

# Taiwan

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## Taiwan

- *In the early 1960s, Taiwan entered a period of rapid economic growth and industrialization called the "Taiwan Miracle".*
- *Taiwan, officially the Republic of China (ROC), is a state in East Asia.*
- *The resumption of the Chinese Civil War led to the loss of the mainland to the Communist Party of China and the flight of the ROC government to Taiwan in 1949.*

Taiwan, officially the Republic of China (ROC), is a state in East Asia. Neighbouring states include the People's Republic of China (PRC) to the west, Japan to the northeast, and the Philippines to the south. The island of Taiwan has an area of 35,808 square kilometres (13,826 sq mi), with mountain ranges dominating the eastern two thirds and plains in the western third, where its highly urbanised population is concentrated. Taipei is the capital and largest metropolitan area. Other major cities include Kaohsiung, Taichung, Tainan and Taoyuan. With 23.5 million inhabitants, Taiwan is among the most densely populated states, and is the most populous state and largest economy that is not a member of the United Nations (UN).

Taiwanese indigenous peoples inhabited the island of Taiwan for thousands of years before the 17th century, when Dutch rule opened the island to mass Han immigration. After a brief rule by the Kingdom of Tungning, the island was annexed in 1683 by the Qing dynasty of China, and ceded to the Empire of Japan in 1895. Following the surrender of Japan in 1945, the Republic of China, which had overthrown and succeeded the Qing in 1911, took control of Taiwan on behalf of the World War II Allies. The resumption of the Chinese Civil War led to the loss of the mainland to the Communist Party of China and the flight of the ROC government to Taiwan in 1949. Although the ROC government continued to claim to be the legitimate representative of China, since 1950 its effective jurisdiction has been limited to Taiwan and several small islands. In the early 1960s, Taiwan entered a period of rapid economic growth and industrialization called the "Taiwan Miracle". In the 1980s and early

1990s, the ROC changed from a one-party military dictatorship to a multi-party democracy with a semi-presidential system.

As a founding member, the ROC represented China in the UN until the PRC replaced it in 1971. The PRC has consistently claimed sovereignty over Taiwan and refused diplomatic relations with any country that recognises the ROC. Taiwan maintains official ties with 16 out of 193 UN member states. Most international organisations in which the PRC participates either refuse to grant membership to Taiwan or allow it to participate only as a non-state actor; most major powers maintain unofficial ties with Taiwan through representative offices and institutions that function as de facto embassies and consulates. Domestically, the major political division is between parties favouring eventual Chinese unification and promoting a Chinese identity contrasted with those aspiring to independence and promoting Taiwanese identity, although both sides have moderated their positions to broaden their appeal.

Taiwan is a high-income country with a skilled and educated workforce. Its export-oriented industrial economy is the 21st-largest in the world, with sectors including steel, machinery, electronics and chemicals manufacturing. The state is ranked highly in terms of civil and political liberties, education, health care and human development.

## Etymology

- *During the 1950s and 1960s, after the government had withdrawn to Taiwan upon losing the Chinese Civil War, it was commonly referred to as "Nationalist China" (or "Free China") to differentiate it from "Communist China" (or "Red China").*
- *In some contexts, especially ROC government publications, the name is written as "Republic of China (Taiwan)", "Republic of China/Taiwan", or sometimes "Taiwan (ROC)."*

Various names for the island of Taiwan remain in use today, each derived from explorers or rulers during a particular historical period. The name Formosa (福摩沙) dates from 1542, [verification needed] when Portuguese sailors sighted an uncharted island and noted it on their maps as Ilha Formosa ("beautiful island"). The name Formosa eventually "replaced all others in European literature"[attribution needed] and remained in common use among English speakers into the 20th century.

In the early 17th century, the Dutch East India Company established a commercial post at Fort Zeelandia (modern-day Anping, Tainan) on a coastal sandbar called "Tayouan", after their ethnonym for a nearby Taiwanese aboriginal tribe, possibly Taivoan people, written by the Dutch and Portuguese variously as Taïouwang, Tayowan, Teijoan, etc. This name was also adopted into the Chinese vernacular (in particular, Hokkien, as Pêh-ōe-jī: Tâi-oân/Tâi-oân) as the name of the sandbar and nearby area (Tainan). The modern word "Taiwan" is derived from this usage, which is seen in various forms (台, 臺, 台, 臺, 台 and 臺) in Chinese historical records. The area occupied by modern-day Tainan represented the first permanent settlement by both European colonists and Chinese immigrants. The settlement grew to be the island's most important trading hub and served as its capital until 1887.

Use of the current Chinese name (台灣) became official as early as 1684 with the establishment of Taiwan Prefecture. Through its rapid development the entire Formosan mainland eventually became known as "Taiwan".

In his Daoyi Zhilüe (1349), Wang Dayuan used "Liuqiu" as a name for the island of Taiwan, or the part of it closest to Penghu.

Elsewhere, the name was used for the Ryukyu Islands in general or Okinawa, the largest of them; indeed the name Ryūkyū is the Japanese form of Liúqiú.

The name also appears in the Book of Sui (636) and other early works, but scholars cannot agree on whether these references are to the Ryukyus, Taiwan or even Luzon.

The official name of the state is the "Republic of China"; it has also been known under various names throughout its existence. Shortly after the ROC's establishment in 1912, while it was still located on the Chinese mainland, the government used the short form "China" (Zhōngguó (中國)) to refer to itself, which derives from zhōng ("central" or "middle") and guó ("state, nation-state"), a term which also developed under the Zhou dynasty in reference to its royal demesne, and the name was then applied to the area around Luoyi (present-day Luoyang) during the Eastern Zhou and then to China's Central Plain before being used as an occasional synonym for the state during the Qing era.

During the 1950s and 1960s, after the government had withdrawn to Taiwan upon losing the Chinese Civil War, it was commonly referred to as "Nationalist China" (or "Free China") to differentiate it from "Communist China" (or "Red China").

It was a member of the United Nations representing "China" until 1971, when it lost its seat to the People's Republic of China. Over subsequent decades, the Republic of China has become commonly known as "Taiwan", after the island that comprises 99% of the territory under its control. In some contexts, especially ROC government publications, the name is written as "Republic of China (Taiwan)", "Republic of China/Taiwan", or sometimes "Taiwan (ROC)."

The Republic of China participates in most international forums and organizations under the name "Chinese Taipei" due to diplomatic pressure from the People's Republic of China. For instance, it is the name under which it has competed at the Olympic Games since 1984, and its name as an observer at the World Health Organization.

## History



*A young Tsou man*

### From prehistory until the 16th century

- *Around 6,000 years ago, Taiwan was settled by farmers, most likely from mainland China.*
- *This has led linguists to propose Taiwan as the urheimat of the family, from which seafaring peoples dispersed across Southeast Asia and the Pacific and Indian Oceans.*
- *Taiwan was joined to the mainland in the Late Pleistocene, until sea levels rose about 10,000 years ago.*

Taiwan was joined to the mainland in the Late Pleistocene, until sea levels rose about 10,000 years ago. Fragmentary human remains dated 20,000 to 30,000 years ago have been found on the island, as well as later artifacts of a paleolithic culture.

Around 6,000 years ago, Taiwan was settled by farmers, most likely from mainland China. They are believed to be the ancestors of today's Taiwanese aborigines, whose languages

belong to the Austronesian language family, but show much greater diversity than the rest of the family, which spans a huge area from Maritime Southeast Asia west to Madagascar and east as far as New Zealand, Hawaii and Easter Island. This has led linguists to propose Taiwan as the urheimat of the family, from which seafaring peoples dispersed across Southeast Asia and the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

Han Chinese fishermen began settling in the Penghu islands in the 13th century. Hostile tribes, and a lack of valuable trade products, meant that few outsiders visited the main island until the 16th century. During the 16th century, visits to the coast by fishermen from Fujian, as well as Chinese and Japanese pirates, became more frequent.



*Fort Zeelandia, the Governor's residence in Dutch Formosa*

### Opening in the 17th century

- *When the Dutch arrived, they found southwestern Taiwan already frequented by a transient Chinese population numbering close to 1,500.*
- *In 1626, the Spanish Empire landed on and occupied northern Taiwan, at the ports of Keelung and Tamsui, as a base to extend their trading.*

The Dutch East India Company attempted to establish a trading outpost on the Penghu Islands (Pescadores) in 1622, but were driven off by Ming forces.

In 1624, the company established a stronghold called Fort Zeelandia on the coastal islet of Tayouan, which is now part of the main island at Anping, Tainan.

When the Dutch arrived, they found southwestern Taiwan already frequented by a transient Chinese population numbering close to 1,500.

David Wright, a Scottish agent of the company who lived on the island in the 1650s,



In 1626, the Spanish Empire landed on and occupied northern Taiwan, at the ports of Keelung and Tamsui, as a base to extend their trading. This colonial period lasted 16 years until 1642, when the last Spanish fortress fell to Dutch forces.

捕鹿

溪谷巖中復巖中  
 蒼苔翠石草生紅  
 蒼苔翠石草生紅  
 巖谷巖石生紅草

*Hunting deer, painted in 1746*

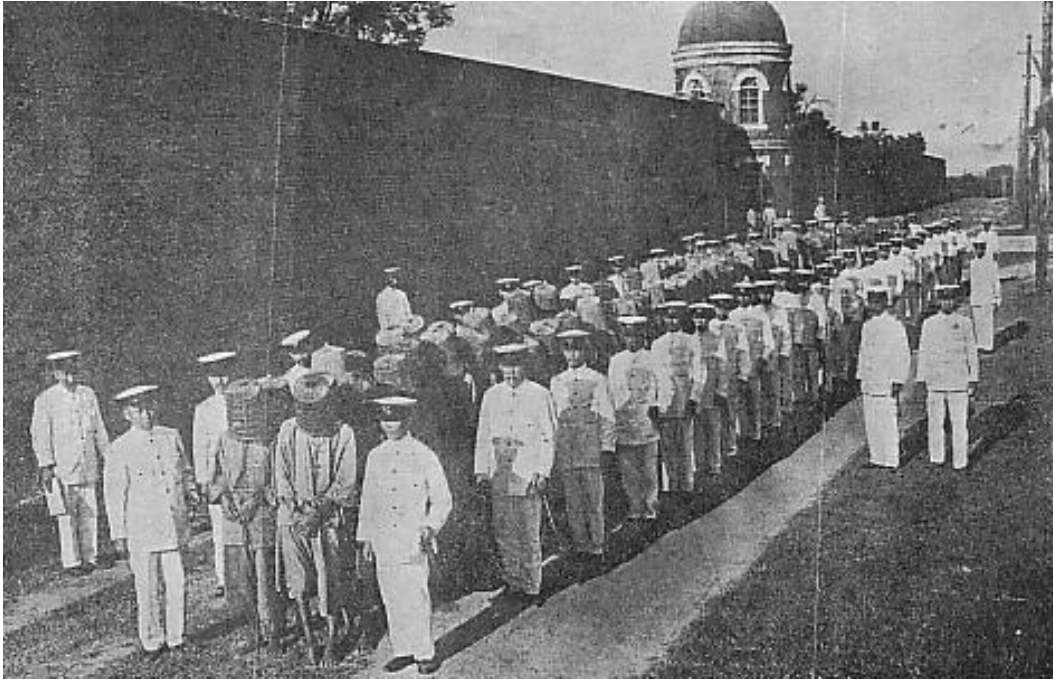
## **Qing rule**

- *Northern Taiwan and the Penghu Islands were the scene of subsidiary campaigns in the Sino-French War (August 1884 to April 1885).*
- *Immigrants mostly from southern Fujian continued to enter Taiwan.*
- *In 1887, the Qing upgraded the island's administration from being the Taiwan Prefecture of Fujian Province to Fujian-Taiwan-Province, the twentieth in the empire, with its capital at Taipei.*

