

In late April this year Mr. Ng Bun-Hiong, who failed in an attempt to assassinate former President Chiang Chin-Kuo in 1970 and was forced to become a political exile ever since, returned to Taiwan after 26 years of exile and was well-received by the Taiwanese society. At the press conference he asserted that "it is necessary to assign an appropriate place in the social life for the nationalists - whether Taiwanese nationalists or Chinese nationalists - so that nationalism would not become a guiding principle paramount to all others." To me, his plea is almost like the noble quest for religious freedom and toleration in Europe during the sixteenth - and seventeenth - century, a time when the old Europe was still plagued by the religious wars of the Reformation. Indeed, Ng's advice is an admirable plea for "ideological freedom and toleration"! With deep appreciation I truly agree with his wise counsel. In face of the ideological contention and the pluralistic nature of the Taiwanese society, the idea of toleration seems both essential and momentous.

However, with this proviso in mind, I also want to emphasize that, in order to achieve a genuine harmony in the Taiwanese society, more have to be done regarding ideological conflict than simply assigning "fitting places" for the respective rivalling groups.

It is therefore critical to engage in a careful inquiry and reflection from the ideological point of view.