



Photo by Huang Chung-hsin



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## DOING RESEARCH IN THE HEART OF ASIA

The Taipei Representative Office in Hungary is pleased to announce that this year's Taiwan Fellowship is open for online application starting May 1 to June 30. The Taiwan Fellowship is established by the ROC Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) to encourage foreign experts and scholars of social sciences and humanities interested in issues related to Taiwan, cross-strait relations, mainland China, Asia-Pacific region and Chinese studies to conduct advanced research at universities or academic institutions in Taiwan.

**Teréz Vincze, assistant professor at Department of Film Studies at Institute for Art Theory and Media Studies, Eötvös Loránd University, did her fellowship in 2016. She shares her experiences with the readers of Taiwan info.**

### *THE MAGICAL ISLAND – WITH A FELLOWSHIP IN TAIWAN*

*I had the opportunity between February and December, 2016, to spend 11 months in Taipei with the help of the Taiwan Fellowship program. I need to say straight away, that this period was one of the most defining and most magnificent experience of my researcher and education career. As a fellow of film studies for me the primary sources about Taiwan were films and the cinema. I received my first information about the Taipei Representative Office, which takes*

*care of the Fellowship program through the cinema as well – the film clubs and festivals they organize called my attention to the cultural work of the Office. After that I started to pay attention to the fellowship opportunities they announced and I attended their info session about the fellowships as well.*

*The East Asian cinema had been part of my research interest even before, but it was thanks to the fellowship that by today I definitely committed myself to the region's, and in it Taiwan's cinematic art. Having earned many positive experiences during my stay took part in it too, with the general hospitality of the Taiwanese people and the readiness to help and the attentive care of the host institute.*

*The life of the foreign fellows in Taipei is organized by the Fellowship office located in the building of and working in cooperation with the Taiwan National Library. I am thankful*



*for all the cultural programs they organized during which I not only could get to know Taiwan's culture and traditions but also its culinary wonders, and they created an opportunity for the fellows from all around the world to get to know one another and create friendships, as well as research partnerships.*

*Another key player in my fellowship work was my host university institute: I found a hospitable and helpful "home" at the Department of Taiwanese Literature of the Taiwan National University. If I could I would say thank you to each and every person by name for all they did so that I would feel at home at an unfamiliar place and despite the language barriers.*

*I must have been lucky as well, since everything worked out just fine since the very beginning, but I believe that the general hospitality in Taiwan greatly contributed to it (they won first place on the "best place to live as an expat" list in 2016 for*

*a reason), as well as the pleasant climate (despite all the earthquakes and typhoons).*

*Next to researching and participating in scientific conferences and lecture, naturally getting to know the country's culture and amazing natural wonders was the most important and defining part of the fellowship for me.*

*I gained unforgettable experiences while exploring the breathtaking national parks, outdoor hot springs, Buddhist temples and gorgeous beaches. Based on my own experiences, I can credibly say that Taiwan has earned its name given by the Portuguese travelers in all respects: Ilha Formosa, the magical island.*

Teréz VINCZE, Dr  
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## Local festival scenes added to Google Street View

**A total of 150 images of five major traditional festivals in Taiwan were recently added to Google Street View, offering internet users around the world an opportunity to explore the country's rich and diverse cultural heritage.**

In a statement released April 19 in Taipei, Google Taiwan said this marks the first time that photographs of the country's cultural events have been presented in the online service. These latest additions increase the number of Taiwan attractions and scenic locations featured in Street View to more than 770, it added. Among the newly highlighted celebrations is the Boat Burning Festi-

val, part of the Welcoming Wangye Deities Ceremony, or Welcoming the King Lord Ceremony, that takes place every three years in October or November in Donggang Township of southern Taiwan's Pingtung County.

