



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Prepared by the WDP Committee of Taiwan

March 3, 2023

“I Have Heard About Your Faith”

Country Background Script

1. Geographical Location, Climate, and Environment	Photo/Copyright
<p>Taiwan is an island country measuring approximately 36,000 square kilometers, located in the Western Pacific region. The main island sits between Japan and the Philippines with the Tropic of Cancer crossing through its southern half. The capital city—Taipei City—sits in northern Taiwan while other major cities run long the west coast.</p>	 © Cho, I-Kuang  © Chen, Haw-Jan 
<p>There are nine national parks in Taiwan. Among them, the Taroko National Park attracts the most tourists with its splendid gorge scenery. The South Penghu Marine National Park and the Dongsha Atoll National Park preserve the precious coasts and marine resources. Because of its location in the Ring of Fire, Taiwan and its surrounding islands experience approximately 1,000 sensible earthquakes each year. A major earthquake with a magnitude of 7.3 occurred on September 21, 1999 in Central Taiwan (also known as the 921 Earthquake) and was the most disastrous in recent history with more than 13,000 casualties and missing people. While causing damages, earthquakes in Taiwan have also brought about a valuable underground resource, namely geothermally heated groundwater.</p>	  © Siú-tō  © EIMINGCHEN   © KAO, Li-Chuan  © maylynchen  © WANG,CHANG-YU
<p>The unique island geography and climate conditions have resulted in the considerable diversity of animal and plant species. The forests host over 250,000 species that make up 3.8% of all the species</p>	  © Chen, Haw-Jan

in the world. Furthermore, Taiwan has a high proportion of endemic species, with 64% of mammals and 13% of avian species. For example, Taiwan black bears, Formosan barbets, Taiwan blue magpies and Taiwan pleione are all endemic species found in Taiwan.



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2. People

With an approximate population of 23.6 million people, Taiwan is a densely populated multi-ethnic country. The Austronesian people, who have lived on the island for at least 6,000 years, are generally categorized into two groups—the plains indigenous people and the officially-recognized indigenous people. The Minnan people and the Hakka who emigrated from the southeastern coastal areas of the Great Qing Empire in the 17th century make up the majority of the population in Taiwan.

The characteristic of Taiwan as a society of immigrants is also reflected on its language. With the 16 officially-recognized indigenous languages, Hokkien, Hakka, and other dialects used by descendants of Chinese immigrants, and the mother languages spoken by the new immigrants from other countries.

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3. History

Ancient ruins in eastern Taiwan dated approximately 50,000 years ago prove that there have been human activities since ancient times. Because of Taiwan's advantageous location for maritime trade, the Dutch set foot on southern Taiwan in 1624. In 1895, the Qing Empire ceded Taiwan to Japan under the Treaty of Shimonoseki, starting the 50-year period of Japanese rule. The Japanese were defeated in the summer of 1945. Afterwards, Taiwan was placed under the administrative control of

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the government of the Republic of China (“ROC”) on behalf of the Allied forces. Because of cultural differences and the ruling government’s extreme political and economic policies, the Taiwanese society fell into a state of conflicts and unrest, which then led to the February 28 incident in 1947 where local Taiwanese clashed with ROC officials and military personnel.

From 1949 to 1971, the world saw two governments competing diplomatically to be the legitimate Chinese government. However, in 1971, the United Nations officially recognized the People’s Republic of China as “the only legitimate representative of China to the United Nations.” By 2021, only 15 nations in the world maintain diplomatic ties with the Taiwanese government.



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4. Politics

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In 2000, after the presidential candidate from the biggest opposition party—the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)—won the election, Taiwan observed its first peaceful transition of political power, which further matured Taiwan’s democracy. The results of this election also drove the KMT into an opposition party after over 50 years of regime. In 2016, Tsai Ing-wen, a female candidate also of the DPP, was elected president. As the first female president in Taiwan, she started to work for women empowerment while hoping that her success as president would not be characterized by her gender alone.

In 2014, a number of courageous college students and civil organizations occupied the Legislature’s meeting hall in protest of the government’s attempt to sign a trade agreement with China that would infringe upon the country’s sovereignty. The younger generation’s concern about public



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affairs has become a crucial force in Taiwan's democratic progress in recent years.

