



Photo by Theerasak Saksritauwee



April 5, 2017

TaiwanINFO

## DIVERSE ANCESTRY



**It might come as a surprise, but Taiwanese people’s ancestry is much more complex than people realize. The successive waves of Chinese immigrants that began arriving in the 17th century belonged to a variety of subgroups with mutually unintelligible languages and different customs. Today in Taiwan, however, distinctions between them have become blurred as a result of extensive intermarriage and the universal use of the Mandarin Chinese language.**

Taiwan proper has been a melting pot not only of diverse Han subgroups, but also of indigenous Malayo-Polynesian peoples and immigrants from all over the world. Recent years, for example, have seen an influx of new arrivals from mainland China and Southeast Asia, mostly through cross-cultural marriages. Currently, the number of new immigrants is over 500,000.

### Han Peoples

Seeking refuge from upheavals during the transition between the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1912) dynasties, the ancestors of Taiwan’s Han peoples began migrating from China’s southeastern provinces to the island in sizeable numbers in the 17th century. The majority of these early immigrants were Holo, mostly from areas in southern Fujian Province, as well as Hakka mainly from eastern Guangdong Province.

Holo immigrants settled in Taiwan’s coastal regions and inland plains, while Hakka immigrants inhabited hilly areas. Clashes between these groups over resources led to the relocation of some communities, and, as time passed, varying degrees of intermarriage and assimilation took place.

### Holo

The Holo people are the largest ethnic group in Taiwan, accounting for approximately 70 percent of the population. During the Qing dynasty (1644-1912), a large number of Holo men from mainland China married women of indigenous Austronesian groups. Hence, many in Taiwan who consider themselves Han have indigenous ancestry as well. With Austronesian and Japanese influences – the latter as the result of the half-century of Japanese rule from 1895 to 1945 – Holo culture in Taiwan is quite different from that in mainland China.



## Hakka

The Hakka, who make up about one-fifth of the Han population in Taiwan, have a long history of periodic migration – hence the name Hakka, which literally means “guest families.” Known also for their communal spirit, large Hakka communities can be found today in the Taoyuan, Hsinchu, Miaoli, Taichung, Kaohsiung, Pingtung, Hualien and Taitung areas.

## Immigrants Arriving around 1949

The Chinese civil war as well as the ROC government's relocation to Taiwan in 1949 occasioned an influx of 1.2 million people from mainland China to Taiwan from 1945 to 1953. The majority were soldiers, civil servants and teachers. Unlike earlier immigrants, these people came from all over mainland China and included not only Han Chinese but also ethnic groups from Mongolia, Tibet and southwestern China.

## Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous Malayo-Polynesian peoples have lived on the island for millennia, with archaeological evidence confirming their presence dating back 12,000 to 15,000 years. Their languages belong to the Austronesian linguistic family, whose speakers are known for their migratory history and inhabit an area of the globe that stretches from Madagascar Island in the west to Easter Island in the east and from Taiwan in the north to New Zealand in the south.

There is a growing appreciation in Taiwan for the cultural legacies of the 16 officially recognized Austronesian-speaking subgroups, which constitute a little more than 2 percent of the population. Both public and private organizations are making efforts to revitalize their languages and cultures, as illustrated by the launching of Taiwan Indigenous Television and the passage of the Indigenous Peoples Basic Act.

Source: The ROC Yearbook, ROC (Taiwan) at a glance

*For more detailed information on Taiwan's indigenous peoples, please refer to the May 5 issue of Taiwan info: [English](#), [Hungarian](#)*

---

## Over 100 foreign students join Mazu frenzy in Taichung

**A total of 148 foreign students took part in the annual Dajia Mazu pilgrimage in Taichung on March 25, alongside hundreds of thousands of local pilgrims, taking the opportunity to learn more about local culture.**

The students from 27 countries traveled to Taichung in central Taiwan to participate in an activity dubbed "Fun Mazu-Learn Chinese," which was co-sponsored by the Ministry of Education and Feng Chia University (FCU).

Before joining the parade, the foreign students gathered at Yonghe Palace in Taichung's Dadu district, where professors from FCU's Chinese Language Center gave briefings on the architecture of Taiwan's temples, the legend of the sea goddess Mazu, and the Mazu religious ceremony, according to the education ministry. The

briefings also included cultural implications of the annual Mazu pilgrimage, one of the biggest religious activities in Taiwan, the ministry said. The highlight of the program was the ritual of "climbing under Mazu's palanquin to get a blessing," along the four kilometer part of the pilgrimage that the students joined, the ministry said.