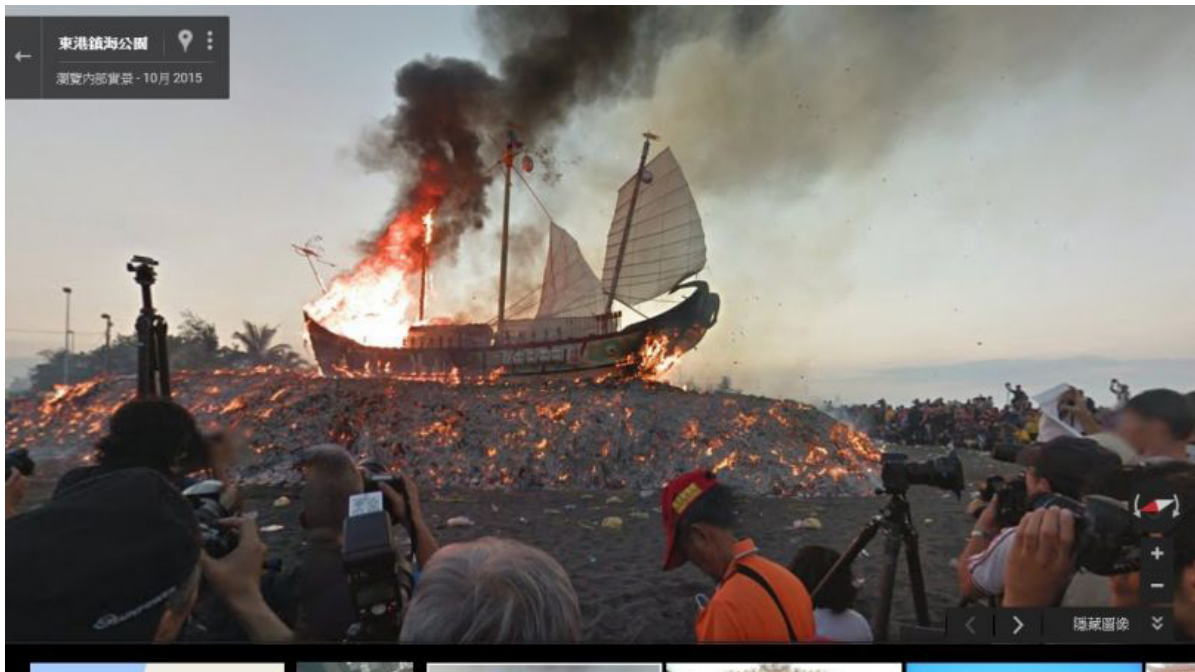
Tracing its origins back to the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), the eight-day Taoist festival concludes with the spectacular burning of the King Boat on piles of joss



paper, or ghost money, so as to ward off disease. Designated a major national folk custom in 2010 by the Ministry of Culture, the event has become a popular attraction among visitors from home and abroad.

Also included are images of the Mid-Summer Ghost Festival, held on

cation across the nation every year and typically attracts tens of millions of visitors. In addition, the map service now hosts images of the Bo-Bing custom staged during the Mid-Autumn Festival, which falls on the 15th day of the eighth lunar month, in outlying Kinmen County. This tradition consists of a dice game



the 15th day of the seventh lunar month, from northern Taiwan's Keelung City, as well as photographs of boat races from Dragon Boat Festival, which falls on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month and is celebrated in ethnic Chinese communities all over the world.

Pictures of the Taiwan Lantern Festival have also been added to the Google service. This spectacular event, which kicks off on the 15th day of the first lunar month as part of Lunar New Year celebrations, is staged in a different lo-

in which participants compete to win mooncakes, traditional pastries stuffed with bean paste or other fillings and the signature food of the holiday.

According to Google Taiwan, besides photographs of major cultural festivals, Street View includes more than 100 images of the country's diverse natural environments, such as Chia Lo Lake in the northeastern county of Yilan, columnar basalt in outlying Penghu County and the Lala Mountain Nature Protection Zone in the northern city of Taoyuan.

Source: *Taiwan Today*, Photo: Courtesy of Google



## Cabinet OKs draft bill on work environment for foreign professionals

**A bill easing immigration rules for foreign professionals working or seeking employment in Taiwan was approved April 20 by the Cabinet and will be forwarded to the Legislature for fast-tracked review as part of government efforts to spur the country's economic development and deepen its knowledge-based talent pool.**

Comprising 23 articles aimed at building a friendlier environment for skilled workers from abroad, the National Development Council (NDC)-proposed bill covers such areas as immediate health coverage and permanent residency applications for dependents, internship visas and taxation benefits.

