

## First-Class Freedom Fighting

March 18, 2021

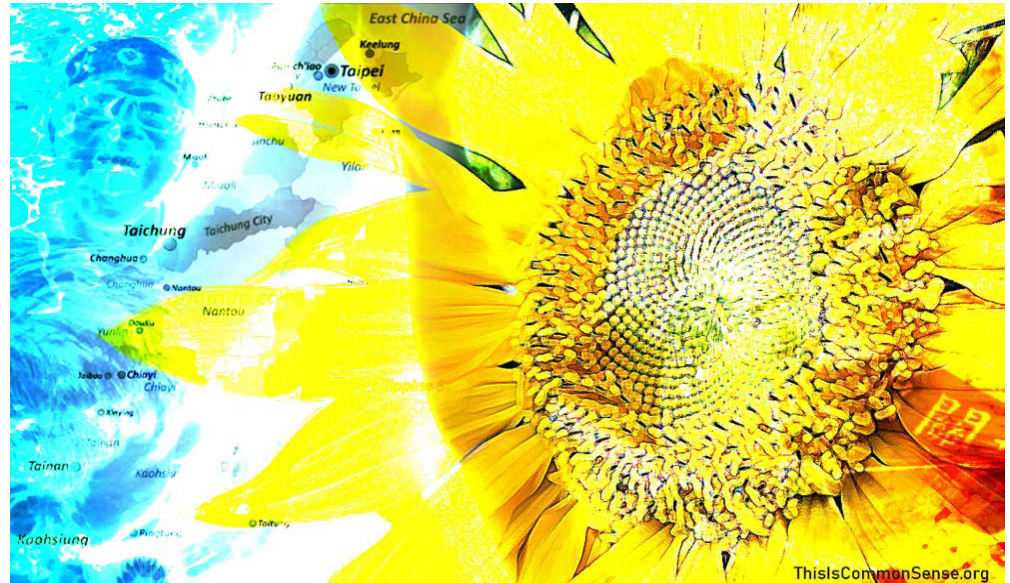
Just seven years ago today — March 18, 2014 — Taiwanese students began a 23-day occupation of the country's legislature, in what became known as the Sunflower Student Movement. They were protesting the rushed and opaque passage of a Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement with China.

Trade deals usually aren't so *explosive*, but China is a neighbor 58 times larger than Taiwan's 24-million population and one that regularly threatens military invasion. Furthermore, the agreement was negotiated in secret and initially passed by the Legislative Yuan in 30 seconds.

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Obviously *without* debate.

Opponents of the deal argued it would allow China to effectively “purchase” Taiwan, and to economically leverage and then strangle Taiwan's vibrant democracy, which like Hong Kong's aspirations constitutes a terrible affront



to the anti-democratic Chinese Communist Party (CCP) ruling over more than a billion silenced, disenfranchised Chinese.

The students' concerns for transparency and safeguards connected with the Taiwanese public, which put enormous pressure on the government.

Ultimately, the spring Sunflower Movement in Taiwan helped influence the autumn Umbrella Movement protests in Hong Kong as well as energizing the 2016 win for Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party and far less Beijing-friendly President Tsai Ing-wen (who won a second term last year).

In these last seven years, the world has come a long way in recognizing the threat posed by totalitarian China. For that I give those students in Taipei a lot of credit. Their standing up kept Taiwan free — and helped us all begin to stand up to the *Chinazis* (as Hong Kongers call the CCP).

The *other* aftermath? *Le Monde's* report on students finally leaving the Yuan, noted it was “not without having thoroughly cleaned the building.”

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.