

The older generation could learn from young

Written by Huang Tien-lin 黃天麟
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Students seem more alert than their parents' generation. They differ from older corrupt and power-hungry generations and maintain a rational analytical ability. On March 17, Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) legislators, bullied by the party's placing of party discipline before public opinion, decided that the cross-strait service trade agreement review procedure should skip the Internal Administration Committee and be referred directly to the legislative floor. While older generations could not decide how to deal with this unprecedented crisis, a group of students rapidly mobilized. Ignoring the impact on their studies, they occupied the legislative chamber and blocked the government's attempt to sell Taiwan down the river. This is a matter of saving the nation, a just action that requires bravery and intelligence.

Why is it a matter of saving the nation?

First, without the Sunflower student movement the pact would have taken effect immediately. The pact might allow a small number of companies in the financial and service industries to fulfill their dreams and move into China, but this is no different from the big technology firms that moved to China a decade ago to "consolidate resources and improve competitiveness." It will do nothing to facilitate innovation or upgrade industry, but will bring domestic unemployment and lower starting salaries. More seriously, the pact will allow Chinese businesses — the biggest of which are state-owned — to move in and buy up a hollowed-out Taiwan. Beijing would be buying Taiwan without firing a single bullet.

Second, the student movement has recaptured Taiwan's democratic institutions. Why does President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) continue to insist that the pact must be passed? It is partly that he wants to pave the way for a meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping (習近平). More importantly, if the agreement is passed before June, the 2016 presidential election will be one-and-a-half years away which will allow the KMT and the Chinese Communist Party to use the new rule allowing any company investing US\$250,000 or more to apply for permission to send over two people to be in charge.

That would allow China to set up what could be called "underground political work stations" from which it could direct and monitor the political mobilization of Taiwanese conducting business with China and indoctrinate them with a pro-China stance. With Chinese forces entering Taiwan and Taiwanese homes, democracy would disappear in all but name.

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Third, the students' demand that the pact be rejected and that laws regulating the oversight of cross-strait agreements be completed during the current legislative session strikes at the heart of the matter. It is more reasonable than the older generations' demand for a clause-by-clause review of the pact.

Why does the government oppose a law regulating the oversight of cross-strait agreements? Although Ma is inept at ruling the country, he has been very effective when it comes to cross-strait relations — in little more than five years, his government has signed 19 agreements with China. He claims that cross-strait agreements are not state-to-state in nature. This loophole allows him to dodge legislative oversight. If the pact is forced through the legislature, the KMT could also see through a traitorous “peace accord” and put an end to Taiwan's existence as a country.

The students have shown great bravery in standing up to the authorities. The older generation should take pride in the students: They are the glory of Taiwan, and its future.

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Translated by Perry Svensson

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