In 1683, following the defeat of Koxinga's grandson by an armada led by Admiral Shi Lang of southern Fujian, the Qing dynasty formally annexed Taiwan, placing it under the jurisdiction of Fujian province. The Qing imperial government tried to reduce piracy and vagrancy in the area, issuing a series of edicts to manage immigration and respect aboriginal land rights. Immigrants mostly from southern Fujian continued to enter Taiwan. The border between taxpaying lands and what was considered "savage" lands shifted eastward, with some aborigines becoming sinicized while others retreated into the mountains. During this time, there were a number of conflicts between different ethnic groups of Han Chinese, Quanzhou Minnanese feuding with Zhangzhou and Hakkas peasants, and major clan fights between Minnans (Hoklos), Hakkas and aborigines too.

Northern Taiwan and the Penghu Islands were the scene of subsidiary campaigns in the Sino-French War (August 1884 to April 1885). The French occupied Keelung on 1 October 1884, but were repulsed from Tamsui a few days later. The French won some tactical victories but were unable to exploit them, and the Keelung Campaign ended in stalemate. The Pescadores Campaign, beginning on 31 March 1885, was a French victory, but had no long-term consequences. The French evacuated both Keelung and the Penghu archipelago after the end of the war.

In 1887, the Qing upgraded the island's administration from being the Taiwan Prefecture of Fujian Province to Fujian-Taiwan-Province, the twentieth in the empire, with its capital at Taipei. This was accompanied by a modernization drive that included building China's first railway.



*Japanese colonial soldiers march Taiwanese captured after the Tapani Incident from the Tainan jail to court, 1915.*

## Japanese rule

- *By 1939, Taiwan was the seventh greatest sugar producer in the world.*
- *Intellectuals and workers who participated in left-wing movements within Taiwan were also arrested and massacred (e.g.*
- *By 1938, 309,000 Japanese settlers resided in Taiwan.*
- *Inhabitants on Taiwan and Penghu wishing to remain Qing subjects were given a two-year grace period to sell their property and move to mainland China.*

As the Qing dynasty was defeated in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), Taiwan, along with Penghu and Liaodong Peninsula, were ceded in full sovereignty to the Empire of Japan by the Treaty of Shimonoseki. Inhabitants on Taiwan and Penghu wishing to remain Qing subjects were given a two-year grace period to sell their property and move to mainland China. Very few Taiwanese saw this as feasible. On 25 May 1895, a group of pro-Qing high officials proclaimed the Republic of Formosa to resist impending Japanese rule. Japanese forces entered the capital at Tainan and quelled this resistance on 21 October 1895. Guerrilla fighting continued periodically until about 1902 and ultimately took the lives of 14,000 Taiwanese, or 0.5% of the population. Several subsequent rebellions against the Japanese (the Beipu uprising of 1907, the Tapani incident of 1915, and the Musha incident of 1930) were all unsuccessful but demonstrated opposition to Japanese colonial rule.

Japanese colonial rule was instrumental in the industrialization of the island, extending the railways and other transport networks, building an extensive sanitation system, and



establishing a formal education system in Taiwan. Japanese rule ended the practice of headhunting. During this period the human and natural resources of Taiwan were used to aid the development of Japan and the production of cash crops such as rice and sugar greatly increased. By 1939, Taiwan was the seventh greatest sugar producer in the world. Still, the Taiwanese and aborigines were classified as second- and third-class citizens. After suppressing Chinese guerrillas in the first decade of their rule, Japanese authorities engaged in a series of bloody campaigns against the mountain aboriginals, culminating in the Musha Incident of 1930. Intellectuals and workers who participated in left-wing movements within Taiwan were also arrested and massacred (e.g. Chiang Wei-shui (蔣渭水) and Masanosuke Watanabe (渡辺武人)).

Around 1935, the Japanese began an island-wide assimilation project to bind the island more firmly to the Japanese Empire and people were taught to see themselves as Japanese under the Kominka Movement, during which time Taiwanese culture and religion were outlawed and the citizens were encouraged to adopt Japanese surnames. By 1938, 309,000 Japanese settlers resided in Taiwan.

Taiwan held strategic wartime importance as Imperial Japanese military campaigns first expanded and then contracted over the course of World War II. The "South Strike Group" was based at the Taihoku Imperial University in Taipei. During World War II, tens of thousands of Taiwanese served in the Japanese military. Over 2,000 women, euphemistically called "comfort women", were forced into sexual slavery for Imperial Japanese troops.

The Imperial Japanese Navy operated heavily out of Taiwanese ports. In October 1944 the Formosa Air Battle was fought between American carriers and Japanese forces based in Taiwan. Important Japanese military bases and industrial complexes throughout Taiwan, such as Kaohsiung and Keelung, were targets of heavy raids by American bombers.

After Japan's surrender ended World War II, most of Taiwan's approximately 300,000 Japanese residents were expelled and sent to Japan.



*General Chen Yi (right) accepting the receipt of General Order No. 1 from Rikichi Andō (left), the last Japanese Governor-General of Taiwan, in Taipei City Hall*

### Republic of China rule

- *On mainland China, the victorious Communists claimed they ruled the sole and only China (which they claimed included Taiwan) and that the Republic of China no longer existed.*
- *This introduced the disputed sovereignty status of Taiwan and whether the ROC has sovereignty over Taiwan or only remaining over Kinmen and Matsu Islands.*

While Taiwan was still under Japanese rule, the Republic of China was founded on the mainland on 1 January 1912, following the Xinhai Revolution, which began with the Wuchang Uprising on 10 October 1911, replacing the Qing Dynasty and ending over two thousand years of imperial rule in China. From its founding until 1949 it was based in mainland China. Central authority waxed and waned in response to warlordism (1915–28), Japanese invasion (1937–45), and the Chinese Civil War (1927–50), with central authority strongest during the Nanjing decade (1927–37), when most of China came under the control of the Kuomintang (KMT) under an authoritarian one-party state.

After the Surrender of Japan on 25 October 1945, the US Navy ferried ROC troops to Taiwan in order to accept the formal surrender of Japanese military forces in Taipei on behalf of the Allied Powers, as part of General Order No. 1 for temporary military occupation. General Rikichi Andō, governor-general of Taiwan and commander-in-chief of all Japanese forces on

the island, signed the receipt and handed it over to General Chen Yi of the ROC military to complete the official turnover. Chen Yi proclaimed that day to be "Taiwan Retrocession Day", but the Allies considered Taiwan and the Penghu Islands to be under military occupation and still under Japanese sovereignty until 1952, when the Treaty of San Francisco took effect.

Although the 1943 Cairo Declaration had envisaged returning these territories to China, it had no legal status as treaty, and also in the Treaty of San Francisco and Treaty of Taipei Japan renounced all claim to them without specifying to what country they were to be surrendered. This introduced the disputed sovereignty status of Taiwan and whether the ROC has sovereignty over Taiwan or only remaining over Kinmen and Matsu Islands.

The ROC administration of Taiwan under Chen Yi was strained by increasing tensions between Taiwanese-born people and newly arrived mainlanders, which were compounded by economic woes, such as hyperinflation. Furthermore, cultural and linguistic conflicts between the two groups quickly led to the loss of popular support for the new government, while the mass movement led by the working committee of the Communist Party also aimed to bring down the Kuomintang government. The shooting of a civilian on 28 February 1947 triggered island-wide unrest, which was suppressed with military force in what is now called the February 28 Incident. Mainstream estimates of the number killed range from 18,000 to 30,000. Those killed were mainly members of the Taiwanese elite.

After the end of World War II, the Chinese Civil War resumed between the Chinese Nationalists (Kuomintang), led by Chiang Kai-shek, and the Communist Party of China, led by Mao Zedong. Throughout the months of 1949, a series of Chinese Communist offensives led to the capture of its capital Nanjing on 23 April and the subsequent defeat of the Nationalist army on the mainland, and the Communists founded the People's Republic of China on 1 October.

On 7 December 1949, after the loss of four capitals, Chiang evacuated his Nationalist government to Taiwan and made Taipei the temporary capital of the ROC (also called the "wartime capital" by Chiang Kai-shek). Some 2 million people, consisting mainly of soldiers, members of the ruling Kuomintang and intellectual and business elites, were evacuated from mainland China to Taiwan at that time, adding to the earlier population of approximately six million. In addition, the ROC government took to Taipei many national treasures and much of China's gold reserves and foreign currency reserves.

After losing most of the mainland, the Kuomintang remained in control of Tibet, portions of Qinghai, Xinjiang, and Yunnan provinces along with Hainan Island until 1951 when the Communists subsequently captured these territories too. From this point onwards, the Kuomintang's territory was reduced to the island of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu Islands (Fujian Province), and two major islands of the Dongsha and Nansha island groups. The Kuomintang continued to claim sovereignty over all of "China", which it defined to include mainland China, Taiwan, Outer Mongolia and other areas. On mainland China, the victorious Communists claimed they ruled the sole and only China (which they claimed included Taiwan) and that the Republic of China no longer existed.



