

On Campus

# Taiwanese President Speaks on Campus

Fall 2019



Photo: Diane Bondareff

**The president of Taiwan, Tsai Ing-wen,** visited Columbia this summer, meeting with students and faculty and participating in a wide-ranging conversation about global politics. Her visit was part of a two-day trip to New York City that occurred despite objections from China, which claims Taiwan, a self-governing island of twenty-four million people, as its own territory.

Addressing a packed crowd at the [Italian Academy for Advanced Studies](#), Tsai spoke

firmly of the importance of democracy. “Each day that Taiwan chooses freedom of speech, human rights, and the rule of law is a day that we drift further from the influences of authoritarianism,” Tsai said. “Taiwan stands as a rare example of a country that has both experienced authoritarianism and championed democracy in the modern age.”

While a group of about fifty pro-Taiwan and pro-China demonstrators gathered outside, the audience in the Italian Academy was vocal but calm, asking Tsai a range of questions about Taiwan’s relations with the US and China.

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