



## President Tsai named global thinker of 2016

President Tsai Ing-wen was named one of the global thinkers of 2016 by the US-based Foreign Policy magazine, an honor that Taiwan's Presidential Office said was shared by the people of Taiwan.



Tsai was listed in the decision-makers category of the “100 Leading Global Thinkers of 2016” for not kowtowing to China, according to the magazine.

In its citation, Foreign Policy said that since Tsai took office in May as Taiwan's first female president, she has made the island's sovereignty a top, albeit controversial, priority. “Distancing her administration from the pro-China stance of her predecessor, she has cozied up to Japan by brokering a mechanism to deal with maritime disputes, dropped charges against locals who protested against a Taipei-Beijing trade pact, and reversed school syllabus changes that emphasize links to the mainland,” the magazine said.

In her National Day address on October 10, Tsai also called on Beijing to restart negotiations on the island nation's status, urging China to recognize the reality of Taiwan's existence and saying that the people of Taiwan have an unshakable faith in the democratic system, the magazine noted. Commenting on the magazine's recognition of Taiwan's leader, Presidential Office spokesman Alex Huang said the responsibility of a president is to lead reforms that will improve the country and welfare of its people. Tsai's listing as a global thinker is recognition not just of the president but also of the efforts of the Taiwanese people in the areas of democracy and freedom, he said. “The strengthening of Taiwan in these and other areas has been seen by the whole world,” Huang said.

On the list of “100 Leading Global Thinkers of 2016,” others in the decision-makers category included Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for “designing a humane refugee policy,” German Chancellor Angela Merkel for “keeping the doors ajar,” UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for “outrunning Donald Trump to save the planet,” and U.S. Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton for “going high when others go low.”

Source: Focus Taiwan, Photo: Foreign Policy website



## Taipei Representative Office in Hungary attends Make-A-Wish donation ceremony

**The Taipei Representative Office in Hungary joined the Sovereign Order of Malta to the Republic of Serbia on December 9 in the latter's Make-A-Wish project, donating a minibus to Ustanva za decu imlade in Sremčica, Serbia; an institute for children and youth.**

At a speech delivered as part of the donation ceremony, Ambassador Tao Wenlung explained that it is part of the Taiwanese culture to share. Tao noted that Taiwan also underwent a period of time when it was the recipient of foreign aid. Today, Taiwan's government and non-governmental organizations are working to help people in need all over the world.

Ambassador Alberto di Luca of the Sovereign Order of Malta to the Republic of Serbia said that a minibus had been at the top of the wish list from the Sremčica institute. Thanks to Taiwan, Ambassador di Luca said, this has been made possible. He pointed out that he has had a long friendship with Taiwan, going on 30 years. Aleksandra Trifković, director of Ustanva za decu imlade, expressed her gratitude, saying that the mini bus will help transport the children to schools, sporting venues, and hospitals, which is very important for them.

The institute has 300 inhabitants, mostly mentally challenged children and youth, Director Trifković said, adding that there are 118 professionals providing everyday services including medical care. "We've been talking with the Ministry of Health in Serbia about the 2017 Make-A-Wish project," Ambassador di Luca said, explaining a possible change in approach. "We can have doctors from Taiwan come to Serbia to help children with operational needs, or send children there." To this, Ambassador Tao said his office would try

its best to help with such a project, as Taiwan has advanced medical care and surgical expertise.

The Make-A-Wish project was initiated by the Sovereign Order of Malta to the Republic of Serbia in 2015. It is aimed at helping children who reside in several Serbian municipalities that suffered from severe floods in 2014. The children "make a wish" consisting of their dream items, which are reviewed by a group of experts. Then the Sovereign Order of Malta, based on the final list, looks for sponsors to fulfill the children's wishes. The positive results encouraged the Embassy to carry on the project this year for physically and mentally challenged children and adults.

*Source and photo: Taipei Representative Office in Hungary*



Last year, the ROC (Taiwan) government responded to the call of the Sovereign Order of Malta to support this project and contributed by donating 65 mountain bikes, 2 wheelchairs and 300 chairs and desks for young Serbian students.



## Taiwan rises to 4th in PISA science rankings

Taiwan moved up nine places to rank fourth in the science category of the 2015 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) implemented by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), according to results released December 6.

With a score of 532, compared to the OECD average of 493, Taiwan trailed only Singapore, Japan and Estonia in that order and finished ahead of Hong Kong in ninth and South Korea, which placed 11th, in the triennial survey of 72 countries and economies.

In the mathematics portion of the assessment, Taiwan remained No. 4 with 542 points, well above the OECD average of 490. The survey also found nearly 30 percent of local participants to be top performers in at least one subject, the second highest percentage after Singapore. Male students generally outperformed their female counterparts in math and science, while female participants fared much better in reading, the results showed.

While the nation's mean score of 497 in read-

ing is higher than the OECD average of 493, it put the country at No. 23 on the global list, down 15 places from the previous survey and behind most major economies in Asia.

Launched by the Paris-based organization in 2000, PISA aims to appraise the efficiency, equity and quality of school systems worldwide by evaluating the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students. The assessment is widely regarded as an important indicator for education policymaking.

