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## Taiwan's Freedom – A Chance to be better

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### ABSTRACT

This article is an observational report which focuses on the changes post martial law on Taiwan. The end of 38 years of martial law on 15<sup>th</sup> July 1987 is etched in gold as 'a new milestone' for the democracy in the country when the then President formally announced the end of martial law. This historic decision ushered in a new wind of democracy and freedom. This article notes that Taiwan has experienced a drastic growth in the past 31 years. Especially the media boom on the island is commendable. Taiwan's cultural, social and political development following the government's decision to uplift the martial law around 3 decades back has raised hopes of many nations' dreams of liberation from their mundane form of government. This article emphasizes on understanding the progress that Taiwan as a nation has made in the past three decades and factors that were pivotal in their pursuit of excelling. The period of martial law imposition in Taiwan lasted for 38 years beginning from 19<sup>th</sup> May 1949 which had been the longest period of martial law in the history of mankind until Syria was imposed the same law in 1963. The February 28 incident that is notorious for its execution of tens of thousands of Taiwanese who opposed the Chinese Nationalist Party led by Chiang Kai-shek paved way for the beginning of 'White Terror' era in Taiwan.

**Keywords:** Martial Law, 30 Decades, First Female President, Democracy.

### Brief about Taiwan's Freedom – A Chance to Be Better





### **FEBRUARY 28 MASSACRE**

Emergency powers were placed in the hands of the president, the citizens were completely deprived of their rights relating to freedom of speech, press, and assembly or in other words the former officially became a taboo. On scrutinizing the era, what was inexplicably evident was the use of education and propaganda as the ample tools for stifling local culture and an attempt to erase 50 years of Japanese colonial rule. But as a person of the advancing 21<sup>st</sup> century, a poignant question that one may raise is how the uplifting of martial law in Taiwan has equipped the country to mature over the time. Taiwan no less than other countries will be labelled as for how it responds to these plights.



### **Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen**

Keeping the debate over the past aside, the actuality that Taiwan has altered itself into a full-fledged democracy over the past few decades is appreciable with its torchlight of leading the country to the pinnacle of success being handed over to Tsai Ing-wen who was sworn in as the first female president of Taiwan. This indeed was a silent proclamation to the world that the 30 years long martial law has only made Taiwan more mature. There was an air of optimism and change across the country. Taiwan was a ray of hope amidst the sea of disparity. The 30 year long wait in Taiwan has brought changes in the freedom, legal aspects and many arenas of civilian priority. Being the first government in Asia to legalize same sex marriage, Taiwan has taken strenuous efforts in stepping up to help and protect the minority. One of the laudable changes that the toddling democracy has brought in is the changeover old circumstance of denying the respondent's *right to access a lawyer*. The initiation of nullifying almost all the emergency decrees evidently signifies the country's sincere effort to establish a people's government.

Even after the end of martial law Taiwan still faces constraints. In the past years, Taiwan has kept on exterminating the shackles of old political limitations. Moreover, it has to a greater extent accomplished the herculean task of achieving liberation and freedom for individual mentalities, social culture, and collective consciousness.

The flourishing political scenario and thriving social activism are the culmination of the enhancement of creative and cultural industries in the recent years. This upshot is especially attractive for the reason that a strong Taiwanese identity separate from a Chinese identity has bloomed from the past couple of decades.

Taiwan as a de facto independent nation yet, due to Chinese pressure without international recognition is increasingly unsatisfactory to an island of 24 million. China claims Taiwan as a part of its territory despite the island's effectual split from the mainland. It is a firm conviction of ours that the stable rise of China will have huge consequences for Taiwan, almost all will be bad. Moreover once China rises as the power saturated region of the oriental it will be deeply committed to making Taiwan part of China. Nevertheless, ties have warmed by a long way, only time will tell whether the cross-strait relations remain likewise.

Taiwan did not undergo a unique transition. In fact, it followed the world trend - accelerated liberalization and democratization. Taiwan is one of the many countries whose gain of freedom has proceeded linearly upward. However, one may straightforwardly find that Taiwan in fact lived by the words of Albert Camus – “Freedom is nothing but a chance to be better”.

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