Party)

in 1949.<sup>1</sup> It seems Taiwanese didn't have any chance except to accept Nationalist movement and the low response of Taiwanese because the low credibility of Chiang Kai Shek in international arena. Furthermore, Taiwanese didn't like the Mainland China because of its corruption<sup>2</sup>. Then, the Guomintang reformed itself during in Taiwan by Chiang Kai Shek and continued by Chiang Ching Kuo.

The domination of Guomintang party in Taiwan which created authoritarian system made Taiwanese want to create its own party. During the period of Chiang Kai Shek and Chiang Ching Kuo constituted the authoritarian government in 4 decade, the domination of Guomintang made the democracy in the state became weak and the people couldn't accommodate its interests. In 1983, the new process of national election were established and became the first time of election in the country. There was a party *tangwai*-a loose political organization-which will become a new form of DPP party. The failure of *tangwai* in national election 1983 was the consequence of the immaturity of the political party competed with Guomintang which still dominate the power. Thus, in 1986 Chiang Ching Kuo reformed the martial law and opened the freedom to create their own political party for the people. In September, *tangwai* politicians gathered and announced themselves as Democratic Progressive Party. Chiang Ching Kuo asked the government not to prohibit the establishment of its party. DPP party became bigger because the support from *tangwai* and independent groups.

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<sup>1</sup> Copper, 2009, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-132.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 46.

After self campaign as a political party in 1986, the DPP gain massive public support but the internal condition of the party were clashing because of different purposes. Community group that supports the DPP was people who fed up with the authoritarian rule of the Gomintang and the lower class society. Many Taiwanese people living in rural areas to support the existence of this party were workers, city dwellers, the poor, people who against the KMT, Taiwanese had gained the support of between 10% -20% of the population at that time. However, the party itself was experienced internal turmoil with the face of one of the prominent issues, namely independence. In the body of the DPP party, there were options whether option to choose independence or not to do so because it's too dangerous or Taiwan was still premature. Moreover, in the DPP's body, there were those who assume that the DPP with the KMT ties should be maintained for a while, but some choose to fight against the KMT. The third issue was to accept the presence of mainlanders.<sup>3</sup> This sharpens the issue of the relationship between Taiwan and China mainland who filed reunification.

#### B. The Dynamic of Political Leadership in Taiwan towards Cross-Strait Relations

China since it offered reunification, Taiwan has responded differently towards its proposal. In this section, I will describe the President's policy related to the issue of reunification. Reunification efforts undertaken by China have been and continuing to

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 133-135.

be done since the bid in 1981 until 2007. At that time, Taiwan experienced a 3 times changes of the head of government. The leaders came from the two dominant parties, namely the KMT's Chiang Ching-kuo, Lee Teng Hui, and one representative of the DPP party is Chen Shui-bian.

Chiang Ching Kuo had done led Taiwan since 1978 until 1988. His political career began and initiated from 1949 to 1978 as a premiere. In the history of leadership in Taiwan, Chiang Ching Kuo reminds the end of the democratic authoritarian system which was hold by Gomintang party.

He reformed the policy especially to change the martial law by giving bigger chance for the people to create an organization or political party and to open the relations with mainland. Chiang Ching Kuo preferred not to free Taiwan to be independence and this view was same with its father Chiang Kai Shek. In this moment, Chiang Ching Kuo opened the indirect trade relations in 1987 with China. Besides that, he also opened the registration of Taiwanese to see its family relations from mainland China through Hong Kong.<sup>4</sup> It's indicated that the policy of Chiang Ching Kuo wanted to maintain the stability of cross strait relations and to look for peaceful future reunification.

During 1988-2000, Lee Theng Hui became generalissimo or the highest position such as President of the state. Lee Teng Hui as representative from Guomintang party decided to support the relationship between China and Taiwan.

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<sup>4</sup> Winberg Chai, 2009, Chiang Ching Kuo, In L. Cheng, *Berkshire Encyclopaedia of China*, pp. 318-319.

Quoting from his words, “.....*If the two sides can recognize and appreciate this special relationship, they can transcend political differences and jointly develop a relationship conducive to the peaceful and democratic reunification of the Chinese nation one day.*”<sup>5</sup> From his words, Lee Teng Hui hopes that there will be future reunification between China and Taiwan solving the problem peacefully and suitably with the political process of democratic Taiwanese. Building relationship after 4 decades dismissed, it will influence the local politics and responds from the Taiwanese people. According to Lee Teng Hui this process cannot be monopolized by Taiwanese government in deciding Taiwanese future because they also need an input from its people.

