US FORCES INDOPACIFIC CULTURE GUIDE

TAIWAN

About this Guide

This guide is designed to prepare you to deploy to culturally complex environments and achieve mission objectives. The fundamental information contained within will help you understand the cultural dimension of your assigned location and gain skills necessary for success (Photo: Pre-World War II photo of a Tsou youth. The Tsou is 1 of 16 officially recognized indigenous Taiwanese ethnic groups).

The guide consists of 2 parts:

Part 1 "Culture General" provides the foundational knowledge you need to operate effectively in any global environment with a focus on East Asia.

Part 2 "Culture Specific" describes unique cultural features of Taiwanese society. It applies culture-general concepts to help increase your knowledge of your assigned deployment location. This section is meant to complement other pre-deployment training (Photo: Chiang Kai-shek who served as leader of the Republic of China from 1928-1975, first in mainland China until 1949 and then Taiwan until his death in 1975).

For more information, visit the Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC) website at https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/AFCLC/ or contact the AFCLC Region Team at AFCLC.Region@us.af.mil.

Disclaimer: All text is the property of the AFCLC and may not be modified by a change in title, content, or labeling. It may be reproduced in its current format with the express permission of the AFCLC. All photography is provided as a courtesy of the US government, Wikimedia, and other sources as indicated.

PART 1 – CULTURE GENERAL

What is Culture?

Fundamental to all aspects of human existence, culture shapes the way humans view life and functions as a tool we use to adapt to our social and physical environments. A culture is the sum of all of the beliefs, values, behaviors, and symbols that have meaning for a society. All human beings have culture, and individuals within a culture share a general set of beliefs and values.

Members of a culture also usually assign the same meanings to the symbols in that culture. A symbol is when one thing—an image, word, object, idea, or story—represents another thing. For example, the American flag is a physical and visual symbol of a core American value—freedom. At the same time, the story of George Washington admitting to having chopped down a cherry tree is also symbolic because it represents the premium Americans place on personal honesty and leadership integrity.

Force Multiplier

The military services have learned through experience the importance of understanding other cultures. Unlike the 20th-century bipolar world order that dominated US strategy for nearly half a century, today the US military is operating in what we classify as asymmetric or irregular conflict zones, where the notion of cross-cultural interactions is on the leading edge of our engagement strategies.

We have come to view the people themselves, rather than the political system or physical environment, as the decisive feature in conflict areas. Our primary objective hinges on influencing constructive change through peaceful means where possible. We achieve this endeavor by encouraging local nationals to focus on developing stable political, social, and economic institutions that reflect their cultural beliefs and traditions.

Therefore, understanding the basic concepts of culture serves as a force multiplier. Achieving an awareness and respect of a society's values and beliefs enables deploying forces to build relationships with people from other cultures, positively influence their actions, and ultimately achieve mission success.

Cultural Domains

Culture is not just represented by the beliefs we carry internally, but also by our behaviors and by the systems members of a culture create to organize their lives. These systems, such as political or educational institutions, help us to live in a manner that is appropriate to our culture and encourages us to perpetuate that culture into the future.

We can organize behaviors and systems into categories—what the Air Force refers to as "cultural domains"—in order to better understand the primary values and characteristics of a society. A cross-culturally competent military member can use these domains—which include kinship, language and communication, and social and political systems, and others (see chart on next page)—as tools for understanding and adapting to any culture. For example, by understanding the way a culture defines family and kinship, a US military member operating overseas can more effectively interact with members of that culture.

Social Behaviors across Cultures

While humankind shares basic behaviors, various groups enact or even group those behaviors differently across cultural boundaries. For example, all societies obtain food for survival, although agrarian societies generally produce their own food for limited consumption using very basic techniques.

Conversely, industrialized nations have more sophisticated market economies, producing foodstuffs for universal consumption. Likewise, all cultures value history and tradition, although they represent these concepts through a variety of unique forms of symbolism. While the dominant world religions share the belief in one God, their worship practices vary with their traditional historical development. Similarly, in many kin-based cultures where familial bonds are foundational to social

identity, it is customary for family or friends to serve as godparents, while for other societies this practice is nearly non-existent.

Worldview

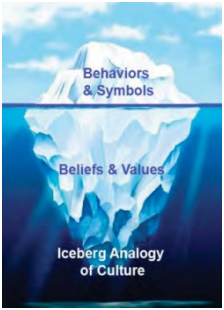
One of our most basic human behaviors is the tendency to classify others as similar or different based on our cultural standards. As depicted in the chart below, we can apply 12 cultural domains to help us compare similarities and differences across cultures. We evaluate others' behavior to determine if they are "people like me" or "people not like me." Usually, we assume that those in the "like me" category share our perspectives and values.

This collective perspective forms our worldview—how we see the world and understand our place in it. Your worldview functions as a lens through which you see and understand the world. It helps you to interpret your experiences and the values and behaviors of other people that you encounter. Consider your worldview as a way of framing behavior, providing an accountability standard for actions, and a logical explanation of why we individually or collectively act in a certain manner.

Cultural Belief System

An important component of any worldview is a belief system. A community's belief system assigns meaning, sets its universal standards of what is good and bad, defines right and wrong behavior, and assigns a value of meaningful or meaningless. Our beliefs form the fundamental values we hold to be true—regardless of whether there is evidence to support those ideas. Beliefs are a central aspect of human culture. They are shared views about world order and how the universe was physically and socially constructed.

While all people have beliefs, their specific components tend to vary depending upon respective world views. What people classify as good or bad, right or wrong depends on our deeply-held beliefs we started developing early in life that have help shape our characters. Likewise, these values are ingrained in our personalities and shape our behavior patterns and our self-identities. Because cultural beliefs are intensely held, they are difficult, though not impossible, to change.



Core Beliefs

Core beliefs shape and influence certain behaviors and also serve to rationalize those behaviors. Therefore, knowledge of individual or group beliefs can be useful in comprehending or making sense of their activities. We will use the iceberg model for classifying culture to illustrate two levels of meaning, as depicted. Beliefs and values, portrayed by the deeper and greater level of the submerged iceberg, are seldom visible, but are indicated / hinted at / referenced by our behaviors and symbols (top level). It is important to recognize, though, that the parts of culture that are not visible (under the waterline) are informing and shaping what is being made visible (above the waterline).

In many cases, different worldviews may present behaviors that are contrary to our own beliefs, particularly in many regions where US forces deploy. Your ability to suspend

judgment in order to understand another perspective is essential to establishing relationships with your host-nation counterparts. The ability to withhold your opinion and strive to understand a culture from a member of that culture's perspective is known as cultural relativism. It often involves taking an alternate perspective when interpreting others' behaviors and is critical to your ability to achieve mission success.

As you travel throughout East Asia, you will encounter cultural patterns of meaning that are common across the region. What follows is a general description of 12 cultural domains which are used to frame those commonalities.

CULTURAL DOMAINS

1. History and Myth

History is a record of the past that is based on verifiable facts and events. Myth can act as a type of historical record, although it is usually a story which members of a culture use to explain community origins or important events that are not verifiable or which occurred prior to written language.

East Asia includes the countries of China, Japan, Mongolia, North Korea, and South Korea (also Taiwan, which is not officially recognized as an independent country since China claims Taiwan as its territory). By the 700s AD, ancient East Asian tribes and peoples had consolidated into unified Chinese, Japanese, and Korean states; Mongolia formed a state in the 13th century.

China has played a central role in East Asian history, influencing the region's culture, philosophy, and politics. Between the 8th and 11th centuries, the people of Japan and Korea adopted several aspects of Chinese culture, including clothing and architecture (Photo: The Great Wall of China).

Despite its predominance, China remained vulnerable to nomadic Mongol tribes living along its northern border. In the

12th and 13th centuries, Mongol forces under the command of Genghis Khan swept through Asia and parts of Europe, conquering China and Korea. Though vast and diverse, the Mongol Empire was ultimately short-lived.

Over the next 500 years, East Asian societies advanced along differing paths. Japan developed largely in isolation, while Korea – a Chinese tributary state – had some limited outside connections. After the Mongol Empire's demise in the 14th century, Mongolia came under Chinese control, which lasted until Mongolia aligned with the Soviet Union (USSR) in 1924. China established overland trade routes with Europe in the 200s BC, and by the 1500s AD, Europeans expanded their control in East Asia.

As Japan industrialized in the mid-19th century, it proceeded to colonize Korea, northeastern China, Taiwan, the southern half of Sakhalin Island and Micronesia. This colonial activity led to conflicts with other powers in the region, angering Japanese colonial subjects (Pictured: 1898 political cartoon depicting European and Japanese rulers dividing China over the protests of a Chinese official).

During World War II (WWII), Japan launched a coordinated attack on the US and other powers in the Asia-Pacific region in 1941. This war caused millions of casualties and lasting bitterness across the region. In 1945, Japan surrendered to the Allied Powers.

Following WWII, Cold War politics shaped East Asia's destiny. In China, USSR-backed communists seized control of mainland China, forcing US-backed nationalists to retreat to the island of Taiwan off the Chinese coast. Korea was divided into the US-controlled South and USSR-controlled North as part of a postwar transition. In 1950 North Korea invaded South Korea, sparking the Korean War and permanent separation.

During the second half of the 20th century, Japan and South Korea became wealthy, democratic societies with developed

economies. China liberalized its economy but did not reform politically. Mongolia followed communist economic policies until the 1990s, when it liberalized both politically and economically. North Korea remains communist and isolated.

2. Political and Social Relations

Political relations are the ways in which members of a community organize leadership, power, and authority. Social relations are all of the ways in which individuals are linked to others in their community. Despite the longevity of its societies, East Asia has experienced substantial political change since the mid-1900s.

As a consequence of the Allied occupation of Japan from 1945-1952, Japan aligned with the US, demilitarized, democratized, and retained its emperor as a symbol of national unity. Japan also was able to rebuild its economy after the war. While the same party has ruled for the most part since 1955, Japan today enjoys economic prosperity and political freedom.

Once the USSR helped China establish a communist stronghold, China asserted sovereignty at the expense of several million casualties from political purges and avoidable famines. In 1978 China's government introduced market reforms that lifted millions out of poverty. Nevertheless, the Chinese Communist Party have maintained a tight rein on power, denying the Chinese people their autonomy.

Arriving in 1949, Taiwan's Chinese nationalists established an authoritarian rule that has promoted rapid economic growth. Today Taiwan has a thriving economy and a vibrant, multiparty democracy. Although China claims sovereignty over Taiwan, the island functions as an independent country.

The 2 Koreas have followed vastly different paths since their division (Photo: South Koreans protest for North Korean freedom near the border between the Koreas). During the 1960s and 1970s, South Korea was ruled by authoritarians who favored economic

growth over political freedom, prompting the country to industrialize rapidly. Having democratized in the late 1980s, South Korea now has an open, democratic political system and one of the world's most developed economies. North Korea, by contrast, remains militaristic, repressive, and economically weak.

Long a communist state, Mongolia transitioned to democracy after a peaceful revolution in 1990. Although the communist Mongolian People's Party continued to win elections in the early 1990s, several new parties have won majorities in the Mongolian Parliament in subsequent elections.

Regional security threats and mutual distrust motivate military posturing in East Asia. Having the largest military in the region, China lays claim to several disputed territories and defends a wide range of commercial interests. A well-equipped force, China's military has advanced technologically in recent years. The Japanese, South Korean, and Taiwanese militaries are substantially smaller than China's but are professional and well-resourced. Technically still at war with South Korea, North Korea has a massive but poorly trained and equipped military of more than a million troops. Mongolia has no international disputes and only a small military. While nationalism and historical animosity threaten East Asian security, most countries in the region trade or engage diplomatically. All East Asian countries apart from North Korea have US embassies.

Japan and the Koreas are societies made up of an overwhelming ethnic majority. Similarly, 94% of Mongolians are ethnic Mongols, while Turkic people constitute the rest of the population. Although 91% of China's population belongs to the Han ethnic group, the Chinese government also recognizes 55 other ethnic groups. No countries in East Asia have substantial foreign-born or immigrant populations.

Many differences exist among social groups within East Asian countries. Wealth, age, educational attainment, employment,

family background, and marital status factor into a person's social status. In most East Asian countries, city dwellers tend to regard their rural counterparts as backward, less cultured, and less educated. While some generational differences exist, most East Asians consider social and familial harmony paramount. Thus, young people tend to respect elders' wishes.

3. Religion and Spirituality

Religion is a cultural belief system that provides meaning to members of a community. Religious and spiritual beliefs help preserve the social order by defining proper behavior. They also create social unity by defining shared identity, offering individuals peace of mind, and explaining the causes of events in a society.

Early East Asians were animists, believing that gods or ancestral spirits inhabited various natural objects and expressed their will in daily life. Today, East Asians of many different faiths still follow certain ancient religious practices, such as making offerings to ancestral spirits. Japan's indigenous animist religion, Shintoism, stresses the spiritual connection between Japan's land and its people (Photo: Famous Itsukushima Torii gate on Miyajima Island). Similarly, beliefs about shamans and their connection to a spiritual realm persist among some Chinese, Mongolians, and Koreans.

Multiple belief systems historically have coexisted peacefully in East Asia, many of which originated in China and are not linked to specific gods. East Asians typically observe practices from several belief systems simultaneously. In the 6th and 5th centuries BC, Chinese philosophers Confucius and Laozi developed Confucianism and Daoism, respectively. As these philosophies spread, they shaped regional ideas about social harmony. Whereas Confucianism describes how various types of social relationships should function ideally, Daoism emphasizes balance, simplicity, compliance with the natural order, and reverence for ancestors and Laozi.

Around 150 AD, Buddhism spread from the Indian subcontinent into China, eventually reaching other parts of Asia. East Asian

Buddhism has many variations because its adherents have adapted the faith to their cultures, philosophies, and traditions. Many East Asians practice some form of Buddhism today.

While Islam and Christianity have been present in East Asia for centuries, their influence has been limited to certain places. Arriving in China in the 7th century AD, Islam has a long history in western China and Mongolia and has undergone a modest expansion in recent years. Christianity also was introduced to East Asia in the 7th century AD and eventually gained converts among some Mongol tribes. Beginning in the 1500s, European missionaries expanded Christianity's reach. Today most East Asian Christians live in South Korea, where roughly 30% of the population is Christian.

During the 20th century, communist East Asian governments often curtailed religious practice in favor of atheism. China is still officially atheist, and the Communist Party of China forbids party members from following any religion. The North Korean government takes a different approach by promoting ***Juche***, a state-sponsored faith that combines aspects of Eastern and Western belief systems with reverence for Kim Il-sung, the first North Korean President, and his family. Despite these recent examples of religious suppression, East Asians have tended to resume open religious practice as the government permits. For example, Buddhism has thrived in Mongolia since the country abandoned communism in 1990.

4. Family and Kinship

The domain of family and kinship refers to groups of people related through blood ties, marriage, or through strong emotional bonds that influence them to treat each other like family members (often called "fictive kin").

Most East Asians highly value family relationships. Individuals are expected to subordinate their desires to those of their families as a means of promoting harmony and the best interests of the family as a whole (Photo: A Japanese family in 1928). Children are taught

to respect and obey their elders from a young age. In return, parents devote themselves to their children and make many sacrifices for their wellbeing. These sacrifices enable children's success, preserve the family legacy, and ensure that parents will have a caretaker in old age.

Traditionally, East Asian families have been large, close-knit, multi-generational kin groups whose members support each other. Members of the same extended family traditionally have lived in close proximity, an arrangement that provided many benefits in the rural, agricultural villages that once were widespread in East Asia. Although family life still revolves around farming or herding in some rural areas, family life has changed as East Asia has industrialized and urbanized. While caring for elderly relatives is still common, some modern East Asian households, especially in urban areas, consist of nuclear families (2 parents and their offspring) that live far from their ancestral homes.

East Asian dwellings vary widely. In large urban areas like Beijing, Seoul, Tokyo, Ulaanbaatar, and Shanghai, people typically live in either older homes or modern, high-rise apartment buildings. By contrast, rural East Asians typically live with their extended families in freestanding houses. China and Mongolia have especially extensive rural hinterlands. A number of Mongolians continue to live seasonally as nomadic herders in collapsible huts (pictured).

Marriage is a key milestone for East Asians, who typically date and select their own spouses with the advice and approval of elders. Since many young East Asians today delay marriage to pursue educational or career opportunities, the average marriage age has increased. Nevertheless, the traditional expectation that young East Asians will marry, bear children, and care for their elderly parents remains deep-seated.

East Asians commemorate major life stages through a range of ceremonies and celebrations. The birth of a healthy child, for example, is a joyous occasion that prompts parties, gift-giving,

and welcoming and naming ceremonies. Conversely, funerals and other death customs are more somber and demonstrate respect for the deceased.

5. Sex and Gender

Sex refers to the biological and reproductive differences between males and females. Gender is a more flexible concept that refers to a culture's categorizing of masculine and feminine behaviors, symbols, and social roles.

While most East Asian countries provide for legal gender equality, women are subordinate to men in practice. Moreover, cultural norms tend to entrench traditional roles, whereby women remain underrepresented in both business and government. Many of East Asia's predominant philosophies and religions, such as Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, establish men as family providers and direct women to behave subserviently. Nevertheless, East Asian women still make important contributions to society, having enjoyed expanding rights over the past 50 years.

In states under communist influence, women have been allowed to work outside the home, although also expected to continue performing domestic duties. By contrast, women in Japan and South Korea gained social rights more gradually. Today, most East Asian women, particularly in urban areas, have access to training and education equal to that of their male peers.

While women typically receive less pay than men and rarely reach senior levels of leadership, East Asians generally accept women in the workplace. Many women balance career and family responsibilities, although they are more likely than men to leave the workforce to care for children or elderly relatives.

Due to family planning policies and increased use of contraceptives, among other factors, East Asian countries have low birthrates. Of note, China's birthrates have declined more than 40% since the government introduced a One-Child Policy in 1979. Due to an enduring cultural preference for sons, the

policy has driven many Chinese couples to abort female fetuses or give up their daughters for adoption in hopes that their lone child will be a son. These practices have skewed China's gender ratio.

East Asians historically have not regarded homosexuality as an acceptable practice. Consequently, homosexuals in the region typically have assumed heterosexual family roles. Nevertheless, gay rights are beginning to gain traction mostly in China, South Korea, and Japan, although same-sex marriages remain taboo.

6. Language and Communication

Language is a system for sharing information symbolically, whereby words are used to represent ideas. Communication refers to the cultural practice of sharing meaning in interaction, both verbally and non-verbally. In East Asian countries, most inhabitants speak the official language or a similar dialect. For example, more than 99% of people in Japan and the Koreas speak the official state languages, while more than 90% of Mongolians speak Khalkha Mongolian, the official language.

China is East Asia's most linguistically diverse country having 292 spoken languages. A majority of China's population speaks the official Mandarin (Sino-Tibetan) language, although a number of groups continue to speak ethnic languages as a means of preserving their unique identities (Pictured: A Chinese dictionary).

Speakers of Mandarin, Cantonese, and other Chinese languages use an ancient, character-based writing system to record sound and meaning. Developed around 1200 BC, the Chinese writing system has tens of thousands unique characters. Historically, Mongolians, Japanese, and Koreans also transcribed their languages using Chinese characters. While the Japanese and Koreans eventually devised their own writing systems, their languages still use some words and characters borrowed from Chinese. Mongolians have used many scripts to write their language, although they, like Russians, now use Cyrillic.

East Asians typically avoid confrontation, seek consensus, and refrain from displaying emotions in public. In order to maintain social harmony, East Asians often try to “save face”—avoid embarrassment to themselves or others. They tend to begin conversations by discussing neutral topics, such as health, family, and hobbies. While specific greeting customs—such as bows, handshakes, and forms of address—vary by country, all East Asians tend to use both verbal and non-verbal cues to convey respect and reinforce social hierarchy.

East Asians typically are reserved when meeting new people for the first time, particularly foreign nationals. Eventually, they become more comfortable and candid as they get to know a new acquaintance. Being introduced through a well-respected mutual contact alleviates these reservations to some extent.

7. Learning and Knowledge

All cultures require that the older generation transmit important information to the younger generation. This information can be strictly factual (for example, how to fulfill subsistence and health requirements) or culturally traditional (the beliefs, behaviors, and symbols that have meaning to the community). This knowledge transfer may occur through structured, formalized systems like schools or through informal learning by watching adults or peers.

Most East Asian cultures value education. Historically reserved for young male elites, formal education was an essential qualification for prestigious civil service jobs in ancient China, Japan, and Korea, where students often took personal lessons from famous scholars. Scholars and teachers historically have been and continue to be highly respected in East Asia, typically receiving high salaries and esteem.

Today East Asian children across social and economic ranks have access to basic education. Primary education is compulsory throughout East Asia, where literacy rates reach 96%. Although East Asian students tend to be among the world’s top performers on international achievement tests,

some observers criticize East Asian schools for their emphasis on memorization over critical thinking and creativity.

