



February 5, 2016

Photo by Theerasak Saksritavee



Studying in Taiwan with scholarship opportunities

The Taipei Representative Office in Hungary is pleased to announce that the 2016 Taiwan Scholarship Program (TS) and Huayu Enrichment Scholarship (HES) Program are calling for application.

The TS is to encourage outstanding international students to undertake degree programs in Taiwan, while the HES is to help foreign nationals acquire a better command of Mandarin, and hence a greater understanding of Taiwan's culture. Both programs, sponsored by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of China (Taiwan), hope to promote friendship between Taiwan and countries around the world.

This year, each program offers six scholarships for citizens of Hungary, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Kosovo.

The application should be sent by post or submitted in person to the Taipei Representative Office in Hungary (address: Budapest 1088, Rakoczi ut. 1-3/II em, Hungary) no later than April 15, 2016. Relevant information including application forms and guidelines can be found at tro.hu.

Hear it from those with firsthand experience:

Over the past few years, the economic development of countries in Asia has pushed me to do more research in this area and this has created a new goal for me to learn more about the people and culture



Rrezon Abazi, IMBA at National Tsing Hua University

in Asia, particularly Taiwan, which is an economic and technological power.

Despite the political difficulties Taiwan faces on the international level, Taiwan's econo-



my is a great contributor to globalization and the universities here are highly ranked in the international rankings of universities. That's why I decided to study here, especially the university where I study now.

I don't want to give any spoiler about the experience studying and living in Taiwan but I highly encourage everyone who has the opportunity to study here, not to let this life-time chance slip by.

During my Chinese studies I was in such a lucky position that I got to study in Taiwan, Asia's small but beautiful jewelry box, on a scholarship twice. First for four trimesters studying Mandarin (2011-2012) then completing my Master's Degree in two years (2013-2015).



Dorina Vicen, Taiwan Alumni

The three-month long language training at language schools aims to teach Chinese to foreign students with high standards. But it depends on the educational institute, so it's recommended to ask around in advance. Personally I was really satisfied with the school and the teachers, but that wouldn't have taken me so far without the dedication, diligence and persistence. The two year long MA program was a great

challenge for me, because I took the classes and exams in Chinese, and had to write my dissertation in Chinese as well. This, of course is not compulsory, there are many universities that offer courses taught in English both on BA (4 years), MA (2 years) and PhD (min. 3 years) level.

Let's go in to the informal introduction of the scholarships. Taiwan is a country that's very livable, economically developed, modern, yet at the same time respectful to its traditions. The Taiwanese people are nice, always helpful, however a bit withdrawn, but basically friendly.

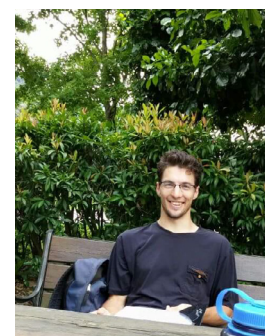
Living on the monthly scholarship, you can afford not a luxurious, but a normal life including renting an apartment with still a little money remaining for entertainment – though that depends on the individual. If after reading this short introduction you feel like exploring the island and getting to know Taiwan's unique and colourful culture and history and would like to study in an Asian country, apply for one of the scholarships! The opportunity is given, it's up to you whether you take it.

I have been living in Taiwan for five years now. I study international relations in Taipei at National Chengchi University. I had spent my first year here studying the language and that was when I decided: I would like to continue to study at university here.

Although I live in a big city with millions of citizens, I spend most of my free time in the mountains, by forest springs or at the seaside.

The hospitality of the people, the safety and convenience are the main characteristics of the everyday life.

Taiwan is a great place for someone to spend their younger years fully, might it mean friends, studies, parties, exploring the world or all of the above.”



Gergely Kádár, BA student at the Department of Diplomacy, National Chengchi University



TWO DECADES OF UNIVERSAL CARE

In the wake of the National Health Insurance program's 20th anniversary, officials and medical professionals ponder future reforms and the challenges posed by an aging population.