5. Economy

Taiwan's currency is the New Taiwan dollar. About 90% of the country's energy and raw material supplies relies on mass imports, while different parts of electrical equipment are its primary export products. High-tech industries include core technologies such as Wafer Foundry, Integrated Circuits, the Internet of Things, and Artificial Intelligence. Its agricultural products comprise mainly of flowers, fruits, organic farming, and other products from quality agriculture. The Taiwanese society has since committed to recycling with the second highest recycle rate in the world. On average, each Taiwanese individual produces 0.4 kilos (less than 1 pound) of trash each day, which is significantly lower than the global average of 1.2 kilos (more than 2.5 pounds) per day.

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6. Religions

Being a society of immigrants with the Constitution protecting the basic human rights to freedom of religion, the diversity in religion in Taiwan ranks second in the world, and its religious freedom shares first place with Belgium and The Netherlands.

After Koxinga drove away the Dutch, Christianity was banned in Taiwan until mid-19th century when it was once again brought to Taiwan as the Dominican Order from the Philippines started to evangelize in southern Taiwan. The Wanchin Basilica of the Immaculate Conception is an important landmark indicating the arrival of Catholicism in Taiwan. In the meantime, the English Presbyterian Mission and the Canadian Presbyterian Mission also sent

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missionaries who started their ministries in southern and northern Taiwan, respectively. Due to persecution by the Chinese Communist Party in the 1950s, Christian churches such as Anglicans, Methodists, the Baptist Church, and the Lutheran Church in China fled to Taiwan and started their ministries. Interactions among denominations grew increasingly and actively, leading to the establishment of the National Council of Churches in Taiwan (“NCCT”) in 1963.



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7. Culture

The three most important holidays in Taiwan are the Spring Festival, the Dragon Boat Festival, and the Moon Festival. The Spring Festival is commonly known as the Lunar New Year, when people have approximately one week of holidays. Families gather together on Lunar New Year’s Eve to enjoy a feast, bid farewell to the old year, and welcome the new.

Night markets are very popular in Taiwan, mainly because Taiwan is practically a very safe place.

Art works and performances, such as painting, sculpture, music, dramas, dancing, traditional operas, puppet shows, and Taiwanese operas, have been passed down by outstanding artists and numerous enthusiasts.

People who are enthusiastic about staying healthy are often seen jogging or practicing tai chi or Baduanjin qigong (eight-sectioned exercise) at parks near their homes. Praise dance, which was developed by Christians, is not only a fitness activity but also a way to attract people to Christianity. Taiwan’s Oolong tea is of high quality and widely popular among the people. Drinking tea while spending time with family and friends is considered a great pleasure.

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8. Medical Care	Photo/Copyright
<p>Through years of developing advanced medical equipment and training professional medical care workers, the average life expectancy of the Taiwanese population reached 80.7 years by 2018. The National Health Insurance was established in 1995. The National Health Insurance and the reliable health system also provide partial or full coverage for the less privileged people.</p> <p>During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Taiwan implemented early deployment, border controls, and export bans on surgical masks. Through the requisition and allocation of surgical masks and the donation of over tens of millions of surgical masks to countries that were hit badly by COVID-19, the slogan “Taiwan Can Help” received acknowledgement from many foreign governments.</p>	<div data-bbox="691 212 971 401" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="695 405 954 432" data-label="Caption"> <p>© Taiwan Church Press</p> </div> <div data-bbox="699 617 979 806" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="703 810 963 837" data-label="Caption"> <p>© Taiwan Church Press</p> </div>
9. Education	Photo/Copyright
<p>Since the implementation of nine-year compulsory education in 1968, boys and girls between the age of seven and 15 had been required to attend school. As a result of universal education, the literacy rate among Taiwanese individuals above the age of 15 had reached 99% by 2019. Beginning in 2019, compulsory education was extended to 12 years. Taiwan’s Constitution mandates that women have equal rights for education, and women’s potentials at workplace have increased thereafter.</p> <p>Since 2001, elementary schools have made mother languages a mandatory subject, and students have had an opportunity to study their own mother languages. Furthermore, each ethnic group has been actively promoting its respective mother language through videoclips in the media and on the internet.</p>	<div data-bbox="682 1173 1019 1400" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="678 1402 938 1430" data-label="Caption"> <p>© Taiwan Church Press</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1065 1182 1471 1404" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="1068 1409 1317 1436" data-label="Caption"> <p>© Alice Feei Feei Lim</p> </div> <div data-bbox="691 1572 971 1782" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="695 1787 889 1814" data-label="Caption"> <p>© Chen, Haw-Jan</p> </div>