The pilgrimage began at Dajia Jenn Lann Temple late March 24, drawing hundreds of thousands of followers along the route, which took them to Fengtian Temple in Chiayi and back over a nine-day period. This is the second year that the education

Source: Focus Taiwan, Photo: Courtesy of Ministry of Education





ministry and FCU have jointly organized the Mazu frenzy for foreign students. It is part of the ministry's "learning Chinese from everyday life" initiative, which is designed to allow foreign students in Taiwan, where traditional Chinese characters are taught in school and used in

everyday life, to take part in local cultural and festive activities while learning the language.

The ministry said it is currently planning similar activities around the Dragon Boat Festival, the Moon Festival and the Ghost Festival this year.

---

## Fabulous Fireflies



*Source: Taiwan Today, Photo: Courtesy of Hualien Forest District Office*

**Fireflies illuminate the nightscape in Danongdafu Forest Park of Hualien County. Situated in eastern Taiwan, the park is one of the most popular spots nationwide to view the insects during the March-April firefly season.**



## Taiwan hoping to launch home-grown submarines within a decade

Taiwan is hoping to build its first home-grown submarines within eight years and commission them into service within a decade, the local shipbuilder commissioned to carry out the submarine program said March 21.

CSBC Corp. Taiwan Chairman Cheng Wenlon acknowledged there were problems to be worked out because Taiwan lacks any experience in building submarines, but he said the difficulties were being addressed. He also noted that CSBC Corp. has built more than 100 ships for the Navy and said the company would use that experience in developing the local submarine program.

Cheng's comments came after the shipbuilder and the National Chung-Shan Institute of Science and Technology (NCSIST) signed a memorandum of understanding with Taiwan's Navy in Kaohsiung earlier in the day to jointly build submarines for the military.

According to the schedule laid out in the MOU, home-grown submarines will be completed



within eight years and then formally commissioned into service within a decade, he said. NCSIST Vice President Gao Chung-hsing said the most important part of the program is a system to integrate all of the equipment and ensure the safety of ships operating underwater. The March 21 signing was also witnessed by President Tsai Ing-wen, who said the construction

of submarines is the most challenging aspect of Taiwan's policy to create an independent national defense industry. The ROC Navy currently operates four diesel-electric submarines. The Haihu and Hailung were purchased from the Netherlands and commissioned in the late 1980s, while the Haipao and Haishih are former U.S. Navy boats acquired in the early 1970s, according to the Ministry of National Defense.

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

---

## World takes reference from Taiwan's research on *H. pylori*: scholar

Taiwan's research on helicobacter pylori (*H. pylori*) bacteria has been excellent, becoming a reference for the treatment of gastric problems in other countries and resulting in changed treatment guidelines, the head of a national research program said March 22.

That type of worldwide recognition of Taiwan's work is "not an easy achievement," said Yang Pan-chyr, head of the National Research Program for Biopharmaceuticals and president of National Taiwan University (NTU). Several major clinical trials have been conducted by Taiwan and

Source: Focus Taiwan





have become an important reference for the rest of the world, Yang said at a meeting to release the results of Taiwan's research on *H. pylori*, a type of bacteria that grows in the digestive tract and can invade the stomach lining. Taiwanese researchers have established that a certain regimen of antibiotics can be used effectively against *H. pylori*, according to Yang.

He said a team of biomedical researchers at NTU had found that the use of sequential therapy - three types of antibiotics and proton pump inhibitors - was more effective against the bacteria than the conventional triple therapy. According to Yang,

Taiwanese, particularly in rural areas, are prone to stomach problems, related to *H. pylori* infections, which puts them at high risk for gastritis and stomach ulcers and cancer. Based on Taiwan's research, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, which is affiliated with the World Health Organization, has worked out a model for *H. pylori* screening to prevent stomach cancer, Yang said.

He said that while Taiwan's clinical tests might lag behind China and South Korea's in terms of volume, the quality is excellent and the tests have been recognized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

---

## Taiwan hosts largest wintering population of black-faced spoonbills

Taiwan recorded the world's largest wintering population of black-faced spoonbills this year, with 2,601 birds recorded, the Forestry Bureau under the Council of Agriculture said March 28.



This year's figure marks 541 more than last year, or a world record high increase, and it is the third consecutive year in which the number has exceeded 2,000, the bureau said, citing the results of the International Black-faced Spoonbill Census 2017 conducted January 14-15.

The Taiwan section of the census was conducted at 51 sites in Taiwan by the Wild Bird Society of the Republic of China, along with 26 wild bird groups around the country, according to the bureau. The black-faced spoonbill (*Platalea minor*) is classi-

fied as a globally endangered species under the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)'s Red List.

A total of 3,941 birds were recorded in this year's global census, including 2,601 in Taiwan, or 66 percent of the global total. The global population of the bird was 585 fewer than last year.

About 98.8 percent of the black-faced spoonbills in Taiwan were recorded in wetlands, fish ponds, saltwater ponds and lagoons in coastal areas of Tainan and Chiayi in southwestern Taiwan, according to the bureau.