Launched in 1995, Taiwan's universal health care system, the National Health Insurance (NHI) program, is widely regarded as one of the country's most impressive achievements. The scheme covers more than 99 percent of the nation's population of 23.5 million, granting people cheap and easy access to a huge range of services, from Western and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) to dental care.

With Taiwan marking the 20th anniversary of the system's establishment on March 1 last year, there has been considerable discussion among officials and medical sector professionals about its future. The NHI has already undergone significant changes in recent years to tackle recurring deficits. And many experts believe that the scheme will have to be further reformed in the short to medium term in light of Taiwan's rapidly aging society and the pressure this will place on medical resources.

At present, the system is in robust financial health. This is primarily a result of the modifications built into the second-generation NHI program, which was unveiled at the beginning of 2013. This package of reforms significantly altered the way the system is financed, transforming consistent funding shortfalls into surpluses.

The NHI is a single-payer compulsory social insurance plan. Additional revenue comes from government subsidies and relatively small out-of-pocket charges to patients. Prior to 2013, the basic premium was set at 5.17 percent of an employee's salary, with a worker contributing 30 percent of this amount, their employer 60 percent and the government 10 percent. This meant that an employee earning a monthly wage of NT\$50,000 (US\$1,615) paid less than NT\$800 (US\$26) per month under the scheme. However, in certain ways, the NHI program has been a victim of its own



success. Since its introduction, hospital visits have soared, and the system was recording persistent deficits prior to 2010.

To collect additional revenue and make contributions more reflective of an individual's total income, the second-generation NHI program expanded the system's premium base. While the basic rate was lowered to 4.91 percent, a 2 percent charge on supplemental earnings was introduced. This premium applies to income above a specified amount from stock earnings, interest, rental properties and part-time jobs, as well as bonuses exceeding four months' salary.

Since its introduction in 2013, the charge on supplemental income has generated more than NT\$40 billion (US\$1.3 billion) a year in additional revenue. "As a result of this measure, the premium base has grown to encompass 90 percent of all household income in Taiwan," notes Tsai Shu-ling, deputy director-general of the National Health Insurance Administration (NHIA) under the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MOHW). The NHI budget is projected to reach roughly NT\$600 billion (US\$19.4 billion) in 2015.

Under the National Health Insurance Act, the program is required to maintain a reserve fund totaling one to three months of its operating expenses. This was previously impossible due to annual funding shortfalls. However, owing to the surpluses recorded in recent years, the NHI's reserves hit about NT\$197 billion (US\$6.4 billion) at the end of the second quarter of this year. Tsai also notes that under the second-generation program the government extended coverage to the nation's nearly 60,000 prisoners. This move "reflects the NHI system's principles of fairness and respect for human rights," she says.

The current financial health of the program has led to calls to lower the basic or supplementary premium rates. However,

the NHIA notes that the surpluses will not continue for long due to the nation's rapidly aging society. At present, more than 12 percent of the population is 65 or older, with this proportion forecast to reach over 20 percent by 2025. Owing to Taiwan's shifting demographics, the administration projects that the system will begin running a deficit again in 2017 unless further funding reforms are enacted. "Elderly people tend to use three to five times the medical resources of any other age group," Tsai says.



While future revenue shortfalls are a major issue that must be addressed, many medical industry experts believe that the government should also review how the NHI budget is apportioned. Commenting on the 20th anniversary of the program, Twu Shiing-jer, former minister of health and incumbent mayor of southern Taiwan's Chiayi City, indicated that any move to lower premiums would be "unwise." He further stated that the government should give priority to such issues as the allocation of medical resources and the workloads of doctors and nurses. Chu Ning-wei,



an attending physician in the Anesthesiology Department at St. Martin De Porres Hospital in Chiayi City, says that while the NHI's coverage rate, which is the highest in the world, deserves praise, the system's convenience and affordability have led to a tendency among some patients to seek treatment for the same condition at multiple hospitals and clinics. Over the past two decades, demand for medical services has tripled, adds Chu, who also serves as a board member of the Taiwan Medical Alliance for Labor Justice and Patient Safety (TMAL), an advocacy group established in 2012 comprising doctors, nurses and medical students. "Yet, medical manpower has only doubled during this period."