A highlight of the bill is the Employment Gold Card. Available to certain categories of foreign talents, it functions as an alien residence card, re-entry permit, residence visa and work permit. Under the bill, foreign professionals with permanent residence will be included in Taiwan's labor pension system, with their adult children eligible to work in Taiwan if they meet certain requirements. In addition, those employed by public schools will be entitled to retirement benefits. The bill also permits foreign nationals to enter Taiwan on a job-seeking visa for a maximum

one-year stay without having to leave the country. The requirement that foreign professionals must spend at least 183 days in country to maintain permanent residency status is lifted.

Meanwhile, students and new graduates of foreign universities will be permitted to seek internships at Taiwan companies. In the category of foreign freelance artists and performers, they will be allowed to apply for work permits themselves and will no longer require a prospective employer to sponsor them.

The NDC said by substantially easing regulations regarding foreign professionals' employment and stays in Taiwan, the bill will assist local firms with their global strategies and drive technological development of Taiwan's industrial sectors. This will also help steer the local economy toward a high-tech and high-value development track.

*Source: Taiwan Today, Focus Taiwan*

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## Taipei's firefly conservation efforts star at international symposium

**Taipei City Government's (TCG) success in transforming the northern Taiwan metropolis into a global capital for firefly conservation is taking center stage at the first locally staged International Firefly Symposium running April 24-26 at Taipei Zoo.**

Under an NT\$50 million (US\$1.65 million) firefly ecological restoration project, one of many TCG initiatives promoting

biodiversity and ecological sustainability in recent years, the city parks of Daan Forest, Mucha and Rongxing are seeing fireflies for the first time in over two decades.

During an address at the opening of the IFS, Vice President Chen Chien-jen said fireflies are a bellwether of environmental health as they are extremely sensitive to changes in their habitat caused by climatic variables and pollution. It is expected that



by hosting the symposium, Taiwan's efforts to raise ecological awareness among the public and protect the local environment will enhance its reputation as a frontrunner in greening the globe, he added.

Despite challenges posed by Daan Forest Park's central city location, proximity to high-traffic roads, exposure to an abundance of artificial light and the presence of

Taipei was selected at the 2014 IFS in Florida as host of the 2017 symposium following a presentation on the Wen-shan District restoration project. Commencing October 2012, the undertaking involves protecting fireflies at a 3.5-hectare plot adjacent to Yongjian Elementary School. Various measures were employed such as planting adult trees



more than 10,000 visitors per day, the project has turned the green space into one of the most important habitats in the city for fireflies. This accomplishment has also helped make Taipei the only highly-populated metropolis in the world to achieve such a goal, according to TCG.

An equal share of the credit for this achievement can be attributed to a research team led by NTU professor emeritus Yang Ping-shih, as well as the coordinated efforts of civic groups, government agencies and more than 10,000 volunteers, the TCG said.

to shield fireflies from urban light pollution, establishing a 300-meter grassed waterway, building four ecological ponds and developing a noninvasive light-emitting diode, or LED, red light torch.

The 2017 IFS gathered more than 190 entomologists from 20-plus countries. It featured keynote speeches and research paper presentations, as well as a tour of Daan Forest, Mucha and Rongxing parks.

First held nine years ago in Thailand, the symposium became a triennial event following the 2014 edition in Florida.

Source: *Taiwan Today*, Photo: [www.ifs2017taipei.org](http://www.ifs2017taipei.org)

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## Taiwan's press freedom improves, remains best in Asia

Taiwan's global press freedom ranking improved this year, moving up six notches from 2016 to 45th, the best performance by any Asian country, according to the Worldwide Press Freedom Index 2017 released on April 26 by the Paris-based Reporters without Borders (RSF).

Taiwan's ranking is better than South Korea's, which was 63rd, up seven places from last year; Japan, which remained at 72nd; and Hong Kong, which fell four places to 73rd this year. Norway placed first in the index, which measures the level of press freedom in 180 countries,



and was followed by Sweden and Finland. The other countries rounding out the top 10 are Denmark, Netherlands, Costa Rica, Switzerland, Jamaica, Belgium, and Iceland.