Urban schools tend to be better resourced and staffed than those in rural areas, particularly in China and Mongolia. Unlike their wealthier urban peers, many rural students cannot afford additional tutoring and tend to lag behind on national examinations.

8. Time and Space

In every society, people occupy space and time in ways that are not directly linked to physical survival. In most Western cultures, people tend to be preoccupied with strict time management, devoting less effort to building lasting relationships. Most East Asian cultures consider personal relationships and efficient time management equally essential and not mutually exclusive in professional and social settings.

East Asians typically adhere to deadlines and schedules and may multitask to maximize efficiency. While they typically refrain from taking time to build relationships during meetings, they often use after-work social events to build and maintain personal relationships with coworkers. Accordingly, socializing over meals or drinks helps foster relationships.

East Asians occupy public and private space in ways that may be unfamiliar to Americans. For example, since East Asian cities tend to be crowded, personal space is at a premium. Similarly, people tend to stand in close proximity in social contexts. East Asians keep inside spaces clean, removing shoes and wearing slippers after they enter a home, school, or temple (pictured).

9. Aesthetics and Recreation

Every culture has its own forms of creative expression that are guided by aesthetic principles of imagination, beauty, skill, and style. A country's clothing, games, music, theater, literature, and artwork reflect a variety of historic, cultural, and religious influences as well as its geographic features, climate, and global interconnectedness.

East Asia is known for its rich artistic traditions that emphasize principles such as balance, precision, and harmony, although these traditions vary by culture and time period. While the region has a long tradition of classical dance and music using a range of musical instruments, more recently, some musicians have adopted modern Western styles, particularly pop music.

East Asia also has a long, rich, and well-preserved tradition of literature and folklore. East Asian classics, such as Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*, are well-known even in the US. Historically, East Asia's religions and philosophies, particularly Buddhism, Daoism, and folk beliefs, have influenced its arts, crafts, and architecture. Today modern secular influences tend to inspire East Asian artists. By contrast, North Korean art, music, and cinema are limited to themes that honor its leaders.

East Asians enjoy soccer and table tennis. Baseball is popular in Japan and South Korea, while basketball is common in China. Mongolians excel at archery, wrestling, and horseback riding. Martial arts, such as Japan's ***judo*** and ***karate*** or Korea's ***taekwondo***, are popular throughout the region. Many East Asian athletes have excelled in worldwide sports competitions. Notably, China, South Korea, and Japan have hosted the Olympics, collectively earning hundreds of medals.

While traditional clothing varies among and within East Asian countries, it is typically colorful and elaborately decorated. Most East Asians reserve traditional clothing for special occasions. For instance, Koreans wear ***hanbok*** or ***choson-ot***, a 2-piece garment with a short jacket for weddings or funerals. Japanese people often wear the ***kimono***, an ankle-length, long-sleeve robe, for special occasions. Across East Asia, Western-style clothing is the most common style for daily wear.

10. Sustenance and Health

Societies have different methods of transforming natural resources into food. These methods can shape residence patterns, family structures, and economics. Theories of

disease and healing practices exist in all cultures and serve as adaptive responses to disease and illness.

East Asian cuisine varies widely even within single countries. Rice is East Asia's main staple grain featured at most meals as a complement to meat, seafood, or vegetables. Rice is also an ingredient in many desserts. Many East Asian cuisines also include noodles, dumplings, and soups. Although the Koreas share a culinary heritage, North Koreans' diet has less variety and more corn since it is cheaper than rice. Mongolia's cuisine consists largely of meat and dairy from sheep, cows, camels, yaks (indigenous Asian long-haired ox), and goats, with few vegetables or spices due to a lack of arable land.

East Asians regularly drink teas and also enjoy a number of indigenous alcoholic beverages, including Japanese ***saké***, made by fermenting rice, and Mongolian ***airag***, which comes from fermented horse milk.

Although most East Asian countries have experienced gradual increases in life expectancy as they have industrialized, accessibility and affordability of modern medical care vary widely. Preventative care is considered important to maintain health. Many East Asians rely on traditional medicines such as acupuncture and herbal medicines to cure their ailments. Some mainstream medical practitioners have incorporated traditional practices into their clinical healthcare. Of concern is the use of toxic herbal treatments that can harm patients, rare animal species like rhinos and tigers, and the environment.

While most communicable diseases have been eradicated or controlled in East Asia, less healthy lifestyles have contributed to an increase in non-communicable illnesses, such as cancer and cardiovascular diseases. Emerging infectious diseases, such as "bird flu" (avian influenza), can threaten public health and spread rapidly in densely populated cities. In addition to purely medical concerns, China, Japan, and South Korea also face the common problem of financing healthcare for their growing elderly populations. Meanwhile, Mongolia and North Korea still grapple with malnutrition.

11. Economics and Resources

This domain refers to beliefs regarding appropriate ways for a society to produce, distribute, and consume goods and services. It details how countries allocate their resources by sector, trade with other countries, give or receive aid, and pay for goods and services within their borders.

East Asian economic systems range from communism to free market capitalism. With the exception of North Korea, East Asian countries have benefited from industrialization and global trade and investments. China, Japan, and South Korea, in particular, have some of the world's largest economies, ranking 2nd, 3rd, and 12th in the world by nominal gross domestic product (GDP), respectively.

China's shift from planned to free market economics enabled it to realize dramatic economic gains. Since liberalizing its economy, China has experienced economic growth averaging 7% annually, largely due to its exports. This expansion so far has freed 500 million people from poverty, although wealth remains primarily in the hands of China's elites. While China continues to grow, the pace has slowed (Photo: Shanghai skyline).

Japan and South Korea have industrialized, highly developed economies. Since World War II, both countries have achieved large economic gains. In the 1990s, Mongolia abandoned its planned economy and privatized many industries, leading to substantial economic growth and social change. By contrast, North Korea's economy struggles under international sanctions and relies heavily on China to boost its failing economy.

12. Technology and Material

Societies use technology to transform their physical world, and culture heavily influences the development and use of technology. While technological development is often seen as purely positive, governments can also harness technology to monitor their citizens and crackdown on dissent.

Technology has enabled development throughout East Asia, although it has occurred at different rates. For example, while Japan and South Korea have adopted a range of industrial and Internet-enabled technologies, North Korea purposely shuns many of those technologies in order to remain isolated. China, Japan, and South Korea have well-developed physical and telecommunications infrastructures that enable transportation, trade, and connectivity with the entire world.

Transport infrastructure varies widely throughout East Asia. For example, high-speed trains crisscross much of Japan (pictured), while only about 20% of Mongolia's roads are paved. Consequently, most Mongolians travel by foot, on animals, or on motorcycles.

While Japan and South Korea have relatively few mineral resources, Mongolia, China, and North Korea have large mineral deposits. Most East Asian countries use diverse energy sources such as coal and oil, importing substantial quantities of oil and natural gas from other regions. China is the world's 2nd largest oil importer and largest producer and consumer of coal. Apart from North Korea, East Asian countries have sought to develop nuclear power and hydropower as alternative energy sources.

Freedom of the press and Internet vary substantially in East Asia. China and North Korea lack these freedoms, sponsoring state-controlled media outlets. Japan, Mongolia, and South Korea, by contrast, have relatively few restrictions on the press and Internet. While the number of Internet users in China alone exceeds the entire US population, China's government heavily censors online content and monitors its citizens' Internet use. Japanese and South Korean residents are avid Internet users, enjoying some of the world's fastest Internet connections.

Now that we have introduced general concepts that characterize East Asian society at large, we will focus on specific features of Taiwanese society.

PART 2 – CULTURE SPECIFIC

1. HISTORY AND MYTH

Overview

An island with a unique multilingual and multicultural population, Taiwan was a Dutch colony, a province in the Chinese Empire, and then a Japanese colony before coming under the control of Chinese Nationalists following World War II. For the next 40 years, residents experienced authoritarian, single-party rule accompanied by an economic boom. Since the end of martial law in 1987, Taiwan has emerged as a stable, multi-party democracy whose robust, export-oriented economy has become a model of development. Nevertheless, the mainland People's Republic of China's (PRC) ongoing claim to the island has compelled most nations, including the US, to deny Taiwan diplomatic recognition, hindering its participation in the international community (Photo: Taipei skyline).

Early History

Simple horn, bone, and stone implements indicate that humans were living in Taiwan between 30,000-50,000 years ago. Austronesian peoples from the mainland likely migrated to the island around 6,000 years ago. In subsequent centuries, these peoples spread to the Philippines and across Polynesia, reaching Hawaii and New Zealand between 500-1300 AD. Scholars believe that Taiwan's 16 officially-recognized indigenous groups (see p. 14 of *Political and Social Relations*) are descendants of these early inhabitants.

Limited Contact with China and Japan: While Chinese court records from the 3rd century BC mention the island, the first recorded contact between China and Taiwan occurred in 239

AD, when the Chinese emperor sent an expedition to explore the island. By the 7th century, Chinese fishermen were regularly visiting the Penghu Islands (a part of Taiwan today), located in the Taiwan Strait between Taiwan and the mainland. By the 12th century, a few Chinese had migrated to Taiwan and formed settlements, and eventually, both Chinese and Japanese pirates used it as a base of operations. The island's indigenous inhabitants objected to these settlements, raiding them frequently and contributing to the island's reputation as a wild, uninhabitable place. Nevertheless, over subsequent centuries, the Chinese presence slowly grew, and some indigenous inhabitants engaged in trade in deer skins and meat with both Chinese and Japanese merchants.

The Arrival of Europeans

The island remained largely isolated until the late 16th-early 17th centuries, when several different groups of Europeans arrived, all seeking to expand their share of the lucrative trade in Asian silks, spices, and other luxury goods. Around 1544, a Portuguese ship sailing by Taiwan recorded its name as "Ilha Formosa" or "beautiful island." Most Westerners continued to refer to the island as "Formosa" well into the 20th century.

From their base in present-day Indonesia, the Dutch arrived in 1622, establishing a small fort on the Penghu Islands. From there, the Dutch launched raids on the Chinese mainland and disrupted Chinese trade with the Spanish, who controlled the Philippines. In response, the Chinese attacked the Dutch and, in a 1624 truce, agreed that the Dutch could occupy Taiwan if they abandoned Penghu. The Dutch subsequently established a fort on Taiwan's southwest coast near modern-day Tainan. The truce referred to the site of the fort as "Tayouan," a term that evolved to become "Taiwan" and refer to the entire island (Illustration: 1644 depiction of the Dutch fortress of Fort Zeelandia near the present-day city of Tainan).

Dutch Control: The Dutch moved quickly to establish their dominance, yet their control of the island was not uncontested. Beginning in 1626, the Spanish also built several forts on the island before continual attacks by the Dutch and the collapse of trade with Japan forced them to retreat to the Philippines in 1642. Many Chinese settlers also objected to the Dutch presence, unsuccessfully rebelling that same year. Nevertheless, the Dutch managed to secure their hold on the island, maintaining it as a colony governed by the Dutch East India Company until 1662.

The Dutch brought significant changes to the island. Dutch missionaries spread Christianity among the indigenous population (see p. 5 of *Religion and Spirituality*) and introduced a writing system for some indigenous languages (see p. 3 of *Language and Communication*). To expand its trade in the region, the Dutch also developed commercial agriculture, introducing new farming implements and methods to cultivate rice and sugarcane, which the Dutch sold to Japan. They also collected taxes from Chinese fishermen and regulated the lucrative deerskin and venison trade.

To grow the colony, the Dutch offered land to rent to Chinese farmers from the mainland, resulting in a population surge. In 1624, around 1,500 Chinese lived on Taiwan, yet by 1662, that figure had increased to over 50,000. Life in the Dutch colony was not always peaceful: "pacification" of the island's indigenous inhabitants (who began retreating to the mountainous interior as the Dutch confiscated their coastal lands for agriculture) sometimes involved significant violence. Among the growing Chinese population, high taxes and resentment of the Dutch authorities also led to a series of rebellions with significant bloodshed (Illustration: A 1724 map of Taiwan and the Penghu Islands also gives depth markings across the Taiwan Strait to the mainland).

General Zheng Cheng-gong Captures Taiwan

Meanwhile, the Chinese Empire on the mainland was experiencing upheaval. Manchurian horsemen invading from the North overthrew the Ming Dynasty in Beijing and installed their own Qing Dynasty in 1644. The Ming resistance forces retreated to the southeastern Chinese province of Fujian, just across the Taiwan Strait from Taiwan, under the leadership of General Zheng Cheng-gong. Known widely in the West as Koxinga, Zheng initially maintained good relations with the Dutch, trading with them to fund his struggle. Yet a disastrous defeat against the Manchu in 1659 forced Zheng to retreat even further. With the aim of making Taiwan his secure rear base, Zheng landed on the island in 1661 with an army of some 25,000. The Dutch surrendered in early 1662 following a 9-month siege that resulted in the death of more than 1/2 of the 2,300 Europeans and more than 1/3 of Zheng's forces died.

Zheng achieved significant international renown for his achievements. In Taiwan, temples dedicated to his memory are found across the country today (see p. 3 of *Religion and Spirituality*), while many mainland Chinese continue to honor him as a hero in the struggle against Western imperialism. Because his mother was Japanese, Zheng is also an admired figure in Japan (Photo: Statue of Zheng in Tainan).

Zheng established Taiwan and the Penghu Islands as an independent kingdom. Following Zheng's sudden death just months later, his son Zheng Jing ruled for the next 2 decades. With Tainan as its capital, the kingdom introduced Chinese-style taxation, administration, education, and finance systems while promoting Chinese culture and encouraging Chinese immigration to the island. However, leadership disputes in the early 1680s weakened the kingdom, prompting the Qing (Manchu) Dynasty in China to intervene. In 1683, Qing Navy Admiral Shi Lang invaded and captured the Penghu Islands. To avoid further bloodshed, the kingdom's leaders relinquished Taiwan to the Qing emperor.

Qing (Manchu) Rule of Taiwan

Skeptical of the island's worth, Qing Emperor Kangxi initially wanted to compel Taiwan's Chinese inhabitants to return to the mainland then abandon it to its indigenous inhabitants. Nevertheless, Admiral Shi Lang appreciated the island's strategic location and potentially rich resources and persuaded the emperor to admit Taiwan into the Chinese Empire as a part of the mainland's Fujian province in 1684. The Qing would rule Taiwan for the next 212 years.

The Qing posted imperial officials to the island and immediately segregated the indigenous and Chinese populations, banning intergroup marriage and outlawing migration from the Chinese mainland. Nevertheless, many mainland Chinese, predominantly men, continued to migrate to Taiwan, mostly from Fujian and Guangdong provinces (see p. 12-13 of *Political and Social Relations*). The lack of women on the island encouraged some Chinese men to marry indigenous women (see p. 14 of *Political and Social Relations*), even though integration was prohibited. Lacking the longstanding familial roots that structured life on the mainland, Chinese communities in Taiwan began to develop their own social structures and traditions. Nevertheless, they also experienced significant conflict as settlers often divided into rival groups based on their place of origin on the mainland (see p. 12-13 of *Political and Social Relations*).

Typically posted to the island for just a few years, Qing officials were frequently corrupt, inspiring significant resentment in local communities. Throughout Qing rule, the island experienced uprisings and rebellions against the Qing authorities as well as banditry and clan warfare within the Chinese population and against indigenous groups. Despite the continuing prevalence of deadly diseases like malaria, the population grew – by 1811, some 2 million people lived on the island (Illustration: 1724 Qing Dynasty map of Taiwan).

Beginning in the late 18th century, Taiwan underwent an agricultural revolution. More land was devoted to rice and sugarcane cultivation, and beginning in the 19th century, foreign companies began large-scale tea production (see p. 1 of *Economics and Resources*). With this increased economic output, Taiwan became more peaceful. The educated class grew (see p. 1-2 of *Learning and Knowledge*), and Taiwan's free ports welcomed Western merchants, missionaries, diplomats, and scholars (Illustration: English newspaper depiction of "Chinese Manners and Customs in Formosa" from 1859).

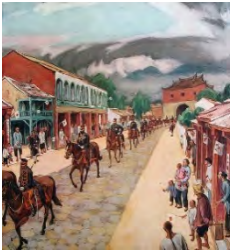
Meanwhile, the Qing Empire was experiencing a series of crises that would affect Taiwan. Between 1839-60, it fought the British in 2 wars that significantly weakened the Empire and resulted in the bombing of the Taiwanese port of Keelung. In 1874, the Japanese dispatched an expeditionary force to Taiwan (in an episode known as the "Mudan Incident") to avenge the 1871 massacre of some 54 shipwrecked Japanese sailors by indigenous Taiwanese. After engaging the warriors and inflicting significant casualties, the Japanese refused to leave until the Qing paid compensation for their losses, revealing to the world the weakness of the Qing and their limited authority in Taiwan.

In 1884, the Qing fought with France over a region of present-day Vietnam, resulting in a temporary French invasion and occupation of Taiwan. Recognizing the strategic importance of the island, the Qing made it a full-fledged province of the empire in 1885, while developing plans to increase its defenses. Other modernization improvements included land and tax reform, the development of coal mines, and Taiwan's first railroad and postal system. Meanwhile, efforts to "pacify" indigenous communities were less successful, and some areas of the mountainous interior remained largely independent.

Japanese Colonization

By the late 19th century, Japan was emerging as a regional power. Territorial spats between China and Japan developed into a full-fledged war (the First Sino-Japanese War) in 1894, which Japan won in a decisive victory. The subsequent Treaty of Shimonoseki indefinitely granted Taiwan (along with the Penghu Islands) to Japan.

Shocked by the Qing Empire's abandonment of the island, several wealthy and educated Chinese residents convinced the governor to declare an independent Taiwan Republic. Nevertheless, within 2 weeks, a Japanese force of 12,000 soldiers had landed on the island, leading to the Republic's collapse. On June 7, 1895, the Japanese marched into the present-day capital of Taipei, beginning 50 years of Japanese colonization (Illustration: Depiction of Japanese soldiers entering Taipei in 1895).



Life under Japanese Rule: Resistance to the Japanese flared immediately. Within the first few months of the occupation at least 10,000 civilians and soldiers were killed, and localized uprisings, especially among Taiwan's indigenous groups, would continue to occur for years. By contrast, other residents hoped that the Japanese colonists would be better rulers than the corrupt Qing regime. Indeed, the colonial period proved to be a period of exploitation and "Japanization." But it also brought significant economic development and improvement in the standard of living.

The Japanese authorities focused on eradicating disease, increasing agricultural output, and creating a modern economy. The colonial government built roads, railways, and an electricity grid. New hospitals and sanitation systems improved public health, while new schools provided enhanced educational opportunities (see p. 2 of *Learning and Knowledge*).

Despite these improvements, life under the new regime was harsh. The Japanese outlawed dissent yet rebellions were frequent. In response, the government imposed broadly-written

"bandit laws" that mandated severe punishment of rebels and made even their relatives guilty. By 1902, some 32,000 Taiwanese had received punishment under these laws. Following the massacre of 1 famed rebel leader that year, resistance among the Chinese population was effectively suppressed. By contrast, resistance in indigenous communities continued for many years (Photo: English scientist E.H. Wilson and other Western explorers pose with Taiwanese indigenous people in 1918).

Besides quashing dissent with violence, the Japanese also tried to suppress local culture, while requiring the population to learn Japanese (see p. 2 of *Learning and Knowledge*). Yet the Japanese investments in the colony were beginning to pay off: by 1914, Taiwan was financially self-sufficient and even contributing taxes to Japan; the island featured 100s of miles of new roads and railroads; new schools and teaching colleges significantly improved educational standards; cities and towns were redesigned according to modern urban planning; and advanced agricultural practices saw food production rise dramatically. The population surged from 2.6 million in 1896 to 6.6 million by 1943.

In the 1920s, the economy began to shift its emphasis away from agriculture to industry and light manufacturing. Island residents increasingly lived in cities, where a growing sense of unique Taiwanese identity (as opposed to Chinese) began to develop. Taiwanese groups, such as the Taiwan Cultural Association, began to petition the colonial authorities for civil rights, self-representation, and self-determination.

The Wushe Incident: Following years of mistreatment (such as the confiscation of hunting weapons, the appropriation of ancestral lands, and the requirement to labor on government projects for low wages), indigenous resentment of the colonial authorities reached its peak in 1930. That year, local Atayal (see p. 14 of *Political and Social Relations*) leader Mona Rudao

led a band of indigenous warriors who attacked Japanese attending a school event in the mountain town of Wushe, killing 134. In response, the Japanese assembled a force of about 3,800 to pursue the rebels. After 2 months of fighting that left some 644 Atayal (1 of Taiwan's indigenous ethnic groups) dead, the rebellion ended. In the aftermath, the Japanese suppressed all remaining resistance, including massacring some Atayal who attempted to surrender.

The Founding of the Republic of China

The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw significant turmoil in mainland China. Following China's 1895 defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War that resulted in Taiwan's transfer to Japan, revolutionaries seeking to overthrow the Qing regime initiated several failed uprisings. They were finally successfully in 1911, ending over 2000 years of imperial rule and establishing the new Republic of China (ROC) under President Sun Yat-sen a year later. The October 10 ("Double Ten") anniversary of the successful uprising is celebrated as a major holiday in Taiwan today (see p. 2 of *Time and Space*).

