

Taiwan culture and history escorted small group tour

Reading List

Taiwan: A Political History

by Denny Roy

For centuries, various great powers have both exploited and benefited Taiwan, their designs for this island frequently clashing with the desire of local inhabitants to control their own destiny. Such conflicts have shaped Taiwan's multiple, and frequently contradictory, identities. Denny Roy contends that Taiwan's political history is best understood as a continuous struggle for security. Eschewing the usual emphasis on the high politics of the recent era, he offers a comprehensive narrative of the island's political history from the first Chinese settlements to the Chen Shui-bian presidency. Roy covers the political system constructed by the KMT during the Cold War, the opposition breakthrough, the presidency of Lee Teng-hui, and the DPP presidential victory in March 2000. Roy's approach allows him to integrate his understanding of Taiwan's domestic politics with its foreign affairs—particularly the relations with mainland China. He reveals how the interplay between political forces within and the influence of foreign countries from without has shaped Taiwan. His is a balanced account, incorporating up-to-date coverage and presenting many indigenous voices. Taiwan: A Political History illuminates the origins of the island's often-troubled domestic and international political situation.

Taiwan's China Dilemma: Contested Identities and Multiple Interests in Taiwan's Cross-Strait Economic Policy

by Syaru Shirley Lin

China and Taiwan share one of the world's most complex international relationships. Although similar cultures and economic interests promoted an explosion of economic ties between them since the late 1980s, these ties have not led to an improved political relationship, let alone progress toward the unification that both governments once claimed to seek. In addition, Taiwan's recent Sunflower Movement succeeded in obstructing deeper economic ties with China. Why has Taiwan's policy toward China been so inconsistent?

Taiwan's China Dilemma explains the divergence between the development of economic and political relations across the Taiwan Strait through the interplay of national identity and economic interests. Using primary sources, opinion surveys, and interviews with Taiwanese opinion leaders,

Syaru Shirley Lin paints a vivid picture of one of the most unsettled and dangerous relationships in the contemporary world, and illustrates the growing backlash against economic liberalization and regional economic integration around the world.

Taiwan: A New History

by Murray A. Rubinstein

Since its initial publication in 1999, Taiwan: A New History has established itself as the book of choice on the history of Taiwan. Conceived as a cohesive and interconnected set of interpretive and narrative essays, it is the most integrated, comprehensive, and accessible history of Taiwan published in any Western language. The contributors are the very best people in their specialties, drawn from North America, Europe, and Asia. This new edition expands the coverage from where the first edition ended in 1995 to 2006. It includes new material on democratization, party politics, and the independence movement. Collectively, the chapters take the reader from the geographical and climatological setting, through the stages of premodern history and contact with China and the West, through the Japanese occupation, to the successful establishment of a modern state.

Forbidden Nation: A History of Taiwan

by Jonathan Manthorpe

For over 400 years, Taiwan has suffered at the hands of multiple colonial powers, but it has now entered the decade when its independence will be won or lost. At the heart of Taiwan's story is the curse of geography that placed the island on the strategic cusp between the Far East and Southeast Asia and made it the guardian of some of the world's most lucrative trade routes. It is the story of the dogged determination of a courageous people to overcome every obstacle thrown in their path. Forbidden Nation tells the dramatic story of the island, its people, and what brought them to this moment when their future will be decided.

Accidental State: Chiang Kai-shek, the United States, and the Making of Taiwan

by Hsiao-ting Lin

The existence of two Chinese states—one controlling mainland China, the other controlling the island of Taiwan—is often understood as a seemingly inevitable outcome of the Chinese civil war. Defeated by Mao Zedong, Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists fled to Taiwan to establish a rival state, thereby

creating the “Two Chinas” dilemma that vexes international diplomacy to this day. Accidental State challenges this conventional narrative to offer a new perspective on the founding of modern Taiwan.

Hsiao-ting Lin marshals extensive research in recently declassified archives to show that the creation of a Taiwanese state in the early 1950s owed more to serendipity than careful geostrategic planning. It was the cumulative outcome of ad hoc half-measures and imperfect compromises, particularly when it came to the Nationalists’ often contentious relationship with the United States.

Taiwan’s political status was fraught from the start. The island had been formally ceded to Japan after the First Sino-Japanese War, and during World War II the Allies promised Chiang that Taiwan would revert to Chinese rule after Japan’s defeat. But as the Chinese civil war turned against the Nationalists, U.S. policymakers reassessed the wisdom of backing Chiang. The idea of placing Taiwan under United Nations trusteeship gained traction. Cold War realities, and the fear of Taiwan falling into Communist hands, led Washington to recalibrate U.S. policy. Yet American support of a Taiwan-based Republic of China remained ambivalent, and Taiwan had to eke out a place for itself in international affairs as a de facto, if not fully sovereign, state.

Why Taiwan Matters: Small Island, Global Powerhouse

by Shelley Rigger

Now in an updated paperback edition, *Why Taiwan Matters* offers a comprehensive but compact introduction to a country that exercises a role in the world far greater than its tiny size would indicate. Leading expert Shelley Rigger explains how Taiwan became such a key global player, highlighting economic and political breakthroughs so impressive they have been called “miracles.” She links these accomplishments to Taiwan’s determined society, vibrant culture, and unique history. Drawing on arts, economics, politics, and international relations, Rigger explores Taiwan’s importance to China, the United States, and the world. Considering where Taiwan may be headed in its wary standoff with China, she traces how the focus of Taiwan’s domestic politics has shifted to a Taiwan-centered strategy. All readers interested in Asia and international affairs will find this an accessible and entertaining overview, replete with human interest stories and colorful examples of daily life in Taiwan.

My Fight for a New Taiwan: One Woman's Journey from Prison to Power

by Hsiu-lien Lu (Author), Ashley Esarey (Author), Jerome A. Cohen (Foreword)

Lu Hsiu-lien’s journey is the story of Taiwan. Through her successive drives for gender equality, human rights, political reform, Taiwan independence, and, currently, environmental protection, Lu

has played a key role in Taiwan's evolution from dictatorship to democracy. The election in 2000 of Democratic Progressive Party leader Chen Shui-bian to the presidency, with Lu as his vice president, ended more than fifty years of rule by the Kuomintang (Nationalist Party).

Taiwan's painful struggle for democratization is dramatized here in the life of Lu, a feminist leader and pro-democracy advocate who was imprisoned for more than five years in the 1980s. Unlike such famous Asian women politicians as Burma's Aung San Suu Kyi, India's Indira Gandhi, and Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto, Lu Hsiu-lien grew up in a family without political connections. Her impoverished parents twice attempted to give her away for adoption, and as an adult she survived cancer and imprisonment, later achieving success as an elected politician?the first self-made woman to serve with such prominence in Asia.

My Fight for a New Taiwan's rich narrative gives readers an insider's perspective on Taiwan's unique blend of Chinese and indigenous culture and recent social transformation.