There were three problems why the process of reunification between China and Taiwan was so hard according to Lee Teng Hui. First, the trust between Taiwan and China has not been created. Taiwanese sees that the Chinese Communist leadership has threatened the Taiwanese and they are suspicious with Chinese Communist Party. Second, there has been intimidation from mainland by military force. Before the proposal of reunification, Chinese Communist Party had once wanted to free Taiwan by using force by conflict in Taiwan Strait. Besides that, in 1995 China used missile test in Taiwan Strait and made Taiwanese become stronger to be united to declare independence. Third, there are differences of political system between democracy and authoritarian. Taiwan has been democratic after the reformation of martial law policy.

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<sup>5</sup> Lee Teng Hui, 1999, Understanding Taiwan, *Foreign Affairs*, 78(6), pp. 9-14.

However, the authoritarian system applied by mainlanders worried that they will curb socio-economically and influence the political system.<sup>6</sup> These kinds of problem was dodged by the mainland China and increases the identity of Taiwanese over Taiwan Island.

Then Taiwanese leadership of Lee Teng Hui changed into Chen Shui Bian. It was the first time where the president came from DPP. The challenge during Chen Shui Bian administration was that the Legislative Yuan were not overpowered by DPP. The dominance of Legislative Yuan was managed by KMT. DPP was known as the party that raises up independence movement. However, it influenced the cross-strait relations between Taiwan and China.

In its declaration in January 2000, Chen stated "*no Taiwan independence if no mainland invasion*". The President who served in the 2000-2008 year believed that basically the people of Taiwan is already independent. At the time of the 1999 presidential campaign, Chen supported the people of Taiwan to hold a referendum and change the views of the community to get out of the position of the status quo. At that moment, Jiang as the president of PRC stated the formula of 'one country, two systems'. However, Chen chose not to approve this formula.

There are a lot of different perspectives which is poured by several medias related the Chen Shui-Bian leadership and opposition party from Guomintang and People First Party in terms of cross-strait relations between Taiwan and China. In The

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

official English-language newspaper China Daily entitled "New Thinking Guides Cross-Straits Relations" commented that Chen and DPP rejected what Mainland had offered for Taiwan and also criticize the visits of the opposition party by Soong and Lien towards Mainland China. It means Chen and DPP were taking critical situation and influence the unstable tension on the cross strait relations. The other respond from China Radio International which was sponsored by newspaper World News Journal Lin Hai stated that the stance of Chen and DPP was provocative when Chen talks about Mainland and cross strait relations. Moreover, in this report stated that cross strait relations was reimagined as 'one step forward, two steps back' in the political structure of Taiwan and China. Some parties were insisted that Chen and DPP had to change its policy towards cross-strait relations. The opposite party from Lien as Guomintang representative and Soong as representative of People First Party made a close approach with China over cross-strait relations which divided the supporter from Taiwanese. Since the act of Chen was very strict at the beginning towards the independence 'ideology', step by step his supporters were decreasing.<sup>7</sup>

Along with the measures taken during the tenure of his presidency, Chen Shui-bian chose to take middle course. The purpose of creating Taiwan independence, not too obtrusive as it campaigned. The desire platform as pro-independence of DPP

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<sup>7</sup> CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS: MAINLAND VISITS CREATE DILEMMA FOR CHEN, (2005, Jun 13), *US Fed News Service, Including US State News* Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/470681857?accountid=38628>.

became merely tactical.<sup>8</sup> After the election of Chen as president, there was no significant change in the substance of cross-strait relations. The measures taken by Chen were more focusing on economic relations than on policy.

However, although Taiwan has been passing several different types of leaders, cross strait relations remain uncertain. Originated from the reign of Chiang Ching-kuo opening trade opportunities, communication, and postal to meet the needs of Taiwan in developing markets and also some family reunion. In addition, the changed in martial law also had a big influence because it encourages the opposition party to emerge, DPP. Lee Teng Hui possess its willingness to have mutual political relations with mainland China whereas the two leader hadn't met to talk about this. At the time of Lee Teng-hui, Taiwan was tested the ballistic missile threat from China in 1995. Even so, indirectly foster a sense of nationalism and patriotic people of Taiwan. Thus at the next election, president of the DPP get the most votes. However, the process did not go smoothly. Later, the leadership had to change into Chen Shui Bian which led Taiwan in two periods since 2000 until 2008. He was appointed by DPP but he ran the cross strait relations with low contacts from ARATS-SEF relations.<sup>9</sup> Taiwan has different leadership and different approaches towards cross strait relations and it influence the foreign policy that they form.

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<sup>8</sup> Yu-Kang Lee, 2005, *New Government, New Language? The Third Way Discourse in Taiwan. Modern Asian Studies* 39, 3, pp. 631–660.

<sup>9</sup> Zhengyuan Fu, 2006, The author of The Taiwan issue and Sino-U.S. Relations, *Transnational Law & Contemporary Problems*.