Deputy Director-General Tsai points out that, excluding the dental and TCM sectors, people in Taiwan make an average of 12 visits to clinics and hospitals each year. This number is much higher than the level recorded in many Western countries, although it is smaller than the figures in Japan and South Korea. The two East Asian countries, like Taiwan, offer easy access to medical services without a rigorous referral system such as that practiced in Great Britain's public health care system. "I don't think our people would be willing to accept the lengthy wait times between referrals from family physicians and hospital treatment," Tsai says.

The health official believes that a middle point can be reached between the two extremes, noting that the NHIA is working to discourage people with minor ailments from visiting large medical centers. "We've developed campaigns to try to convince people to consult a local doctor before seeking help at a hospital," she stresses.

Another of the reforms introduced under the second-generation NHI program requires hospitals whose annual revenue exceeds NT\$600 million (US\$19.4 mil-

lion) to publish financial reports, with 109 institutions doing so in 2014. "More than 80 percent of them recorded profits," Tsai says.

Despite the healthy financial status of many major medical centers, some industry experts are concerned that too little is being done to ease the burden on staff. Chong Chee-fah, chairman of TMAL and an attending physician in the Emergency Department at Shin Kong Wu Ho-Su Memorial Hospital in Taipei, says it is common for resident doctors in Taiwan to work 90 to 110 hours a week. An amendment to the nation's Labor Standards Act, which was passed earlier this year and will come into effect at the start of 2016, stipulates that an employee's basic workweek may not exceed 40 hours.

However, the law does not apply to physicians. The TMAL and other medical groups have called for doctors to be included in the act, while noting that they are open to establishing separate limits on work hours for physicians. The MOHW is currently considering this proposal. "Incorporating doctors into the law would secure their broader labor rights," Chong says.

"For instance, as they aren't covered by the legislation, doctors are currently unable to apply for compensation for workplace accidents." He points out that the current standard used by the government to grade hospitals sets the maximum work hours for residents, including overtime, at 88 hours per week. "This workload is already enormous, but is still not enough to satisfy some employers," Chong says.

Chu states that, as with all universal social welfare programs, the NHI has both strengths and weaknesses. He stresses that it performs brilliantly at controlling medical expenses, adding that it may in fact be too successful in this regard. Every



year, NHI spending is capped for each of the system's four main health care categories, namely dental services, TCM, Western clinics and Western hospitals, with participating medical centers receiving a proportion of the total funds relative to the number and type of patients they treat.

Liang Chi-ming, chairman of the Ching Kang Foundation for Pharmacy Promotion, which was formed in 1983 by graduates from National Taiwan University's School of Pharmacy, says that as a result of this approach, health care expenditure in Taiwan accounts for only around 6.6 percent of gross domestic product. This level is far below the approximately 17 percent

recorded in the U.S., and also lower than the average of roughly 10 percent among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries.

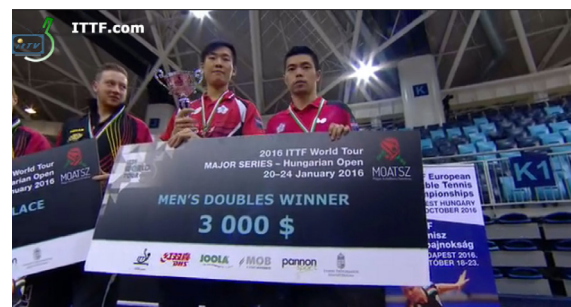
With issues such as this in mind, in September last year Liang helped found the Alliance for Reform of Pharmaceutical Policy, which serves as a platform for more than 20 related groups and university departments. "Part of the current surplus in NHI revenue could be used to boost pharmaceutical resources and expertise," he says. "After all, the program is not simply about managing health care costs, but more significantly is also about improving people's overall quality of life."