Later, Sun co-founded and led the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang or KMT). Upon Sun's 1925 death, General Chiang Kai-shek assumed leadership of the KMT, and in 1928, became the President of the ROC – a position he would hold for the next 47 years. In the 1930s-40s, Chiang struggled for control of the ROC on the mainland against a variety of factions, including the Communist Party of China. After Japan's 1937 invasion in the Second Sino-Japanese War, this struggle took a backseat to defending China. Upon Japan's 1945 surrender at the end of World War II, the ROC and Communists resumed hostilities, which flared to become the 4-year Chinese Civil War.

Japan Invades China

Through the 1920s, Japan had progressed slowly toward a more democratic form of government. However, when a new emperor took the throne in 1926, military leaders became increasingly influential. Soon, Japan began to pursue expansionist goals, invading and occupying Manchuria in northern China in 1931. In 1937, Japan launched a full-scale invasion of China (the Second Sino-Japanese War) which eventually became part of the greater conflict of World War II.

In Taiwan, the Japanese authorities mobilized all assets to support the war against China. For example, the "Kominka Movement" attempted to erase all remaining remnants of Chinese identity among the island's population and promote loyalty to the Japanese emperor. Methods included suppressing Chinese languages and encouraging Japanese Shintoism over traditional indigenous and Chinese forms of worship (see p. 1-5 of *Religion and Spirituality*). The movement was somewhat successful: many Taiwanese adopted Japanese names, and by 1945, some 2/3 of Taiwanese spoke Japanese. The Japanese also shifted industrial output in Taiwan to support its war efforts. Considering the island as an important piece of its expansionist strategy, the Japanese also established military bases for use as staging areas for its invasions to the south.

World War II (WWII)

On December 7, 1941 Japan launched a surprise air attack on US naval forces at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, triggering the Pacific War, a term that refers to WWII events in the Pacific and East Asia. Over the next 4 years, the Japanese used Taiwan as a secure area where it could train soldiers and pilots and house prisoners of war. It also increased Taiwan's production of timber and rubber, while its ports became important bases for the Japanese Imperial Navy. Overall, some 200,000 Taiwanese served in the Japanese armed forces, some as volunteers and others as conscripts (pictured), while some 7,000 women were forced to work as

“comfort women” or sex slaves. One unique group was the Takasago Volunteers, a unit of some 5,000 indigenous men recruited by the Japanese for special service. Of all Taiwanese who served, some 30,000 were killed in combat.

The Restoration of Chinese Control

While WWII was still ongoing in 1943, US President Roosevelt, UK Prime Minister Churchill, and ROC President/Nationalist Party (KMT) leader Chiang Kai-shek verbally agreed that control of Taiwan would return to China following Japan’s defeat. That agreement was confirmed by world leaders at war’s end in August 1945. In October, Chinese General Chen Yi accepted Japan’s surrender of Taiwan, declared the island a territory of the ROC, and became its governor-general (Photo: Students welcome Chinese troops and officials to Taiwan).

While many Taiwanese celebrated the restoration of Chinese rule, pro-independence residents considered the KMT’s assumption of control illegal. The KMT struggled to fill positions left vacant by the departure of 1000s of Japanese administrators, officials, and technical experts. The KMT also prioritized decoupling the economy from Japan, rewriting Japanese law, and erasing Japanese culture and language from the island.

Generally, Chen, Chiang, and other ROC leaders distrusted the Taiwanese population, considering them potential traitors with lingering allegiance to Japan. Similarly, many Taiwanese viewed the new government, staffed primarily with KMT supporters from the mainland, with suspicion. As the economy worsened, educational standards fell, and once-eradicated diseases returned, as distrust in the new leaders increased.

Chinese Civil War: Meanwhile, with the end of WWII, hostilities between the ruling KMT (Nationalists) and the rebel Communists on the mainland resumed. Both sides raced to acquire former Japanese territories, while building up their

forces. The US provided significant support to the Nationalists, such as helping them move troops to occupy major cities and landing some 53,000 US Marines in the North to help disarm and repatriate Japanese troops. By the end of 1945, the Communists were entrenched in the North and controlled large sections of important supply lines, while the Nationalists held vast territories of the South and West along with a few northern cities (Illustration: US government poster supporting the Nationalist cause).

Peace negotiations were unsuccessful and fighting soon transformed into full-fledged civil war. At the end of 1946, the Nationalists made significant gains, adopted a new constitution, and prepared for elections in 1947. Yet grave economic problems soon blocked their progress, and by mid-1947, the tide had turned for the Communists. At year's end, the Nationalists had more than twice as many forces as the Communists, but the Nationalists were thinly spread and on the defensive. In 1948, the Communists took major towns and won several decisive battles. Meanwhile, the Nationalists lost hundreds of thousands of troops as casualties, captives, or defectors. In early 1949, the Communists won a decisive 65-day battle for control of Suzhou, near Shanghai. Even though the US declined to send additional support, the Nationalists still controlled more than 1/2 of China and retained a large army. Consequently, they resisted surrender, continually retreating until they occupied only the islands of Taiwan and Hainan and a few pockets of the mainland. On October 1, 1949, Communist leader Mao Zedong proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

The 2-28 Incident

Meanwhile, life on Taiwan during the Chinese Civil War years was tense. Many Taiwanese resented the ROC government's favoritism toward mainlanders and the confiscation of property

and assets left by the Japanese. Tensions exploded in February 1947, when government agents harassed a woman selling unlicensed cigarettes in Taipei then shot and killed a passerby. During subsequent demonstrations, additional civilians were killed, prompting weeks of violent protests. The KMT authorities summoned reinforcement troops from the mainland who restored order with force. This episode, known as the "2-28 Incident" for the date on which the protests first formed, cost as many as 28,000 lives, most killed by government forces. With the fight against the Communists on the mainland going badly and sensing their precarious hold on power in Taiwan, the KMT suppressed all political dissent, adopting "temporary" provisions suspending many constitutional freedoms in mid-1948 and imposing martial law a year later.

Nationalist Retreat to Taiwan

Facing defeat on the mainland, Nationalist/KMT General Chiang Kai-shek retreated to Taiwan in December 1949, arriving with most of the ROC's gold reserves and the Nationalist Air Force and Navy. Some 1.5 million mainlanders followed Chiang to Taiwan, almost 1/2 of them soldiers. As President of the ROC, Chiang would rule Taiwan for the next 26 years (Photo: Chiang Kai-shek and his wife Soong May-ling in 1950).

With the 1950 outbreak of the Korean War, the US reversed its noninvolvement stance regarding the Chinese conflict as part of a larger policy to stem the spread of communism in the region. Subsequently, the US provided significant support to the Chiang regime, championing its successful bid to represent China in the United Nations (UN) instead of the PRC, and supplying significant financial and military aid to the island.

White Terror: Chiang's government used martial law to ruthlessly suppress dissent in many ways. It favored mainlanders for administrative positions, outlawed opposition parties, and banned the Taiwanese language, while mandating

the use of Mandarin (see p. 1-2 of *Language and Communication*). The regime also dealt harshly with anyone who questioned President Chiang's rule, while banning travel to mainland China. Although exact figures are unknown, scholars estimate that some 140,000 received jail time and 1000s were executed during this period known as the "White Terror." Chiang believed these authoritarian tendencies were justified because they served his higher purpose: the eventual invasion of the mainland, defeat of the PRC, and restoration of KMT control over all of China.

The Taiwan Economic Miracle

President Chiang and other KMT leaders realized that their loss to the Communists on the mainland was at least partly due to the Nationalists' failure to address the needs of China's impoverished rural populations. They also realized that economic growth could result in improved living standards for Taiwan's residents, which in turn could improve relations between the people and the authorities and help ensure continued international support. Consequently, Chiang introduced land reforms that vastly improved agriculture output and produced significant income. Chiang then invested this capital into a variety of government-owned industries (see p. 2 of *Economics and Resources*) (Photo: A boy watches farmers in 1960s Taiwan).

By the late 1950s, Taiwan exported more factory-produced goods than agricultural products. In the 1960s, the government introduced an aggressive export-oriented strategy, liberalized the financial system, set up a stock market, and created export-processing zones. With the world's fastest-growing economy between 1960-70, Taiwan experienced significant social changes. Women entered the workforce in record numbers and the population grew rapidly, from under 8 million in 1950 to 14.6 million in 1970. The government also invested in education, building 100s of new schools and universities.

International Isolation

Amid this domestic prosperity, Taiwan became increasingly isolated in the international community. The US and Taiwan had signed a mutual defense treaty in 1954, but by the late 1960s, the US sought better relations instead with the PRC as a way to end its own involvement in the Vietnam War. In 1971, the UN revoked recognition of the ROC authorities in Taiwan and recognized the PRC as the "only legitimate representative of China." A year later, US President Nixon visited the PRC. In a subsequent communiqué, the US acknowledged its understanding that there is just "one China" and that Taiwan is a part of China, prompting other countries to also seek better relations with the PRC over Taiwan.

President Chiang died in 1975 and was succeeded by his Vice President. In 1978, the National Assembly elected Chiang's son, Chiang Ching-kuo (known as CCK) as President. During his 10 years in office, CCK launched an anticorruption campaign and implemented various democratization initiatives. He also oversaw continued economic growth, while remaining dedicated to the KMT goal of reunifying all of China under Nationalist rule (Photo: CCK in 1948).

Shortly after CCK took office, US President Carter suddenly announced that the US would end its formal diplomatic ties with the ROC so that it could normalize relations with the PRC. The move compelled several other countries to follow suit. Despite these and other setbacks, such as the closing of US bases on the island, CCK continued to pursue his democratization initiatives. He also embarked on a path of "dollar diplomacy," the use of financial aid and investment to maintain international influence (see p. 2 of *Economics and Resources*). Subsequent Presidents would also use this tactic to try to maintain ties with countries that declined formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

Dissent Grows and the End of Martial Law

Demanding democracy and civil rights, opposition to one-party rule by the KMT grew during the 1970s. During a December 1979 protest known as the "Kaohsiung Incident," scuffles between the police and demonstrators turned into a full-scale riot. The authorities arrested 50 dissidents (notably including 2 future Vice Presidents), put them on trial (future President Chen Shui-bian was 1 of the dissidents' defense lawyers), and sentenced them to prison terms. Nevertheless, the episode increased public support for democratic reforms.

Taiwan's relations with the PRC improved somewhat in the early 1980s. Meanwhile, the KMT opened party leadership positions to people born in Taiwan, not just mainlanders, for the first time. CCK allowed the formation of Taiwan's first opposition party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) (see p. 6 of *Political and Social Relations*) in 1986, even though this act was still technically outlawed. A year later, CKK lifted martial law and ended the ban on travel to mainland China, leading to the formation of personal and economic contacts across the Taiwan Strait for the first time since 1949 (Photo: Office of the President in Taipei).

Democratization Continues

KMT leader Lee Teng-hui, CCK's hand-picked successor, was elected President by the National Assembly in 1988 following CKK's death. The island's first native-born President, Lee continued many of CKK's reforms. For example, he legalized the formation of political parties in 1989, and in 1991, ended the "temporary" provisions that had suspended speech and press freedoms for decades. He also initiated constitutional changes that allowed for direct election of the President and a national legislative body, now called the Legislative Yuan (see p. 5 of *Political and Social Relations*). Lee also formally ended the state of war with the PRC, which had persisted since 1949, while also abandoning the ROC's claim over the mainland.

Lee continued CKK's policy of bringing in more native-born Taiwanese into government. He also pursued a policy of "localization" or "Taiwanization" that stressed the island's own multiethnic and multilingual history and culture over those of mainland China. Lee's actions caused serious fractures in the KMT and prompted some party members to join opposition parties. Angered at what it perceived as Lee's efforts to legally separate Taiwan from China, the PRC conducted missile tests in the Taiwan Strait in late 1995-early 1996 just as Taiwan was preparing for its first direct Presidential elections. These actions prompted US President Clinton to dispatch warships to the Strait, though tensions soon abated.

President Lee won the historic 1996 election, becoming the first-ever directly-elected leader of a Chinese entity. Lee's second term saw continued democratic and civil reforms but also a spike in organized crime activity. Tensions across the Strait increased again in 1999 when Lee called for "state-to-state" relations between Taiwan and the PRC, implying that Taiwan was a sovereign nation. This stance was in stark contrast to the PRC's claim that Taiwan was simply a renegade province of China. Nevertheless, attention was soon diverted by a massive earthquake that killed some 2,400 people and caused major property damage (see p. 3 of *Political and Social Relations*) (Photo: KMT headquarters in Taipei).

The End of One-Party Rule

Fifty years of KMT rule came to an abrupt and unexpected end in the 2000 presidential election. Disputes within the KMT caused a leading candidate to leave the party and run as an independent, splitting KMT support and allowing DPP candidate Chen Shui-bian to win with just 39% of the vote. With this peaceful transition of power, Taiwan demonstrated it had become the world's first Chinese democracy.

Upon taking office, Chen emphasized “localization” policies to distinguish Taiwan’s identity, replacing “China” with “Taiwan” in many public companies and institutions. Gradually, residents, even the children of mainlanders (see p. 13 of *Political and Social Relations*), began calling themselves “Taiwanese” over “Chinese.” Nevertheless, Chen was unable to sustain widespread support, and ethnic tensions increased as political gridlock halted reform and led to economic recession. Tensions with the PRC also heightened, due primarily to Chen’s calls for independence, though Taiwanese investment in the PRC dramatically increased during this period (see p. 3 of *Economics and Resources*).

Projections suggested Chen would lose his 2004 bid for re-election, when just hours before the polls were to open, Chen and his running mate were shot, suffering minor wounds. Critics charged the attack was staged, yet the polls opened, and Chen won by a small margin. In Chen’s 2nd term, political paralysis worsened, and corruption increased. In 2005, the PRC passed a law clarifying its intent to attack Taiwan if the island declared independence. Massive demonstrations protested Chen’s poor governance and widespread corruption. A year after ending his term in 2008, Chen was sentenced to life in prison after he and his wife were convicted of embezzlement, receiving bribes, and money laundering.

Contemporary Taiwan

The DPP’s reputation was significantly tarnished by Chen’s crimes, and the KMT returned to power in 2008 when its presidential candidate, Ma Ying-jeou won 58% of the vote. President Ma initially received high approval ratings, primarily due to his efforts to improve relations with both the US and the PRC by dropping all reference to Taiwan independence. Following public dissatisfaction with the government’s response to a 2009 typhoon that killed some 700 (see p. 3 of *Political and Social Relations*), his popularity plummeted (Photo: US Navy provides humanitarian support following the 2009 typhoon).

Nevertheless, Ma successfully negotiated several agreements with the PRC that resulted in the first scheduled flights and ferries between the island and the mainland, the arrival of the first PRC tourists, and increased investment by Taiwanese in industry located on the mainland (see p. 3 of *Economics and Resources*).

Ma closely won re-election in 2012. Nevertheless, public anger over soaring home prices, stagnating wages, poor governance, and the island's increasingly close trade relations with the PRC soon prompted widespread student protests (see p. 3 of *Economics and Resources*) and caused his popularity to decline. Yet Ma continued to pursue his agenda, and in late 2015, met PRC President Xi Jingping in the first-ever encounter between the heads of the ROC and PRC, crowning 8 years of relative stability in cross-Strait relations (Photo: Demonstrators protest the 2015 meeting).

The Tsai Presidency: The opposition DPP won Major local elections in 2014 and then regained the Presidency in 2016 with its candidate, Tsai Ing-wen, winning some 56% of the vote and becoming Taiwan's first female President. The DPP also won control of the legislature that year (see p. 6 of *Political and Social Relations*), potentially giving the party the opportunity to achieve significant change. Since taking office, President Tsai has pledged to restore economic growth, implement free-trade agreements, and reduce social inequities across the island (see p. 15 of *Political and Social Relations*).

While considered a moderate within the pro-independence DPP, President Tsai has caused tensions with the PRC to rise, mainly due to her unwillingness to commit to the PRC- and KMT-supported notion that Taiwan and the mainland together comprise "one China." Instead, she has supported the "status quo" policy that aims to preserve the situation as it has been since 1949: no unification yet also no independence for Taiwan. Despite her party's preference for independence, Tsai

seems to favor a more moderate approach that supports a continuing process of separation from the mainland by de-emphasizing the island's mainland Chinese character and underscoring Taiwan's distinct identity. In response, the PRC has increased its efforts to isolate Taiwan by pressuring its few remaining allies to suspend diplomatic relations with Taiwan in return for financial support or investment (see p. 10-11 of *Political and Social Relations*). Strong wins by the KMT in local elections in November 2018 (see p. 7 of *Political and Social Relations*) cast some doubt over Taiwanese support for Tsai's strategy to confront the growing economic, political, and military pressure from the PRC.

Chiang Kai-shek's Legacy

While some Taiwanese, particularly supporters of the KMT, still revere Chiang Kai-shek as a hero, many others condemn him as the authoritarian ruler who brutally repressed dissent during the "White Terror." From 2000-08 and since 2016, the DPP-controlled government has supported the removal of Chiang's image and name from memorials, signs, and institutions like Taipei's international airport (see p. 2 of *Technology and Materials*). In 2017, the Parliament approved a bill calling for an investigation and assessment of Chiang's rule and requiring the removal of his name from government offices and schools. As of early 2019, the authorities are considering removing Chiang's image from Taiwan's currency (see p. 5-6 of *Economics and Resources*).

Myth Overview

In contrast to history, which is supposed to be an objective record of the past based on verifiable facts, myths embody a culture's values and often explain the origins of humans and the natural world. Myths are important because they provide a sense of unique heritage and identity. Because of its multiethnic and multilingual past, Taiwan is a rich source of myths, legends, and folktales.

A Hornet Repays its Debt: This story is also told in mainland Guangdong and Fujian provinces, suggesting that it likely spread to Taiwan with Hakka settlers. Ah Fu was well-known in his community as a cheerful, hard worker. One day, a fortuneteller stopped Ah Fu on his way home and told him signs indicated that Ah Fu would likely die before the next morning. Shocked, Ah Fu continued home and pondered why his time was up, especially since he was in good health and had never committed any evil acts. He soon noticed some children playing with torches. Worried for their safety, Ah Fu shouted at the children, who said they intended to set a nearby hornets' nest on fire. To thwart their plan, Ah Fu gave the children some money and told them to go buy sweets. The children put out their torches and ran off. Ah Fu continued home, where his mother heated water for bathing. Upon picking up the bucket of warm water, a hornet stung Ah Fu on the nose, causing him to drop the bucket. Arriving at his cry, Ah Fu's mother spied a poisonous snake in the bucket that surely would have bitten him. Ah Fu then realized that the hornet had repaid Ah Fu's earlier kindness and thus saved his life. Ah Fu lived to a grand old age.

The Great Flood: Taiwan's indigenous groups have their own myths and legends, including this Bunun flood story. One day, a huge snake settled in the mouth of a river, causing it to flood the land. Two groups of Bunun people fled to the only land remaining – the tops of 2 mountains. When 1 group noticed the other had fire, they sent first a toad then a bird across the water to collect a burning ember. Tragically, the animals were unsuccessful. Desperate, the Bunun convinced a ***kaibixi*** bird to try, and this time, the bird succeeded. Meanwhile, a crab killed the snake, allowing the flood waters to recede and the Bunun people to come down from the mountaintops. Since then, the Bunun people have shown the toad and *kaibixi* bird their gratitude by protecting them from all harm (Photo: Bunun people around 1900).

2. POLITICAL AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

Official Name

Republic of China (Taiwan)
Zhōnghuá Mínguó/ Tiong-hoâ Bîn-kok/ Chûng-fà Mìn-koet
中華民國 (Chinese)

Political Borders

Coastline: 973 mi

Capital

Taipei

Demographics

Taiwan's population of about 23.6 million is slowly growing at a rate of 0.11% annually. Although Taiwan is currently a young nation – about 84% of the population is under the age of 65 – experts predict the population will age rapidly in the coming decades due to falling birth rates (see p. 3 of *Sex and Gender*) and long life expectancies. About 79% of Taiwanese live in urban areas, primarily in New Taipei City, Taipei, Taoyuan, Kaohsiung, Taichung, and Tainan. The population concentrates on the western and northern coasts.

Flag

The Taiwanese flag consists of a red backdrop with a dark blue rectangle bearing a white sun with 12 triangular rays in the upper left corner. The red background represents sacrifice, brotherhood, and nationalism, while the blue rectangle stands for democracy, liberty, and justice. The white sun signifies equality, frankness, and livelihood, while also serving as the emblem of Taiwan's Kuomintang Party (KMT – see p. 9 of *History and Myth*). The sun's 12 rays represent the months of the year and the 12 traditional Chinese hours.