Roughly 540,000 students around the world took part in the latest tests, including 7,708 local youths from 214 junior and senior high schools as well as vocational schools and junior colleges. Taiwan students have participated in the tests since 2006.

Source: Taiwan Today

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## Museums of Living History

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*Taiwan Review*

*Photos: Chin Hung-hao*

**Institutions around the island showcase the history and cultures of Taiwan's indigenous peoples.**

Taiwan is home to a diverse mix of indigenous peoples. They have helped shape the nation's history and are an indispensable part of its pluralistic society. To honor Taiwan's aboriginal tribes and highlight their importance to local culture, museums and galleries have been established across the country, including the Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines, National Museum of Prehistory and

Ketagalan Culture Center. These facilities are committed to recording and displaying the history of Taiwan's indigenous peoples through a variety of lenses, from artistic traditions to social structures.

The Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines was founded in 1994 by Shung Ye Group Chairman Safe C.F. Lin. The facility is one of the few privately owned museums



in Taiwan dedicated to the exploration of indigenous cultures. The building is located in Taipei's Waishuangxi area just down the road from the National Palace Museum.

In the lobby, flanking the entrance to the museum proper, are a traditional Tao canoe and an engraved stone artwork. According to the museum's supervisor, Lin Wei-cheng, the canoe was given this prominent place to illustrate the diversity of the island's aboriginal peoples. He noted that only two of Taiwan's 16 officially recognized indigenous tribes, the Amis and the Tao, have traditionally depended heavily on the sea.

Standing on its end and reaching nearly to the ceiling, the stone artwork is engraved with images that showcase important aspects of Paiwan culture. Designed by Paiwan artist Sakuliu Pavavalung, "Divination Before a Hunting Adventure" depicts a pre-hunt fortune-telling ritual conducted by a shamaness. Two hunters are seated near the bottom of the tablet. Their small size in comparison with the shamaness illustrates the prominence of spiritual leaders in Paiwan society.

The Shung Ye Museum's permanent collection is housed on the first basement floor as well as the second and third floors. The basement exhibits are all grouped under the theme "The World of the Gods" and focus on aboriginal religious beliefs, customs and rituals. The second floor, themed "The World of Men," houses displays of pottery and traditional aboriginal tools, including hunting and farming implements. "The World of Women" on the third floor primarily showcases traditional weaving techniques and clothing. Part of what makes the Shung Ye Museum stand out among similar institutions is its insistence on allowing the subjects of its exhibits to tell their own stories. This commitment is demonstrated by the descriptions that accompany the items on display. Museum labels are typically drafted by academics and historians, but at the Shung Ye Museum, the majority were written by members of indigenous tribes.

On the second floor, a description written by Rukai elder Auvini Kadresengan accompanies a scale model of a traditional slate house.



Another exhibit, which was put together with assistance from National Taiwan Normal University professor and member of the Tsou tribe Wang Ming-huey, examines stereotypes surrounding indigenous cultures. “We want to present tribal cultures from the point of view of their members,” Lin said. “We want to hear from the aboriginal residents and elders themselves, people who live and breathe these unique cultures and are intimately familiar with their traditions.” The museum also holds a biennial event titled “Together with the Tribes” in which members of indigenous communities share their stories.

### Digging Up History

The decision to establish the National Museum of Prehistory (NMP) in southeastern Taiwan’s Taitung City was made out of necessity. In 1980, during the early stages of construction on the South Link Line’s Beinan Station, now Taitung Station, workers uncovered a large number of ancient artifacts. Anthropologists from National Taiwan University determined that the site contained the largest collection of preserved prehistoric relics in Taiwan. In 1990, the central government announced that the

NMP would be constructed near the site in order to preserve these fragile treasures. The museum was inaugurated in 2002 and focuses on the island’s prehistory, natural history and Austronesian cultures.

The section of the NMP titled “The Natural History of Taiwan” tells the story of Taiwan’s early history, from its geological



origins to the last Ice Age, which ended roughly 10,000 years ago. “The Indigenous Peoples of Taiwan,” meanwhile, explores the Austronesian peoples of the



world and the rites, social structures and tools of Taiwan's aboriginal tribes. This section examines these societies' pre-history through maritime and ceramic relics, as well as remnants of Taiwan's megalithic cultures, whose giant stone-works have been found in the foothills of eastern Taiwan.

Among the most noteworthy items in the NMP's collection is the "Zoo-anthropomorphic Jade Earring," which was designated a National Treasure under the Cultural Heritage Preservation Act. The earring is about the size of an adult's palm and is shaped like two people with an animal standing on their heads. While the motivation behind the earring's design cannot be known for certain, researchers have theorized that the artifact represents ancient peoples' belief in their ability to communicate with sacred animals. Other examples of prehistoric jewelry on display include the "Trumpet-shaped Nephrite Bracelet" and 1-centimeter-thick translucent jade tubes of varying lengths.

