



Photo by Theerasak Sakrtaeng



September 18, 2016

Taiwan, EBRD celebrate 25 years of collaboration

The Republic of China (Taiwan) and London-based European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) celebrated 25 years of collaboration and 10 years since the establishment of the Taiwan Office of EBRD Business Development September 12 in Taipei, with the two sides announcing their commitment to enhancing cooperation and strengthening industry participation.

“Taiwan is the EBRD’s fourth largest donor country as well as a constructive, reliable and effective partner,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) Secretary-General Paul Wen-liang Chang said during a ceremony marking the event.

He added that Taiwan hopes to continue working with the EBRD to further promote the development of green energy, smart cities, small and medium-sized enterprises, and knowledge-based economies.

According to the MOFA, Taiwan’s cooperation with the bank is a model of reciprocal, mutually beneficial and sustainable relations. Over the past 25 years, the EBRD Taiwan Technical Cooperation Fund has provided investments totaling US\$43 million and sponsored 270-plus

projects implemented by the organization, generating more than US\$500 million in business opportunities. In this same period, Taiwan has arranged for 15 local experts in information and communications technology, green energy, transportation and water resources to serve as consultants to the bank.

As part of the celebrations, a business forum on green energy and smart city development was held the same day, with more than 100 local business representatives gathering for updates on EBRD projects and business opportunities available in countries cooperating with the organization. Also attending was a four-member delegation led by Enzo Quattrocioche, secretary-general of the London-based institution.

Source: Taiwan Today



Vice President Chen lauds success of Vatican trip

Vice President Chen Chien-jen said September 8 that his official trip to the Vatican for the canonization of Mother Teresa of Calcutta helped further strengthen relations between the Republic of China (Taiwan) and diplomatic ally the Holy See.

“As an indispensable partner in promoting religious freedom and global peace, the ROC will continue working with the Holy See and like-minded countries around the world based on such universal values as peace, democracy, freedom, equality and fraternity,” Chen said.

The vice president made the remarks after touching down at Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport following his six-day visit to the Holy See as the representative of President Tsai Ing-wen. He was accompanied during the trip by his wife Lo Fong-ping, and led a delegation comprising Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Wu Chih-chung, National Security Council Deputy Secretary-General Tseng Hou-jeu and other senior officials.

Chen said at the September 4 canonization, he conveyed his highest regards to Pope Francis on behalf of Tsai, as well as the people of Taiwan and Catholics nationwide. He added that the pontiff responded amiably, stating he would pray for the people of Taiwan.

Later the same day, Chen met with Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin for talks on promoting bilateral ties. He also took the opportunity to donate 100,000 euros (US\$112,520) on behalf of Taiwan to assist those affected by a major earthquake that struck central Italy late last month.

The vice president also visited the town of Assisi – the birthplace of St. Francis of Assisi – and attended a Mass

for global and cross-strait peace in the central Italian town, before departing September 7 for Taiwan.

A devout Catholic, Chen was made a Knight of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem in 2010 and a Knight of the Pontifical Equestrian Order



of St. Gregory the Great in 2013 in recognition of his efforts to fight SARS and academic achievements. He and his wife have been invited to Vatican several times and received by Pope Francis, Pope Benedict XVI and Pope John Paul II.

The ROC established diplomatic relations in 1942 with the Holy See – its sole diplomatic ally in Europe. The two sides enjoy close ties and cooperation in many areas as illustrated by “Treasures from Heaven: A Special Exhibition of Artifacts from the Holy See” staged February 5 to May 2 at Taipei-based National Palace Museum, and an agreement concluded in 2011 on higher education collaboration.

Text: Taiwan Today, Photo: Office of the President



Taiwan ranked top expat destination

Taiwan was named the best place in the world to live for expatriates, standing out for the quality and affordability of its health care and enviable financial situation of expats living there, according to the 2016 InterNations Expat Insider Survey.

“Taiwan is our big winner. It’s the best place for quality of life as well as for personal finances,” Malte Zeeck, founder of InterNations, the world’s largest network for people living abroad, said during an interview with Forbes recently. “They are doing something very right there.”