The United States dropped two spots from a year earlier to 43rd. The five countries at the bottom of the list are China, Syria, Turkmenistan, Eritrea and North Korea, in that order. Although Europe enjoys the greatest degree of press freedom in the world, the score of the region as a whole fell over the past year, according to the press freedom report. Published annually by RSF since

2002, the World Press Freedom Index is based on an evaluation of media freedom that measures pluralism, media independence, quality of legal framework and safety of journalists in 180 countries, according to the global press freedom watchdog. The RSF announced in early April the opening of its first Asia bureau in Taipei. According to RSF Secretary General Christophe Deloire, Taiwan was chosen not only because of its central geographic location but also in recognition of its top ranking place among Asian countries on the annual press freedom index.

Source: Focus Taiwan

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## US welcomes Taiwan's ongoing WHA participation

The United States has welcomed Taiwan's participation as an observer at the past eight World Health Assembly (WHA) meetings and looks forward to its continued participation in the decision-making body of the World Health Organization (WHO), according to American Institute in Taiwan Chairman James Moriarty April 25.

Given Taiwan's geographical position at the heart of Asia, its robust economic and people-to-people ties with countries around the world, and its own significant experience and demonstrated capacity, the US continues to support Taiwan's meaningful and substantive contributions to the international community, Moriarty said.

Taiwan was invited in 2009 by the WHO to take part as an observer in

the annual WHA in Geneva, Switzerland, following 38 years of exclusion.

The country has since shared its extensive experience in a range of areas like providing universal health care coverage and managing outbreaks of highly contagious diseases. This involvement is widely recognized

as helping strengthen the global disease-prevention network and safeguard the health of the nation's 23 mil-



Source: Taiwan Today, Photo: Courtesy of the Office of the President



lion people. The AIT chairman, who was in country on a seven-day visit until April 29, made the remarks while addressing a public health workshop in Taipei organized under the auspices of the Taiwan-US Global Cooperation and Training Framework, according to a statement released April 25 by the AIT.

Launched in June 2015, the framework enables Taiwan and the US to work together in expanding their already robust cooperation through addressing global challenges such as education, energy, environmental protection, international humanitarian assistance, public health, technology and regional development.

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## Tai Tzu-ying wins Badminton Asia Championships title



Source: Focus Taiwan, Photo: Courtesy of World Badminton Federation

Tai Tzu-ying (second left, back row)

Taiwan's Tai Tzu-ying, the world's top-ranked women's badminton player, defeated Akane Yamaguchi of Japan on April 30 to win the women's singles title at the Badminton Asia Championships in Wuhan, China. Tai beat Yamaguchi 18-21, 21-11, 21-18 in three sets, becoming the first Taiwanese to win a title at the Asian tournament since it was launched in 1962. It was Tsai's sixth straight World Super Series title and followed her win at the Badminton World Federation Super Series Singapore Open Badminton Championship on April 16. She climbed to the world No. 1 spot last December.



# Putting Down Roots



*An organic fungus farm in Yilan County run by 30-year-old Hsu Wei-ting*

**As Taiwan's farming population ages, the government is working to draw people back to the sector.**

*By Oscar Chung  
Taiwan Review  
Photos by Chen Mei-ling*

Chen Jih-wei grew up in a farming family in a rural suburb of central Taiwan's Taichung City. He had hoped to follow in his father's footsteps, but was convinced to pursue a different path by his parents. "I love working on a farm and being close to nature, but my father wanted me to find a career with a stable income," he said.

The 35-year-old instead became an engineer at a major electronics manufacturer, but never gave up on his original ambition. Then one day, he heard about the Next Generation in Agriculture program launched by the Taichung City Government's Agriculture Bureau. Designed to inspire young

people to pursue a career in farming, the scheme finds apprenticeships for participants on successful farms and provides them with financial support.

Chen said he has learned much since beginning his placement in July 2016. "My father's attitude is changing now that I've shown him what I've learned."

Hsu Wei-ting is another relatively recent addition to the ranks of Taiwan's young farmers. Three years ago, she quit her job as a biomedical sciences research fellow at Taipei-based Academia Sinica, Taiwan's foremost research institute. The 30-year-old has since been running a fungus farm set up a decade ago by her father in her





hometown in the northeastern county of Yilan. Under her management, the family business has attained organic accreditation.