According to NMP Deputy Director Agilasay Pakawyan, the museum's collection of ancient aboriginal artifacts can help shed light on the cultural evolution of Taiwan's indigenous tribes and other Austronesian peoples. Currently, the prevailing theory is that Austronesians began migrating from continental Asia to Taiwan in the Neolithic era, and later spread to Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands, New Zealand and as far as west as Madagascar. Therefore, when scientists make a discovery about a single Austronesian culture, the knowledge they gain can be used to further their understanding of other societies.

### **Modern Indigenous Influences**

Not every exhibition on Taiwan's aboriginal peoples focuses on the distant

or even recent past. Some institutions, such as the Ketagalan Culture Center in Taipei, make a point of celebrating the beauty and rich diversity of indigenous cultures in the modern day.

The culture center, located near the Xinbeitou Metro Station, is operated by the Indigenous Peoples Commission under the Taipei City Government. In addition to boasting an impressive permanent collection, the venue hosts a variety of exhibitions and events, which routinely feature some of the most talented artists from Taiwan's indigenous communities.

One of the center's most recent displays, "Art Original Flow," was curated by Amaya Sayfik, a member of the Amis tribe. The event, which concluded last month, featured eight artists from the Puyuma, Amis and Rukai indigenous groups. Their creations, which ranged from installation art pieces to clothing and accessories, were modern interpretations of ancient tribal traditions.

The Taipei institution's permanent collection is divided into four categories, namely accessories, everyday objects and musical instruments, modern art, and ritual objects. Items on display include coconut drinking vessels from the Tao tribe, shoulder straps worn by the Paiwan to indicate social status, and a wide variety of traditional and modern clothing.

Taiwan's indigenous cultures are varied and colorful. To help ensure that these peoples are honored and their contributions to contemporary society understood by future generations, institutions dedicated to aboriginal cultures have been set up throughout the island. These facilities, however, are unlike most of the world's museums. Instead of mere repositories of history, they are treasure houses of living, breathing cultures that are actively shaping the modern social landscape of Taiwan.



## Local smart toll system expands reach to Balkans

Taiwan's Far Eastern Electronic Toll Collection Co. (FETC) and Republic of Srpska Motorways concluded a memorandum of understanding recently in Taipei, paving the way for the latter to introduce the FETC's smart toll system to Bosnia and Herzegovina.



The pact was signed November 30 by FETC President Chang Yung-chang and RSM General Manager Dusan Topic, who was visiting Taiwan as part of a delegation that also included business leaders and officials from Belarus and Kazakhstan.

This fact-finding trip was the second jointly arranged by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) since 2015 to promote smart city projects and foster partnerships between local firms and related businesses in EBRD recipient economies.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Chang expressed his company's eagerness to share its smart infrastructure solutions with interested nations. In response, Topic said he hopes to fast-track collaboration with FETC so that residents can enjoy the same advanced multilane free-flow tolling system as the people of Taiwan. The latest MOU follows two similar pacts that the Taipei-based company concluded with Belarus and Kazakhstan in December last

year. FETC also signed a consulting agreement with Vietnam in early 2015 to introduce an electronic toll collection system on 2,400 km of the Southeast Asian nation's freeways.

Launched in 2006 as an optional payment method using onboard infrared units, Taiwan's ETC system converted to e-Tags based on radio frequency identification, or RFID, technology in 2012. It boasts tolling accuracy and usage rates of 99.99 percent and 92.75 percent, respectively.

The system has garnered several global awards since its introduction, including the Traffic Management and Intelligent Transportation Systems prize at the International Road Federation-organized Global Road Achievement Awards in October this year. It also received the Customer Service and Marketing Outreach award from the International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association and the Industry Award from the Intelligent Transport Systems World Congress, both in 2015.



## Farm industry seeks to appeal to young generation

In a bid to rejuvenate the aging agricultural sector the government is planning to appeal to young people, Council of Agriculture (COA) Minister Tsao Chi-hung said December 8.



Over the next 10 years, Tsao said, Taiwan wants to encourage 30,000 young people to enter the sector. In 2017, the first year of the 10-year plan, the government wants 3,000 young people to become involved in agricultural businesses. In a report submitted to the Executive Yuan, the COA said the average age of workers in local agriculture is now 62, indicating that the sector is aging and needs to attract young blood to reverse the situation.

Tsao said that the move to encourage young people to take an interest in agriculture is expected to create more job opportunities and improve the local job market. Chen Chi-chung, Tsao's deputy, told a press conference that the government will ask the Land Bank of Taiwan, which specializes in providing credit to the real es-

tate and agricultural sectors, to help young farmers lease land to develop businesses.

Chen said that income would be a critical factor in attracting the young generation. To that end, he pointed out that "professional agricultural households" make an average of NT\$1.31 million (US\$41,194) per annum, higher than the average family income in Taiwan. According to the Directorate General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, average household income in Taiwan was NT\$1.17 million per annum in 2015.

The term "professional agricultural household" refers to families that make a living exclusively from agriculture and the number is currently 123,000, out of a total of 780,000 agricultural households nationwide, COA data showed.

Source: Focus Taiwan, Photo: Huang Chung-hsin