*Chiang Kai-shek, leader of the Kuomintang from 1925 until his death in 1975*

### **Chinese Nationalist one-party rule**

- *Martial law, declared on Taiwan in May 1949, continued to be in effect after the central government relocated to Taiwan.*
- *During the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis in September 1958, Taiwan's landscape saw Nike-Hercules missile batteries added, with the formation of the 1st Missile Battalion Chinese Army that would not be deactivated until 1997.*
- *As the Chinese Civil War continued without truce, the government built up military fortifications throughout Taiwan.*

Martial law, declared on Taiwan in May 1949, continued to be in effect after the central government relocated to Taiwan. It was not repealed until 1987, and was used as a way to suppress the political opposition in the intervening years. During the White Terror, as the period is known, 140,000 people were imprisoned or executed for being perceived as anti-KMT or pro-Communist. Many citizens were arrested, tortured, imprisoned and executed



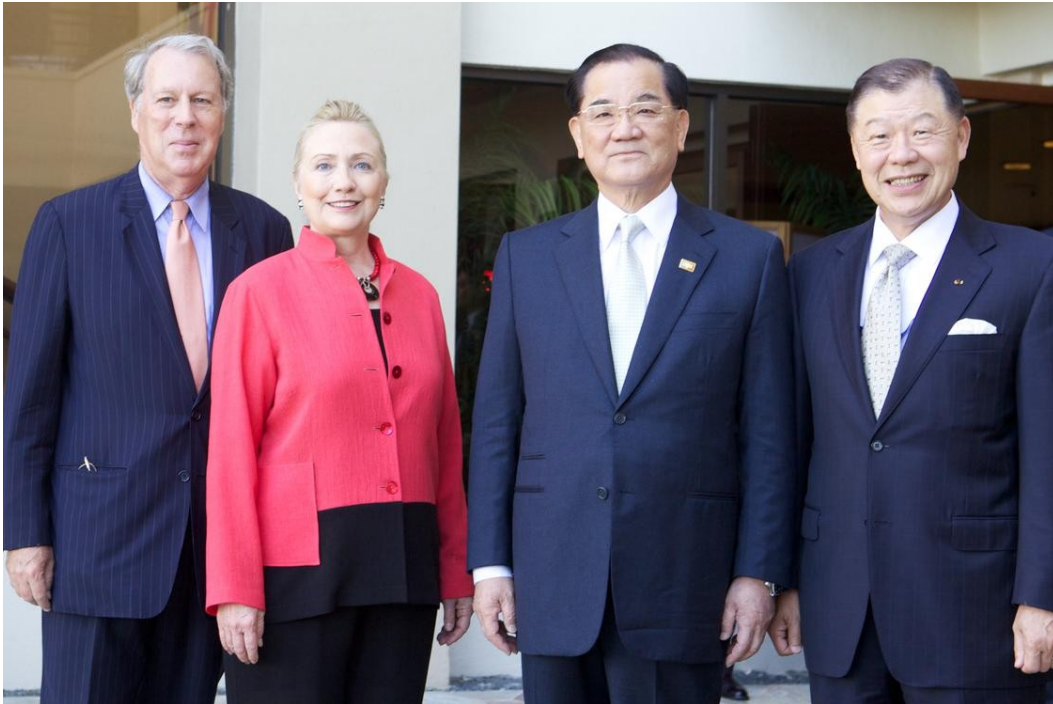
for their real or perceived link to the Communists. Since these people were mainly from the intellectual and social elite, an entire generation of political and social leaders was decimated. In 1998, a law was passed to create the "Compensation Foundation for Improper Verdicts" which oversaw compensation to White Terror victims and families. President Ma Ying-jeou made an official apology in 2008, expressing hope that there would never be a tragedy similar to White Terror.

Initially, the United States abandoned the KMT and expected that Taiwan would fall to the Communists. However, in 1950 the conflict between North Korea and South Korea, which had been ongoing since the Japanese withdrawal in 1945, escalated into full-blown war, and in the context of the Cold War, US President Harry S. Truman intervened again and dispatched the US Navy's 7th Fleet into the Taiwan Strait to prevent hostilities between Taiwan and mainland China. In the Treaty of San Francisco and the Treaty of Taipei, which came into force respectively on 28 April 1952 and 5 August 1952, Japan formally renounced all right, claim and title to Taiwan and Penghu, and renounced all treaties signed with China before 1942. Neither treaty specified to whom sovereignty over the islands should be transferred, because the United States and the United Kingdom disagreed on whether the ROC or the PRC was the legitimate government of China. Continuing conflict of the Chinese Civil War through the 1950s, and intervention by the United States notably resulted in legislation such as the Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty and the Formosa Resolution of 1955.

As the Chinese Civil War continued without truce, the government built up military fortifications throughout Taiwan. Within this effort, KMT veterans built the now famous Central Cross-Island Highway through the Taroko Gorge in the 1950s. The two sides would continue to engage in sporadic military clashes with seldom publicized details well into the 1960s on the China coastal islands with an unknown number of night raids. During the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis in September 1958, Taiwan's landscape saw Nike-Hercules missile batteries added, with the formation of the 1st Missile Battalion Chinese Army that would not be deactivated until 1997. Newer generations of missile batteries have since replaced the Nike Hercules systems throughout the island.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the ROC maintained an authoritarian, single-party government while its economy became industrialized and technology-oriented. This rapid economic growth, known as the Taiwan Miracle, was the result of a fiscal regime independent from mainland China and backed up, among others, by the support of US funds and demand for Taiwanese products. In the 1970s, Taiwan was economically the second fastest growing state in Asia after Japan. Taiwan, along with Hong Kong, South Korea and Singapore, became known as one of the Four Asian Tigers. Because of the Cold War, most Western nations and the United Nations regarded the ROC as the sole legitimate government of China until the 1970s. Later, especially after the termination of the Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty, most nations switched diplomatic recognition to the PRC (see United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2758).

Until the 1970s the government was regarded by Western critics as undemocratic for upholding martial law, for severely repressing any political opposition, and for controlling media. The KMT did not allow the creation of new parties and those that existed did not seriously compete with the KMT. Thus, competitive democratic elections did not exist. From the late 1970s to the 1990s, however, Taiwan went through reforms and social changes that transformed it from an authoritarian state to a democracy. In 1979, a pro-democracy protest known as the Kaohsiung Incident took place in Kaohsiung to celebrate Human Rights Day. Although the protest was rapidly crushed by the authorities, it is today considered as the main event that united Taiwan's opposition.



*US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Taiwan's special envoy to the APEC summit, Lien Chan, November 2011*

## **Democratic reforms**

- *It also called for general use of "Taiwan" as the country's name, without abolishing its formal name, the Republic of China.*
- *Lee's reforms included printing banknotes from the Central Bank rather than the Provincial Bank of Taiwan, and streamlining the Taiwan Provincial Government with most of its functions transferred to the Executive Yuan.*

Chiang Ching-kuo, Chiang Kai-shek's son and successor as the president, began reforms to the political system in the mid-1980s. In 1984, the younger Chiang selected Lee Teng-hui, a Taiwanese-born, US-educated technocrat, to be his vice-president. In 1986, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was formed and inaugurated as the first opposition party in the ROC to counter the KMT. A year later, Chiang Ching-kuo lifted martial law on the main

island of Taiwan (martial law was lifted on Penghu in 1979, Matsu island in 1992 and Kinmen island in 1993). With the advent of democratization, the issue of the political status of Taiwan gradually resurfaced as a controversial issue where, previously, the discussion of anything other than unification under the ROC was taboo.

After the death of Chiang Ching-kuo in January 1988, Lee Teng-hui succeeded him and became the first Taiwan-born president. Lee continued the democratic reforms to the government and decrease the concentration of government authority in the hands of mainland Chinese. Under Lee, Taiwan underwent a process of localization in which Taiwanese culture and history were promoted over a pan-China viewpoint in contrast to earlier KMT policies which had promoted a Chinese identity. Lee's reforms included printing banknotes from the Central Bank rather than the Provincial Bank of Taiwan, and streamlining the Taiwan Provincial Government with most of its functions transferred to the Executive Yuan. Under Lee, the original members of the Legislative Yuan and National Assembly (a former supreme legislative body defunct in 2005), elected in 1947 to represent mainland Chinese constituencies and having held the seats without re-election for more than four decades, were forced to resign in 1991. The previously nominal representation in the Legislative Yuan was brought to an end, reflecting the reality that the ROC had no jurisdiction over mainland China, and vice versa. Restrictions on the use of Taiwanese Hokkien in the broadcast media and in schools were also lifted.

Democratic reforms continued in the 1990s, with Lee Teng-hui re-elected in 1996, in the first direct presidential election in the history of the ROC. During the later years of Lee's administration, he was involved in corruption controversies relating to government release of land and weapons purchase, although no legal proceedings commenced. In 1997, "To meet the requisites of the nation prior to national unification", the Additional Articles of the Constitution of the Republic of China was passed and then the former "constitution of five powers" turns to be more tripartite. In 2000, Chen Shui-bian of the Democratic Progressive Party was elected as the first non-Kuomintang (KMT) President and was re-elected to serve his second and last term since 2004. Polarized politics has emerged in Taiwan with the formation of the Pan-Blue Coalition of parties led by the KMT, favouring eventual Chinese reunification, and the Pan-Green Coalition of parties led by the DPP, favouring an eventual and official declaration of Taiwanese independence.[clarification needed] In early 2006, President Chen Shui-bian remarked:

"The National Unification Council will cease to function. No budget will be ear-marked for it and its personnel must return to their original posts...The National Unification Guidelines will cease to apply."

On 30 September 2007, the ruling DPP approved a resolution asserting a separate identity from China and called for the enactment of a new constitution for a "normal country". It also called for general use of "Taiwan" as the country's name, without abolishing its formal name, the Republic of China. The Chen administration also pushed for referendums on cross-strait relations in 2004 and UN entry in 2008, both of which held on the same day as the presidential election. They both failed due to voter turnout below the required legal

threshold of 50% of all registered voters. The Chen administration was dogged by public concerns over reduced economic growth, legislative gridlock due to a pan-blue, opposition-controlled Legislative Yuan and corruption involving the First Family as well as government officials.

The KMT increased its majority in the Legislative Yuan in the January 2008 legislative elections, while its nominee Ma Ying-jeou went on to win the presidency in March of the same year, campaigning on a platform of increased economic growth and better ties with the PRC under a policy of "mutual nondenial". Ma took office on 20 May 2008, the same day that President Chen Shui-bian stepped down and was notified by prosecutors of possible corruption charges. Part of the rationale for campaigning for closer economic ties with the PRC stems from the strong economic growth China attained since joining the World Trade Organization. However, some analysts said that despite the election of Ma Ying-jeou, the diplomatic and military tensions with the PRC had not been reduced.

In 2016, Tsai Ing-wen of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) became President of Taiwan. President Tsai called upon the international community to help Taiwan to preserve its democracy despite the threatening language used against Taiwan by Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China (PRC paramount leader). President Tsai called upon the PRC to democratize, respect human rights, and renounce the use of military force against Taiwan.

On 24 May 2017, the Constitutional Court ruled that then-current marriage laws had been violating the Constitution by denying Taiwanese same-sex couples the right to marry. The Court ruled that if the Legislative Yuan did not pass adequate amendments to Taiwanese marriage laws within two years, same-sex marriages would automatically become lawful in Taiwan. On 17 May 2019, Taiwan's parliament approved a bill legalizing same-sex marriage, making it the first in Asia to do so.





