SHARING STRICTLY PROHIBITED - For personal use of the licensed account only - See MixCache.com Terms of Use.

From the MixCache.com library

SAMPLE COPY

SHARING STRICTLY PROHIBITED - For personal use of the licensed account only - See MixCache.com Terms of Use.

Taiwan

MixCache.com

SAMPLE COPY

Sample from MixCache.com - The Online eBook Marketplace

SHARING STRICTLY PROHIBITED - For personal use of the licensed account only - See MixCache.com Terms of Use.

Table of Contents

- **Introduction**
- **Chapter 1** Geography and Natural Environment
- **Chapter 2** Climate and Biodiversity
- **Chapter 3** Indigenous Peoples and Early Settlement
- **Chapter 4** The Age of Discovery: Taiwan and the West
- **Chapter 5** Colonial Era: Dutch and Spanish Occupation
- **Chapter 6** Ming Loyalists and the Kingdom of Tungning
- **Chapter 7** Taiwan Under Qing Dynasty Rule
- **Chapter 8** Japanese Colonial Period
- **Chapter 9** World War II and the Transfer to ROC
- **Chapter 10** The Chinese Civil War and Retreat to Taiwan
- **Chapter 11** Martial Law and Taiwan’s Political Evolution
- **Chapter 12** Democratization and Social Movements
- **Chapter 13** Government and the Political System Today
- **Chapter 14** Taiwan’s Economy: From Agriculture to Industry
- **Chapter 15** The Technological Miracle: Semiconductor Leadership
- **Chapter 16** Demographics and Social Structure
- **Chapter 17** Languages and Communication
- **Chapter 18** Religion and Beliefs
- **Chapter 19** Culture and Daily Life
- **Chapter 20** Festivals, Arts, and Heritage
- **Chapter 21** Education in Taiwan
- **Chapter 22** Healthcare and Social Welfare
- **Chapter 23** Urban Life, Infrastructure, and Transportation
- **Chapter 24** Tourism and Natural Attractions
- **Chapter 25** Environmental Challenges and Sustainability
- **Chapter 26** International Relations and Cross-Strait Dynamics

SAMPLE COPY

Sample from MixCache.com - The Online eBook Marketplace

SHARING STRICTLY PROHIBITED - For personal use of the licensed account only - See MixCache.com Terms of Use.

Introduction

Taiwan, an island situated off the southeastern coast of China, has long fascinated scholars, travelers, and observers worldwide. Officially known as the Republic of China (ROC), Taiwan is at the intersection of complex historical narratives, dynamic cultural exchanges, and modern geopolitical challenges. From towering mountain peaks to vibrant urban centers, Taiwan’s story is one of continual transformation, resilience, and identity formation. In the global imagination, Taiwan often conjures images of high-tech manufacturing, dazzling night markets, lush green mountains, and spirited democratic debates—elements that together form a multifaceted portrait of a nation.

The roots of contemporary Taiwan stretch deep into history, reaching back thousands of years to when Austronesian-speaking indigenous peoples first settled the island. Over the centuries, Taiwan has been both a crossroads and a contested space, variously shaped by colonial powers, waves of migration, and imperial ambitions. Portuguese mariners who sighted the island in the 16th century deemed it “Formosa,” meaning “beautiful island,” and even today, the land’s striking physical geography and ecological wealth are foundational to its identity.

SAMPLE COPY

The last four centuries have seen Taiwan change hands and governments multiple times: from Dutch and Spanish colonizers to Ming loyalists, from the Qing Empire to Japanese imperial rule, and finally, following World War II, to the Republic of China. This frequent change has indelibly marked Taiwan’s cultural landscape, fostering a society that is open, adaptive, and uniquely hybrid. The transition to democracy in the late twentieth century marked a new era, transforming Taiwan into one of Asia's most progressive and dynamic societies.

Taiwan’s economy, once rooted in agriculture, has developed into a global powerhouse of industry and innovation, particularly in high technology and semiconductor manufacturing. The country’s economic journey—often referred to as the “Taiwan Miracle”—is one of strategic adaptation, educational commitment, and global integration. As a result, quality of life in Taiwan is high, and the country is recognized for its advanced healthcare, comprehensive education system, and robust civil liberties.

Yet, Taiwan’s challenges are as significant as its triumphs. Environmental pressures, demographic shifts, and the shadow of cross-strait relations with mainland China loom large. The complexities of Taiwan’s international status remain ever-present, shaping both its domestic policies and its role on the world stage. At the same time, the island continues to assert its unique voice and identity, balancing tradition and innovation, openness and security.

Sample from MixCache.com - The Online eBook Marketplace

SHARING STRICTLY PROHIBITED - For personal use of the licensed account only - See MixCache.com Terms of Use.

This book explores Taiwan from every angle: its dynamic history, geographical wonders, remarkable people, political evolution, economic triumphs, cultural vibrancy, and the everyday lives of its citizens. Whether you are a curious traveler, student, or policy observer, the chapters ahead promise a comprehensive, nuanced, and engaging portrait of a country like no other—Taiwan.

SAMPLE COPY

Sample from MixCache.com - The Online eBook Marketplace

SHARING STRICTLY PROHIBITED - For personal use of the licensed account only - See MixCache.com Terms of Use.

CHAPTER ONE: Geography and Natural Environment

Taiwan, often affectionately called "Formosa" or "beautiful island" by early European explorers, lives up to its name with a remarkable landscape that belies its modest size. Roughly oval in shape, this island nation spans approximately 35,808 square kilometers (13,826 square miles). To put that into perspective, it's comparable in land area to the Netherlands, or if you're picturing it closer to North America, imagine the combined landmass of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. This relatively small footprint, however, contains an astonishing array of geographical features, from soaring mountain ranges to fertile plains and a captivating coastline.

