

Speaker: Ray Wu
Topic: Recent Protests in Taiwan
Date: 11/15/2008



Ray begun the discussion topic with facts about recent Wild Strawberries Movement and anti-China protest in Taiwan. Ray presented basic facts on the issue and posed 3 questions for discussion:

- 1. What is your opinion about ARTS chairman Chen Yunlin going to Taiwan?**
- 2. What is “freedom of speech”?**
- 3. How do you feel about this Wild Strawberry Movement student protest?**

Re: Question 1-

Stacy: “The visit can allow people to see how Taiwanese democracy has gone reverse. And Taiwanese seemed to react to this as if they have given up and no longer care.”

Maggie: “Electing wrong president can lead to unwanted unification with China and it seems like KMT has idolized Ma Yingjeou.”

Ken: “The visit its self is okay if Taiwan is treated as equal by China. Taiwan and China can become the next US and UK if they can respect each other as equal sovereign states. However, the president must never compromise the sovereignty of the people he/she represents and he can do so by insisting on the way foreigners address his/her title. Ma has completed 3 ways access with China too fast without making sure the sovereignty of Taiwan is secured and recognize by China.”

Tony: “President should not cast the blame on his/her subordinates.”

Re: Question 2-

Ray: “One can easily see the double standard happening during Chen’s visit. Ma Administration suppressed the people with violence and brutality while Chen Administration did not. What is democracy if people cannot play music and wave flag?”

Maggie: “Taiwanese should be alerted and stand up for their freedom of speech”

Stacy: “There is no comparison for the way both administrations care about Taiwan and its people. Freedom of speech should be allowed as long as it does not interfere with the freedom of others.”

Eddie: “KMT allows criticisms on Chen Shuibian but not people criticizing Ma Yingjeou.”

Ken: “Taiwanese are spoiled by peaceful democracy and they do not know the pain of losing democracy so they do not have a sense of urgency to cherish it. In the US, freedom of speech is often one of the most important issue being discussed, and its definition is often the first thing being discussed. Freedom of speech must be allowed within legal guidelines. (citing US vs. NY Times case). Both blue camp and green camp have valid cases supporting their reason for their actions/opinions. Blues feel that Chen Yunlin is guest and Taiwanese should be polite and courteous to foreign guests, but the green camp feels that there should not be anything wrong to sing national anthem or

wave flag within its own land. The problem got messy when both sides have valid points and one side must have its way. However, no matter what, one should not debase its basic sovereignty and principles for the sake of extending courtesy.”

Stacy: “Individuals should never supercede the country. If freedom of speech of people can topple a country and endanger the livelihood off the nation, then it should not be allowed. How does one differentiate laws and ethics?”

Ken: “Conflict of values in Taiwan due to economic ties with China. People rather take better economy over national integrity and sovereignty.”

Tony: “The government does not allow the people to decide. Why is Ma making major national decisions on his own without involving the people?”

Eddie: “Government in Taiwan today does not care about national interest anymore as it arbitrarily declassifies national secrets without thorough thought process about the consequences.”

Ken: “People do not have consensus today on what freedom of speech should be and what the most important value for Taiwan is: economy or national sovereignty.”

Re: Question 3-

Ray: “How do you feel about the Wild Strawberries? 20 years ago the Wild Lilies student movement was supported by numerous professors and scholars and led to the awakening of young political enthusiasm, but today the medias give nothing but harsh criticisms to the Wild Strawberries.”

Maggie: “Student protest is an indicator of society.”

Ken: “Red shirts wanted to protest against Chen Shuibian and Wild Strawberries want apology from Ma Yingjeou and change in the existing laws regarding demonstration and protests. However, judging from what they are demanding and what they have used as the basis of their demands, they do not have enough knowledge on the issue and do not have global view for they failed to see how rest of the world also have similar set of rules as Taiwan. Students should have researched first before starting demonstration.”

Ray: “It seems the Wild Strawberries decided to do this too rashly.”

Eddie: “It is reported that the student movement has lost its focus and even has disputes internally. They do not know why they are having a sit-in protest and what the purpose is.”

Ken: “If the students don’t know what are they protesting about then they are basically a disorganized mob. Emerald Connection will not support a civil movement that has no set focus or meaningful purpose. Taiwanese love to criticize and not being constructive, we should at least give them some positive praise and concrete guidance in a set direction for their movement.”