*Taiwan is mostly mountainous in the east, with gently sloping plains in the west. The Penghu Islands are west of the main island.*

## Geography

- *Taiwan's highest point is Yu Shan (Jade Mountain) at 3,952 metres (12,966 ft), making Taiwan the world's fourth-highest island.*
- *The island of Taiwan has an area of 35,808 km<sup>2</sup> (13,826 sq mi), and lies some 180 kilometres (110 mi) from the southeastern coast of mainland China across the Taiwan Strait.*
- *The East China Sea lies to the north, the Philippine Sea to the east, the Bashi Channel of the Luzon Strait directly to the south, and the South China Sea to the southwest.*

The total area of the "Free area of the Republic of China" is 35,980 km<sup>2</sup> (13,892 sq mi), making it the world's 139th-largest country or dependency: smaller than Switzerland and larger than Belgium.

The island of Taiwan has an area of 35,808 km<sup>2</sup> (13,826 sq mi), and lies some 180 kilometres (110 mi) from the southeastern coast of mainland China across the Taiwan Strait. The East China Sea lies to the north, the Philippine Sea to the east, the Bashi Channel of the Luzon Strait directly to the south, and the South China Sea to the southwest.

There is a contrast between the eastern two-thirds of the island, consisting mostly of rugged mountains running in five ranges from the northern to the southern tip of the island, and the flat to gently rolling Chiayi–Tainan Plains in the west that are also home to most of Taiwan's population. Taiwan's highest point is Yu Shan (Jade Mountain) at 3,952 metres (12,966 ft), making Taiwan the world's fourth-highest island.

The Penghu Islands, 50 km (31.1 mi) west of the main island, have an area of 126.9 km<sup>2</sup> (49.0 sq mi). More distant islands of the Republic of China are the Kinmen, Wuchiu and Matsu Islands off the coast of Fujian, with a total area of 180.5 km<sup>2</sup> (69.7 sq mi), and the Pratas Islands and Taiping Island in the South China Sea, with a total area of 2.9 km<sup>2</sup> (1.1 sq mi) and no permanent inhabitants.

The ROC government also claims the Senkaku Islands to the northeast, which are controlled by Japan.

## Climate

- *Taiwan lies on the Tropic of Cancer, and its general climate is marine tropical.*

Taiwan lies on the Tropic of Cancer, and its general climate is marine tropical. The northern and central regions are subtropical, whereas the south is tropical and the mountainous regions are temperate. The average rainfall is 2,600 millimetres (100 inches) per year for the island proper; the rainy season is concurrent with the onset of the summer East Asian Monsoon in May and June. The entire island experiences hot, humid weather from June through September. Typhoons are most common in July, August and September. During the winter (November to March), the northeast experiences steady rain, while the central and southern parts of the island are mostly sunny.

## Geology

- *The major seismic faults in Taiwan correspond to the various suture zones between the various terranes.*
- *The seismic hazard map for Taiwan by the USGS shows 9/10 of the island as the highest rating (most hazardous).*
- *The east and south of Taiwan are a complex system of belts formed by, and part of the zone of, active collision between the North Luzon Trough portion of the Luzon Volcanic Arc and South China, where accreted portions of the Luzon Arc and Luzon forearc form the eastern Coastal Range and parallel inland Longitudinal Valley of Taiwan respectively.*

The island of Taiwan lies in a complex tectonic area between the Yangtze Plate to the west and north, the Okinawa Plate on the north-east, and the Philippine Mobile Belt on the east

and south. The upper part of the crust on the island is primarily made up of a series of terranes, mostly old island arcs which have been forced together by the collision of the forerunners of the Eurasian Plate and the Philippine Sea Plate. These have been further uplifted as a result of the detachment of a portion of the Eurasian Plate as it was subducted beneath remnants of the Philippine Sea Plate, a process which left the crust under Taiwan more buoyant.

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The major seismic faults in Taiwan correspond to the various suture zones between the various terranes. These have produced major quakes throughout the history of the island. On 21 September 1999, a 7.3 quake known as the "921 earthquake" killed more than 2,400 people. The seismic hazard map for Taiwan by the USGS shows 9/10 of the island as the highest rating (most hazardous).

## Political and legal status

- *The political and legal statuses of Taiwan are contentious issues.*
- *The People's Republic of China (PRC) claims that the Republic of China government is illegitimate, referring to it as the "Taiwan Authority".*

The political and legal statuses of Taiwan are contentious issues. The People's Republic of China (PRC) claims that the Republic of China government is illegitimate, referring to it as the "Taiwan Authority". The ROC has its own constitution, independently elected president and armed forces. It has not formally renounced its claim to the mainland, but ROC government publications have increasingly downplayed it.

Internationally, there is controversy on whether the ROC still exists as a state or a defunct state per international law due to the lack of wide diplomatic recognition. In a poll of Taiwanese aged 20 and older taken by TVBS in March 2009, a majority of 64% opted for the "status quo", while 19% favoured "independence" and 5% favoured "unification".

## Relations with the PRC

- *[citation needed] In response to US support for Taiwan, the Chinese defence ministry declared in 2019 that "If anyone dares to split Taiwan from China, the Chinese military has no choice but to fight at all costs".*
- *The PRC supports a version of the One-China policy, which states that Taiwan and mainland China are both part of China, and that the PRC is the only legitimate government of China.*

The political environment is complicated by the potential for military conflict should Taiwan declare de jure independence. It is the official PRC policy to force unification if peaceful unification is no longer possible, as stated in its anti-secession law, and for this reason there is a substantial military presence on the Fujian coast.

On 29 April 2005, Kuomintang Chairman Lien Chan travelled to Beijing and met with Communist Party of China (CPC) General Secretary Hu Jintao, the first meeting between the leaders of the two parties since the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949. On 11 February 2014, Mainland Affairs Council head Wang Yu-chi travelled to Nanjing and met with Taiwan Affairs Office head Zhang Zhijun, the first meeting between high-ranking officials from either side. Zhang paid a reciprocal visit to Taiwan and met Wang on 25 June 2014, making Zhang the first minister-level PRC official to ever visit Taiwan. On 7 November 2015, Ma Ying-jeou (in his capacity as Leader of Taiwan) and Xi Jinping (in his capacity as paramount leader of the PRC) travelled to Singapore and met up, marking the highest-level exchange between the two sides since 1949.[citation needed] In response to US support for Taiwan, the Chinese defence ministry declared in 2019 that "If anyone dares to split Taiwan from China, the Chinese military has no choice but to fight at all costs".

The PRC supports a version of the One-China policy, which states that Taiwan and mainland China are both part of China, and that the PRC is the only legitimate government of China. It uses this policy to prevent the international recognition of the ROC as an independent sovereign state, meaning that Taiwan participates in international forums under the name "Chinese Taipei". With the emergence of the Taiwanese independence movement, the name "Taiwan" has been used increasingly often on the island.

## Foreign relations

- *After the KMT's retreat to Taiwan, most countries, notably the countries in the Western Bloc, continued to maintain relations with the ROC.*
- *The United States remains one of the main allies of Taiwan and, through the Taiwan Relations Act passed in 1979, has continued selling arms and providing military training to the Armed Forces.*

Before 1928, the foreign policy of Republican China was complicated by a lack of internal unity—competing areas of power all claimed legitimacy. This situation changed after the defeat of the Peiyang Government by the Kuomintang, which led to widespread diplomatic recognition of the Republic of China.

After the KMT's retreat to Taiwan, most countries, notably the countries in the Western Bloc, continued to maintain relations with the ROC. Due to diplomatic pressure, recognition gradually eroded and many countries switched recognition to the PRC in the 1970s. UN Resolution 2758 (25 October 1971) recognized the People's Republic of China as China's sole representative in the United Nations.



The PRC refuses to have diplomatic relations with any nation that have diplomatic relations the ROC, and requires all nations with which it has diplomatic relations to make a statement recognizing its claims to Taiwan. As a result, only 16 UN member states and the Holy See maintain official diplomatic relations with the Republic of China. The ROC maintains unofficial relations with most countries via de facto embassies and consulates called Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Offices (TECRO), with branch offices called "Taipei Economic and Cultural Offices" (TECO). Both TECRO and TECO are "unofficial commercial entities" of the ROC in charge of maintaining diplomatic relations, providing consular services (i.e. visa applications), and serving the national interests of the ROC in other countries.

The United States remains one of the main allies of Taiwan and, through the Taiwan Relations Act passed in 1979, has continued selling arms and providing military training to the Armed Forces. This situation continues to be an issue for the People's Republic of China which considers US involvement disruptive to the stability of the region. In January 2010, the Obama administration announced its intention to sell \$6.4 billion worth of military hardware to Taiwan. As a consequence, the PRC threatened the US with economic sanctions and warned that their co-operation on international and regional issues could suffer.

The official position of the United States is that the PRC is expected to "use no force or threat[en] to use force against Taiwan" and the ROC is to "exercise prudence in managing all aspects of Cross-Strait relations." Both are to refrain from performing actions or espousing statements "that would unilaterally alter Taiwan's status."

On 16 December 2015, the Obama administration announced a deal to sell \$1.83 billion worth of arms to the armed forces of the ROC. China's foreign ministry had expressed its disapproval for the sales and issued the US a "stern warning", saying it would hurt China-US relations.

## Participation in international events and organizations

- *Due to its limited international recognition, the Republic of China has been a member of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) since the foundation of the organization in 1991, represented by a government-funded organization, the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy (TFD), under the name "Taiwan".*

The ROC was a founding member of the United Nations, and held the seat of China on the Security Council and other UN bodies until 1971, when it was expelled by Resolution 2758 and replaced in all UN organs with the PRC. Each year since 1992, the ROC has petitioned the UN for entry, but its applications have not made it past committee stage.

Due to its limited international recognition, the Republic of China has been a member of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) since the foundation of the organization in 1991, represented by a government-funded organization, the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy (TFD), under the name "Taiwan".

Also due to its One China policy, the PRC only participates in international organizations where the ROC does not participate as a sovereign country. Most member states, including the United States, do not wish to discuss the issue of the ROC's political status for fear of souring diplomatic ties with the PRC. However, both the US and Japan publicly support the ROC's bid for membership in the World Health Organization as an observer. However, though the ROC sought to participate in the WHO since 1997, their efforts were blocked by the PRC until 2010, when they were invited as observers to attend the World Health Assembly, under the name "Chinese Taipei".

Due to PRC pressure, the ROC is forced to use the name "Chinese Taipei" in international events, such as the Olympic Games, where the PRC is also a party. The ROC is typically barred from using its national anthem and national flag in international events due to PRC pressure; ROC spectators attending events such as the Olympics are often barred from bringing ROC flags into venues.

Taiwan also participates in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (since 1991) and the World Trade Organization (since 2002) under the name "Chinese Taipei".

The ROC is able to participate as "China" in organizations that the PRC does not participate in, such as the World Organization of the Scout Movement.