The survey covers a wide range of topics and focuses on participants’ happiness regarding a variety of factors related to their countries of residence and personal lives abroad. More than 14,000 respondents representing 174 nationalities took part and answered questions involving issues such as ease of settling in, family life, personal finances, quality of life and working abroad.



Taiwan replaced two-time champion Ecuador to rank at the top of this year’s survey. In addition to claiming first place out of 67 countries in the overall ranking, it is in the top 10 for every individual index.

Following Taiwan on the list of top 10 expat destinations were Malta, Ecuador, Mexico, New Zealand, Costa Rica, Australia, Austria, Luxembourg and Czech Republic.

According to the Ministry of Labor, there are more than 31,000 foreign white collar workers currently employed in Taiwan. Nearly 18,000 work in specialized and technical fields, with the remainder working in areas such as education, show business and art, among others.

Text: Taiwan Today, Photo: Huang Chung-hsin

Austronesian Roots

New evidence gleaned from the study of a common plant species lends further credence to the theory that Taiwan is the ancestral homeland of the Austronesian-speaking peoples.

Toward the end of 2015, a team of researchers from Taiwan and Chile gained the attention of the international scientific community when they presented evidence bolstering the theory that Taiwan is the ancestral homeland of the Austronesian peoples.

Published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, their findings constitute strong biogeographical evidence in support of the “out of Taiwan” hypothesis. This theory posits that Austronesian-speaking people expanded outward from the southeastern shores of con-



Text: Pui Gao, Taiwan Review, Photos: Courtesy of Chung Kuo-fang

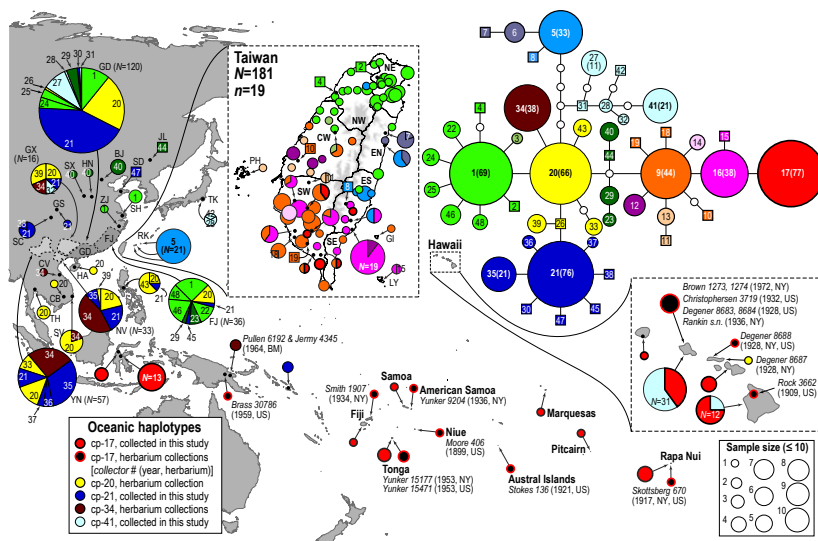
tinental Asia to Taiwan and then on to Southeast Asia, the islands of Oceania, including New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific islands, and eventually Madagascar off the east coast of Africa.

The team was led by Chung Kuo-fang, who is now a research fellow in the Biodiversity Research Center at *Academia Sinica*, Taiwan's foremost scientific institution. When the article was published, he was an associate professor in the School of Forestry and Resource Conservation at National Taiwan University (NTU) in Taipei.

There are about 400 million people of Austronesian descent residing in the broad

area that ranges from Taiwan in the north to Madagascar in the west and Chile's Easter Island in the east. Chung notes that, given the diversity and widespread distribution of their interconnected languages, which number around 1,200, Austronesian peoples and their many distinct cultures are an intriguing topic for multidisciplinary studies.

In the 1970s, Australian archaeologist Peter Bellwood, utilizing data from archaeological, linguistic and biological fields, pointed to Taiwan as the ancestral homeland of the Austronesian-speaking peoples, with a more distant origin in southern China. "There might be a



genealogical connection with today's Fujian, Guangdong and Guangxi regions back to around 8,000 years ago," Chung says. "However, we don't know if modern Austronesian language families are related to the tongues spoken by the ancient peoples from those regions."