Geography

Taiwan is situated in the western Pacific Ocean about 100 mi east of mainland China. The island of Taiwan is bounded by the East China Sea to the North, the Philippine Sea and Pacific Ocean to the East, the Luzon Strait to the South, the South China Sea to the Southwest, and the Taiwan Strait to the West. Taiwan also includes numerous offshore islands, notably the Matsu, Kinmen, and Penghu archipelagos located in the Taiwan Strait, among others. Taiwan's total land area is about 12,455 sq mi, making it about the size of Maryland and slightly smaller than Belgium.

Towering, rugged mountains dominate about 2/3 of Taiwan's interior, running north-south as 5 parallel ranges. The longest and largest range is the ***Zhongyang*** (Central Mountain Range), which extends along the eastern coastline and features steep, rocky cliffs that descend sharply into the Pacific shoreline. Other ranges include the ***Xue*** (Snow) Mountains, ***Yu*** (Jade) Range, Haian Range, and Ali Range. Within them, 164 mountain peaks reach elevations over 9,800 ft, while Taiwan's highest point, the centrally located Yu Shan, rises to 12,966 ft. The gently rolling hills and fertile plains west of the ranges descend toward the coastline, which is characterized by tidal flats and intermittent wetlands. Southern coasts feature sandy beaches, mangrove forests, bays, and inlets. Taiwan is also home to 118 rivers, the longest of which is the Zhuoshui (Photo: Nantou County in Taiwan's interior).

Climate

Taiwan's subtropical climate divides into a humid, hot season lasting from April-October and a dry, cooler season from November-March. Generally, northern regions see slightly cooler temperatures than the South. For example, the northern capital city of Taipei experiences average daily temperatures of 80°F year-round compared to 84°F on the southern coast. Taiwan's mountainous interior has a more temperate climate, with the highest elevations regularly experiencing freezing temperatures

and heavy snowfall. Taiwan's North receives the heaviest annual rainfall, primarily from October-March. During the mid-summer, monsoonal winds sweep in from the South China Sea, bringing heavy rainfall to the South and East.

Natural Hazards

Taiwan is vulnerable to typhoons (powerful tropical storms), floods, and earthquakes, among other natural hazards. Typically occurring July-October, typhoons bring strong, destructive winds and heavy rainfall, which often causes devastating flash floods and landslides. Besides loss of life, typhoons severely impact the economy by destroying roads, bridges, and other vital infrastructure and killing crops and livestock. The 2009 Typhoon Morakot was the worst to hit Taiwan in the last several years, flooding Taiwan's coasts and setting off landslides that killed 700 people and left thousands with inadequate food, water, or shelter for months.

Taiwan's location at the intersection of the Eurasian and Philippine tectonic plates makes it especially vulnerable to earthquakes. Records indicate Taiwan has experienced over 20,000 significant seismic activities in the last 4 centuries, most striking the densely populated western coast and parts of eastern Taiwan, causing massive damage. The most severe earthquake in recent decades occurred in 1999, killing some 2,400 people and injuring some 11,300. The 1999 tremor also displaced over 100,000 from their homes, destroyed infrastructure, and caused billions in economic loss (Photo: The 921 Earthquake Museum in Taichung features damaged buildings from the 1999 earthquake).

Environmental Issues

Decades of rapid industrialization in the 20th century (see p. 8 and 14 of *History and Myth*) and a lack of environmental protection laws resulted in the widespread degradation of Taiwan's natural environment. Since the 1990s, the authorities have implemented various regulations to reduce air and water

pollution and protect the island's marine and land ecosystems. Despite some success, severe air pollution from vehicle emissions and industrial discharge continues to affect urban areas. Particularly prominent in western and southern Taiwan, dense smog intermittently blankets cities with a thick haze, forces residents to stay indoors, and contributes to respiratory health issues (see p. 7 of *Sustenance and Health*). Air pollution also leads to acid rain, which in turn degrades natural water supplies, strips forests, and damages infrastructure (Photo: Taipei's skyline).

Moreover, agricultural and industrial runoff, including chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and waste from petrochemical, steel, semiconductor, and other industries, pollutes soil and water supplies. Taiwan experiences rampant deforestation from the clearing of land for farming, urban and industrial development, and other uses, which contributes to soil erosion, impedes water retention, and significantly compounds the risk of flooding and landslides.

Government

Although the People's Republic of China (PRC or mainland China) claims sovereignty over Taiwan (see p. 17-19 of *History and Myth*), Taiwan functions as an independent, semi-presidential republic with a parliamentary governing system. Taiwan divides into 13 counties (***xian***) and 3 cities (***shi***), each governed by elected councils and mayors. In addition, 6 special municipalities – namely New Taipei, Taichung, Kaohsiung, Taipei, Taoyuan, and Tainan – are directly administered by the Executive Yuan (see "Executive Branch" below).

Adopted in 1947 and revised 7 times since then, the constitution separates power among 5 governing structures or "***Yuans.***" The 3 primary branches are the Executive Yuan (EY), Legislative Yuan (LY), and Judicial Yuan (JY). While the Examination Yuan (which historically managed the civil service system) and Control Yuan (which retained the power to audit and impeach officials) still exist, their powers have reduced

significantly in recent years. Taiwan's constitution is based on the "Three Principles of the People," a political ideology developed by Nationalist Chinese leader Sun Yat-sen (see p. 9 of *History and Myth*) that outlines the concepts of nationalism, democracy, and social welfare.

Executive Branch

The President, who is head-of-state and commander-in-chief of Taiwan's Armed Forces, is elected by popular vote to serve up to 2 consecutive 4-year terms. A Vice President, elected along with the President on the same ballot, supports the President in running Taiwan's day-to-day affairs. Current President Tsai Ing-wen took office in 2016, becoming Taiwan's first female President (see p. 19 of *History and Myth*) (Photo: President Tsai, center front, poses with a delegation from the Solomon Islands).

The President shares executive power with the EY, or cabinet led by a Premier and comprised of a Vice Premier, ministers, and advisors. The President appoints the Premier, who then selects all other cabinet members for appointment by the President. EY powers include formulating and implementing foreign and domestic policies and approving bills drafted by the legislature, among others. Current Premier Su Tseng-chang took office in 2019.

Legislative Branch

Taiwan's legislature is the single-chamber LY comprised of 113 members serving 4-year terms. While 73 members are directly elected in single-seat constituencies by a simple majority vote, 34 members are directly elected through a nationwide vote based on proportional representation. The remaining 6 members are elected in multi-seat indigenous constituencies, also by a proportional representation vote. The LY controls all legislative powers, including setting the budget, approving treaties, passing legislation upon approval of the EY, and making declarations of war, among others.

Judicial Branch

The JY includes a Supreme Court, Constitutional Court, high courts, district courts, and a system of administrative courts that oversee minor civil cases. As the highest court, the 100-member Supreme Court is the final court of appeal for civil and criminal cases. It is organized into 12 criminal and 8 civil divisions, and all justices are appointed by the President for lifelong terms. The President also appoints the Constitutional Court's 15 members, following the approval of the LY, to 8-year terms (Photo: Taiwanese honor guard).

Political Climate

In the late 1980s, Taiwan emerged from single-party authoritarian rule and slowly transitioned into today's flourishing, multi-party democracy. For decades, Taiwan's relationship with the PRC has dominated its political climate. While platforms are often complex and factionalized, political parties tend to organize along 2 opposing ideologies: the support of eventual unification with mainland China and support of Taiwanese independence. While numerous political groups are active in Taiwan, 2 large parties dominate the political arena and contend for power: the historically powerful, conservative, and pro-unification Kuomingtang (Chinese Nationalist Party or KMT) and the increasingly influential, liberal, and PRC-skeptic Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). Generally, KMT and its supporters call for deeper social, economic, and political ties with the PRC and are more likely to subscribe to the notion that Taiwan and the PRC belong to "one China," though preferably under control of the KMT (see p. 19 of *History and Myth*). By contrast, pro-independence groups like the DPP tend to oppose the "one China" policy and embrace a distinct Taiwanese national identity.

Breaking 8 years of KMT rule, the DPP swept the 2016 national elections, gaining a majority in the LY for the first time and bringing DPP leader Tsai Ing-wen to the Presidency. Considered a moderate within the party, President Tsai has

never publicly expressed support for Taiwan's independence, unlike many other DPP leaders. Instead she has vowed to maintain the fragile yet stable relationship Taiwan upheld with the PRC under the previous KMT administration (see p. 18-19 of *History and Myth*) by keeping economic and communication channels open. However, President Tsai's refusal to publicly support the "one China" notion as demanded by the PRC has caused substantial friction between the 2.

Since 2016, the PRC has increased political and military pressure on Taiwan (see "Security Issues" below), sparking significant debate both in Taiwan and within the international community. While many Taiwanese remain reluctant to vocalize support for independence for fear of provoking a military response from the PRC, opposition to PRC influence in the region has grown. Pro-independence activists frequently organize demonstrations and protests, such as an October 2018 event that attracted more than 100,000 in Taipei. In a surprise result, the KMT swept local elections in November 2018, and in response, President Tsai resigned as leader of the DPP. Some observers believe voters were responding primarily to domestic issues, and results do not necessarily reflect a rejection of President Tsai's China policy. Nevertheless, the results raised some uncertainty ahead of the 2020 presidential and legislative elections.

Defense

Taiwan's Armed Forces (TAF) are a unified military force consisting of ground, maritime, and air branches, with a joint strength of 163,000 active duty troops, 1,657,000 reserve personnel, and 11,500 paramilitary troops. While the TAF announced plans to eventually move to an all-volunteer force, as of 2018, all men born before 1993 must serve 12 months of compulsory military service, while men born after 1994 must serve 4 months. The TAF are charged with defending against foreign and domestic threats and supporting disaster relief and humanitarian efforts. Because of Taiwan's lack of official

international recognition, its access to foreign military resources is somewhat limited. Consequently, the TAF relies on internal resources to improve its military capacity, investing heavily to modernize both equipment and infrastructure. For example, in 2017, Taiwan launched a domestic submarine program to design and build 8 marine vessels to enter into service starting in 2027.

Army: As the largest branch, Taiwan's Army is a well-equipped, well-trained force of 88,000 active-duty troops. The Army has 8 headquarter commands and corps, a special forces/helicopter command which divides into 2 special operations groups and 2 helicopter brigades, 13 maneuver brigades (including armored, mechanized, and light), 12 combat support groups, and 1 coastal defense battalion.

Air Force: Taiwan's Air Force consists of 35,000 active-duty personnel who divide into 3 fighter squadrons, 14 fighter/ground attack squadrons, an anti-submarine warfare squadron, an electronic warfare squadron, an Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) squadron, an airborne early warning and control squadron, a search and rescue squadron, 3 transport squadrons, and 3 training squadron. They are equipped with 481 combat capable aircraft, 19 helicopters, and other air defense equipment.

Navy: Taiwan's Navy is a well-trained force of 40,000 active-duty personnel, including 10,000 marines and 3 naval aviation squadrons. The Navy is equipped with 4 tactical submarines, 24 principal surface combatants, 43 patrol and coastal combatants, 10 mine warfare and mine countermeasures vessels, a command ship, and 10 logistics and support vessels (Photo: Servicemembers from the TAF and other countries tour a US military base).

Paramilitary: Taiwan's Paramilitary force consists of 11,500 Coast Guard members equipped with 170 patrol and coastal combatants.

Taiwan Air Force Rank Insignia

Security Issues

Taiwan's historically contentious relationship with the PRC dominates its security environment. Taiwan relies on US military assistance to bolster its ability to respond to threats, while investing in its own domestic defense industry.

Relations with the PRC: Following 8 years of relatively stable cross-Strait relations (see p. 18-19 of *History and Myth*), bilateral tensions have spiked since 2016, prompted primarily by the election of DPP President Tsai and a DPP majority in the Legislative Yuan (see "Political Climate" above). The PRC has attempted to discredit President Tsai's administration, while leveraging its formidable economic and political influence to hinder Taiwan's participation in the international arena. Since 2016, the PRC has compelled 5 countries to switch their allegiance, blocked Taiwan from numerous global forums, and restricted Chinese tourism to Taiwan (Photo: Taiwan's embassy at the Vatican).

Moreover, the PRC has become more aggressive and expansive in its territorial claims, notably increasing its military deployments near Taiwan. On several occasions in 2017, the movement of Chinese vessels into what Taiwan considers its waters sparked hostilities. While close economic ties (see p. 3-4 of *Economics and Resources*) have historically mitigated frictions, renewed and increasingly volatile political tensions under President Tsai's administration threaten to overshadow the Taiwan-PRC economic relationship.

Foreign Relations

While it has never formally declared independence, Taiwan considers itself a sovereign state and thus seeks to cultivate diplomatic relations outside of the PRC's influence. Meanwhile, the PRC views Taiwan as part of its territory and insists that nations cannot cultivate diplomatic ties with both Taiwan and China. As of early 2019, Taiwan maintains formal, diplomatic

relations with just 16 countries, including 9 Latin American and Caribbean nations, 6 Pacific states, 1 African kingdom, plus the Holy See (Vatican). Despite its political isolation, Taiwan's export-oriented economy ties it to other nations that are not official diplomatic partners, notably the US and Japan (see p. 6 of *Economics and Resources*).

Since 1971, Taiwan has been barred from membership in the United Nations (see p. 15 of *History and Myth*), and the PRC actively hinders Taiwan's participation in other international organizations. As a result, Taiwan's participation is limited to groups that do not require statehood for membership. In such cases, Taiwan participates as an "economy" or "territory" often under the name "Chinese Taipei" (see p. 3-4 of *Aesthetics and Recreation*). Nonetheless, Taiwan holds observer, member, or honorary status in over 40 regional and global organizations, such as the World Trade Organization, Asian Development Bank, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Taiwan is also 1 of 73 members of the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), a US-led global security and counter-terrorism initiative (Photo: Taiwanese officials pose with El Salvador's former President Sánchez Cerén).

Relations with Japan: Although Taiwan and Japan are linked through strong economic ties, political relations between the 2 have been cool since 1972, when Japan cut diplomatic ties in favor of the PRC. A dispute over a group of uninhabited islands in the East China Sea – known as the Diaoyu Islands in Taiwan and Senkaku Islands in Japan – also strained relations until 2014, when Taiwan and Japan reached a cooperative fishing agreement. Recently, heightened tensions with the PRC have prompted Taiwan to seek improved ties with Japan. Progress, however, remains constrained by Japan's desire to avoid destabilizing its own

tense relations with China. Consequently, Taiwan maintains only private and informal ties with Japan.

Relations with the US: The US has maintained close but unofficial relations with Taiwan since 1979, when it formally established them with the PRC (see p. 15 of *History and Myth*). Further, the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) provides a legal foundation for the US to maintain economic, cultural, and military connections with Taiwan. The TRA helps ensure that Taiwan retains the ability to defend itself against foreign aggression, primarily through support to the island's domestic defense industry and the sale of advanced weapons to Taiwan's military, totaling over $25 billion in 2007-18. The PRC views US economic and military support to Taiwan as direct interference in the PRC's internal affairs and as a violation of the US commitment to the "one China" principle. The US' 2018 pledge to increase weapons sales and financial support to Taiwan could affect the delicate political balance between the US, PRC, and Taiwan (Photo: US President Eisenhower with President Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang during his 1960 visit to Taiwan).

In addition to military ties, the US and Taiwan also share a strong economic connection – the US is Taiwan's 2nd largest trading partner, while Taiwan is the US' 11th largest partner (see p. 6 of *Economics and Resources*). Moreover, Taiwan and the US belong to several bilateral trade and investment agreements that allow for a liberalized flow of goods and services. Finally, the US and Taiwan have committed to expand cooperation in disaster relief, public health, women's rights, and renewable energy, among others.

Ethnic Groups

Taiwanese today divide into 2 main ethnic categories: Han Chinese and indigenous. Years of intermarriage have resulted in less distinct categories: researchers believe up to 60% of Chinese Taiwanese also have indigenous ancestors.

Han Chinese: Some 95-98% of Taiwan's citizens are Han Chinese, an East Asian ethnic group concentrated in mainland China. The Han divide into several sub-groups based on language, place of origin on the mainland, and time of arrival in Taiwan. The largest subgroup, comprising 65-70% of the population, is the Taiwanese (also known as the Hoklo, Fukien Taiwanese, Fukienese, or Fujianese). Most Taiwanese's ancestors migrated to the island from the mainland's southern Fujian Province during the 14th-17th centuries. Members of this sub-group tend to speak Taiwanese (see p. 2 of *Language and Communication*) as their first language. A unified "Taiwanese" identity is relatively recent. As late as the 19th century, this sub-group subdivided into several smaller groupings based on place of origin in Fujian Province (Photo: Crowds at a night market in Keelung City near Taipei).

Comprising some 15% of the population, the Hakka were historically a migratory people in mainland China who began arriving from Fujian and Guangdong provinces in the 17th century. Taiwan's Hakka minority tend to speak 1 of several Hakka dialects (see p. 3 of *Language and Communication*).

Unlike the other 2 Han Chinese sub-groups, the "mainlanders" arrival on the island is much more recent. The label originally applied to the 1.5 million mainland Chinese who retreated to Taiwan with Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek in 1949 (see p. 13 of *History and Myth*). In subsequent decades, the label was also applied to the offspring of any mainlander man, regardless of their mother's ethnic identity. Comprising some 15% of the population today, mainlanders typically speak Mandarin as their first language (see p. 1-2 of *Language and Communication*). Traditionally, the mainlanders and their descendants are known as the ***wàishěngrén*** ("outside-province people") while the Taiwanese and Hakka are called ***běnshěngrén*** ("home-province people"), though these labels are becoming obsolete.

Indigenous Groups: Some 2% of Taiwanese citizens belong to 1 of 16 officially-recognized indigenous (also known as aboriginal) groups, each speaking its own Austronesian language (see p. 3 of *Language and Communication*). The officially recognized groups include the Amis, Atayal, Bunun, Kanakanavu, Kavalan, Paiwan, Puyuma, Rukai, Saaroa, Saisiat, Sakizaya, Seediq, Tao (or Yami), Thao, Truku, and Tsou, though a 17th group is petitioning for recognition. The largest groups are the Amis (209,203 as of 2018), the Paiwan (100,591 in 2007), and the Atayal (89,958 in 2007). In recent years, the indigenous population has grown faster than the national average. Historically driven off their ancestral lands into the island's mountainous interior (see p. 3 of *History and Myth*), some 44% of indigenous people live in cities today (Photo: Bunun children in 1989 in Lona Village).

Other Groups: Taiwan has seen significant immigration of ethnic Chinese from Malaysia, Myanmar, and other countries in recent decades. Other immigrants include Vietnamese, Filipinos, Thais, Indonesians, and mainland Chinese.

Social Relations

Traditionally, Chinese society was ordered hierarchically in accordance with the teachings of Confucius, a 6th-5th-century BC Chinese philosopher. According to Confucian philosophy, social relations should promote social harmony rather than individual happiness. To promote this ideal, Confucian philosophy describes the nature of 5 basic social relationships: between friends, there should be faithfulness; between father and son, affection; between husband and wife, attention to proper roles; between old and young, order; and between leader and subject, righteousness. Residents of mainland China brought these ideas when they migrated to Taiwan beginning in the 12th century (see p. 2 of *History and Myth*).

As Taiwan has developed economically over the last decades, social relations have changed. Society has seen the rise of 2 new classes: a middle class and an elite class of industrialists. Enhanced educational opportunities and increased participation of women in the labor force have changed family structures and gender roles. Despite these effects of modernization, many aspects of the Confucian system persist, especially in the continuing emphasis on respecting family, serving society, and pursuing knowledge.

Nevertheless, society has been marked by historical rivalries within the Chinese population based on language or geographical origin (see p. 5 of *History and Myth*). Privileged by the ruling KMT after 1949, the “mainlanders” had a disproportionate hold on political and economic power, and consequently elevated social status, for decades. This pattern has disappeared largely with the rise of inter-group marriage and internal migration.

Meanwhile, through history, the island’s indigenous communities were continually suppressed and mistreated (see p. 3, 5, 8-9 of *History and Myth*). Shortly after taking office in 2016, President Tsai became the first Taiwanese leader to apologize to the indigenous population for centuries of neglect and discrimination. Nevertheless, indigenous Taiwanese on average have a lower socioeconomic status than non-indigenous citizens. Indigenous communities experience significantly higher unemployment rates than other communities, and indigenous household incomes are just 40% of the national average. While several schemes aim to enhance educational opportunities in indigenous communities (see p. 5 of *Learning and Knowledge*), educational achievement remains below average. Finally, the indigenous and general populations exhibit significant health disparities (see p. 7 of *Sustenance and Health*) (Photo: The Tao community of Ivalino on Orchid Island, off the southeast coast of Taiwan).

3. RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

Overview

According to a 2005 study, about 35% of Taiwanese are Buddhists and some 33% Taoists. Nevertheless, many Taiwanese decline to identify with a single religion. Instead, they consider themselves both Buddhist and Taoist and often incorporate elements of other beliefs like Confucianism and indigenous animist traditions into their spiritual lives. Less than 5% of the population subscribe to other traditions, such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, I-Kuan Taoism and various other traditional Chinese religions, among others (Photo: Statue of the Buddha in Taiwan).