## Domestic opinion

- *On 27 September 2017, Taiwanese premier William Lai said that he was a "political worker who advocates Taiwan independence", but that as Taiwan was an independent country called the Republic of China, it had no need to declare independence.*
- *Within Taiwan, opinions are polarized between those supporting unification, represented by the Pan-Blue Coalition of parties, and those supporting independence, represented by the Pan-Green Coalition.*

Within Taiwan, opinions are polarized between those supporting unification, represented by the Pan-Blue Coalition of parties, and those supporting independence, represented by the Pan-Green Coalition.

The KMT, the largest Pan-Blue party, supports the status quo for the indefinite future with a stated ultimate goal of unification. However, it does not support unification in the short term with the PRC as such a prospect would be unacceptable to most of its members and the public. Ma Ying-jeou, chairman of the KMT and former president of the ROC, has set out democracy, economic development to a level near that of Taiwan, and equitable wealth distribution as the conditions that the PRC must fulfill for reunification to occur.

The Democratic Progressive Party, the largest Pan-Green party, officially seeks independence, but in practice also supports the status quo because its members and the public would not accept the risk of provoking the PRC.

On 2 September 2008, Mexican newspaper El Sol de México asked President Ma about his views on the subject of "two Chinas" and if there was a solution for the sovereignty issues

between the two. The president replied that the relations are neither between two Chinas nor two states. It is a special relationship. Further, he stated that the sovereignty issues between the two cannot be resolved at present, but he quoted the "1992 Consensus", currently accepted by both the Kuomintang and the Communist Party of China, as a temporary measure until a solution becomes available.

On 27 September 2017, Taiwanese premier William Lai said that he was a "political worker who advocates Taiwan independence", but that as Taiwan was an independent country called the Republic of China, it had no need to declare independence.

The relationship with the PRC and the related issues of Taiwanese independence and Chinese unification continue to dominate politics.



*Taiwan's popularly elected president resides in the Presidential Office Building, Taipei, originally built in the Japanese era for colonial governors.*

## Government and politics

- *The constitution was drafted before the fall of mainland China to the Communist Party of China.*
- *The government of the Republic of China was founded on the Constitution of the ROC and its Three Principles of the People, which states that the ROC "shall be a democratic republic of the people, to be governed by the people and for the people."*

The government of the Republic of China was founded on the Constitution of the ROC and its Three Principles of the People, which states that the ROC "shall be a democratic republic of the people, to be governed by the people and for the people." The government is divided into five branches (Yuan): the Executive Yuan (cabinet), the Legislative Yuan (Congress or Parliament), the Judicial Yuan, the Control Yuan (audit agency), and the Examination Yuan (civil service examination agency). The constitution was drafted before the fall of mainland China to the Communist Party of China. It was created by the KMT for the purpose of all of its claimed territory, including Taiwan, even though the Communist Party boycotted the drafting of the constitution. The constitution went into effect on 25 December 1947. The ROC remained under martial law from 1948 until 1987 and much of the constitution was not in effect. Political reforms beginning in the late 1970s and continuing through the early 1990s transformed into a multiparty democracy. Since the lifting of martial law, the Republic of China has democratized and reformed, suspending constitutional components that were originally meant for the whole of China. This process of amendment continues. In 2000, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) won the presidency, ending KMT's continuous control of the government. In May 2005, a new National Assembly was elected to reduce the number of parliamentary seats and implement several constitutional reforms. These reforms have been passed; the National Assembly has essentially voted to abolish itself and transfer the power of constitutional reform to the popular ballot.

The head of state and commander-in-chief of the armed forces is the president, who is elected by popular vote for a maximum of 2 four-year terms on the same ticket as the vice-president. The president has authority over the Yuan. The president appoints the members of the Executive Yuan as his cabinet, including a premier, who is officially the President of the Executive Yuan; members are responsible for policy and administration.

The main legislative body is the unicameral Legislative Yuan with 113 seats. Seventy-three are elected by popular vote from single-member constituencies; thirty-four are elected based on the proportion of nationwide votes received by participating political parties in a separate party list ballot; and six are elected from two three-member aboriginal constituencies. Members serve four-year terms. Originally the unicameral National Assembly, as a standing constitutional convention and electoral college, held some parliamentary functions, but the National Assembly was abolished in 2005 with the power of constitutional amendments handed over to the Legislative Yuan and all eligible voters of the Republic via referendums.

The premier is selected by the president without the need for approval from the legislature, but the legislature can pass laws without regard for the president, as neither he nor the Premier wields veto power. Thus, there is little incentive for the president and the legislature to negotiate on legislation if they are of opposing parties. After the election of the pan-Green's Chen Shui-bian as President in 2000, legislation repeatedly stalled because of deadlock with the Legislative Yuan, which was controlled by a pan-Blue majority. Historically, the ROC has been dominated by strongman single party politics. This legacy has resulted in executive powers currently being concentrated in the office of the president



rather than the premier, even though the constitution does not explicitly state the extent of the president's executive power.

The Judicial Yuan is the highest judicial organ. It interprets the constitution and other laws and decrees, judges administrative suits, and disciplines public functionaries. The president and vice-president of the Judicial Yuan and additional thirteen justices form the Council of Grand Justices. They are nominated and appointed by the president, with the consent of the Legislative Yuan. The highest court, the Supreme Court, consists of a number of civil and criminal divisions, each of which is formed by a presiding judge and four associate judges, all appointed for life. In 1993, a separate constitutional court was established to resolve constitutional disputes, regulate the activities of political parties and accelerate the democratization process. There is no trial by jury but the right to a fair public trial is protected by law and respected in practice; many cases are presided over by multiple judges.

Capital punishment is still used in Taiwan, although efforts have been made by the government to reduce the number of executions. Between 2005 and 2009, capital punishment was stopped. Nevertheless, according to a survey in 2006, about 80% of Taiwanese still wanted to keep the death penalty.

The Control Yuan is a watchdog agency that monitors (controls) the actions of the executive. It can be considered a standing commission for administrative inquiry and can be compared to the Court of Auditors of the European Union or the Government Accountability Office of the United States.

The Examination Yuan is in charge of validating the qualification of civil servants. It is based on the old imperial examination system used in dynastic China. It can be compared to the European Personnel Selection Office of the European Union or the Office of Personnel Management of the United States.

## Major camps

- *It regards Taiwan as an independent, sovereign state synonymous with the ROC, opposes the definition that Taiwan is part of "China", and seeks wide diplomatic recognition and an eventual declaration of formal Taiwan independence.*
- *The tension between mainland China and Taiwan shades most of political life since it is the official policy of the PRC to meet any Taiwanese government move towards "Taiwan independence" with a threat of invasion.*

The tension between mainland China and Taiwan shades most of political life since it is the official policy of the PRC to meet any Taiwanese government move towards "Taiwan independence" with a threat of invasion. The PRC's official policy is to reunify Taiwan and mainland China under the formula of "one country, two systems" and refuses to renounce the use of military force, especially should Taiwan seek a declaration of independence.

The political scene is generally divided into two major camps in terms of views on how Taiwan should relate to China or the PRC, referred to as cross-Strait relations. It is the main political difference between two camps: the Pan-Blue Coalition, composed of the pro-unification Kuomintang, People First Party (PFP), and New Party, who believe that the ROC is the sole legitimate government of "China" (including Taiwan) and supports eventual Chinese reunification. The opposition Pan-Green Coalition is composed of the pro-independence DPP and Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU). It regards Taiwan as an independent, sovereign state synonymous with the ROC, opposes the definition that Taiwan is part of "China", and seeks wide diplomatic recognition and an eventual declaration of formal Taiwan independence. The Pan-Green camp tends to favour emphasizing the Republic of China as being a distinct country from the People's Republic of China. Thus, in September 2007, the then ruling Democratic Progressive Party approved a resolution asserting separate identity from China and called for the enactment of a new constitution for a "normal country". It called also for general use of "Taiwan" as the country's name, without abolishing its formal name, the "Republic of China". Some members of the coalition, such as former President Chen Shui-bian, argue that it is unnecessary to proclaim independence because "Taiwan is already an independent, sovereign country" and the Republic of China is the same as Taiwan. Despite being a member of KMT prior to and during his presidency, Lee Teng-hui also held a similar view and was a supporter of the Taiwanization movement.

Pan-Blue members generally support the concept of the One-China policy, which states that there is only one China and that its only government is the ROC. They favour eventual reunification of China. The more mainstream Pan-Blue position is to lift investment restrictions and pursue negotiations with the PRC to immediately open direct transportation links. Regarding independence, the mainstream Pan-Blue position is to maintain the status quo, while refusing immediate reunification. President Ma Ying-jeou stated that there will be no unification nor declaration of independence during his presidency. As of 2009[update], Pan-Blue members usually seek to improve relationships with mainland China, with a current focus on improving economic ties.

## Current political issues

- *Direct weekend charter flights between Taiwan and mainland China began in July 2008 under the current KMT government, and the first direct daily charter flights took off in December 2008.*
- *The dominant political issue in Taiwan is its relationship with the PRC.*
- *For almost 60 years, there were no direct transportation links, including direct flights, between Taiwan and mainland China.*

The dominant political issue in Taiwan is its relationship with the PRC. For almost 60 years, there were no direct transportation links, including direct flights, between Taiwan and mainland China. This was a problem for many Taiwanese businesses that had opened factories or branches in mainland China. The former DPP administration feared that such

links would lead to tighter economic and political integration with mainland China, and in the 2006 Lunar New Year Speech, President Chen Shui-bian called for managed opening of links. Direct weekend charter flights between Taiwan and mainland China began in July 2008 under the current KMT government, and the first direct daily charter flights took off in December 2008.

Other major political issues include the passage of an arms procurement bill that the United States authorized in 2001. In 2008, however, the United States was reluctant to send over more arms to Taiwan out of fear that it would hinder the recent improvement of ties between the PRC and the ROC. Another major political issue is the establishment of a National Communications Commission to take over from the Government Information Office, whose advertising budget exercised great control over the media.

The politicians and their parties have themselves become major political issues. Corruption among some DPP administration officials has been exposed. In early 2006, President Chen Shui-bian was linked to possible corruption. The political effect on President Chen Shui-bian was great, causing a divide in the DPP leadership and supporters alike. It eventually led to the creation of a political camp led by ex-DPP leader Shih Ming-teh which believes the president should resign. The KMT assets continue to be another major issue, as it was once the richest political party in the world. Nearing the end of 2006, KMT's chairman Ma Ying-jeou was also hit by corruption controversies, although he has since then been cleared of any wrongdoings by the courts. After completing his second term as President, Chen Shui-bian was charged with corruption and money laundering. Following his conviction, he is serving a 17-year sentence in Taipei Prison.

Taiwan's leaders, including President Tsai and Premier William Lai, have repeatedly accused China of spreading fake news via social media to create divisions in Taiwanese society, influence voters and support candidates more sympathetic to Beijing ahead of the 2018 Taiwanese local elections.