10. Women	Photo/Copyright
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Under the mainstream patriarchal society of the early years, women were only able to participate in politics through guaranteed seats in public office that provided limited opportunities. Under consideration of gender equality, the discriminating “guarantee system” was changed into the “principles of gender proportion” in 1999, in order to encourage more women to take part in politics. At 42%, the proportion of women in legislature is the highest in Asia.

First of all, women’s participation in politics is still limited by patriarchy and party politics. Secondly, the labor market continues to practice wage discrepancies based on gender. While seemingly independent, many Taiwanese women still suffer from the ordeals of domestic violence, sexual harassment/assault, and the internet and drug abuse. These are all indicators that the Taiwanese society still has much to improve on gender equality. The church started the ordination of female elders/deacons in the 1920s and of female pastors in 1949. In 2020, the first female moderator of PCT’s general assembly was elected making her the first female church leader at the national level.



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11. The History and Current State of WDP in Taiwan

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The earliest record of Taiwan church women’s participation in the World Day of Prayer dates back to March 1935 in the Taiwan Church Press. The PCT invited YWCA, the Baptist Church, the Methodist Church, and the Lutheran Church to hold a WDP worship service and to establish the “WDP Committee” as the taskforce under the Women’s Mission.

In the 1970s, the United States



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severed its diplomatic ties with Taiwan. In the midst of China's military threats and the critical state of Taiwan's international status, the PCT issued three declarations. However, the government at the time did not tolerate dissents, and the PCT suffered persecution in many ways. As a result, other denominations distanced themselves from the PCT, which also impacted the assembly of inter-denomination WDP worship services. By 1979, the national WDP committee in Taiwan had been operated solely by the PCT. In 1982, YWCA convened with a few denominations and church organizations to establish the WDP Taiwan National Committee, resulting in the current state of two WDP points of contact in Taiwan.

In 2017, the WDPIC accepted Taiwan's proposal to write the worship service materials for 2023. This certainly opened up an opportunity for the two WDP committees in Taiwan to collaborate. In 2020, the two committees formed four writing working groups, and the process of working in conjunction has brought the WDP movement in Taiwan an opportunity of mutual exchange and dialogue to seek a state of unity in faith and love between the two committees.



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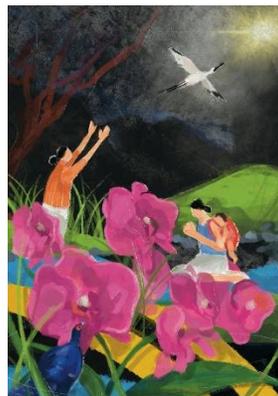
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12. The Artist and Artwork

The women in the painting are sitting by a stream, praying silently and looking up into the dark. Despite the uncertainty of the path ahead, they know that the salvation of Christ has come.

The painting also features two endangered species: the Mikado pheasant and the Black-faced Spoonbill, both of unique significance to the Taiwanese people. Their distinctiveness symbolizes the characteristic of the

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Taiwanese people—showing confidence and perseverance in times of difficulty.

The green grass and Phalaenopsis (Butterfly) orchids stand out against the dark background, they are the pride of Taiwan. Taiwan has a worldwide reputation for being the “Kingdom of Orchids.”

Green grass represents Taiwanese grassroots nature—simple, confident and strong, with God taking care of the grass in the field.

Hui-Wen HSAIO was born in Tainan, Taiwan, in 1993. In 2017, she received her bachelor’s degree in Visual Communication Design at Kun Shan University in Tainan, Taiwan. She is currently pursuing a master’s degree in Intermedia Art Therapy (Intermediale Kunsttherapie) at MSH Medical School in Hamburg, Germany. As a woman, I want to explore the female identity through my artwork. My subjects and art always depict the relationship of mothers, women, and people. In my exhibitions, I compose my artwork under the theme of mothers in order to express my observation, gratitude, and faith. I cherish my God-given talents and serve God with my artwork. I humbly hope people will know God through my art.



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