

**FORMER PRESIDENT MA YING-JEOU'S Q&A interview with Debra Mao,
Bloomberg for SOPA (Society of Publishers in Asia) awards ceremony, at Hong
Kong Convention Center on Wednesday, June 15, 2016**

Debra: Hey SOPA delegates, I am Debra Mao, bureau chief for Bloomberg here in Taiwan, I am here with former President Ma Ying-jeou of Taiwan who as you've heard very much regrets not being there with you in Hong Kong and so while he's here, we're going to take the opportunity to ask him questions from the SOPA Committee.

So Mr. Ma thanking you for spending some extra time with us. We're wondering now would you consider Taiwan government system and democracy a model for mainland China or for Hong Kong?

Mr. Ma: Well, so far Taiwan democracy I think has been, probably the most developed in the Chinese community in the world. But we still have problems that we have to deal with. Compare to Hong Kong and mainland China, I think we do have something we can share with them. I think, for instance, if you analyze democracy, it's follow the majority, respect the minority and tolerate dissent. I think the third one is probably the most important one. (1:10)

Debra: Now there are many people in Hong Kong who feel that their freedom of expression and to the certain extent that freedom of the press is now under threat and even raising questions about whether one country two systems is a viable model. What are your thoughts on this?

Mr. Ma: I think as I said we should start with the tolerate dissent, many people get used to a democratic society where the dissent has to be tolerated and this is not something from the west. 2500 years ago in ancient China, in the kingdom of Zhen, a person official named Zhi Chan 子產 decided not to shut down a school, where people gather after work, in the afternoon to talk about politics. And he said by listening to them, he'll

learn something, and so he decided not to shut it down. And this is very good example for Hong Kong and for mainland China. The whole story is called 子產不毀鄉校 (2:25). Mr. Zhi Chan refused to shut down the country school. This is something I always emphasize, because this is not an imported idea, this is 100% indigenous. So I think maybe we should re-read the whole story and learn from the wisdom of our ancestors. (2:50)

Debra: So when Beijing says, it's a western concept.

Mr. Ma: No no, not a case. (2:53)

Debra: And with China's presence influence in the world getting larger, how important is the freedom for the people of Hong Kong and Taiwan to freely express their art and their language and their freedom to publish their ideas, and I know you mentioned Orthodox characters earlier, can you say more about the importance of that?

Mr. Ma: Well, before that the advent of the simplified characters, the orthodox Chinese characters, have been used for thousands of years, a very important tradition of our culture. The change that took place on mainland China certainly have a lot of impact on the language itself.

I think the best way is not to enlarge the dichotomy, but rather we should take an inclusive view of the whole. Just recently Taiwan and Mainland scholar cooperate to publish a dictionary of Orthodox and Simplified characters. They collected more than 100,000 entries, and the most important style they juxtaposed the simplified and orthodox characters, so that people would get used to that. If you look at the essence, the difference isn't that great, so you could always find a way, to be inclusive and not exclusive. (4:29)

Debra: And finally going into the US politics now, is there any advice you would give to the next US President whether it be Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton on how to handle the South China Sea? (4:47)

Mr. Ma: Well actually I have been studying the issue, not just in South China Sea and also East China Sea, and the fundamental concepts for dispute settlement is that while national territory cannot be, national sovereignty cannot be divided, compromised, but national resources can be shared. (5:07)

We used that model to solve the East China Sea problem and eventually conclusion fishery agreement with Japan. So just about a year ago, I proposed the South China Sea peace initiative, the briefly said, it is the idea that first of all, shelf the dispute, secondly joint development resources by having a comprehensive plan, and then the third stage is zonal development, we divide the whole area into different zones and trying to ask the claimants to develop the resources together. (5:48)

This is probably the only way out, if the escalation, confrontation continues, there'll be no solution at all. So that's why I think the South China Sea peace initiative I proposed just about a year ago could be a useful reference.

(6:07)

Debra: Do you think the US is doing enough?

Mr. Ma: I don't know, but I keep telling them, East Asia, the way of dispute settlement is a little bit different from that in the West. Here countries do not favor third party adjudications, they prefer negotiations (6:25)

Debra: All right, well thank you Mr. President and SOPA

Mr. Ma: Thank you members of SOPA and I hope we have the chance to talk to you again and sometime maybe in Taiwan. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to talk to you. Thank you, bye bye.