## National identity

- *Another survey, conducted in Taiwan in July 2009, showed that 82.8% of respondents consider the ROC and the PRC as two separate countries with each developing on its own.*
- *Roughly 84% of Taiwan's population descends from Han Chinese who migrated from Qing China between 1661 and 1895.*
- *Its acceptance makes the island distinct from mainland China, and therefore may be seen as a step towards forming a consensus for de jure Taiwan independence.*

Roughly 84% of Taiwan's population descends from Han Chinese who migrated from Qing China between 1661 and 1895. Another significant fraction descends from Han Chinese who immigrated from mainland China in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The shared cultural origin combined with several hundred years of geographical separation, some hundred years of political separation and foreign influences, as well as hostility between the rival ROC and PRC have resulted in national identity being a contentious issue with political

overtones. Since democratic reforms and the lifting of martial law, a distinct Taiwanese identity (as opposed to Taiwanese identity as a subset of a Chinese identity) is often at the heart of political debates. Its acceptance makes the island distinct from mainland China, and therefore may be seen as a step towards forming a consensus for de jure Taiwan independence. The pan-green camp supports a distinct Taiwanese identity, while the pan-blue camp supports a Chinese identity only. The KMT has downplayed this stance in the recent years and now supports a Taiwanese identity as part of a Chinese identity.

According to a survey conducted in March 2009, 49% of the respondents consider themselves as Taiwanese only, and 44% of the respondents consider themselves as Taiwanese and Chinese. 3% consider themselves as only Chinese. Another survey, conducted in Taiwan in July 2009, showed that 82.8% of respondents consider the ROC and the PRC as two separate countries with each developing on its own. A survey conducted in December 2009 showed that 62% of the respondents consider themselves as Taiwanese only, and 22% of the respondents consider themselves as both Taiwanese and Chinese. 8% consider themselves as only Chinese. The survey also shows that among 18- to 29-year-old respondents, 75% consider themselves as Taiwanese only.

In the latest survey conducted by National Chengchi University in 2014 and published in early 2015, 60.6% of respondents identified themselves exclusively as Taiwanese, 32.5% identified themselves as both Taiwanese and Chinese and 3.5% identified themselves as Chinese.

## Administrative divisions

- *They were placed under Kaohsiung administration after the retreat to Taiwan.*
- *However, since its retreat, the ROC has controlled only Taiwan Province and some islands of Fujian Province.*
- *The two provincial governments were "streamlined", with their functions transferred to the central government (Fujian in 1956 and Taiwan in 1998).*

According to the 1947 constitution, the territory of the ROC is according to its "existing national boundaries". According to the Executive Yuan in 2012, Mongolia was re-recognized by Republic of China as an independent country when the constitution was announced in 1946.

When the ROC retreated to Taiwan in 1949, its claimed territory consisted of 35 provinces, 12 special municipalities, 1 special administrative region and 2 autonomous regions. However, since its retreat, the ROC has controlled only Taiwan Province and some islands of Fujian Province. The ROC also controls the Pratas Islands and Taiping Island in the Spratly Islands, which are part of the disputed South China Sea Islands. They were placed under Kaohsiung administration after the retreat to Taiwan.

Since 1949, the government has made some changes in the area under its control. Taipei became a special municipality in 1967 and Kaohsiung in 1979. The two provincial

governments were "streamlined", with their functions transferred to the central government (Fujian in 1956 and Taiwan in 1998). In 2010, New Taipei, Taichung and Tainan were upgraded to special municipalities. And in 2014, Taoyuan County was also upgraded to Taoyuan special municipality. This brought the top-level divisions to their current state:

According to Article 4 of the Local Government Act, laws pertaining to special municipalities also apply to counties with a population exceeding 2 million. This provision does not currently apply to any county, although it previously applied to Taipei County (now New Taipei City) and Taoyuan County (now Taoyuan City).

## Military

- *It was later reformed into the Republic of China Army.*
- *There is, however, no guarantee in the Taiwan Relations Act or any other treaty that the United States will defend Taiwan, even in the event of invasion.*
- *When the People's Liberation Army won the Chinese Civil War, much of the National Revolutionary Army retreated to Taiwan along with the government.*

The Republic of China Army takes its roots in the National Revolutionary Army, which was established by Sun Yat-sen in 1925 in Guangdong with a goal of reunifying China under the Kuomintang. When the People's Liberation Army won the Chinese Civil War, much of the National Revolutionary Army retreated to Taiwan along with the government. It was later reformed into the Republic of China Army. Units which surrendered and remained in mainland China were either disbanded or incorporated into the People's Liberation Army.

Today, Taiwan maintains a large and technologically advanced military, mainly to counteract the constant threat of invasion by the People's Liberation Army using the Anti-Secession Law of the People's Republic of China as a pretext. This law authorizes the use of military force when certain conditions are met, such as a danger to mainlanders.

From 1949 to the 1970s, the primary mission of the Taiwanese military was to "retake mainland China" through Project National Glory. As this mission has transitioned away from attack because the relative strength of the PRC has massively increased, the ROC military has begun to shift emphasis from the traditionally dominant Army to the air force and navy.

Control of the armed forces has also passed into the hands of the civilian government. As the ROC military shares historical roots with the KMT, the older generation of high-ranking officers tends to have Pan-Blue sympathies. However, many have retired and there are many more non-mainlanders enlisting in the armed forces in the younger generations, so the political leanings of the military have moved closer to the public norm in Taiwan.

The ROC began a force reduction plan, Jingshi An (translated to streamlining program), to scale down its military from a level of 450,000 in 1997 to 380,000 in 2001. As of 2009[update], the armed forces of the ROC number approximately 300,000, with nominal

reserves totalling 3.6 million as of 2015[update]. Conscription remains universal for qualified males reaching age eighteen, but as a part of the reduction effort many are given the opportunity to fulfill their draft requirement through alternative service and are redirected to government agencies or arms related industries. Current plans call for a transition to a predominantly professional army over the next decade. Conscription periods are planned to decrease from 14 months to 12. In the last months of the Bush administration, Taipei took the decision to reverse the trend of declining military spending, at a time when most Asian countries kept on reducing their military expenditures. It also decided to strengthen both defensive and offensive capabilities. Taipei still keeps a large military apparatus relative to the island's population: military expenditures for 2008 were NTD 334 billion (approximately US \$10.5 billion), which accounted for 2.94% of GDP.

The armed forces' primary concern at this time, according to the National Defense Report, is the possibility of an invasion by the PRC, consisting of a naval blockade, airborne assault, and/or missile bombardment. Four upgraded Kidd-class destroyers were purchased from the United States, and commissioned into the Republic of China Navy in 2005–2006, significantly upgrading Taiwan's protection from aerial attack and submarine hunting abilities. The Ministry of National Defense planned to purchase diesel-powered submarines and Patriot anti-missile batteries from the United States, but its budget has been stalled repeatedly by the opposition-Pan-Blue Coalition controlled legislature. The military package was stalled from 2001 to 2007 where it was finally passed through the legislature and the US responded on 3 October 2008, with a \$6.5 billion arms package including PAC III Anti-Air systems, AH-64D Apache Attack helicopters and other arms and parts. A significant amount of military hardware has been bought from the United States, and, as of 2009[update], continues to be legally guaranteed by the Taiwan Relations Act. In the past, France and the Netherlands have also sold military weapons and hardware to the ROC, but they almost entirely stopped in the 1990s under pressure of the PRC.

The first line of protection against invasion by the PRC is the ROC's own armed forces. Current ROC military doctrine is to hold out against an invasion or blockade until the US military responds. There is, however, no guarantee in the Taiwan Relations Act or any other treaty that the United States will defend Taiwan, even in the event of invasion. The joint declaration on security between the US and Japan signed in 1996 may imply that Japan would be involved in any response. However, Japan has refused to stipulate whether the "area surrounding Japan" mentioned in the pact includes Taiwan, and the precise purpose of the pact is unclear. The Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty (ANZUS Treaty) may mean that other US allies, such as Australia, could theoretically be involved. In practice, the risk of losing economic ties with China may prevent Australia from taking action.

## Economy

- *Since the beginning of the 1990s, the economic ties between Taiwan and the People's Republic of China have been very prolific.*



- *The currency of Taiwan is the New Taiwan dollar.*
- *The quick industrialization and rapid growth of Taiwan during the latter half of the 20th century has been called the "Taiwan Miracle".*
- *By 1945, hyperinflation was in progress in mainland China and Taiwan as a result of the war with Japan.*

The quick industrialization and rapid growth of Taiwan during the latter half of the 20th century has been called the "Taiwan Miracle". Taiwan is one of the "Four Asian Tigers" alongside Hong Kong, South Korea and Singapore.

Japanese rule prior to and during World War II brought changes in the public and private sectors, most notably in the area of public works, which enabled rapid communications and facilitated transport throughout much of the island. The Japanese also improved public education and made it compulsory for all residents of Taiwan. By 1945, hyperinflation was in progress in mainland China and Taiwan as a result of the war with Japan. To isolate Taiwan from it, the Nationalist government created a new currency area for the island, and began a price stabilization strategy. These efforts significantly slowed inflation.

When the KMT government fled to Taiwan it brought millions of taels (where 1 tael = 37.5 g or ~1.2 oz) of gold and the foreign currency reserve of mainland China, which, according to the KMT, stabilized prices and reduced hyperinflation. Perhaps more importantly, as part of its retreat to Taiwan, the KMT brought the intellectual and business elites from mainland China. The KMT government instituted many laws and land reforms that it had never effectively enacted on mainland China. The government also implemented a policy of import-substitution, attempting to produce imported goods domestically.

In 1950, with the outbreak of the Korean War, the United States began an aid curriculum which resulted in fully stabilized prices by 1952. Economic development was encouraged by American economic aid and initiatives such as the Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction, which turned the agricultural sector into the basis for later growth. Under the combined stimulus of the land reform and the agricultural development plans, agricultural production increased at an average annual rate of 4 per cent from 1952 to 1959, which was greater than the population growth, 3.6%.

In 1962, Taiwan had a (nominal) per-capita gross national product (GNP) of \$170, placing its economy on a par with those of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. On a purchasing power parity (PPP) basis, its GDP per capita in the early 1960s was \$1,353 (in 1990 prices). By 2011 per-capita GNP, adjusted for purchasing power parity (PPP), had risen to \$37,000, contributing to a Human Development Index (HDI) equivalent to that of other developed countries. Taiwan's HDI in 2012 is 0.890, (23rd, very high), according to the UN's new "Inequality-adjusted HDI" calculation method.

In 1974, Chiang Ching-kuo implemented the Ten Major Construction Projects, the beginning foundations that helped Taiwan transform into its current export driven economy. Since the 1990s, a number of Taiwan-based technology firms have expanded their reach around the

world. Well-known international technology companies headquartered in Taiwan include personal computer manufacturers Acer Inc. and Asus, mobile phone maker HTC, as well as electronics manufacturing giant Foxconn, which makes products for Apple, Amazon, and Microsoft. Computex Taipei is a major computer expo, held since 1981.