Taiwan's constitution provides for the separation of church and state, recognizes no official religion, and allows all religious groups to practice freely. While the law protects freedom of religion, it prohibits residents from engaging in religious activities that infringe on the freedom of others or undermine social order, public welfare, or national security. Generally, Taiwanese society is characterized by peaceful interfaith relations and is relatively free of instances of interreligious intolerance, prejudice, and religiously motivated conflict and violence. Leaders of religious organizations and faith-based civil service groups meet regularly to advocate interfaith tolerance.

Early Spiritual Landscape

Many early inhabitants of East Asia, including Taiwan, practiced animism, the belief that a spiritual presence resides in all objects, both animate and inanimate, such as animals, trees, rivers, and rocks. Animism promotes the notion that all natural objects are sacred, and this conviction establishes a close connection between animists and their environment.

Like Taoism (see below), these indigenous religious traditions also recognized guardian spirits that inhabit and protect the natural world. Others acknowledged ancestor spirits who can both protect and harm the living, such as by causing sickness, family discord, and other forms of misfortune. Today, many Taiwanese continue to incorporate elements of these traditional beliefs into their devotional practices. Research suggests that some 80% of the population subscribe to this form of folk belief, often blending it with Taoist, Buddhist, and other religious tenets to practice a complex, syncretic "folk religion" (Photo: A Buddhist monk collects donations).

Confucianism

Based on the teachings of Confucius, a 6th-5th century BC Chinese philosopher, Confucianism teaches that social relations should promote social harmony rather than individual happiness (see p. 14 of *Political and Social Relations*). Since it does not involve deity worship, Confucianism is not usually considered a religion. Instead, it is better described as a social philosophy and system of ethics, within which specific rules of conduct and courtesy govern every relationship. Entirely abandoned in mainland China after 1949 (see p. 11-12 of *History and Myth*), Confucianism thrives in Taiwan, and the Confucian principles of fairness, harmony, and ancestor veneration pervade Taiwanese society. The 79th descendant of Confucius – Kung Tsui-chang, born in 1975 and formally known as the "Sacrificial Official to Confucius" – lives in Taipei and serves as an advisor to Taiwan's President.

Taoism

Taoism originated in China around the 6th century BC. Based in the teachings of Lao-Tze, a Chinese philosopher and contemporary of Confucius, it spread to Taiwan over centuries of Chinese migration to the island. Taoism acknowledges a singular great force behind all things in the universe, the ***tao***. Adherents of Taoism believe harmony with the natural world is achieved by minimizing the desire for material gain and living a compassionate, frugal, and humble life that is balanced within

the *tao*. Taoism also recognizes hundreds of gods and goddesses, who control or exert influence over various aspects of human life.

While thousands of deities exist, notable examples include the Jade Emperor, the highest-ranking Supreme Being, who presides over the celestial hierarchy. ***Mazu*** (also known as ***Matsu*** or ***Tianhou***) is goddess of the sea and, with over 800 temples dedicated to her, is Taiwan's most prominent and revered deity, often venerated as a protector. ***Guan Di*** or ***Guan Gong***, god of war and wealth, is often venerated by police, criminal gangs, business owners, and others who revere his righteousness, bravery, and loyalty. Finally, ***Wang Ye*** is an umbrella term for some 360 deities, who ward off disease and bad luck and include Zheng Cheng-gong, a famed 17th century Chinese general (see p. 4 of *History and Myth*), who assumed the status of a deity in the centuries following his death.

Today, Taiwanese incorporate many Taoist practices into daily life. For example, they may consult spiritualists (***dangki***) to tell the future, choose the appropriate placement of buildings (see. 1 of *Family and Kinship*), and cure illness. In addition, many households feature a Taoist "door god" above the front door to protect the home from evil forces (see p. 1 of *Family and Kinship*), while drivers often display protective Taoist icons in their vehicles to ward off bad luck (Photo: Taiwanese men dressed as Taoist gods during a festival).

Buddhism

Buddhism traces its beginning to around 500 BC, when Siddhartha Gautama, a South Asian prince, attained spiritual insight through meditation. Buddhists believe that humans are fated to suffer, that suffering is caused by greed or desire, and can be stopped by following a spiritual path that includes unselfish living and meditation. Buddhists' ultimate goal is to achieve nirvana, a state of peace and unity with the universe.

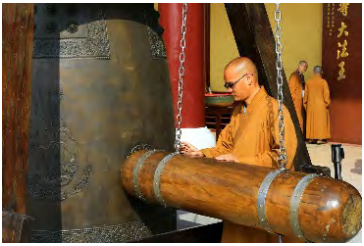
Several centuries after Gautama's death, Buddhism divided into 2 schools of thought – Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism. Most prevalent in Taiwan today, Mahayana Buddhism differs from Theravada Buddhism in its view of Gautama: while adherents of Theravada believe Gautama is the only enlightened being, the Mahayana school teaches that Gautama was 1 of many. Mahayana further teaches that all followers may attempt to reach nirvana, while the Theravada school stipulates only ordained monks may do so.

Mahayana Buddhism spread from southern to central Asia, flourishing in China, where it mixed with Taoist and Confucian thought. Beginning in the 7th century, waves of Chinese immigrants gradually brought the religion to Taiwan. Buddhism grew considerably during the 14-17th centuries, when increasing numbers of Chinese migrated to the island, spreading rapidly after 1662, when thousands of Chinese immigrants flooded Taiwan after its seizure by Zheng Cheng-gong (see p. 4 of *History and Myth*). As Buddhism flourished over subsequent centuries, many practitioners strayed from traditional Buddhist teachings, incorporating mysticism, animism, polytheism, and Taoist rituals into their practices (Photo: A Buddhist temple).

Consequently, few orthodox Buddhist organizations existed until the arrival of the Japanese in the late 19th century (see p. 7 of *History and Myth*). Because many were devout Buddhists, the Japanese encouraged the growth of a more orthodox form of Buddhism, while suppressing Taoist and other Chinese religious influences and indigenous forms of worship. During the 50 years of Japanese occupation, some Taoist temples became Buddhist places of worship, while the Japanese destroyed or confiscated over 1,000 shrines exhibiting Taoist or folk features as part of their efforts to suppress Chinese identity on the island (see p. 10 of *History and Myth*). By 1945, the number of Buddhist temples and monasteries had grown

substantially. While the Japanese also promoted the spread of Shintoism (Japan's indigenous religion), the religion largely failed to take root.

In the mid-20th century, Taiwan came under control of the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomingtang or KMT) (see p. 11-13 of *History and Myth*). Fearing religious persecution by the mainland's communist government, 1000s of Buddhist monks followed the KMT to Taiwan, where they could practice their faith freely. In the 1960s, numerous independent and socially influential Buddhist groups began to emerge, rapidly fueling Buddhism's popularity in subsequent decades (Photo: A Buddhist monk performs a ceremony).



Christianity

While Dutch and Spanish missionaries first brought Christianity to Taiwan in the early 17th century (see p. 3 of *History and Myth*), the religion initially failed to take root. Beginning in the 1860s, Christianity somewhat grew in popularity following the arrival of British and North American missionaries, who proselytized heavily among Taiwan's indigenous populations. These missionaries also built schools and medical clinics and provided various social services. One notable example is Canadian George L. Mackay who arrived in northern Taiwan in 1872 and conducted extensive and successful missionary work on behalf of the Presbyterian Church.

While they succeeded in converting members of Taiwan's indigenous groups, Christian missionaries made little progress among Taiwan's sizeable Han Chinese population (see p. 12-14 of *Political and Social Relations*). Christianity's doctrine and organizational structure differed fundamentally from Chinese religious traditions. Many Han Chinese were particularly suspicious of the Christians' refusal to perform ancestor veneration rituals. The Han Chinese also accused Christian converts of abandoning their ancestors and disrespecting the

family responsibilities required in Confucian, Buddhist, and Taoist traditions. As a result, most Christian adherents remain indigenous Taiwanese today.

Religion Today

Today, many Taiwanese continue to blend various traditions in their daily spiritual lives. For example, they may pray at a Buddhist temple but also consult with local diviners, who communicate with Taoist deities or nature spirits. Moreover, many Buddhist temples include halls or altars devoted to Taoist and animist deities, while Taoist temples may in turn feature shrines to the Buddha (Photo: A Taiwanese performs a Taoist ritual).

Many Taiwanese religious practices emphasize ancestor veneration. Considering the boundary between the human and spirit worlds to be thin and permeable, Taiwanese believe deceased ancestors can help or hinder the living. As a result, families venerate both gods and ancestral spirits at temples and family shrines through various rituals, such as placing morsels of food on ancestral altars, burning incense, reciting prayers, and offering "ghost money," small sheets of paper that, when burned, transform into currency for ancestors or gods to use in the spirit world (see p. 5 of *Family and Kinship*).

Buddhism: Since the 1950s, numerous Buddhist organizations have promoted the return to a "pure" form of Buddhist thought without Taoist and indigenous influences. As a result, Taiwan is home to about 4 million strict adherents of Mahayana Buddhism today. The 2 most popular forms are Pure Land and the meditative Chan (also known as Zen) Buddhism, though most Buddhist organizations tend to blend teachings from both traditions.

Taiwan has also become a center of new and emerging Buddhist traditions. A notable example is ***Renjian*** (Humanistic) Buddhism, a form of socially active Buddhism that attempts to

adapt traditional Buddhist teachings to modern life. *Renjian* deemphasizes the importance of the monkhood and ritual, while expanding the traditional Buddhist tenets of charity, selflessness, and compassion within everyday life. For example, *Renjian* practitioners stress humanitarian work and teach that respect for one's ancestors and elders should encompass not only family but society at large.

Taiwan is home to one of Asia's largest populations of Buddhist monks and nuns. Prominent ones are often influential figures within Taiwanese society, publishing widely-read books and appearing on television, radio, and other media to promote Buddhist thought and address societal issues (Photo: Monks on a hillside in southern Taiwan).

I-Kuan Tao: Founded in China in the 1930s and drawing on concepts from Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism, I-Kuan Tao claims some 900,000 followers in Taiwan. It emphasizes the existence of a single universal god and the importance of family, moral development, and ancestor worship.

Other Religions: While Taiwan is home to a variety of other religious movements, together these groups comprise less than 5% of the population. According to recent estimates, the majority of Taiwan's indigenous population are adherents of Roman Catholicism or one of numerous Protestant denominations. Other groups include Baha'i, Latter Day Saints, and Jews, as well as local and traditional Chinese forms of worship, such as Tien Ti Chiao (Heaven Emperor Religion), Tien Te Chiao (Heaven Virtue Religion), Li-ism, Hsuan Yuan Chiao (Yellow Emperor Religion), and Zhonghua Sheng Chiao (Chinese Holy Religion), among others. Some 60,000 Muslims support several mosques in Taipei, Kaohsiung, Taichung, and Lungkang.

4. FAMILY AND KINSHIP

Overview

Although traditional values like harmony, honor, and duty still infuse Taiwanese family life, urbanization and decreased marriage rates in recent decades have altered the family's structure and function. Further, a declining birth rate has shifted societal composition, with more elderly and fewer children. Nevertheless, extended family networks remain important, and many businesses continue to be family-owned and operated.

Residence

Some 79% of Taiwanese live in urban areas on the northern and western coasts, where residents have faced skyrocketing housing prices in recent years. Taiwanese architecture and interior design typically incorporate ***fengshui*** ("wind-water") principles. This Chinese concept seeks to harmonize the universe, earth, and humanity by orienting buildings and living spaces in certain ways. Further, many homes feature images or statues of "door gods" posted over gates and doorways to protect the home from evil influences (see p. 3 of *Religion and Spirituality*). Regardless of housing type, residents and visitors alike typically change from street to house shoes when entering the home (Photo: Taipei apartment building).

Traditional: Found primarily in rural areas, the traditional home is a single-story brick structure built in a U-shape. The central hall (***gongting***) functions as a common space for receiving guests and hosting family gatherings. This room also houses the family's altar, which typically contains images of gods or the Buddha along with wooden tablets commemorating deceased family members (see p. 6 of *Religion and Spirituality*). The dwelling's wings house sleeping quarters, which family members inhabit based on family hierarchy in line with Confucian ideals (see p. 14 of *Political and Social Relations*).

Modern: As Taiwan's economy grew in the 1960s (see p. 14 of *History and Myth*), Taiwanese authorities promoted the construction of high-rise apartment buildings. Most Taiwanese families today live in such apartments with 2-3 bedrooms, a small kitchen, and a living room that houses the family's altar.

Family Structure

Taiwanese traditionally view the family as a single unit rather than a group of individuals. Family members are expected to help each other and value the good of the family over their own needs. Traditionally, extended families consisting of parents, children, grandparents, and even great-grandparents lived together in a single residence. Most households today consist of small nuclear families (parents and their children), though some include aging grandparents, while others comprise a single-parent family. Even though many women work outside the home, Taiwanese typically regard men as the primary breadwinners and household heads. They expect women to manage the household affairs and be responsible for childrearing (see p. 1 of *Sex and Gender*).

In accordance with the Confucian concept of filial piety (respect for one's parents, elders, and ancestors – see p. 14 of *Political and Social Relations*), Taiwanese typically demonstrate great reverence toward older family members. Children often defer to their parents regarding major life decisions and provide physical and financial care as they age (Photo: A Taiwanese family poses for a photo in Taichung City).

Children

While Taiwanese families were traditionally large, today they tend to have just 1-2 children. Although Taiwanese parents tend to refrain from displaying open affection for their offspring, they treasure their children and strive to construct a secure future for them. Most Taiwanese attempt to raise their children to be obedient, cooperative, and respectful. They also highly value education, and as a result, children tend to spend much more

time studying than their US counterparts (see p. 5 of *Learning and Knowledge*).

Taiwanese typically treat expectant women with special consideration, encouraging rest and the avoidance of exertion. This treatment continues after childbirth, when new mothers receive constant care, while adhering to a strict diet and following certain rules regarding bathing, dress, and exercise. This month-long period of healing known as ***zuo yuezi*** ("sitting out a month") is intended to restore the mother's well-being and spiritual balance as understood in traditional Chinese medicine (see p. 5-6 of *Sustenance and Health*). Traditionally provided by the mother-in-law, *zuo yuezi* services are also offered in specialty "birth recovery centers" today.

Names: While names are not usually gender specific, boys often receive names that demonstrate strength or power. By contrast, girls' names tend to refer to beauty, grace, or charm. Some families consult an astrologer to help them align name choices with the child's fate or to promote good luck (Photo: Children in Beipu township).

Milestones

Following the month of confinement after a birth, the family celebrates the new baby with a banquet called ***man yue*** ("fulfilling a month"). A similar banquet called ***man sui*** ("fulfilling a year") is held a year later. Taiwanese consider a baby already 1 year old at birth and count another year's completion at Chinese New Year (see p. 2 of *Time and Space* and p. 2 of *Aesthetics and Recreation*).

Historically, few Taiwanese celebrated their birthdays, though older people generally marked their 60th, 70th, and 80th birthdays as special occasions. Today, many young people celebrate their birthdays with parties and special foods, such as birthday "longevity noodles" that must be slurped whole to ensure a long life.

Dating and Marriage

Taiwanese traditionally regarded marriage as a means of producing a male heir, perpetuating a lineage, and uniting 2 families rather than as a union based on love and companionship. Accordingly, Taiwanese depended on a matchmaker or relatives to find socioeconomically compatible potential spouses.

Today, Taiwanese tend to marry for love, meeting prospective partners through school, family, friends, or coworkers, though some still depend on the services of a professional matchmaker. Youth often socialize in groups and typically delay serious dating until they have finished their education.

While Taiwanese may wed at age 16 for women and 18 for men, the average age of marriage has risen steadily for decades and is now 30 years for women and 32 for men. The total number of new marriages-per-year also has decreased steadily, with many Taiwanese delaying marriage to finish their education or secure steady employment or opting out altogether (Photo: Taiwanese friends pose for a selfie).

When a couple decides to marry, they gather their families for an engagement ceremony during which the prospective bride serves tea to her future in-laws' while both families exchange gifts. The couple may also exchange rings.

Weddings: Taiwanese wedding ceremonies typically include a mix of modern and traditional practices. Many couples wear Western-style attire, while others prefer traditional styles, usually red for good luck. Traditional rituals include the burning of incense to honor ancestors at the bride's home and the use of firecrackers at the groom's home to rid the space of evil spirits. Family and friends usually gather at a large banquet hall to enjoy elaborate meals with traditional foods, toasts, and speeches.

Divorce: Taiwan's rate of 2.3 divorces per 1,000 inhabitants in 2017 is among the region's highest, though lower than the US rate of 3.2. Observers suggest that women's economic empowerment along with their enhanced education opportunities may explain this rate.

Death

Taiwanese usually memorialize the death of a loved one with a series of rituals based in Buddhist traditions (see p. 3-7 of *Religion and Spirituality*). Upon death, the deceased is dressed in several layers of natural fiber clothing and placed in a casket within the deceased's home or funeral facility for a final viewing. The casket is then sealed and remains in place for up to 7 weeks. A Buddhist priest visits to chant ***sutras*** (Buddhist scriptures) and burn incense, and family and friends visit to express their condolences (Photo: Buddhist monks outside a Taiwanese temple).

The funeral service is scheduled for a favorable day as indicated by the lunar calendar (see p. 2 of *Time and Space*). A procession with loud music accompanies the casket to the site of the funeral service, where family, friends, and colleagues pray, burn incense, and light candles. The casket is then transported either to a cemetery for burial or to a cremation facility. The cremated remains are then buried or interred in a vault or similar structure. Funeral dress is traditionally white, though some participants may wear other colors to denote their relationship to the deceased.

During the annual Quing Ming Festival (Tomb Sweeping Holiday – see p. 2 of *Time and Space*), observed each spring, families visit the graves of family members to clean them and leave offerings of flowers, food, and incense. They also burn ceremonial Joss Paper (coarse bamboo paper printed with seals, stamps, or other designs also known as "ghost money") as a symbol of their enduring support and care for their ancestors.

5. SEX AND GENDER

Overview

Traditional gender roles in Taiwan were shaped by Confucian values (see p. 14 of *Political and Social Relations*), which grant men higher status than women. Nevertheless, over the last 5 decades, Taiwan's rapid economic development has been accompanied by significant social change – Taiwan now ranks first for gender equality in Asia and 5th globally. Still, women face some discrimination, and activists have criticized the government for lagging in policy reform.

Gender Roles and Work

Domestic Labor: Traditional Confucian values dictated a strict division of domestic labor, and Taiwanese women continue to hold primary responsibility for their children's care and education and do some 80% of housework. Nevertheless, Taiwanese men's share of domestic labor has increased in recent years and is higher than that in South Korea and Japan.

Labor Force: About 51% of Taiwanese women worked outside the home in 2018, compared to 57% in the US. Women are well represented in all sectors of the Taiwanese economy except for manufacturing, which continues to be predominantly male. Nevertheless, women experience discrimination in promotion, occupy fewer management positions, and receive lower wages than men with comparable education levels and work experience. The gender pay gap has been shrinking since the 1990s, and on average, Taiwanese women earn 86% of men's wages, compared to 75% in Japan, 65% South Korea, and 82% in the US (Photo: Women harvest tea in rural Taiwan).

Unlike in some other East Asian countries, most Taiwanese women return to the labor force after childbirth. Taiwan's small to medium-sized companies often provide flexible working hours and maternal leave in order to retain their highly-skilled female workforce. Despite this support, Taiwan's long working hours (see p. 1 of *Time and Space*) coupled with a heavy burden of domestic work compel some mothers to leave the workforce (Photo: A street vendor in Taipei).

Gender and the Law

Women are guaranteed equal protection under the constitution, which also requires authorities to "eliminate sexual discrimination and further substantive gender equality" among other rights. Despite this supporting legal framework, some gender disparities and unequal treatment exist. For example, women convicted under Taiwan's adultery law tend to receive harsher punishments than men. Women are entitled to equal inheritance as men, yet traditional Confucian notions (see p. 14 of *Political and Social Relations*) privilege male heirs. Consequently, some families pressure women to pass their inheritances to male relatives.

Although illegal, discrimination against women in the workplace frequently goes unreported due to fears of retaliation. The authorities often fail to enforce workplace parental leave policies and childcare provisions. Finally, household caregivers and domestic workers (many from Indonesia, Vietnam, and Thailand) are not covered under minimum wage and overtime provisions, making them vulnerable to exploitation.

Gender and Politics

Women generally are active in politics. In 2016, Taiwan elected its first female President, Tsai Ing-wen (see p. 19 of *History and Myth* and p. 5 of *Political and Social Relations*). First implemented in the 1950s, quotas mandate that 25% of national legislative seats be reserved for women, as well as 1 out of every

4 seats reserved for indigenous representatives (see p. 14 of *Political and Social Relations*).

