

CONNECTION

This English Section appears bi-weekly Edited by : Wendy Y.C. Yeh

Profile

A Gem of the Pacific: Taiwan



Taiwan is nicknamed "Formosa" which means the beautiful island. Shaped roughly like a tobacco leaf, the beautiful island of Taiwan is 245 miles long and 90 miles wide at its broadest point.

Taiwan is surrounded by the Pacific Ocean to the east, the Taiwan Strait to the west, the South China Sea to the south, and the East China Sea to the north. It has an amazing coastline of 708 miles.

The Central Mountain Range bisects Taiwan from north to south and about 70% of the island is covered with forested mountains.

When the port of Tamsui opened in 1856, northern Taiwan began to surpass the south as the island's political and economic center. It grew prosperous with the trading of tea, coal, and camphor.

In 1886, the city of Taipei became the capital of the newly founded Taiwan Province.

The Presidential Office Building in Taipei is the seat of power yesterday and today.

Taipei is defined by its vibrant sunshine, its friendliness, its cleanliness, and its natural beauty. Taipei is a refreshingly green city. Parks, gardens, and wooded hillsides with hiking trails and vegetable patches offer residents numerous chances to get close to nature. Thanks to the perfect weather when I was visiting Taipei, I was able to notice the bluest sky, the greenest grass, and the most glorious sunlight.

Standing at 1,667 feet, the emblematic Taipei 101 helps create the city's dramatic skyline. Upon its completion in 2004, Taipei 101 was the world's tallest inhabited building. The sleek symbol of the city stands proud. Tourist crowds enjoy getting the panoramic view of Taipei from the observation deck on the 88th floor.

I had lots of fun sampling a variety of local snacks at a night market. To experience this rich and stunning mixture of tastes, I strolled through several food stands. I loved the oyster omelet, minced pork rice, pickled vegetables,

and beef noodle soup. The street cooks really understand its clients' emotional attachment to these specific local flavors.

The Taiwan Province Cheng Huang Temple in Taipei is a place of worship and a frequent prayer site. It is also called "the City God Temple" because it honors the City God and many Buddhist deities. I liked looking at all of the distinctive features. It was interesting to see how the roof's ridgeline curves upwards at the end, tapering, and splitting beautifully like the tail of a swallow.

It felt great to see family and friends in Taipei. It brought back lots of sweet memories through the years and the many times together. It reminded me that family and friends make the world a better and happier place. It means to have someone to share life's joys and life's pains.

As I am finishing reading Rupi Kaur's "Milk and Honey", a New York Times bestseller, I thought of my experience in Taiwan. A line in one of Kaur's poems reflects exactly how I felt. It says, "People go but how they left always stays." It is so very



▲happy to see their joyful faces, from left: Eric; Katy; Lloyd; the beautiful Dr. Sara Lee; Daniel; and Wendy



▲Taiwan Province Cheng Huang Temple in Taipei is also called "the City God Temple"



▲enjoying a wonderful family reunion



▲dear friends make the world a better place, Dr. B.F. Chen, (seated, 3rd from left) is the leader of the pack

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