American linguist Robert Blust's comparative studies offer more evidence for the "out of Taiwan" model, Chung notes. Blust divides Austronesian languages into 10 branches, nine of which can be found only in Taiwan. The 10th branch encompasses every other Austronesian dialect, each of which falls under the umbrella of the Malayo-Polynesian language family. The presence of all but one linguistic group, Chung says, "offers crucial, direct evidence that Taiwan is the homeland of Austronesian peoples."

Although there are alternative models suggesting that the origins of Austronesian-speaking peoples lie in northern Indochina or other Southeast Asian regions, Taiwan is considered by most experts to be the primary dispersal point of the Neolithic era Austronesian migration. About 5,000 years ago, Chung explains, probably due to population growth outstripping the amount of available arable land, people began migrating from Taiwan to today's northern Philippines. They then moved on to the Indonesian archipelago before eventually settling most of Oceania.

Citing American scientist Jared Diamond's article in the journal *Nature* published in 2000, Chung refers to the rapid expansion of Austronesian peoples as "Taiwan's gift to the world." However, he points out that



with various competing hypotheses for the Austronesian dispersal, “we need more evidence to gain a firm understanding of the whole picture.”

Chung has been working on this complex issue by examining matters beyond archaeology, human genetics and linguistics. Adopting an ethnobotanical approach, he chose to study the phylogeographic structure of paper mulberry trees, a common plant species in Taiwan and across the various subregions of Oceania.

Phylogeography looks at the historical processes responsible for the geographic distributions of various species by studying their population genetics. Specifically, Chung chose to study the DNA sequences of 604 paper mulberry samples, including 19 historical herbarium specimens stored in U.S. and European institutions. Chung and his Taiwanese team, with the help of Chilean researchers, gathered samples from nations and territories in Asia and Oceania, including Taiwan, mainland China, Hawaii, Japan, New Guinea, the Philippines, Sulawesi, Tonga and Vietnam. The team’s findings revealed a tight genealogical link between paper mulberry populations in southern Taiwan and the islands of Oceania, strongly indicating that Taiwan is the origin of Pacific paper mulberry trees. This conclusion is in line with the “out of Taiwan” hypothesis for Austronesian expansion, Chung says.

He points out the close connection between the paper mulberry’s distribution and human migratory patterns. In Taiwan, the scientist notes, the marked population differentiation of paper mulberry trees in the northern, eastern and southern parts of the island implies the plant’s limited capacity for propagation through seed dispersal and essentially rules out natural transoceanic spread. For centuries, paper mulberry trees have been propagated clonally, through cuttings or root shoots, as a material for making varieties of paper and cloth. Notably, “the plant is dioecious and its presence in Oceania is predominantly female,” the scientist says, “suggesting a random choice or a preference for female trees at the time when the plant was brought outside of its native land.” Dioecious plant species have male and female varieties.

In 2008, Chung helped a colleague at the National Museum of Prehistory (NMP) sort out a collection, which contains many bark cloth items. Often referred to as *tapa*, the name given to bark cloth by the inhabitants of Tahiti in French Polynesia, the substance is made from paper mulberry trees and can be found throughout Austronesian-speaking societies. The nonwoven fabric of *tapa* is made by peeling off the inner bark of paper mulberry trees and pounding the pieces into a textile-like form.



The earliest known evidence of *tapa* production comes from stone beaters, the tools used to pound the bark, excavated in southern China's Guangxi region that date back approximately 8,000 years. Similar tools dated to slightly later periods have also been found in Taiwan, Indochina and other Southeast Asian regions. In his introduction to the book *Felting Bark to Make Cloth*, published by the NMP in 2011 and one of the first Chinese-language books devoted to *tapa* studies, Chang points to modern uses of the substance and its societal implications. "Tapa research could prove significant in fields such as biology,

phylogeography, archaeology and anthropology," he writes. "Further study can help clarify the relationship between Austronesian peoples and *tapa* culture."

Through the genetic message preserved in a common plant, the research results from Chung's team give further credence to the theory that identifies Taiwan as the source of the great Austronesian expansion. "I'll go deeper into the research to find out more about prehistoric Taiwan's role in Austronesian migrations," Chung says, pointing toward an even more precise model of the "out of Taiwan" hypothesis.