In Taiwan's 2020 national elections, a record 42% of female legislators took office, significantly higher than in the US (24% in 2019) and South Korea (17%). Nevertheless, far fewer women run for local elected positions like mayor or county magistrate, occupying just some 15% of such positions as of 2016 (Photo: President Tsai, 2nd from left, meets with representatives of the Marshall Islands).

Gender Based Violence (GBV)

Taiwanese law criminalizes rape, including spousal rape, sexual assault, and sexual harassment, and Taiwan became the first Asian country to pass a law against domestic violence in 1998. Since then, Taiwan has sought to increase resources for and protection to victims, while bolstering the power of authorities to prosecute crimes. Despite this support, many women fail to report crimes due to social stigma. Consequently, the actual number of assaults is likely 7-10 times higher than official statistics. Experts also believe workplace sexual harassment frequently goes unreported due to fears of employer retaliation.

Sex and Procreation

The Taiwanese generally consider sexual intimacy a private matter, though traditional standards of premarital virginity and marital fidelity are changing. At 1.14 births per woman, Taiwan's birthrate is the world's 3rd lowest and well below the rate required to sustain the population. Recent attempts to encourage child-bearing through childcare subsidies and other financial incentives have seen little effect. Some speculate that Taiwan's population may begin to decrease as early as 2022.

Abortion has been legal in Taiwan since 1985 but only in cases of rape, incest, or danger to the mother's health. Further, the law stipulates a married woman must obtain consent from her

husband, and an unmarried woman under 20 must obtain it from a parent. Despite these restrictions, Taiwan has some of the highest rates of abortion in Asia, especially among teenage girls (Photo: Taiwanese visit a park).

While the law forbids prenatal sex selection (methods to control the sex of babies before birth), a traditional preference for male children over female results in some cases of sex-selective abortions. However, experts believe the practice has significantly declined in recent decades.

Homosexuality

Home to Asia's largest Gay Pride parade, Taiwan has been an Asian beacon of LGBT rights movements in recent years. In mid-2017, Taiwan's Constitutional Court ruled that laws prohibiting same-sex marriage were unconstitutional (a first in Asia), thereby giving legislators a 2-year window to amend existing policy or begin issuing same-sex marriage certificates under current legislation.

Nevertheless, voters in a November 2018 referendum expressed overwhelming opposition to same-sex marriage and voiced support for the removal of content about homosexuality from primary school textbooks. While the vote does not affect the 2017 court ruling, lawmakers are likely to introduce legislation offering same-sex couples a separate civil union option that does not provide the same legal status as heterosexual married couples. Despite widespread societal acceptance, some LGBT individuals experience discrimination and are often reluctant to lodge formal complaints (Photo: Taiwan's 2015 Pride Parade).

6. LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

Language Overview

While Taiwan's governing authorities have named no official language, Mandarin Chinese has been the primary language in education, government, and the media since the end of World War II (see p. 11 of *History and Myth*). Taiwan is also home to other varieties of Chinese, notably Taiwanese and Hakka, and several indigenous languages.

Chinese

Chinese is a subgroup of the Sino-Tibetan language family that includes more than 300 languages spoken across Asia. Chinese languages are tonal, meaning they use tone or pitch to convey meaning. While the different Chinese varieties are mutually unintelligible, they historically have used the same writing system. In contrast to an alphabet, characters in this system represent a thing or idea without indicating the sounds used to pronounce it. Consequently, the characters can be read in any Chinese variety. Although Chinese counts more than 50,000 characters, most people learn around 8,000, while only about 2,000 are commonly used. Since the 1950s, residents of the PRC (mainland China) tend to use a set of simplified characters adopted by their government to increase literacy. By contrast, Taiwan uses the traditional characters. All Chinese varieties use romanization systems to write the languages in the Latin alphabet (Photo: Road sign with Chinese characters and their romanized versions).

Mandarin: While Mandarin is the primary language in both Taiwan and the PRC, speakers give it 2 different names: ***guóyǔ*** ("national language") in Taiwan and ***pǔtōnghuà*** ("common language") on the mainland. Although they are mutually intelligible, mainland Mandarin and Taiwan Mandarin have slight variations in pronunciation and in idiomatic use. Some 90% of Taiwanese speak Mandarin as a first or second language.

Some aspects of Mandarin grammar – notably, its lack of conjugated verbs, cases, genders, and articles – make the language rather easy to learn. However, Mandarin's use of tones to indicate meaning can make it difficult to speak correctly. When written in the Latin alphabet, each of the 5 Mandarin tones is marked by a symbol (see chart below). The sentence "***Mā mà mǎ ma?***" demonstrates how a change in tone alters the meaning of the basic sound "ma" and translates as "Did mother scold the horse?"

Chinese Romanization Systems

Romanization is the process by which Chinese characters are spelled out using the Latin alphabet. Over the centuries, several different systems emerged, such as the Wade-Giles System that was commonly used in the US until the 1980s. In 2009, the Taiwanese authorities announced their adoption of ***Hànyǔ Pīnyīn***, the romanization system also used in mainland China. While many Taiwanese communities followed suit, others did not, such as Kaohsiung, Taiwan's 2nd largest city, which prefers a system unique to Taiwan called ***Tōngyòng Pīnyīn***. Despite official adherence to 1 system or another, most Taiwanese cities exhibit a mix of romanization styles, causing confusion for both visitors and residents. In Taipei, for example, signs may name a street both "Binjiang" and "Pin Chiang."

Taiwanese: Taiwanese, also known as Min Nan Chinese or Hokkien, is an 8-tone Chinese variety from mainland China's southeastern Fujian province. Settlers from that region brought the language to Taiwan beginning in the 17th century (see p. 3 of *History and Myth*). Speakers today are predominant in the South and rural areas. Suppressed by the ruling KMT (see p. 13-14 of *History and Myth*) until the 1980s, Taiwanese has enjoyed a resurgence in recent decades and for many residents is a symbol of independence from mainland China. Some 80% of the population speak Taiwanese.

Hakka: Related to both Mandarin and Cantonese, the language commonly spoken in Hong Kong, Hakka was originally spoken by a migratory people who traveled through mainland China for centuries. Hakka speakers began arriving in Taiwan from the mainland's Guangdong and Fujian provinces in the early 18th century (see p. 5 of *History and Myth*). Some 2.5 million Taiwanese speak one of several dialects of Hakka today. They concentrate in the North and Northwest, but significant numbers of speakers also live in the South and Southeast.

Indigenous Languages

Taiwan's indigenous languages belong to the Formosan sub-group of the Austronesian language family, a collection of widely-dispersed languages found from Southeast Asia to the islands of the Pacific, notably also Hawaii (see p. 1 of *History and Myth*). Linguists believe the varieties found in Taiwan are the oldest of the Austronesian languages, suggesting that the island is the source of the language family. These non-tonal languages were exclusively oral languages until Dutch missionaries arrived in the 17th century (see p. 2-3 of *History and Myth* and p. 1 of *Learning and Knowledge*). Today, some 2% of Taiwan's residents are indigenous (see p. 14 of *Political and Social Relations*), yet fewer than 1/2 of them speak an Austronesian language (Illustration: 19th century replica of a 17th century Bible written in Dutch on the left and a Taiwanese indigenous language on the right).

Het H. Evangelium
na [de heßbrijvinge]
MATTHEI.
Het eerste Capitul.

Hagnan ka D'ligh
Matitik ka na saßuhat ti
MATTHEUS.
Naimamai & lhagh & ßulat,

Presently, linguists list over 40 dialects within 16 indigenous languages, and varieties are in constant threat of extinction. The indigenous languages with the greatest numbers of speakers include Amis (138,000 in 2002), Atayal (84,300), Paiwan (66,100), and Bunun (38,000). Suppressed for centuries, these languages have recently gained support in the 2017 Indigenous Languages Act, which officially recognizes Taiwan's indigenous languages, while requiring the authorities to take various actions

to preserve them. Further, the Act legalized their use in administrative and judicial affairs and required that signage in indigenous communities include the local indigenous language. Finally, the Act required schools to offer courses (see p. 5 of *Learning and Knowledge*) and media outlets to produce programming in indigenous languages (see p. 3 of *Technology and Material*).

English

English is popular in Taiwan due to its widespread use in international business. Residents of Taiwan's larger urban areas commonly speak it. Some parents opt to send their children to English preschools to begin their language education as early as possible, though most Taiwanese children begin learning English in school during the first grade (see p. 4 of *Learning and Knowledge*). Amid fears that Taiwan will lose its competitive edge unless English competency improves, Taiwan is striving to improve its English-language programs. In 2018, the Premier of Taiwan's Executive Yuan (see p. 5 of *Political and Social Relations*) announced a plan to name English alongside Mandarin Chinese as Taiwan's official languages, though it remains unclear if this plan will actually be implemented.

Communication Overview

Communicating effectively in Taiwan requires not only knowledge of Mandarin, but also the ability to interact effectively using language. This broad notion of competence includes paralanguage (rate of speech, volume, intonation), nonverbal communication (personal space, touch, gestures), and interaction management (conversation initiation, turn-taking, and termination). When used properly, these forms of communication help to ensure that statements are interpreted as the speaker intends (Photo: US Marine Corps Gen Amos poses with Taiwanese Marine Corps Lt Gen Pan Jinlong).

Communication Style

While communication patterns can vary due to Taiwan's ethnic diversity (see p. 12-14 of *Political and Social Relations*), they generally reflect Confucian ideals (see p. 14 of *Political and Social Relations*). For example, Taiwanese tend to treat people of different ages, genders, and backgrounds with varying levels of respect and are typically deferential toward elders and people of high status. Generally friendly and polite, Taiwanese believe communications should be respectful, reserved, and discreet.

Due to their emphasis on courtesy and a desire to save "face" or ***miànzi*** (avoid embarrassment to themselves or others), Taiwanese prefer indirect communication, especially in public settings. Consequently, they often talk around contentious issues or avoid them entirely. Further, they may avoid passing on bad news or keep negative opinions to themselves. Taiwanese may hesitate to offer frank opinions, providing more sincere replies to open-ended questions (not requiring a definitive answer) or to those asked within the context of a trust-based relationship. Typically, they refrain from using specific responses such as "yes" and "no," preferring more ambiguous language, such as "maybe."

Greetings

While the Taiwanese do not traditionally shake hands, some people have adopted the custom for use in business settings or with foreign nationals. Instead, Taiwanese typically nod or offer a slight bow when greeting. Taiwanese use a variety of informal verbal greetings, such as ***chī bǎo le ma?*** ("have you eaten?"), though most greetings refer to the time of day, such as ***zǎo!*** ("morning!"). Foreign nationals should always use the more formal greeting ***nǐ hǎo*** ("you good"). When Taiwanese meet in professional contexts, they typically exchange business cards or ***míngpiàn*** (pictured). Foreign nationals should exchange *míngpiàn* with the Taiwanese custom of using both hands, bowing slightly, and looking at the received card briefly to demonstrate interest and respect.

Names

Taiwanese names typically comprise a 1-syllable family name (surname/last name) followed by a given or personal name, often made up of 2 hyphenated syllables. For example, the surname of President Tsai Ing-wen is Tsai, and her given name is Ing-wen. Some Taiwanese follow the Chinese naming practice of using the first part of the hyphenated given name ("Ing" in the previous example) as a generational marker: this first syllable is the same for all family members of a given generation.

Unrelated adults typically address each other by full name, though Taiwanese frequently use nicknames among friends and family. In the South, Taiwanese commonly add the prefix "A" to the last syllable of a person's given name (the second part of the hyphenated name) to form a nickname. For example, popstar Chang Hui-mei is known as A-mei (see p. 5 of *Aesthetics and Recreation*).

Forms of Address

Taiwanese use specific forms of address to indicate respect and solidarity. In business contexts, Taiwanese often use the family name followed by Mr. (***xiānshēng***), Mrs. (***tàitài***), or Miss (***xiǎojiě)*** or occupational title, such as ***lǎoshī*** (teacher). Within the family, Taiwanese use labels that specify the relationship, such as "maternal grandmother" (***wàizǔmǔ***) or "paternal grandmother" (***zǔmǔ***).

Conversational Topics

After initial greetings, Taiwanese typically engage in detailed conversation about work, family, hobbies, and education. Taiwanese often discuss money and other financial topics and do not consider questions about such subjects rude. Foreign nationals should feel free to discuss these and other topics, such as health, food, and positive observations about Taiwan but should avoid discussing sensitive subjects, such as Taiwan's history and the current state of the Taiwan-PRC relationship (Photo: US Marines speak with Taiwanese marines and sailors in Hawaii).

Gestures

Taiwanese often use gestures to emphasize or replace spoken words, such as using a finger to write out a Chinese character in the air as a way of complementing their speech. To beckon, Taiwanese typically wave towards the ground with their palms facing down. To indicate "no," they typically shake one hand from side-to-side with a forward-facing palm. To refer to himself, a Taiwanese points at his nose. Foreign nationals should avoid beckoning with their palms facing up and fingers rolled back as the Taiwanese consider this gesture rude. They should also avoid pointing with the index finger and instead use an open hand (Photo: Taipei advertising).

Language Training Resources

Please view the Air Force Culture and Language Center website at www.airuniversity.af.edu/AFCLC/ and click on "Expeditionary Readiness" then "Field Guides" for access to language training and other resources.

The Five Mandarin Tones

Tone	Description	Hànyǔ Pīnyīn Example
1st	"high"	ā
2nd	"rising"	á
3rd	"falling-rising"	ǎ
4th	"falling"	à
5th	neutral (no accent)	a

Useful Words and Phrases

English	Mandarin (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn)	Mandarin (Traditional Characters)
Hello	Nǐ hǎo	你 好
How are you?	Nǐ hǎo ma?	你 好 嗎?
I'm very well	Wǒ hěn hǎo	我很好
Yes	Shì	是
No	Bùshì	不是
Please	Qǐng	請
Thank you	Xiè xiè	謝謝
You are welcome	Bùkèqì	不客氣
Sorry/ Excuse me	Duìbùqǐ	對不起
I understand	Wǒ tīngdédǒng	我聽得懂
I don't understand	Wǒ tīngbùdǒng	我聽不懂
Where are you from?	Nǐ shì cóng nǎli lái de?	你是從哪裡來的？
Goodbye	Zài jiàn	再見
How do you say …?	... zhōngwén zěnme shuō ?	...中文怎麼說？
Do you speak English?	Nǐ huì shuō yīngyǔ ma?	你會說英語嗎？
Where is (the)...?	…zài nǎlǐ?	...在哪裡 ？
How?	Zěnme?	怎麼?
Who?	Sheí?	誰?
When?	Shénme shíhòu?	什麼時候?
Which?	Nǎge?	那個?
What is your name?	Nǐ jiào shénme míngzì?	你叫什麼名字?
How much does it cost?	Duō shao qián?	多少錢？
Call a doctor!	Qǐng jiào yīshēng!	話叫醫生！
I'm lost	Wǒ mílùle	我迷路了

7. LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE

Literacy

- Total population over age 15 who can read and write: 98.5%
- Male: 99.7%
- Female: 97.3% (2014 est.)

Early History of Education

Before the arrival of formal education, the island's indigenous Austronesian inhabitants (see p. 1 of *History and Myth*) informally transmitted values, skills, beliefs, and historical knowledge to younger generations.

Education in the Dutch Colony: Following the Dutch East India's conquest and colonization of Taiwan in the 17th century, most education efforts were associated with attempts to convert the indigenous inhabitants to Christianity (see p. 5 *Religion and Spirituality*). Dutch missionaries established schools, and by the 1640s, hundreds of children were receiving a Protestant religious education. While primarily concerned with converting the local population to Christianity, the missionaries studied local cultures and languages and developed writing systems for some of the indigenous languages (see p. 3 of *Language and Communication*). Nevertheless, the Dutch missionaries' efforts were cut short by the Chinese conquest of the island in 1662 (see p. 4 of *History and Myth*) (Illustration: Page from a 1937 Taiwanese textbook).

Education under the Qing Dynasty: The subsequent incorporation of the island into the Chinese Qing Empire in 1684 (see p. 5 of *History and Myth*) saw the strict segregation of the Chinese and indigenous populations and the introduction of Confucian-based Chinese-style formal education. Restricted to Chinese male elites, this education system focused on preparing them for imperial examinations and grew to include 33 schools by 1894. Excluded from this system, the non-elite Chinese

population responded by opening some 250 private schools in the same period. By contrast, indigenous communities had little access to formal education until 1735, when the government began opening a few schools to teach Chinese culture and language.

Education under Japanese Colonial Rule

Following its 1895 acquisition of the island, Japan focused on growing Taiwan's economy (see p. 7 of *History and Myth*), which included introducing comprehensive changes to the island's educational system. The Japanese colonial authorities created a new 6-year basic curriculum focused on Japanese, morals, arithmetic, Chinese composition, music, and physical exercise; developed educational infrastructure; and built new schools with multiple classrooms and outdoor spaces. Nevertheless, most educational opportunities were reserved for the children of the colonialists: in 1905, just 9% of Chinese children and 6% of indigenous children were enrolled in school, as compared to 93% of Japanese children (Photo: 6th grade students visit the Taiwan Provincial Museum in 1947).

Within a few decades, the Japanese enlarged offerings to include specialized higher education programs, such as medical, agricultural, and language schools. As the Japanese imperial state became increasingly militaristic in the 1920s-30s (see p. 10 of *History and Myth*), the colonial authorities adjusted curricula and teaching methods to support Japan's expansionist goals. As the Chinese had done during the Qing rule, the Japanese sought to impose their culture and language upon the residents of Taiwan. The booming economy soon required additional skilled labor, opening new educational opportunities to Taiwan's Chinese population. By the 1940s, some 200,000 Taiwanese had acquired some higher education in Japan and some 60,000 had received college degrees.

Education in Post-World War II Taiwan

Taiwan's return to Chinese control following the end of World War II brought significant changes to education. The ruling Nationalists or KMT (see p. 11 of *History and Myth*) sought to erase the 50 years of Japanese influence on the island by pursuing a policy of "mainlandization" – a focus on Mandarin-language and traditional Chinese-style education methods. The KMT tightly controlled the educational system, encouraging vocational studies over academic coursework to grow the skilled workforce required for Taiwan's "Economic Miracle" (see p. 14 of *History and Myth*). The authorities suppressed both the Japanese and Taiwanese languages, while mandating Mandarin as the primary language of instruction (see p. 1-2 of *Language and Communication*). As the economy continued to surge in the late 1960s, the Taiwanese authorities introduced 9 years of compulsory education (Photo: Classroom at Taichung's Tunghai University).

Modern Education System

Today, the Ministry of Education (MOE), a part of the Executive Yuan (see p. 5 of *Political and Social Relations*), oversees education in Taiwan. The education budget accounts for about 5% of GDP, comparable to the US rate, and a significant increase since 1951, when education comprised just 1.68% of GDP.

Since 2014, 12 years of basic education are compulsory, and Mandarin remains the official language of instruction. Taiwanese students demonstrate excellent scholastic achievement: in a 2015 assessment of 72 countries, Taiwan ranked 4th in both math and science, compared to 40th and 25th for the US. Despite the system's reputation for excellence and small average class sizes, some observers criticize its focus on memorization over analytical skills and creativity and the unhealthy competitive environment created by its emphasis on exam results.

Pre-Primary: Although not compulsory, many children attend preschool between ages 2-6. The MOE is striving to create a consistent pre-primary educational experience, expanding its system of public preschools, while providing need-based financial support for private schools. In 2019-2020, over 565,000 children attended preschools, some 70% at private institutions. Some private preschools offer accelerated or specialized programs, such as English-language instruction.

Primary: Primary education consists of 6 grades starting at age 6. The standard curriculum includes mathematics, science, Mandarin, English, homeland education, social studies, music, art, and native languages. In 2018-2019, some 97% of children of the appropriate age were enrolled.

Secondary: Secondary education comprises 3 years of junior high (ages 12-15) and 3 years of senior secondary school (ages 15-18). In 2018, some 97% of students of the appropriate age were enrolled at the junior level and 96% at the senior. Junior level offerings include both academic and vocational options. Subsequently, students may choose among 4 types of senior secondary schools, namely general, skill-based, comprehensive, and specialized. While general schools prepare students for university, the others provide occupation-based education and training. For example, National Siluo Agricultural Industrial High School trains students in engineering, the livestock industry, and food processing (Photo: Tainan Municipal Chong-Ming Junior High School).

Post-Secondary: Taiwan's post-secondary educational system is extensive and includes both junior colleges and universities. As of 2015, some 45% of Taiwanese had achieved a university or other advanced degree, compared to 35% in the US. Since the 1980s, the number of post-secondary institutions has increased significantly. As of 2019, some 153 universities, colleges, and junior colleges provided instruction for almost 1.21

million students, up from 105 institutions and about 350,000 students in 1986. While this growth has opened higher education to many students, quality has suffered, and many programs of study provide inadequate preparation for the workforce. Further, post-secondary enrollment is declining, due largely to Taiwan's low birth rate (see p. 3 of *Sex and Gender*). Observers expect many small, private institutions will be forced to close, while some larger universities may merge. In an effort to offset declining enrollment, the MOE offers several programs to attract international students, growing the number of such students from some 31,000 to 130,000 between 2007-2019.