The island's distinct topography is a direct consequence of its location on the eastern edge of the Eurasian tectonic plate, where it meets the Philippine Sea plate. This geological meeting point is a bustling nexus of seismic activity, with the Philippine Sea plate continuously pushing westward and sliding beneath the Eurasian plate. The result of this slow, persistent collision is the constant uplift of Taiwan's landmass, with the mountains growing by approximately 5 millimeters (a fifth of an inch) per year. This ongoing geological drama has sculpted a landscape of dramatic contrasts, essentially dividing the island into two primary zones: the rugged, mountainous east and the flatter, more populated west.

SAMPLE COPY

The eastern two-thirds of Taiwan are dominated by an impressive expanse of rugged mountain ranges, often referred to as the "backbone" of the island. The most prominent of these is the Central Mountain Range, which stretches along Taiwan's north-south axis for about 330 kilometers (210 miles). This formidable natural barrier is not just a scenic marvel but also plays a crucial role in influencing the island's climate and biodiversity. Within this range and its connected systems, more than two hundred peaks soar above 3,000 meters (10,000 feet), creating a challenging yet rewarding landscape for explorers and nature enthusiasts.

Among these towering giants, Yu Shan, also known as Jade Mountain or Mount Jade, reigns supreme. Reaching an impressive height of 3,952 meters (12,966 feet) above sea level, Yu Shan proudly holds the title of Taiwan's highest mountain. Its name is said to come from the way its peak often appears covered in thick, glistening snow during winter, resembling a precious jade gemstone. Yu Shan is not only the highest point in Taiwan but also the fourth-highest island in the world by maximum elevation, and the highest peak in the Western Pacific region outside of the Kamchatka Peninsula. The Yushan Range, of which Yu Shan is a part, and the nearby Alishan Range, feature diverse elevations and are home to a rich array of flora and fauna.

West of these majestic mountains, the terrain gradually transforms into a series of flat

Sample from MixCache.com - The Online eBook Marketplace

SHARING STRICTLY PROHIBITED - For personal use of the licensed account only - See MixCache.com Terms of Use.

to gently rolling plains. This western third of the island is where the vast majority of Taiwan's highly urbanized population resides, a stark contrast to the sparsely inhabited mountainous regions. These fertile alluvial plains and basins are nourished by numerous rivers that originate in the eastern mountains and flow westward towards the Taiwan Strait. The Chianan Plain in the southwest is the largest of these agricultural heartlands, vital for cultivating staples like rice and a variety of vegetables and tropical fruits. Other significant plains include the Pingtung Plain, Taichung Basin, and Taipei Basin, each contributing to Taiwan's agricultural output and urban development.

Beyond the main island of Taiwan, the Republic of China also exercises jurisdiction over 168 smaller islands and islets. These scattered landmasses, each with its unique character and history, further diversify Taiwan's geographical footprint. Among the most notable are the Penghu Islands, a picturesque archipelago in the Taiwan Strait, known for their basaltic rock formations and vibrant fishing culture. Further afield lie Lanyu (Orchid Island), renowned for its unique indigenous Tao (Yami) culture and traditional underground stone houses, and Green Island, a popular destination for its saltwater hot springs and stunning sunsets.

Closer to the mainland Chinese coast are Kinmen and Matsu, historically and strategically significant islands that offer a glimpse into Taiwan's complex cross-strait relations. Other smaller, yet captivating islands include Xiaoliuqiu, a coral island famous for its sea turtle population and laid-back vibe, and Turtle Island (Guishan Island), a solitary volcanic island off the coast of Yilan that, as its name suggests, resembles a giant turtle floating in the sea. These outlying islands, while requiring a bit more effort to reach, offer distinct experiences, from water sports and historical exploration to immersive cultural encounters.

SAMPLE COPY

Taiwan's coastline, stretching approximately 1,566.3 kilometers (973.3 miles), is as varied as its interior. The west coast features extensive lagoons, mudflats, and wetlands, providing crucial habitats for migratory birds, particularly during winter. In contrast, the northern coast is notably rocky, while the eastern coast, especially between Hualien and Yilan, is characterized by breathtaking cliffs where the mountains dramatically meet the Pacific Ocean. The southern coast, with its coral reefs and tidal platforms, invites exploration of its vibrant marine life, making Taiwan a haven for divers and nature lovers alike.

The geological dynamism that shaped Taiwan also contributes to its rich natural resources, albeit in limited quantities. The island possesses small deposits of coal, natural gas, limestone, and marble. The eastern region, in particular, has historically been known for its marble deposits. Taiwan's rivers, though short and steep due to the mountainous terrain, are also a valuable resource, providing water for agriculture and offering potential for hydroelectric power. The Cho-shui River, the longest river in Taiwan at over 186 kilometers (116 miles), is particularly important for

Sample from MixCache.com - The Online eBook Marketplace

SHARING STRICTLY PROHIBITED - For personal use of the licensed account only - See MixCache.com Terms of Use.

hydroelectricity. This blend of towering mountains, fertile plains, and diverse coastlines creates a truly unique and captivating geographical portrait of Taiwan.

SAMPLE COPY

Sample from MixCache.com - The Online eBook Marketplace

SHARING STRICTLY PROHIBITED - For personal use of the licensed account only - See MixCache.com Terms of Use.

This is a sample preview. Purchase the book to read the full content.

Visit MixCache.com to purchase the complete book.

SAMPLE COPY

Sample from MixCache.com - The Online eBook Marketplace