Ang Lee honored by International Broadcasting Convention

Oscar-winning Taiwanese director Ang Lee was awarded the 2016 International Honor for Excellence by London-headquartered International Broadcasting Convention – organizer of the world's leading annual broadcasting industry exhibition – at a ceremony September 11 in Amsterdam.

Lee has, for over two decades, led the way in utilizing cutting-edge science in the creation of some of the very finest works of cinematic art like "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" and "Life of Pi," IBC said on its website.

Lee's next work "Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk" uses a revolutionary cinematographic technique that establishes a new level of emotional connection with the on-screen characters while preserving artistic integrity over cinema and electronic entertainment market delivery formats, IBC added.

Accepting the award in person, Lee said he was "happy and honored" to be recognized by IBC and will continue working hard to bring technologically advanced movies to the silver screen. Previous winners of IBC's top honor include Canadian James Cameron, director of "Titanic" and "Avatar," and New Zealand's Peter Jackson, director of the Lord of the Rings and Hobbit movies.

According to Lee, his new film is shot at the highest rate of 120 frames per second in 3-D and with 4K resolution. It offers viewers a more sophisticated and detailed take on its straightforward dramatic theme, and will premiere October 14 at the New York Film Festival, he said. Lee's "Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk" has been listed among the 20 most anticipated new films of the 2016-2017 Oscar season by US entertainment magazine Variety in a recent article. "With this adaptation of Ben Fountain's 2012 novel, [Ang Lee] will be dabbling in high frame rate to put the audience in the heat of battle as he takes on a story in the anti-war spectrum. Whether he ultimately pulls it off or not, it's always exciting to see what a genius is up to," according to the Variety article.

The film is about a group of soldiers, including 19-year-old private Billy Lynn, who were celebrated for their exploits during the war in Iraq at halftime of a football game.



President Tsai: Taiwan to develop intelligent manufacturing

President Tsai Ing-wen said August 31 that the government will integrate resources to create a smart industry platform and will also introduce key technology into the market to pave the way for local investment in the field of intelligent manufacturing.

The relevant authorities will push for customer matchmaking, international cooperation and export expansion to make the Taiwan market more competitive, Tsai said at the opening of the Asia Industry 4.0 & Intelligent Manufacturing Expo.

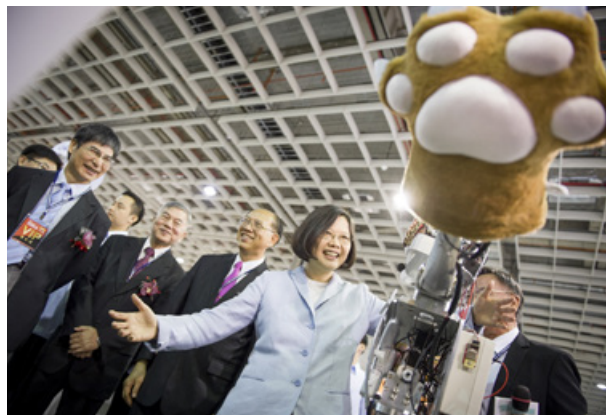
Intelligent manufacturing will include the Internet of Things (IoT) and big data, the president said, adding that the government will also create a platform that will allow Taiwanese investors to explore the market and exchange ideas.

A record 900 manufacturers from around the world took part in the four-day expo at the Taipei Nangang Exhibition Center, seeking to open up more business opportunities in the areas of industrial automation, robotics, mold and die manufacturing, logistics and IoT, fluid power, and mechanical technology. In the automation pavilion,

Germany is making a presentation for the first time, touting its strength in research and development. Germany and Taiwan are two of the most innovative countries in the world and front runners in research and development in their respective regions, the German Trade Office Taipei said.

Through Industry 4.0 and its digital innovations in products, processes and business models, the export driven industries in both countries will remain competitive, the office said.

"Germany and Taiwan, as high-tech world market leaders, have great opportunities to cooperate in the field of Industry 4.0 in order to significantly increase the competitiveness of their respective industries," Andreas Hergenröther, executive director of the German office, said at the show. The expo, held August 31-September 3, featured 2,600 booths in six pavilions.



Text: Focus Taiwan, Photo: Office of the President

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