# Getting the Word Out



**A bastion of Mandarin learning, Taiwan is using its linguistic expertise to reach out to the world.**

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

Ludovic Corvers fell in love with Taiwan as soon as he arrived for the first time in early 2016. Today, he feels even more at home, in part due to his passion for Mandarin. “Chinese is the most spoken language in the world. It really can provide me with better career opportunities,” said the 24-year-old Belgian, who has been studying Mandarin since September last year at the Chinese Language Center of National Cheng Kung University (NCKU) in southern Taiwan’s Tainan City.

Like Corvers, 23-year-old Nguyen Quang Huy from Vietnam also has a keen interest in Taiwan’s most widely spoken tongue. He grew up in central

Vietnam watching Chinese-language soap operas, and found himself drawn to traditional Chinese characters. Two years ago, he began taking courses at Tamkang University’s Chinese Language Center in Taipei City. “Taiwan was my first choice when I thought about learning the language because the traditional Chinese characters used here are more beautiful than the simplified versions taught in mainland China,” he said. “Besides, politically I like Taiwan better.”

Foreign students of Mandarin are helping boost the country’s international profile. According to the Ministry of Education (MOE), 19,977 for-





eigners were enrolled in Mandarin courses in 2016, up from 12,555 in 2010. The majority of these students hailed from Japan, South Korea and the United States, in that order.

### Instructing Teachers and Pupils

“For years, the [Mandarin learning] sector played only a nominal role in local higher education; it wasn’t until around a decade ago that it started receiving significant attention,” said Chen Shu-ling, deputy director of NCKU’s Chinese Language Center.

To develop Taiwan into a Mandarin learning hub, the nation had to first ensure the proficiency of its instructors. Today, 11 universities have departments devoted to educating future teachers of Chinese as a second language. Additionally, seven local tertiary institutions



have set up graduate schools dedicated to the discipline since the original was founded by National Taiwan Normal University in 1995.

In 2006, the government implemented a nationwide licensing test for teachers of the subject. To date, around 21,000 people have taken the stringent exam, with 3,843 granted completion certificates.

“To learn how to become a good Mandarin teacher, it’s important to have a firm grasp of aspects such as phonetics and philology,” said Chiang Hsi-mei, a board director of the Association of Teaching Chinese as a Second Language based in Taipei. She added that to be effective, teachers must also have a good understanding of their students’ mother tongues. This is why Ming Chuan University’s (MCU) Department of Teaching Chinese as a Second Language, based in northern Taiwan’s Taoyuan City and chaired by Chiang, provides a wide selection of language courses including English, French, Japanese and Korean. Indonesian will join the list in the latter half of the year. “Only when teachers understand a foreign language can they know the difficulties its native speakers face when learning Mandarin,” she explained.

To encourage foreign language learners to study in Taiwan, since 2005 the





MOE has offered the Huayu Enrichment Scholarship. Last year, 724 individuals from 52 countries took advantage of the program, which entitles each recipient to NT\$25,000 (US\$785) per month for up to one year. An additional NT\$5.7 million (US\$179,245) has been included in the scholarship's budget this year to cover the growing number of students from South and Southeast Asia, in line with the government's policy of strengthening ties with these regions.

Currently, 56 centers for learning Mandarin – 52 at universities and four at educational associations – are accredited by the MOE to admit foreign students, up from 13 in 1996.

In order to assess the proficiency of students, the MOE organizes the Test of Chinese as a Foreign Language (TOCFL). Since its establishment in 2003, more than 250,000 people have signed up for the TOCFL. The exam is divided into three sections – reading and listening, writing as well as speaking – and offers six difficulty levels ranging from beginner to advanced.

## Global Endeavor

Taiwan has the potential to keep growing as a hub of Mandarin learning. The sector is worthy of continued attention and investment because of the many benefits it brings, including its strategic impact for the nation. Evidence of this can be found in an unprecedented joint effort launched in 2016 by the governments of Taiwan and the United States.

In cooperation with the Critical Language Scholarship Program initiated by the U.S. Department of State in 2006, each year the two sides arrange and sponsor a select group of 20

American students who take courses at NCKU's Chinese Language Center, where they immerse themselves in eight weeks of intensive language training.

“Developing the Mandarin learning sector is not only about making profits,” said NCKU's Chen when asked about the importance of the joint project. “It's also about fostering cultural exchanges and a better understanding of Taiwan among foreigners of the next generation, which is crucial to the nation's long-term development.”



---

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

TAIPEI REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE, HUNGARY

1088 Budapest, Rákóczi Rd. 1-3./II.

[tro.hu](http://tro.hu), [roc-taiwan.org/hu\\_hu](http://roc-taiwan.org/hu_hu)