Today Taiwan has a dynamic, capitalist, export-driven economy with gradually decreasing state involvement in investment and foreign trade. In keeping with this trend, some large government-owned banks and industrial firms are being privatized. Real growth in GDP has averaged about 8% during the past three decades. Exports have provided the primary impetus for industrialization. The trade surplus is substantial, and foreign reserves are the world's fifth largest. The currency of Taiwan is the New Taiwan dollar.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the economic ties between Taiwan and the People's Republic of China have been very prolific. As of 2008[update], more than US\$150 billion have been invested in the PRC by Taiwanese companies, and about 10% of the Taiwanese workforce works in the PRC, often to run their own businesses. Although the economy of Taiwan benefits from this situation, some have expressed the view that the island has become increasingly dependent on the mainland Chinese economy. A 2008 white paper by the Department of Industrial Technology states that "Taiwan should seek to maintain stable relation with China while continuing to protect national security, and avoiding excessive 'Sinicization' of Taiwanese economy." Others argue that close economic ties between Taiwan and mainland China would make any military intervention by the PLA against Taiwan very costly, and therefore less probable.

Taiwan's total trade in 2010 reached an all-time high of US\$526.04 billion, according to Taiwan's Ministry of Finance. Both exports and imports for the year reached record levels, totalling US\$274.64 billion and US\$251.4 billion, respectively.

In 2001, agriculture constituted only 2% of GDP, down from 35% in 1952. Traditional manpower-intensive industries are steadily being moved offshore and with more capital and technology-intensive industries replacing them. High-technology industrial parks have sprung up in every region in Taiwan. The ROC has become a major foreign investor in the PRC, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Vietnam. It is estimated that some 50,000 Taiwanese businesses and 1,000,000 businesspeople and their dependents are established in the PRC.

Because of its conservative financial approach and its entrepreneurial strengths, Taiwan suffered little compared with many near-by countries in the 1997 Asian financial crisis. Unlike South Korea and Japan, the Taiwanese economy is dominated by small and medium-sized businesses, rather than the large business groups. The global economic downturn, however, combined with poor policy co-ordination by the new administration and increasing bad debts in the banking system, pushed Taiwan into recession in 2001, the first whole year of negative growth since 1947. Due to the relocation of many manufacturing and manpower-intensive industries to the PRC, unemployment also reached a level not seen since the 1970s oil crisis. This became a major issue in the 2004 presidential election.

Growth averaged more than 4% in the 2002–2006 period and the unemployment rate fell below 4%.

The ROC often joins international organizations (especially ones that also include the People's Republic of China) under a politically neutral name. The ROC has been a member of governmental trade organizations such as the World Trade Organization under the name Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu (Chinese Taipei) since 2002.

## Transport

- *The Ministry of Transportation and Communications of the Republic of China is the cabinet-level governing body of the transport network in Taiwan.*
- *Railways in Taiwan are primarily used for passenger services, with Taiwan Railway Administration (TRA) operating a circular route and Taiwan High Speed Rail (THSR) running high speed services on the west coast.*
- *There are currently seven airlines in Taiwan, the largest ones being China Airlines and EVA Air.*

The Ministry of Transportation and Communications of the Republic of China is the cabinet-level governing body of the transport network in Taiwan.

Civilian transport in Taiwan is characterised by extensive use of scooters. In March 2019, 13.86 million were registered, twice that of cars.

Both highways and railways are concentrated near the coasts where the majority of the population resides, with 1,619 km (1,006 mi) of motorway.

Railways in Taiwan are primarily used for passenger services, with Taiwan Railway Administration (TRA) operating a circular route and Taiwan High Speed Rail (THSR) running high speed services on the west coast. Urban transit systems include Taipei Metro, Kaohsiung Rapid Transit Taoyuan Metro and New Taipei Metro.

Major airports include Taiwan Taoyuan, Kaohsiung, Taipei Songshan and Taichung. There are currently seven airlines in Taiwan, the largest ones being China Airlines and EVA Air.

There are four international seaports: Keelung, Kaohsiung, Taichung, and Hualien.

## Education

- *Taiwan is one of the top-performing countries in reading literacy, maths and sciences.*
- *However, after the Republic of China took over in 1945, the system was promptly replaced by the same system as in mainland China which mixed features of the Chinese and American educational systems.*
- *Taiwan's higher education system was established by Japan during the colonial period.*
- *As of 2018[update], the literacy rate in Taiwan is 98.87%.*

Taiwan's higher education system was established by Japan during the colonial period. However, after the Republic of China took over in 1945, the system was promptly replaced by the same system as in mainland China which mixed features of the Chinese and American educational systems.

Taiwan is well known for adhering to the Confucian paradigm of valuing education as a means to improve one's socioeconomic position in society. Heavy investment and a cultural valuing of education has catapulted the resource-poor nation consistently to the top of global education rankings. Taiwan is one of the top-performing countries in reading literacy, maths and sciences. In 2015, Taiwanese students achieved one of the world's best results in mathematics, science and literacy, as tested by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), a worldwide evaluation of 15-year-old school pupils' scholastic performance. The strong scholastic and educational performance of Taiwanese students has prompted the nation to build a highly educated workforce that possesses a strong background in mathematics and science to cope with the job market demands of the 21st century.

The Taiwanese education system has been praised for various reasons, including its comparatively high test results and its major role in promoting Taiwan's economic development while creating one of the world's most highly educated workforces. Taiwan has also been praised for its high university entrance rate where the university acceptance rate has increased from around 20 per cent before the 1970s to 49 per cent in 1996 and over 90 per cent since 2006, among the highest in Asia. The nation's high university entrance rate has created a highly skilled workforce making Taiwan one of the most highly educated countries in the world with 68.5% of Taiwanese high school students going on to attend university. Taiwan has a high percentage of its citizens holding a tertiary education degree where 45 per cent of Taiwanese aged 25–64 hold a bachelor's degree or higher compared with the average of 33 per cent among member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). On the other hand, the system has received criticism for placing excessive pressure on students while eschewing creativity and producing an excess supply of over-educated university graduates and a high graduate unemployment rate. With a large number of university graduates seeking a limited number of prestigious white collar jobs in an economic environment that is increasingly losing its competitive edge, this has led many graduates to be employed in lower end jobs with salaries far beneath than their expectations. Taiwan's universities have also been under criticism for not being able to fully meet the requirements and demands of Taiwan's 21st century fast-moving job market citing a skills mismatch among a large number of self-assessed, overeducated university graduates that don't fit the demands of the modern Taiwanese job market. The Taiwanese government has also received criticism for undermining the economy as it has been unable to produce enough jobs to meet the demands of numerous underemployed university graduates.

As the Taiwanese economy is largely science and technology based, the job market demands people who have achieved some form of higher education, particularly related to science

and engineering in order to gain a competitive edge when searching for employment. Although current Taiwanese law mandates only nine years of schooling, 95% of junior high graduates go on to attend a senior vocational high school, university, junior college, trade school, or other higher education institution.[citation needed]

Many Taiwanese students attend cram schools, or bushiban, to improve skills and knowledge on problem solving against exams of subjects like mathematics, nature science, history and many others. Courses are available for most popular subjects and include lectures, reviews, private tutorial sessions, and recitations.

As of 2018[update], the literacy rate in Taiwan is 98.87%.

## Demographics

- *Taiwan has a population of about 23.4 million, most of whom are on the island proper.*

Taiwan has a population of about 23.4 million, most of whom are on the island proper. The remainder live on Penghu (101,758), Kinmen (127,723), and Matsu (12,506).

## Ethnic groups

- *The ROC government reports that over 95% of the population is Han Chinese, of which the majority includes descendants of early Han Chinese immigrants who arrived in Taiwan in large numbers starting in the 18th century.*
- *Additional people of Han origin include and descend from the 2 million Nationalists who fled to Taiwan following the communist victory on the mainland in 1949.*

The ROC government reports that over 95% of the population is Han Chinese, of which the majority includes descendants of early Han Chinese immigrants who arrived in Taiwan in large numbers starting in the 18th century. Alternatively, the ethnic groups of Taiwan may be roughly divided among the Hoklo (70%), the Hakka (14%), the Waishengren (14%), and indigenous peoples (2%).

The Hoklo people are the largest Han subgroup (70% of the total population), whose ancestors migrated from the coastal southern Fujian region across the Taiwan Strait starting in the 17th century. The Hakka comprise about 15% of the total population, and descend from Han migrants to Guangdong, its surrounding areas and Taiwan. Additional people of Han origin include and descend from the 2 million Nationalists who fled to Taiwan following the communist victory on the mainland in 1949.

The indigenous Taiwanese aborigines number about 533,600 and are divided into 16 groups. The Ami, Atayal, Bunun, Kanakanavu, Kavalan, Paiwan, Puyuma, Rukai, Saisiyat, Saaroa, Sakizaya, Sediq, Thao, Truku and Tsou live mostly in the eastern half of the island, while the Yami inhabit Orchid Island.

## Languages

- *Traditional Chinese is used as the writing system in Taiwan.*
- *Their use among Taiwan's aboriginal minority groups has been in decline as usage of Mandarin has risen.*
- *Taiwan's indigenous languages, the Formosan languages, do not belong to the Chinese or Sino-Tibetan language family, but to the Austronesian language family.*

Mandarin is the primary language used in business and education, and is spoken by the vast majority of the population. It has been the main language of instruction in schools since the end of Japanese rule. Traditional Chinese is used as the writing system in Taiwan.

The 70% of the population belonging to the Hoklo ethnic subgroup speak Taiwanese Hokkien (a variant of the Min Nan speech of Fujian province) as their mother tongue, in addition to Mandarin, and many others have some degree of understanding. The Hakka ethnic group (15% of the population) use Hakka Chinese. Most waishengren speak primarily Mandarin. Although Mandarin is the language of instruction in schools and dominates television and radio, non-Mandarin Chinese varieties have undergone a revival in public life in Taiwan, particularly since restrictions on their use were lifted in the 1990s.

Taiwan's indigenous languages, the Formosan languages, do not belong to the Chinese or Sino-Tibetan language family, but to the Austronesian language family. Their use among Taiwan's aboriginal minority groups has been in decline as usage of Mandarin has risen. Of the 14 extant languages, five are considered moribund.

## Religion

- *There has been a small Muslim community of Hui people in Taiwan since the 17th century.*
- *In 2008, Taiwan had 3,262 Churches, an increase of 145.*
- *The Constitution of the Republic of China protects people's freedom of religion and the practices of belief.*
- *As of 2009[update], there were 14,993 temples in Taiwan, approximately one place of worship per 1,500 residents.*

The Constitution of the Republic of China protects people's freedom of religion and the practices of belief.