***Buxiban*:** These "cram schools" are private facilities offering after-school tutoring and preparation for various entrance exams. Even though many observers claim this type of excessive studying is inefficient and exhausting, most parents and students consider *buxiban* attendance essential, and in 2017, over 18,000 cram schools were operating in Taiwan (Photo: Junior High Students at Wagor International School).

Language and Indigenous Education

While the primary language of instruction is Mandarin, schools must provide at least 1 period of instruction per week for grades 1-6 in the "local language." In many areas, this local language is Taiwanese, while in others it might be an indigenous Austronesian variety (see p. 3 of *Language and Communication*). Generally, indigenous Taiwanese have lower educational attainment than the general population. Recent reforms aim to reverse this trend by developing an indigenous research center that will develop courses on indigenous culture, among other topics. Further, the MOE is promoting indigenous "experimental" schools to improve educational outcomes among the population. Indigenous students have historically received preferential treatment in post-secondary entrance exams, although not as much in vocational and technical areas of study.

8. TIME AND SPACE

Overview

Most Taiwanese devote long hours to work and school and also value punctuality and efficient time management. They typically prioritize relationships as the foundation of society and spend significant time in business cultivating them. Generally, Taiwanese avoid physical contact in public life.

Time and Work

Taiwan's work week runs from Monday-Friday, with hours varying by establishment type. Most banks open from 9:00am-3:30pm, while offices typically operate from 9:00am-6:00pm. Government offices open on weekdays from 8:30am-5:30pm, typically closing for an hour lunch break. Most shops open from 10:00am-10:00pm, 7 days weekly except on major holidays. Restaurants are usually open for lunch and dinner from 11:00am-10:00pm, with many serving an afternoon tea between 12:00pm and 5:00pm (Photo: A young man cleans tables at a market stall in Taipei).

Working Conditions: With workers laboring long hours and taking few vacation days, Taiwan had the world's 6th-longest working hours in 2017, 34 days longer than other major economies. Since 2000, Taiwanese authorities have introduced laws reducing working hours and mandating paid leave policies. The most recent law mandates a 40-hour work week (extendable to 48 hours in certain circumstances) with a maximum of 8 hours per day. The law also guarantees holidays and vacation time that carries over to the next calendar year. Despite these provisions, Taiwan's manufacturing sector tends to view an employee's ability to work flexible hours and put in substantial overtime as proof of loyalty, often resulting in cases of overwork and a general lack of work-life balance. The Taiwan authorities also report that some 208 people died between 2011-17 due to "overwork."

Time Zone: Taiwan adheres to China Standard Time (CST), which is 8 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) and 13 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time (EST). Taiwan does not observe daylight savings time.

Date Notation: Like the US, most businesses, schools, and government offices follow the Western (Gregorian) calendar, typically recording the year first, followed by the month and day. By contrast, Taiwanese use the Chinese-based lunar calendar to mark important holidays. Lunar cycles determine each month, which results in 11 fewer days per year than the Western calendar. Leap months are added approximately every 3rd year to keep the lunar calendar synchronized with the seasons. Life events such as weddings and funerals are often timed to coincide with favorable times on the lunar calendar.

Taiwan utilizes the ***Minguo*** calendar to track some official dates. This calendar counts the years since the 1911 founding of the Republic of China (see p. 9 of *History and Myth*). In this system, the year 2019 is the 108th year of the Republic.

National Holidays

- January 1: Founding Day
- February 28: Peace Memorial Day
- April 4: Children's Day
- April 5-6: Tomb Sweeping Day
- May 1: Labor Day
- October 10: Double Ten/National Day

Lunar Holidays (dates vary from year to year)

- Chinese Lunar New Year
- Dragon Boat Festival
- Mid-Autumn (Moon) Festival

Any holiday falling on a weekend is observed on the following Monday. If a holiday falls on a Tuesday or Thursday, it is typically adjusted to provide an extended weekend.

Time and Business

The Chinese approach to forming and maintaining interpersonal relationships known as ***guanxi*** ("connections/relationships") governs much of Taiwanese business culture. Consequently, Taiwanese prefer to establish personal relationships before doing business, often cultivating them through informal dinners, afternoon teas, gift exchanges, and conversations about non-business topics (see p. 6 of *Language and Communication*).

Taiwanese value punctuality and typically respect deadlines, yet business tends to move more slowly than in the US. Meetings often have set agendas, but it is acceptable to deviate and discuss other topics, especially if it helps to facilitate *guanxi*. Businesses are typically hierarchical in structure, but Taiwanese usually prefer group decision-making, which may involve a blend of seniority preferences and group consensus and be a time-consuming process (Photo: Americans and Taiwanese meet).

Personal Space

In social settings, Taiwanese tend to stand closer than Americans when interacting, although strangers may prefer to maintain slightly more distance. People waiting in line and passengers on public transportation tend to stand quite close. In congested public spaces, pedestrians may push and elbow. This behavior is socially acceptable and does not require an apology (Photo: A couple in a Taiwanese mall).

Touch

Generally, interpersonal touching aligns with social rules for respecting elders and upholding proper gender relations. Taiwanese generally consider it disrespectful for a younger person to touch an older

person, especially on the head or shoulders. Because touching people of the opposite gender connotes intimacy, Taiwanese traditionally avoid such physical contact in public, though displays of affection among young couples is increasingly accepted. Although conversational touching between family and friends is common, foreign nationals should wait for Taiwanese to initiate such contact, especially with new acquaintances.

Eye Contact

Taiwanese typically maintain some eye contact during conversations, although sustained contact may be interpreted as aggressive. Taiwanese typically alter their gaze when conversing with people senior in age or status as a sign of respect.

Photographs

While the Taiwanese are typically open to picture-taking, foreign nationals should ask permission before doing so, especially if people are engaged in religious rituals (see p. 6 of *Religion and Spirituality*). Photography within Buddhist temples is sometimes prohibited (Photo: A Taiwanese boy takes a photo).

Driving

Some drivers have aggressive habits and disregard right-of-way laws. Traffic is usually heavy in Taiwan's densely populated cities (pictured), where motorized scooters sometimes ignore traffic laws, contributing to traffic fatalities. As of 2016, both Taiwan and the US experienced a traffic-related death rate of 12 per 100,000 people. Like Americans, Taiwanese drive on the right side of the road. As is common in the US, the police rigorously enforce Taiwan's strict drunk-driving laws.

9. AESTHETICS AND RECREATION

Overview

Taiwan's traditional dress, recreation, music, and arts reflect both the island's multilingual and multiethnic history and modern global influences.

Dress and Appearance

Traditional: Traditional Taiwanese clothing includes both indigenous styles and designs originating in mainland China. Historically, each of Taiwan's indigenous groups (see p. 14 of *Political and Social Relations*) had its own styles of clothing. Members often wove colorful pieces of cloth from palm fiber, hemp, linen, or cotton, which they then pieced together. Shells and beads provided decoration and indicated social status, while colors and patterns often had symbolic meanings. Outfits often included headdresses of flowers, shells, or feathers. Today, Taiwan's indigenous inhabitants tend to wear traditional clothing mostly for special occasions and performances (Photo: Amis people – see p. 14 of *Political and Social Relations* – in the early 20th century).

For much of Taiwan's history, most Chinese men worked as fishermen or farmers and consequently wore simple black or blue trousers with button-down jackets made from hemp or cotton. Settlers from Fujian (see p. 13 of *Political and Social Relations*) often wore conical, bamboo hats as protection from the rain and sun. The Hakka (see p. 13 of *Political and Social Relations*) were known for their flat, circular hats made of straw and fringed with black cotton.

Wealthier Chinese inhabitants preferred garments made from silk imported from the mainland, such as the ***changpao*** – a long, 1-piece robe worn by both men and women, and the ***shenyi –*** a long-sleeved tunic. To indicate their social status, wearers augmented these basic styles with colorful embroidery, sashes, or bands. Some colors or patterns held symbolic meanings.

Today, Taiwanese tend to wear traditional Chinese clothing on special occasions such as religious rituals, theatrical performances, or funerals (see p. 5 of *Family and Kinship*)

(Photo: Young men in *shenyi* before a Taiwanese temple).

Modern: Today, Taiwanese commonly wear Western-style clothing. Young people's preferences for modern styles, especially in urban areas, support a vibrant domestic fashion industry. By contrast, older Taiwanese tend to prefer more conservative clothing. At work, most men wear trousers and a collared shirt, though suits and ties are more common in banking, government, and similar contexts. Women typically wear dresses, skirts, or pantsuits.

Recreation and Leisure

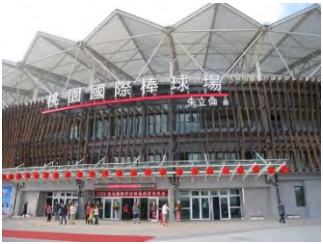
Popular leisure activities include watching TV, going to the cinema, playing card games, shopping, excursions to national parks, and bicycling, often with friends and family. Increasing numbers of Taiwanese also travel abroad. Mainland China, Japan, and the US are particularly popular destinations.

Holidays and Festivals: Taiwanese celebrate several holidays as well as regional and national festivals that mark the change of seasons, honor deceased ancestors, or celebrate important historical events or cultural figures. The most important holiday is the Chinese Lunar New Year, which involves several days of family gatherings, gift-giving, and feasting. Other noteworthy festivals include the Dragon Boat Festival, which commemorates the death of poet Qu Yuan, Mid-Autumn Festival, and the Tomb Sweeping Holiday (see p. 5 of *Family and Kinship*).

Sports and Games

Baseball: Introduced by the Japanese in the late 19th century, ***bàngqiú*** or baseball is Taiwan's most popular sport, drawing massive crowds at games ranging from Little League to professional. For both spectators and players, the sport offers a way for Taiwan to engage in the international arena, especially

given its lack of diplomatic recognition (see p. 10-11 of *Political and Social Relations*). Between 1969-91, Taiwan dominated the Little League World Series. Today, professional Taiwanese players are well represented in both Japanese and American leagues, while some American players have played in Taiwan's domestic league (Photo: Baseball stadium in Taoyuan).



Other Sports: Since the 1994 creation of a professional league, basketball has emerged as Taiwan's second most popular sport. Racquet-based sports, such as table tennis and badminton are also popular, with Taiwanese athletes often placing high in international rankings. Recreational activities in the mountainous interior, such as mountain biking, hiking, and paragliding have both gained popularity and become attractions for tourists. Several Asian martial arts are popular, including ***kendo*** (Japanese-style fencing), ***aikido*** (a Japanese noncombative martial art), and ***judo*** (a Japanese combat form), as well as Korean ***taekwondo***. Increasingly popular among the elderly is ***tai chi***, a meditative martial art known for its slow movements and often practiced by groups in public parks.

Games: Many Taiwanese enjoy ***mahjong***, a tile-based strategy game originating in mainland China. Another popular game is ***wéiqí***, more commonly known in the West by the Japanese name ***Go***. This game involves placing black and white chips onto a grid board, while trying to capture an opponent's pieces. With a thriving Internet café culture and growing e-sport community, Taiwan is becoming an important hub in the videogaming world, home to several "eStadiums" hosting international video game tournaments and other competitions.

Olympics: Taiwan's participation in the Olympics has been a source of controversy since the relocation of the Republic of China to Taiwan and the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on the mainland in 1949 (see p. 9-13 of *History and Myth*). Bowing to pressure from the PRC, the International

Olympic Committee has allowed Taiwan to compete since 1984, but only under the name “Chinese Taipei” and represented by a unique Olympic flag (pictured). In late 2018, Taiwanese voters rejected a referendum seeking to change the island’s competition name to “Taiwan,” likely due to fears that such an attempt would provoke the PRC or that Taiwan would be banned from the Games altogether. Since 1984, Taiwanese athletes have medaled in archery, baseball, table tennis, taekwondo, and weightlifting.

Music

Taiwan’s indigenous inhabitants (see p. 14 of *Political and Social Relations*) traditionally used vocal music to transmit history and legends to the next generation. The island’s Chinese inhabitants have their own traditional styles such as folk songs and instrumental forms. Music is a prominent aspect of daily life for many Taiwanese and often accompanies theatrical performances, festivals, and religious rituals (see p. 6 of *Religion and Spirituality*).

Traditional: Generally, traditional Taiwanese music divides into 2 styles, both originating in the mainland’s Fujian and Guangdong provinces (see p. 12-13 of *Political and Social Relations*) and featured in Taiwanese opera (see below). The ***běiguǎn*** (“Northern Pipes”) style typically has a fast tempo and often accompanies puppetry performances (see below). By contrast, ***nánguǎn*** (“Southern Pipes”) has a slower, smoother rhythm. Common traditional instruments include drums, cymbals, and gongs, the ***sānxián*** (3-stringed lute), the ***dòngxiāo*** (a type of flute), and the ***suǒnà*** (a trumpet-like bamboo horn), among others (Illustration: A 19th-century depiction of a woman playing the *sanxian*).

Modern: Taiwan is home to ***Mandopop*** (Mandarin Chinese pop music) stars such as Teresa Teng, Jay Chou, and A-Mei who have followers across the region and internationally. Taiwan also has a thriving underground rock and hip-hop scene. Music festivals have grown in popularity since the late 1990s and draw performers and fans from around the world.

Theater and Dance

Taiwanese Opera: ***Gēzǎixì*** or traditional Taiwanese opera is a form of musical drama featuring actors in elaborate costumes and makeup (pictured) singing and acting in Taiwanese (see p. 2 of *Language and Communication*). Originating in Taiwan but based on elements from the Fujian and Guangdong provinces of mainland China, operas tend to follow a similar structure, with 4 main lead characters: the ***shēng*** (male lead), the ***dàn*** (female lead), the ***jìng*** (male with a painted face), and the ***chǒu*** (male clown). The colors of both makeup and costumes typically have symbolic meanings. Sets are usually basic, and actors use a few props and stylized gestures and movements to convey information about action and setting. A drummer-conductor leads musicians seated on both sides of the stage, providing percussion and musical to accentuate the actors' movements and emotions.

Puppetry: Considered a "living national treasure," Taiwanese puppet theatre has 3 distinct types. Shadow puppets or ***pí yǐng xì*** are hinged, painted puppets carved from leather and operated by a puppeteer before a lighted screen that depicts their silhouettes. Some puppets known as Marionettes (***guileixì***) are about 2 ft tall and carved of wood. By contrast, puppeteers wear cloth glove puppets (***bùdàixì***) on their hands and typically wear elaborate costumes similar to those of Taiwanese opera.

Cinema

Taiwan has a sizeable film industry. Renowned directors include Hou Hsiao-hsien, whose 1989 film *City of Sadness* portrayed the "White Terror" following the Nationalist (KMT) retreat to Taiwan

in 1949 (see p. 13 of *History and Myth*) and won international acclaim. More recently, Taiwanese director Ang Lee has won Academy Awards for his films *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*; *Brokeback Mountain*; and *The Life of Pi*.

Literature

Historically, the myths, stories, legends, and histories of Taiwan's indigenous populations were primarily orally transmitted. Following the island's 17th-century incorporation into the mainland-based Qing Empire, Chinese poetry and prose forms arrived. During the Japanese colonial period, indigenous residents began expressing themselves in written form for the first time. These developments, combined with the introduction of Japanese literary traditions, provided the foundation for the development of a distinctive Taiwanese literature in the second half of the 20th century. During the 1960s, writers explored the tension between traditional and contemporary values that arose during Taiwan's rapid economic development. Then, the 1980s-90s saw the rise of experimental and post-modern literary styles. Recently, writers have interpreted the history of modern Taiwan through a range of subjects and received increased international attention. Some Taiwanese-American authors also explore themes related to the island.

Arts and Crafts

Taiwan has a rich history of arts and crafts influenced by indigenous, Japanese, and Chinese traditions, many featuring various techniques and styles of calligraphy (the artistic rendering of written language with brushes and ink). The island is home to a wide range of ceramic traditions ranging from classical Chinese blue and red porcelain styles to Japanese-influenced black glazes. Paper-making is also a traditional craft, evident in the paper lanterns widely displayed during festivals (pictured). Woodcarvers and stone masons produce ornate altars, roofs, and statues for the island's many temples (see p. 6 of *Religion and Spirituality*). Other folk arts include woodblock prints and painted scrolls.

10. SUSTENANCE AND HEALTH

Sustenance Overview

Taiwanese enjoy gathering for meals to celebrate holidays, birthdays, and other special occasions. Taiwan's cuisine is extensive and varied, drawing on influences from indigenous, Chinese, and other culinary traditions. Dishes tend to be low in fat and prominently feature vegetables.

Dining Customs

Most Taiwanese eat 3 meals daily, with the largest in the afternoon or evening. Guests usually arrive on time for visits to the home, which are typically arranged in advance. On formal occasions, guests may present the host with a small gift such as candy or fruit. Upon entering the home, guests remove their shoes and replace them with indoor sandals or slippers. Before dining, hosts sometimes offer guests tea and light snacks. On special occasions, a meal often feature over 10 separately served courses, leisurely consumed over several hours. By contrast, informal meals usually consist of 2-3 dishes served simultaneously.

Taiwanese typically eat by using chopsticks to pick up small morsels of food from communal bowls, placing the portion directly in their mouths or in small, individual rice bowls that they hold close to their faces. Diners usually finish all the food in their individual bowls but refrain from taking the last portion from communal dishes. While Taiwanese use spoons to consume soup, they rarely use forks and knives. Taiwanese never use chopsticks to point or leave them lodged vertically in food – a custom reserved exclusively for offerings to ancestors (see p. 6 of *Religion and Spirituality*) (Photo: Squid sautéed with noodles and vegetables).

Diet

Historically, Taiwan's indigenous groups (see p. 14 of *Political and Social Relations*) ate locally-cultivated millet as their staple grain, accompanying it with vegetables and grilled fish, shrimp, and wild game. Today, Taiwanese cuisine primarily reflects Chinese culinary traditions largely from the southeastern mainland province of Fujian. Rice and noodles are the most common staples, followed by yams, sweet potatoes, and taro root (a starchy vegetable similar to a potato).

Rice features at almost every meal, usually served steamed alongside meat, seafood, or vegetables. By contrast, noodles may be served plain, stir-fried, or added to soups (pictured – beef noodle soup). Hakka (see p. 13 of *Political and Social Relations*) cuisine tends to be comparatively more salty, rich, and sour than other Taiwanese fare.

Shellfish, squid, crab, and numerous varieties of fish are common in dishes across Taiwan. Other popular sources of protein include pork, chicken, and mutton, and to a lesser extent, venison, goose, and duck. In some areas, snake, turtle, pigeon, snail, and frog are served as delicacies. Common vegetables include tofu (bean curd), cabbage, carrots, ginger, eggplant, mushrooms, spinach and other leafy greens, and various beans. Taiwanese frequently chop and sauté vegetables in oil, crushed garlic, and other seasonings instead of boiling, steaming, or serving them raw.

A variety of fresh herbs, such as parsley, cilantro, and basil offer distinctive flavors to many dishes. Fare across Taiwan is often seasoned with or dipped in salty, fragrant sauces made from combinations of chili, garlic, sugar, vinegar, sesame oil, and soy sauce. Local fruits include guavas, papayas, mangos, oranges, pears, melons, and pineapples, among many others.

Meals and Popular Dishes

Common breakfast items include hot soybean milk; ***mántóu*** (steamed buns, served plain or filled with meats or vegetables); dough fritters; and stewed rice served with seaweed, dried shredded pork, peanuts, and pickled vegetables. Both lunch and dinner typically feature similar dishes, which may include steamed white rice mixed with vegetables and meat; soups featuring delicate, clear broths made from chicken, pork, or fish stock; or noodle dishes sautéed with meat or seafood, fresh herbs, and seasonal vegetables.

Popular dishes include ***shuǐjiǎo*** (dumplings with various fillings of chopped meat, seafood, and vegetables, served stir-fried, steamed, or in soups); ***xiǎoyu huāshēng*** (stir-fried fish with peanuts and pickled vegetables); ***kezǎi tāng*** (oyster and ginger soup); ***fó tiào qiáng*** ("Buddha Jumps Over the Wall" - a hearty stew of chicken, rare seafood, duck, and pork simmered in rice wine); and ***sānbēi*** (meat or tofu seasoned with spices, soy sauce, sesame oil, and rice wine and served in a clay pot). For dessert, Taiwanese enjoy shaved ice topped with fruit, nuts, and sweet red beans and taro (pictured), a variety of baked goods, sticky rice rolled in sugar and crushed peanuts, or fresh fruit such as watermelon, papaya, and guava.