“On the whole, I get more out of life than when I was living in the city,” Hsu said while serving customers at her stall, which was set up in an area especially for young farmers at a large agricultural market organized by the Cabinet-level Council of Agriculture (COA) one weekend in Taipei. “The produce harvested on the farm is safer for my family as well as my customers. And I get more quality time with my parents.”

### Growing Support

Taiwan’s farming population is aging rapidly, with the median age of full-time and part-time farmers sitting at roughly 62 years. Those who make a living solely from the land are 57 on average, according to Chang Chih-sheng, director of the Farmers’ Service Department under the COA.



*Young people are increasingly turning to agriculture to make a living. At present, about a quarter of the population in the sector is between 15 and 44 years old.*

To reverse this trend, the central and local governments have developed programs to attract young people to the profession. One flagship COA project, launched in 2014, offers interest-free loans of up to NT\$5 million (US\$153,850) to around 100



*Selected as a mentor by Taichung’s Agriculture Bureau, Wu Chien-won, right, loves to share his experiences with apprentices on his farm.*

promising farmers aged 18 to 45 annually. To date, 321 people have been offered funding through the scheme. Recipients are given a three-year period in which they can use the money on business expansion projects. They also receive up to two years of one-on-one mentoring from agriculture experts, who are compensated by the COA.

“The greatest thing about being selected for the project is the knowledge I’m gaining from my mentor,” said Lai Heng-yu, who joined the program in December 2014. The 38-year-old owner of a vegetable farm in southern Taiwan’s Pingtung County was paired with a retired official from the COA’s Kaohsiung District Agricultural Research and Extension Station, one of seven such facilities the council operates around Taiwan. “If I have any problems on my farm, I can just call him and get the solution,” he said.

Lai has also received support from the Swallows Fly South project launched by the Pingtung County Government in 2014. The initiative encourages young people interested in agriculture to return to their hometowns by offering grants and apprenticeship opportunities on selected farms.

Meanwhile, the COA is promoting the involvement of nongovernmental organizations in encouraging young people to take up farming, urging agricultural associa-



tions around Taiwan to help young farmers launch their own organizations. More than 2,300 young people have joined 16 such newly formed groups, through which they can exchange opinions and share resources.

### Value of Mentoring

Many central and local government programs aim to inspire young people to take up farming while exposing them to modern agricultural practices. Take the Next Generation in Agriculture initiative, for example. Geared toward people aged 18 to 35, the program launched in July 2015



*Wu Chien-won works on a farm*

places participants on successful farms, enabling them to learn best practices.

“Participants’ fathers tend to follow traditional practices, whereas our experts, who were selected based on their success in the industry, can tell them

how to work in a more efficient manner,” said Wang Jui-ching, chief secretary of Taichung’s Agriculture Bureau. “In addition, we offer classes in marketing and branding.”

Wu Chien-won, 59, has been growing vegetables in Taichung’s Dongshi District for 27 years. He is one of the 21 veteran farm owners currently involved in the Next Generation in Agriculture program. “What benefits trainees most is our experience in handling emergencies like outbreaks of disease or approaching typhoons. And, having worked in agriculture for decades, I have good connections in the sector, which can make it easier for my apprentices to find and purchase farmland,” he said.

According to Wu, the ultimate value of the program is that it establishes lasting relationships between experienced professionals and newcomers. “They can always seek advice from me even after they complete the program,” the farmer said.

### Agriculture’s New Image

Improved marketing strategies are also leading to increased profits. Today, farmers earn more because they are cutting out middlemen by selling their produce via the internet or directly to consumers at markets like those organized by the COA. According to Hsu, nearly 60 percent of her fungus is sold online, with much of the remaining stock snatched up at local food fairs in Taipei on weekends.

Slowly but surely, young people are being drawn to the fields, motivated by incentives such as the freedom of the outdoors, benefits of healthy foods and opportunity for profit.

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Should you have any question, please contact us at [taiwaninfo.hungary@gmail.com](mailto:taiwaninfo.hungary@gmail.com)

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