In 2005, the census reported that the five largest religions were: Buddhism, Taoism, Yiguandao, Protestantism, and Roman Catholicism. According to Pew Research, the religious composition of Taiwan in 2020 is estimated to become 43.8% Folk religions, 21.2% Buddhist, 13.7% Unaffiliated, 5.8% Christian and 15.5% other religions. Taiwanese aborigines comprise a notable subgroup among professing Christians: "...over 64% identify as Christian... Church buildings are the most obvious markers of Aboriginal villages, distinguishing them from Taiwanese or Hakka villages." There has been a small Muslim community of Hui people in Taiwan since the 17th century.



Confucianism is a philosophy that deals with secular moral ethics, and serves as the foundation of both Chinese and Taiwanese culture. The majority of Taiwanese people usually combine the secular moral teachings of Confucianism with whatever religions they are affiliated with.

As of 2009[update], there were 14,993 temples in Taiwan, approximately one place of worship per 1,500 residents. 9,202 of those temples were dedicated to Taoism and Buddhism. In 2008, Taiwan had 3,262 Churches, an increase of 145.

## Largest cities and counties

- *The figures below are the March 2019 estimates for the twenty most populous administrative divisions; a different ranking exists when considering the total metropolitan area populations (in such rankings the Taipei-Keelung metro area is by far the largest agglomeration).*

The figures below are the March 2019 estimates for the twenty most populous administrative divisions; a different ranking exists when considering the total metropolitan area populations (in such rankings the Taipei-Keelung metro area is by far the largest agglomeration).

## Public health

- *Health care in Taiwan is managed by the Bureau of National Health Insurance (BNHI).*
- *Taiwan has its own authority for disease control, and during the SARS outbreak in March 2003 there were 347 confirmed cases.*
- *The government health insurance policy maintains compulsory insurance for citizens who are employed, impoverished, unemployed, or victims of natural disasters with fees that correlate to the individual and/or family income; it also maintains protection for non-citizens working in Taiwan.*

Health care in Taiwan is managed by the Bureau of National Health Insurance (BNHI).

The current plan was implemented in 1995, and is considered to be a form of social insurance. The government health insurance policy maintains compulsory insurance for citizens who are employed, impoverished, unemployed, or victims of natural disasters with fees that correlate to the individual and/or family income; it also maintains protection for non-citizens working in Taiwan. A standard method of calculation applies to all persons and can optionally be paid by an employer or by individual contributions.

BNHI insurance coverage requires co-payment at the time of service for most services unless it is a preventative health service, for low-income families, veterans, children under three years old, or in the case of catastrophic diseases. Low income households maintain 100% premium coverage by the BNHI and co-pays are reduced for disabled or certain elderly people.[citation needed]

According to a recently published survey, out of 3,360 patients surveyed at a randomly chosen hospital, 75.1% of the patients said they are "very satisfied" with the hospital service; 20.5% said they are "okay" with the service. Only 4.4% of the patients said they are either "not satisfied" or "very not satisfied" with the service or care provided.

Taiwan has its own authority for disease control, and during the SARS outbreak in March 2003 there were 347 confirmed cases. During the outbreak the disease control bureaux and local governments set up monitored stations throughout public transportation, recreational sites and other public areas. With full containment in July 2003, there has not been a case of SARS since.

As of 2017[update], the BNHI Facility Contract Distribution facilities total 28,339, including:

Basic coverage areas of the insurance include:

In 2004, the infant mortality rate was 5.3 with 15 physicians and 63 hospital beds per 10,000 people. The life expectancy for males was 73.5 years and 79.7 years for females according to the World Health Report.

In July 2013, the Department of Health was restructured as the Ministry of Health and Welfare.

Source: UN World Population Prospects

## Culture

- *After their move to Taiwan, the Kuomintang imposed an official interpretation of traditional Chinese culture over Taiwan.*
- *Relations regarding this treasure have warmed recently; Beijing Palace Museum Curator Zheng Xinmiao said that artefacts in both Chinese and Taiwanese museums are "China's cultural heritage jointly owned by people across the Taiwan Strait."*
- *Karaoke, drawn from contemporary Japanese culture, is extremely popular in Taiwan, where it is known as KTV.*

The cultures of Taiwan are a hybrid blend of various sources, incorporating elements of traditional Chinese culture, attributable to the historical and ancestral origin of the majority of its current residents, Japanese culture, traditional Confucianist beliefs, and increasingly Western values.

After their move to Taiwan, the Kuomintang imposed an official interpretation of traditional Chinese culture over Taiwan. The government launched a policy promoting Chinese calligraphy, traditional Chinese painting, folk art, and Chinese opera.[citation needed]

The status of Taiwanese culture is debated. It is disputed whether Taiwanese culture is a regional form of Chinese culture or a distinct culture. Reflecting the continuing controversy surrounding the political status of Taiwan, politics continues to play a role in the conception

and development of a Taiwanese cultural identity, especially in the prior dominant frame of a Taiwanese and Chinese dualism. In recent years, the concept of Taiwanese multiculturalism has been proposed as a relatively apolitical alternative view, which has allowed for the inclusion of mainlanders and other minority groups into the continuing re-definition of Taiwanese culture as collectively held systems of meaning and customary patterns of thought and conduct shared by the people of Taiwan. Identity politics, along with the over one hundred years of political separation from mainland China, has led to distinct traditions in many areas, including cuisine and music.

One of Taiwan's greatest attractions is the National Palace Museum, which houses more than 650,000 pieces of Chinese bronze, jade, calligraphy, painting, and porcelain and is considered one of the greatest collections of Chinese art and objects in the world. The KMT moved this collection from the Forbidden City in Beijing in 1933 and part of the collection was eventually transported to Taiwan during the Chinese Civil War. The collection, estimated to be one-tenth of China's cultural treasures, is so extensive that only 1% is on display at any time. The PRC had said that the collection was stolen and has called for its return, but the ROC has long defended its control of the collection as a necessary act to protect the pieces from destruction, especially during the Cultural Revolution. Relations regarding this treasure have warmed recently; Beijing Palace Museum Curator Zheng Xinmiao said that artefacts in both Chinese and Taiwanese museums are "China's cultural heritage jointly owned by people across the Taiwan Strait."

The classical music culture in Taiwan is highly developed and features artists such as violinist Cho-Liang Lin, pianist Ching-Yun Hu, and the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society Artist Director Wu Han. Karaoke, drawn from contemporary Japanese culture, is extremely popular in Taiwan, where it is known as KTV. KTV businesses operate in a hotel-like style, renting out small rooms and ballrooms according to the number of guests in a group. Many KTV establishments partner with restaurants and buffets to form all-encompassing and elaborate evening affairs for families, friends, or businessmen. Tour buses that travel around Taiwan have several TV's, equipped not for watching movies, but primarily for singing Karaoke. The entertainment counterpart of a KTV is an MTV, being found much less frequently out of the city. There, movies out on DVD can be selected and played in a private viewing room. However, MTV, more so than KTV, has a growing reputation for being a place that young couples will go to be alone and intimate.

Taiwan has a high density of 24-hour convenience stores, which, in addition to the usual services, provide services on behalf of financial institutions or government agencies such as collection of parking fees, utility bills, traffic violation fines, and credit card payments. They also provide a service for mailing packages.

Taiwanese culture has also influenced other cultures. Bubble tea and milk tea are available in Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Australia, Europe, and North America. Taiwanese television shows are popular in Singapore, Malaysia, and other Asian countries. Taiwanese films have won various international awards at film festivals around the world. Ang Lee, a Taiwanese director, has directed critically acclaimed films such as: *Crouching Tiger, Hidden*

Dragon; Eat Drink Man Woman; Sense and Sensibility; Brokeback Mountain; Life of Pi; and Lust, Caution. Other famous Taiwanese directors include Tsai Ming-liang, Edward Yang, and Hou Hsiao-hsien.

## Sports

- *In 2009, Taiwan hosted two international sporting events on the island.*
- *Taiwan is also a major Asian country for Korfball.*
- *Besides baseball, basketball is Taiwan's other major sport.*
- *The Chinese Professional Baseball League in Taiwan was established in 1989, and eventually absorbed the competing Taiwan Major League in 2003.*

Baseball is Taiwan's national sport and is a popular spectator sport. Two of the most famous Taiwanese baseball pitchers are Chien-Ming Wang and Wei-Yin Chen; both are pitchers in Major League Baseball. Other notable players playing in the United States include Chin-hui Tsao who played for the Colorado Rockies (2003–2005) and the Los Angeles Dodgers (2007, 2015–2016), Hong-Chih Kuo, Fu-Te Ni, and Chin-lung Hu. The Chinese Professional Baseball League in Taiwan was established in 1989, and eventually absorbed the competing Taiwan Major League in 2003. As of 2015[update], the CPBL has four teams with average attendance over 5,000 per game.

Besides baseball, basketball is Taiwan's other major sport.

Taiwan participates in international sporting organizations and events under the name of "Chinese Taipei" due to its political status. In 2009, Taiwan hosted two international sporting events on the island. The World Games 2009 were held in Kaohsiung between 16 and 26 July 2009. Taipei hosted the 21st Summer Deaflympics in September of the same year. Furthermore, Taipei hosted the Summer Universiade in 2017.

Taekwondo has become a mature and successful sport in Taiwan in recent years. In the 2004 Olympics, Chen Shih-hsin and Chu Mu-yen won the first two gold medals in women's flyweight event and men's flyweight event, respectively. Subsequent taekwondo competitors such as Yang Shu-chun have strengthened Taiwan's taekwondo culture.

Taiwan is also a major Asian country for Korfball. In 2008, Taiwan hosted the World Youth Korfball Championship and took the silver medal. In 2009, Taiwan's korfball team won a bronze medal at the World Game.

Yani Tseng is the most famous Taiwanese professional golfer currently playing on the US-based LPGA Tour. She is the youngest player ever, male or female, to win five major championships and was ranked number 1 in the Women's World Golf Rankings for 109 consecutive weeks from 2011 to 2013.



*Calendar commemorating the first year of the Republic as well as Sun Yat-sen's election as provisional president*

## Calendar

- *The standard Gregorian calendar is used for most purposes in Taiwan.*

The standard Gregorian calendar is used for most purposes in Taiwan. The year is often denoted by the Minguo era system which starts in 1912, the year the ROC was founded. 2019 is year 108 Minguo (民國 108 年). This notation is most used by the government. The East Asian date format is used in Chinese (2019 年 06 月 14 日).

Prior to standardisation in 1929, the official calendar was a lunisolar system, which remains in use today for traditional festivals such as the Lunar New Year, the Lantern Festival, and the Dragon Boat Festival.

## See also

- *Taiwan Province, People's Republic of China*
- *Taiwan, China*
- *Outline of Taiwan*

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Outline of Taiwan

Taiwan, China

Taiwan Province, People's Republic of China

## Notes

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Office of the President

Executive Yuan

Judicial Yuan

Control Yuan

Examination Yuan

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Taipei Economic & Cultural Representative Office in the US

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