Taiwan's top table tennis player wins two golds at Hungarian Open 2016

Taiwan's top seeded table tennis player **Chuang Chih-yuan** beat his team mate **Chen Chien-an**, taking home gold in Men's Singles at the 2016 ITTF World Tour Hungarian Open (Major) in Budapest, Jan. 24.

Chuang beat Chen in four straight games 11-6, 11-8, 11-4, 11-3. Partnering Huang Sheng-Sheng, Chuang also won the Men's Doubles title a few hours before the Men's Singles final. Chuang and Huang edged out Robin Devos and Cédric Nuytinck of Belgium 11-7, 11-2, 12-11, 11-7. It was Chuang's fourth International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) World Tour Men's Singles title, which makes him the most successful among his Taiwanese peers, according to

ITTF website. Huang was performing well during the games as well. He was unofficially named the most-valued-player by the ITTF sports broadcaster. The Taiwan



team, in total, grabbed two gold medals, one silver and three bronze medals at this year's Hungarian Open held from Jan. 20 to 24.



Simon Chang appointed as new premier

President Ma Ying-jeou has appointed Simon Chang as the new premier after approving the resignation of former Premier Mao Chi-kuo, according to Presidential Office spokesman Charles Chen Jan. 25.

Based on the principle of respecting the legislative majority, the president hopes the appointment of Chang, Mao's deputy, can facilitate a smooth transfer of power, which will see the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) control 68 seats in the 113-member Legislature, Chen said.



Text: www.focusstatu.com.tw, Photo: www.ej.gov.tw

Delicious, Healthy Recipes for the Lunar New Year

Where are you eating over the Lunar New Year, and what sort of food? The answers form a big part of the holiday.

With the number of single-person, small-family, and two-earner households on the rise in recent years, more and more people are choosing to forego the trouble of cooking and either eat out or pick up pre-made meals over the holidays. In fact, ready-made New Year's meals represent an US\$60 million (NT\$2 billion) business opportunity all by themselves.

Each year, the Ministry of Health and Welfare's Food and Drug Administration names an elite group of "FDA Model Chefs."

In 2015, the FDA for the first time asked three of its model chefs to design a healthy 18-dish New Year's feast emphasizing "natural preparation," "unadulterated flavors," and "healthfulness," and made the resulting recipes available to the general public. Taiwan Panorama spoke to the three chefs

who developed the menu—Xiao Guanzhi, Leo Tseng, and Roger Peng—about the original flavors of foods and their creative takes on well-known dishes. They also asked them to demonstrate the recipes to make it easier for our readers to enjoy a healthy New Year's feast. Which dishes are absolutely essential to family New Year's gatherings? A whole chicken, representing the beginning of new endeavors? White pomfret, representing an abundance in every year? White radish, representing good omens?

A loaded table filled with rich New Year's dishes evokes long-lasting plenitude, but tends to lack creativity and overemphasize fatty foods and overpowering flavors. How do you rework rich dishes to make them less fattening and unhealthy? A healthy New Year's menu is your best bet.



Green banqueting

Chef Xiao Guanzhi, an assistant professor at the De Lin Institute of Technology, is known for his “green banquets,” by which he means using energy-saving cooking techniques while also giving due attention to flavor and nutrition. Xiao says that high-temperature cooking wastes energy, and causes unhealthy chemicals to form in your cooking oil. Pressure cookers, waterless cookware, and burner plates can help you produce healthier, restaurant-quality dishes.