Restaurants

Taiwanese eat out regularly, with restaurant visits frequently lasting for hours, particularly on special occasions. Restaurants range from upscale establishments offering international cuisines to inexpensive, casual eateries specializing in regional dishes. In larger cities, restaurants established by Chinese immigrants, who fled to Taiwan in the 1940s (see p. 13 of *History and Myth*), specialize in various mainland Chinese styles of cooking, such as the mild Cantonese or spicy Hunanese and Shanghainese traditions. Taiwan also has a robust tradition of dining from street stalls found alongside roads and in markets. Stalls feature a range of snacks and meals, such as ***chòu dòufu*** (deep fried, fermented

tofu), *shuǐjiǎo*, baked sweet potatoes, noodle soups, fresh seafood, and various sweets. While tipping is relatively uncommon in Taiwan, some upscale restaurants may add a small service charge to the bill.

Beverages

Taiwanese consume tea throughout the day. It may be served cold or hot but typically without milk and sugar. Common varieties include oolong (a partially fermented black tea), green, jasmine (a combination of green tea and flowers), and ginger, among many others. A particularly popular tea-based beverage that has spread internationally is "bubble milk tea" (***boba cha***) or "pearl milk tea" made from blending cold black tea with milk, sugar, and various flavorings and adding small, chewy balls of tapioca. Fresh juices from seasonally-available fruits and vegetables are also popular, often mixed with milk and ice to make smoothies. Alcoholic beverages include beer, wine, ***gāoliáng jiǔ*** (a strong spirit distilled from sorghum) and several rice-based drinks, such as ***shaoshing***, a rice wine similar to Japanese sake (Photo: Bars line a pedestrian street).

Health Overview

The Taiwanese population's overall health has improved significantly in recent decades. Between 1990-2020 Taiwanese life expectancy at birth increased from 74 to 81 years, higher than the regional average of 75 and about the same rate as in the US. In 2020, infant mortality (the proportion of infants who die before age 1) was just 4.2 deaths per 1,000 live births – significantly lower than the regional average (13) and lower than the US rate (5.2). Despite these gains, residents of more remote, rural communities and indigenous Taiwanese (see p. 14 of *Political and Social Relations*) tend to have a lower life expectancy, carry a higher disease burden, and have reduced access to healthcare. Taiwan's aging population is likely to substantially burden the healthcare system with a noteworthy rise in demand and associated cost in the future.

Traditional Medicine

Traditional medicine consists of knowledge, practices, and skills used to protect or restore health derived from the beliefs, experiences, and theories of the native population. Traditional medicine has a rich history in Taiwan and centers on using non-surgical methods to identify and treat the basic causes of illness. Many aspects of Taiwanese medicinal methods derive from Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), which arrived in Taiwan with waves of Chinese immigration throughout the island's history.

Today, many Taiwanese integrate traditional therapies into modern treatments, while some residents of remote rural communities rely primarily on traditional medicine. While some Taiwanese grow or gather their own medicinal herbs, others purchase herbal treatments from pharmacies and other vendors, especially in urban areas. Specialty clinics typically offer unique treatments combining modern techniques with traditional cures to treat both minor ailments like toothaches, digestive problems, and colds and major illnesses such as cancer, respiratory diseases, and diabetes (Photo: An elderly Taiwanese couple).

Taiwanese authorities officially recognize TCM and cover traditional treatments under the national health insurance scheme (see "Modern Healthcare System" below). In 2016, Taiwan had over 6,400 registered practitioners of TCM. Besides herbal medicines, common treatments include ingestion of mixtures of plant and animal products, massage, acupuncture (***jenjyou*** – a process whereby a practitioner inserts very thin needles into a patient's skin), cupping (applying suction cups to draw blood and pathogens to the skin's surface), and moxibustion (burning or massaging herbs into acupuncture points).

Some Taiwanese incorporate a spiritual component into their treatments by petitioning a deity for his or her healing power or

consulting a ***dangki*** (ritual specialist – see p. 3 of *Religion and Spirituality*). Such specialists may communicate with spirits to ward off bad luck or sickness, assist in healing the body of a specific illness, or restore a person's mental wellbeing.

Modern Healthcare System

Taiwan offers free or low-cost medical care in public facilities to all Taiwanese. The Ministry of Health and Welfare's mandatory universal health insurance system, the National Health Insurance program (NHI), was first instituted in 1994 and today insures 99.9% of the population. The program covers a comprehensive range of healthcare needs including dentistry, maternal and prenatal care, end-of-life care, TCM, and long-term care associated with major illnesses like cancer, cardiovascular diseases, and diabetes, among others. The NHI provides special provisions to ensure equal healthcare access to disadvantaged populations such as the poor, those who have difficulty traveling, families of deceased or terminally ill veterans, the physically or mentally disabled, and the very sick, among others (Photo: Taiwanese children on an outing).

Despite increased healthcare spending and expanded private contributions to the NHI, Taiwan's healthcare system struggles to meet growing demand. Specialty departments in large urban hospitals and major medical centers tend to be overcrowded, forcing patients to wait for extended periods before receiving some types of care. Moreover, a shortage of medical personnel and a high volume of patients prompt doctors to shorten patient visits, limiting their effectiveness. The proportion of Taiwan's population aged 65 or older, 16% in 2020, is expected to increase to 24% by 2030 and 37% by 2050. Experts predict this rapidly aging population and the associated need for geriatric services, treatment of chronic diseases, and nursing care will significantly strain the healthcare system.

Taiwan's physical medical infrastructure typically degrades in rural areas, where clinics are often small, ill-equipped, and operate above capacity levels. This rural-urban divide disproportionately affects Taiwanese who live in remote, mountainous regions and on off-shore islands, where medical facilities are often unable to treat serious illnesses. Consequently, residents suffering from chronic ailments have to travel long distances and incur significant costs to receive proper care.

Health Challenges

As is common in most developed countries, the leading causes of death and illness in Taiwan are chronic and non-communicable "lifestyle" diseases, which accounted for some 79% of all deaths in 2013. The primary cause of death since 1982, cancer contributed to 28% of all deaths in 2018, followed by diseases of the heart (11%), cerebrovascular diseases (7%), and diabetes (6%). Less frequent yet still prominent ailments include pneumonia, chronic liver disease and cirrhosis, respiratory diseases, and hypertensive diseases. Preventable "external causes," such as accidents and drug overdoses, comprised the 6th leading cause of death in 2016 (Photo: National Taiwan University Children's Hospital).

In contrast to the increasing burden of non-communicable diseases, rates of communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, bacterial diarrhea, malaria, and dengue fever have fallen dramatically in recent years. However, frequent typhoons, flooding, and other natural disasters (see p. 3 of *Political and Social Relations*) intermittently place thousands of Taiwanese at risk of illness from polluted groundwater. Moreover, industrial pollution and vehicle emissions blanket some areas in a thick, hazardous smog, which in turn leads to an increased prevalence of respiratory diseases in those areas. Finally, indigenous groups suffer various health disparities, including lower life expectancies and higher mortality rates from homicide, tuberculosis, and alcohol-related diseases such as chronic liver disease, cirrhosis, and peptic ulcers.

11. ECONOMICS AND RESOURCES

Overview

For centuries, Taiwan's indigenous inhabitants lived off the land and bartered deer skin and venison with Chinese and Japanese traders (see p. 2 of *History and Myth*). The island's 40 years as a Dutch colony (see p. 2-3 of *History and Myth*) brought lasting changes. Realizing the agricultural potential of Taiwan's fertile soil and subtropical climate, the Dutch invited Chinese farmers from the mainland to help develop commercial agriculture, namely rice and sugarcane. For the next 300 years, these 2 crops would form the basis of the island's economy (Illustration: 1896 depiction of Taiwanese rice threshers).

As part of the mainland-based Qing Empire in the late 18th century (see p. 5-6 of *History and Myth*), Taiwan underwent an agricultural revolution. Colonial authorities improved agricultural methods, while devoting more land to rice and sugarcane cultivation for export to the mainland. In the 19th century, foreign companies began large-scale tea production, which eventually became the island's largest export. During the 2 centuries of Qing rule, Taiwan's economic output increased dramatically and laid the foundation for today's thriving cross-Strait trade.

Japanese colonization in the late 19th century (see p. 7-9 of *History and Myth)* brought dramatic changes to Taiwan's economy. Intent on developing the island to support Japan's own growth, colonial authorities sought first to increase agricultural output. In the 1920s, they gradually shifted the emphasis to industry and light manufacturing. Further, the Japanese attempted to modernize Taiwan's economy by implementing economic development programs, developing infrastructure, unifying the currency, and establishing a central bank of Taiwan.

When Taiwan reverted to Chinese control at the end of World War II (see p. 11 of *History and Myth*), the subsequent departure of Japanese administrators and technical experts resulted in a significant decrease in agricultural and industrial output, causing a severe economic downturn (Photo: Sugarcane factory and rail cars during the Japanese colonial period).

Following their 1949 retreat to Taiwan (see p. 13 of *History and Myth*), President Chiang Kai-shek and other Nationalist (KMT) leaders realized that economic growth and improved living standards were necessary to gain the support of island residents. Consequently, Chiang introduced far-reaching land reform measures in the early 1950s, such as leasing or selling state-owned land to farmers and reducing the proportion of harvest tenant farmers owed their landlords. The reforms were ultimately successful, causing agricultural output to soar and rural areas to flourish. Concurrently, Chiang supported investment in industry, and by the late 1950s, Taiwan was exporting more factory-produced goods than agricultural products, beginning a period known as the "Economic Miracle" (see p. 14 of *History and Myth*).

In the 1960s, the Taiwanese authorities oriented the economy around exports, while introducing financial modernization schemes. Between 1960-70, Taiwan had the world's fastest growing economy, averaging over 9% growth each year and multiplying its exports by 8. Faced with increasing international isolation beginning in 1971 (see p. 15 of *History and Myth*), Taiwanese authorities pursued other ways of extending influence and cultivating allies, namely a "dollar diplomacy" strategy that created international partnerships through financial aid and investment. In the 1980s, Taiwan shifted its manufacturing focus to technological products like semiconductors and other computer parts. By 1988, Taiwan's per capita GDP was 10 times that of the PRC (mainland China).

Meanwhile, the PRC was beginning to open up to foreign investment, and Taiwan companies were quickly attracted to the mainland's cheap labor and large market. In 1990, Taiwan lifted a ban on indirect investment in the PRC, and investment surged from $17 million in 1991 to $3.2 billion just a year later. Many Taiwanese companies relocated their factories to the mainland, while retaining their headquarters on the island. By 2003, some 63% of Taiwan's IT products were produced on the mainland compared to 14% in 1995.

In 2010, Taiwan signed the landmark Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) with the PRC. While the ECFA further facilitated Taiwanese investment on the mainland, critics warned it would make Taiwan's economy dependent on the PRC. The approval of follow-on components of the ECFA subsequently stalled in Taiwan's legislature, even inciting widespread protests in 2014 (see p. 19 of *History and Myth*). Today, the PRC is Taiwan's largest trading partner, and mainland China remains Taiwan's top destination for direct investment (Photo: Opposition party press conference on the ECFA in 2014).

Since taking office in 2016, President Tsai has tried to pursue economic relationships with other partners, particularly in South and Southeast Asia. This strategy seems to have had some success: in the first half of 2017, exports rose some 11%. Although the economy contracted somewhat recently, growing only 0.7% in 2015 and 1.5% in 2016, it has rebounded somewhat, with GDP growing by almost 2.9% in 2017 and similar growth projected through 2020.

Today, Taiwan has the world's 21st largest economy overall and 18th largest trading economy. Under the name of "Taipei, China" or "Chinese Taipei", it is a member of the World Trade Organization, the Asian Development Bank, and the Asia-Pacific

Economic Cooperation. However, because of its lack of international diplomatic recognition (see p. 10-11 of *Political and Social Relations*), it remains excluded from regional trade agreements, reducing the competitiveness of many of its products.

Meanwhile, Taiwan faces other economic challenges. Its economic ties with the PRC bring opportunities, but critics warn that these ties could threaten Taiwan's sovereignty. Further, Taiwan's dependence on exports makes it vulnerable to fluctuations in global demand. As Taiwan confronts increasing competition from the PRC and emerging Asia-Pacific economies, its extremely low birth rate (see p. 3 of *Sex and Gender*), coupled with a rapidly aging population, could result in a future labor shortage. Other challenges include stagnant wages, high housing costs, and high rates of youth unemployment.

Services

Accounting for about 63% of GDP and 60% of employment, the services sector is the largest component of Taiwan's economy. Key sub-sectors include wholesale and retail sales, tourism, banking, and finance. Some 98% of Taiwanese businesses are small or medium enterprises.

Tourism: Taiwan's natural beauty and unique historical and cultural sites drew over 11.1 million tourists in 2018. In 2019, some 44% of tourists were from the PRC and its special administrative regions Hong Kong and Macau, though recent tensions with the PRC (see p. 10 of *Political and Social Relations*) reduced numbers in 2017-18 (Photo: National Palace Museum in Taipei).

Industry

Although Taiwan has few natural resources and must import most raw materials, the industrial sector is the 2nd largest component of Taiwan's economy, accounting for about 35% of GDP and 36% of employment.

Manufacturing: Manufacturing makes up some 30% of GDP, and most companies focus on electronic components. Besides electronics, Taiwanese factories produce petrochemicals, textiles, motor vehicles, other computer parts, and electrical machinery.

Agriculture

Consisting of farming, fishing, floriculture, and forestry, the agricultural sector was traditionally the backbone of Taiwan's economy. Since the 1960s, when agriculture represented almost 29% of GDP, its importance to the economy has declined and now accounts for less than 2% of GDP and some 5% of employment (Photo: Rice paddy in Taiwan).

About 24% of Taiwanese territory is suitable for cultivation. Important food crops include rice (with a production value of over US$1 billion), vegetables, fruit, and tea. Livestock production mainly includes pigs and poultry. The forestry industry is small, consisting mostly of industrial wood, saw-timber, bamboo, and firewood production. Taiwan is the world's largest exporter of orchids, shipped primarily to the US, Japan, and the Netherlands.

Fishing: Fishing represents about 25% of total agricultural production and employed some 350,000 people in 2020. Taiwan is a major supplier of Pacific saury (also known as mackerel pike), grouper, tilapia, eel, oysters, and clams.

Currency

Taiwan's currency (pictured) is the New Taiwan Dollar (NT$, NTD), or ***xīntáibì***, also referred to by the Mandarin terms ***yuán*** and ***kuài***. The NT$

divides into 10 ***jiao*** or 100 ***fen*** (cents) that are rarely in circulation. NT$ banknotes come in 5 values (100, 200, 500, 1,000, and 2,000) while NT$ coins are issued in 5 values (1, 5, 10, 20, 50). Although exchange rates vary, US$1 has averaged about NT$30 over the past 5 years.

Foreign Trade

Despite its lack of international diplomatic standing (see p. 10-11 of *Political and Social Relations*), Taiwan enjoys robust trading relationships with other countries, particularly the PRC, the US, and Japan. Totaling $357 billion in 2018, Taiwan's exports primarily consisted of semiconductors, petrochemicals, automobile parts, wireless communication equipment, flat displays, steel, electronics, plastics, and computers to mainland China (27%), Hong Kong (12%), the US (12%), and Japan (7%). In the same year, imports totaled $263 billion and comprised oil/petroleum, semiconductors, natural gas, coal, steel, computers, wireless communication equipment, automobiles, fine chemicals, and textiles purchased from mainland China (19%), Japan (16%), the US (12%), and the Republic of Korea (6.7%) (Photo: Students protest a proposed trade deal with the PRC in 2014).

Foreign Aid

While the US provided Taiwan with some $100 million annually from 1950-65 (see p. 13 of *History and Myth*), by the mid-1960s, Taiwan no longer needed such aid. Taiwan has since become an aid provider, disbursing around $328 million in Official Development Assistance in 2016 and creating formal programs like the International Cooperation and Development Fund, which offers assistance to 33 partner countries. Recently, President Tsai has promoted the New Southbound Policy, which includes plans for $3.5 billion in infrastructure development within a regional economic community of 18 Indo-Pacific countries. In 2019, Taiwan disbursed $318 million in Official Development Assistance.

12. TECHNOLOGY AND MATERIAL

Overview

Taiwan has a modern physical infrastructure with efficient public transit systems and an extensive highway network. Taiwanese enjoy high-quality, modern communications and unrestricted Internet access.

Transportation

In addition to private modes of transit – such as walking, cycling, and driving – Taiwanese have access to modern and efficient public transport. In and around Taipei, travelers typically use a 1-way "Taipei Pass" token or a rechargeable "Easy Card" to board trains and buses. Taxis and ride-share companies also offer services in towns and cities. For travel between and beyond urban areas, Taiwan has a comprehensive network of rail and bus lines. Ferries link the outer Taiwanese islands to the main island and provide transport to mainland China (Photo: Taipei Metro).

Roadways: As of 2016, Taiwan has some 27,000 mi of roadways, of which 99% were paved. A network of highways and expressways, typically high-speed, multiple lane toll roads, serves the island.

Railways: Rail is a prominent means of transport in Taiwan, serving over 1.12 billion passengers annually and some 639,000 people per day in 2017. As of 2018, Taiwan has about 1000 mi of railways across the main island. The Taiwan Railway Administration oversees traditional rail lines that connect the east and west coasts and link most cities and towns. The western line, running north-south between Keelung and Kaohsiung, is the busiest. Taipei and Kaohsiung also have Mass Rapid Transit metro systems, and a line is scheduled to open in Taichung by 2020. Since 2007, a High-Speed Rail travels the length of the island between Taipei and Kaohsiung in about 1.5

hours, making it 1 of the world's fastest trains with an average speed of 186 mph.

Ports and Waterways: Taiwan has 4 major international ports: Kaohsiung, Keelung, Hualian, and Taichung. Kaohsiung is 1 of the world's busiest ports and handles more than 50% of the island's total cargo volume. Except for Tamsui River in the North, Taiwan's inland waterways are small and largely unnavigable (Photo: Tugboats in Keelung harbor).

Airways: Taiwan has 37 airports, of which 35 have paved runways. Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport (formerly Chiang Kai-shek International Airport) is the primary air transit hub, offering service to Asian, North American, and European destinations. The South's Kaohsiung International Airport is also a major hub. Taiwan is home to 2 international airlines: China Airlines, the national carrier, and EVA Air. In 2018, the PRC (mainland China) objected to international airlines' reference to "Taiwan" on their websites and successfully pressured them to refer only to the airport or city destination on the island instead.

Energy

Since exhausting its coal reserves in the early 2000s, Taiwan depends on imports for 98% of its energy needs, mostly fossil fuels from Australia, Indonesia, Qatar, Malaysia, and South Africa. In 2017, Taiwan generated some 81.5% of its electricity from fossil fuels with the remainder from nuclear (8.3%), hydroelectric (5.2%), and other renewable sources (4.5%). Taiwan is seeking to develop alternative energy sources, such as solar and wind. A plan to end nuclear power generation by 2025 was repealed in a 2018 referendum.

Media

After martial law was lifted in 1987 (see p. 16 of *History and Myth*), several new media outlets opened. Since the 2000s, Taiwanese authorities have abolished censorship laws, while prohibiting politicians and others with political interests from

occupying leadership positions in media organizations. As a result, Taiwan has 1 of Asia's least restrictive media environments, and the courts generally uphold freedom of the press. Nevertheless, media outlets are monopolized by a few owners and are subject to the indirect influence of the PRC government on news content. Some media outlets reflect a particular political position, occasionally causing journalists to self-censor.

Print Media: Taiwan's local and national periodicals typically publish in Mandarin or another Chinese variety (see p. 1-3 of *Language and Communication*). The most popular Chinese-language newspapers are the *Liberty Times* and *Apple Daily* (pictured). While the daily *Taipei Times* is Taiwan's only English-language newspaper, the *China Post* and *Taiwan News* provide online English-language coverage.

Radio and TV: Taiwan's 3 public and 4 commercial television networks offer programming in both Chinese and indigenous languages (see p. 1-5 of *Language and Communication*). Further, paid cable TV service is widespread. Some 171 radio stations offer a variety of programming domestically, while the government-sponsored Radio Taiwan International broadcasts internationally in 13 different languages.

Telecommunications

Taiwan has an advanced telecommunications infrastructure, and more than twice as many Taiwanese subscribe to mobile cellular service as fixed lines as of 2018.

Internet: As of 2018, over 86% of Taiwanese are regular Internet users, with 24 fixed, broad-band subscriptions per 100 inhabitants. Many public areas provide free Wi-Fi access. The authorities neither restrict Internet access nor censor online content. Social media is especially popular in Taiwan, with over 97% of Internet users having a Facebook account.

AFCLC

For more information on
the Air Force Culture and Language Center visit:
airuniversity.af.edu/AFCLC

For more information on
Pacific Air Forces visit:
http://www.pacaf.af.mil

CULTURE GUIDE

Access all of the AFCLC's expeditionary culture field guides in our mobile app!

GET IT ON Google Play

Available on the iPhone App Store

DoD Enterprise Mobility Personal Use Mobile Apps