Recognizing that chicken is a must at the Lunar New Year, Xiao created “Healthy Stewed Chicken with Assorted Mushrooms.” The dish requires scalding a black-boned chicken in boiling water to clean it, then placing it in a pressure cooker with a variety of mushrooms, including lion’s mane, king oyster, oyster,



and shimeji, as well as garlic, jujubes, wolfberries, and clams. The liquid is brought to a boil, then the heat turned down low for 15 minutes before being turned off. Xiao’s “Prosperous New Year” is another dish that covers all the flavor bases, and his approach to making it is really quite simple. A silver carp head is washed clean, sliced lengthways, and placed in a pan.

The chef then scalds a red bell pepper, removes its skin and seeds, and places it atop the fish head. He blooms green chilies, red chilies, ginger, and garlic in hot oil, then pours them over the fish. He next brings peeled-chili sauce, fermented bean curd, rice wine, sugar, rice vinegar, and water to a boil and pours this mixture over the fish too. Finally he steams the whole dish for 15 minutes, then serves.

A grand feast

The menu designed by Chef Leo Tseng, an assistant professor with the Department of Culinary Arts at Keelung’s Ching Kuo Institute of Management and Health, replaces the typical deep-fried and stir-fried dishes with steamed and chilled options. Rather than extravagance, Tseng focused his menu on healthy dishes with a minimal carbon footprint. These



were designed to be so simple to prepare that even occasional cooks could follow the recipes with ease. Take his “Steamed Sea Bass with Pickled Mustard Greens,” for example. The ingredients are very straightforward: a sea bass, Hakka-style pickled mustard greens, kuzukiri (Japanese-style cellophane noodles), cilantro, rice wine, salt, sugar, fish sauce, sesame



oil, scallions, ginger, garlic, and ground chilies. Tseng explains that you first blanch the fish, then sprinkle it with the seasonings and pickled mustard greens. You then steam it for eight minutes, adding the noodles three minutes before it is

done. The method enables the sourness of the pickled veggies to flavor the fish and the fish to flavor the noodles.

He adds that he prefers the Japanese-style noodles because they are gluten-free and less prone to becoming soggy.

A Western-style feast

If you're tired of Chinese food and are looking for something new, you could try Chef Roger Peng's Western-style New Year's menu. His "Corn-fed Chicken Soup with Organic Hualien Red Sage and Sichuan Peppers" substitutes morel mushrooms for the shitake mushrooms more commonly seen in chicken soup. Chef Peng, who is an assistant professor with the Hospitality Management Department at Hsuan Chuang University, says that corn-fed chicken has a sweetness that slowly permeates the soup as it cooks, and that the morels add a nutty flavor and still more sweetness. Though the dish has a long name, the recipe is quite simple. You first steep the morels and blanch the chicken, then add slices of ginger, jujubes, and wolfberries to the pot. Simmer everything over low heat for 1.5 hours, and you're done.

"Alsace Stew" is a French dish, but it is made very much like Taiwanese chaibuey, a stew made from all the leftovers in the fridge. To make it, sauté garlic until fragrant. Add tomatoes and tomato sauce,



and continue to sauté. Next, add water, stock, then lamb shanks, pig knuckles, sausage, and soaked beans (chickpeas, butter beans, and kidney beans) to the pot, and simmer until done. Spoon over boiled cauliflower, and serve. "Pan-fried King Prawns" looks Western, but is at its heart a creative, Chinese-style New Year's dish. To make it, first wash and de-vein the prawns, then lightly salt and pepper them. Pan fry the shrimp until they begin to color, then add olive oil and your seasonings (garlic, onion, chilies, basil and parsley). Sauté until fragrant and serve.

Chef Peng also shares a tip on how to make cleanup easier by preventing food from sticking to your pans. First, heat your pan on the stove to open the pores in the metal, then add a small amount of oil and turn off the heat. When the pan has absorbed the oil, add your ingredients and turn the heat back on. This prevents your pan from spitting while cooking and your ingredients from sticking.

Should you have any question, please contact us at taiwaninfo.hungary@gmail.com

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tro.hu, roc-taiwan.org