

Cycling Taiwan

A Virtual Multi-Disciplinary Introduction to the History and Culture of Taiwan

Created by Anne Prescott and Yurika Kurakata

for the Five College Center for East Asian Studies (FCCEAS)

National Consortium for Teaching about Asia (NCTA) National Coordinating Site

September 2025

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Special thanks to

Prof. Li-Hsin Chen, National Kaohsiung University of Hospitality and Tourism, Taiwan

Sherry Tsou, Cycling Culture Museum, Taichung (Giant Bicycle)

Sheron Wang, Cycling Lifestyle Foundation, Taipei (Giant Bicycle)

Funded by a generous grant from the Freeman Foundation

Participants cycle (both virtually and the distance in reality) 612.1 miles around Taiwan, completing readings, viewing webinars/videos, exploring websites, and responding to discussion prompts for an introductory unit and twelve location-based milestones. In addition, text and photos with general information as well as links to information and resources for each milestone can be used independently, or as introductions to or in conjunction with the readings, videos and assignments. The milestone texts are available at the end of this document. Ideally users will explore each location using Google Street View as well.

Individual units may be used independently, and instructors may select from the readings, other resources and discussion prompts as appropriate for their classrooms. Users are strongly encouraged to utilize Google Street View to enhance their learning about the human and physical geography of Taiwan.

When doing the entire program, accommodations can easily be made for those who do not wish to cycle. For example, you may choose to walk (double or triple the number of miles you walk—whatever seems right to you); swim (adjust the number of miles accordingly—choose an equivalency that makes sense to you); or do another type of activity. The point of cycling is for you to have some sense of the distance around Taiwan, but you should feel free to do what is comfortable for you if you choose not to cycle.

Books: *Taiwan's Imagined Geography*, Emma Jinhua Teng, Harvard University Press, 2006; *Taiwan: A Contested Democracy Under Threat*, Jonathan Sullivan and Lev Nachman, Columbia University Press, 2024; *Boy from Clearwater Volumes 1 and 2*, Yu Pei-Yun, illustrated by Zhou Jian-Xin, translated by Lin King, Levine Quirido, Vol 1-2023, Vol 2-2024; *Daughters of the Flower Fragrant Garden: Two Sisters Separated by China's Civil War*, Zhuqing Li, W.W. Norton and Co., 2022; *Chip War: The Fight for the World's Most Critical Technology*, Chris Miller, Scribner, 2022; *Made in Taiwan: Recipes and Stories from the Island Nation*, Clarissa Wei, S&S/Simon Element, 2023; *Green Island: A Novel*, Shawna Yang Ryan, Vintage, 2016.

Other resources: see the links in the units below.

Before you begin: Introduction Geography

Read: *Taiwan's Imagined Geography*: Interlude 1 (pp. 31-33); Ch 1-An Island Beyond the Seas Enters the Map (pp. 34-59); Ch 5 The Raw and the Cooked (pp. 122-148); Conclusion-Taiwan as a Lost Part of 'My China' (pp. 237-248)

Country Reports [Taiwan](#)

[Island In Between](#) (Academy Award Nominee) Film and Text by S. Leo Chiang, Dec. 11, 2023, (19')

[Who Are the Taiwanese?](#) Video (30') TaiwanPlus Docs, Sept. 6, 2024

Discussion prompts: 1) In *Taiwan's Imagined Geography* you read about China's perception of Taiwan in the 17th-19th centuries. Find one example that would either support or rebuke (or one of each, if you're so inclined) China's claim on Taiwan today. **2)** Give one example (or more, if you like) of how China/the Qing Dynasty viewed indigenous Taiwanese. **3)** A friend asks you, "why should I care about Taiwan?" What would your response be?

Songshan (Taipei): Cross-straits relations

Milestone 1, 0.1 miles

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/mVnRMwgLCxnYb7uh9>

Read: *Taiwan: A Contested Democracy Under Threat*, Lev Nachman and Jonathan Sullivan

[Why China-Taiwan Relations Are So Tense](#), The Council on Foreign Relations, March 19, 2025.

View: Lev Nachman, [Taiwan: A Contested Democracy Under Threat archived webinar](#).

[How China's Threat of Invasion is Changing Taiwan](#) (Vincent Chao, DPP; 7')

Optional recommended resources: [Frontline: Dangerous Straits: Exploring the Future of U.S. China Relations and the Long-Simmering Issue of Taiwan](#), includes Teacher's Guide
[Taiwanese company develops board game based on Chinese invasion](#), *Taipei Times*, Sept. 4, 2024

Discussion prompts: 1) Why does China want to control Taiwan? **2)** Why does the China-Taiwan relationship matter to the US? Other Asian countries? **3)** Using Google Street View, go to Shaxi Fort on Kinmen Island (the closest point to mainland China). (24.41184318295284, 118.21332060363979) What do you see?

Hsinchu

Technology

Milestone 2, 56 miles

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/zCfMnJCyyfZbJwnJ9>

Read: *Chip War* Chapter 29 "We Want a Semiconductor Industry in Taiwan," Chapter 37 "Morris Chang's Grand Alliance", Chapter 53 "Shortages and Supply Chains", Chapter 54 "The Taiwan Dilemma," and "Conclusion."

[The secret sauce for Taiwan's chip superstardom](#), BBC, 16 Dec. 2023

View: Audrey Tang, Digital Minister, [Adapting to the Rise of Authoritarianism](#), Oslo Freedom Forum, Sept. 24, 2020 (24'44")

[China's cyber assault on Taiwan](#), *60 Minutes*; Oct. 9, 2022 (5'44")

Discussion prompts: **1)** What makes TSMC unique? **2)** What would the consequences be for you if Taiwanese chips suddenly ceased to be available?

Xinwuri (Taichung)

Sports: Bike culture in Taiwan

Milestone 3, 122 miles

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/mVnRMwgLCxnYb7uh9>

View: Li-Hsin Chen, ["Bicycle History and Sustainability in Taiwan" archived webinar](#).

[Formosa 900 2023](#), *Cycling Lifestyle*, Jan. 8, 2024 (11')

[How Giant Became the World's Biggest Bike Company](#), *Cycling Pulse*, Dec. 30, 2018 (3'47")

[Handcrafted by Giant](#), *Giant Bicycles*, Aug. 5, 2015 (4'12")

[Bonnie: A film about what it takes to make a difference for women in cycling](#), *Liv Cycling*, Oct. 22, 2024 (16')

Discussion prompts: **1)** Visit a bicycle shop and talk with them about Giant and Liv bicycles. What does the staff know about them? Do they carry them? How well do they sell? Is there a certain demographic which is more likely to purchase these brands? **2)** What should your friends/students know about the Giant Company, and why? **3)** What motivates Bonnie Tu? What has she done for cycling?

Tainan

Maritime history and the Dutch in Taiwan

Milestone 4, 201 miles

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/mVnRMwgLCxnYb7uh9>

View: Robert Murowchick ["Centering Taiwan in Maritime Asia" archived webinar](#)

Read: ["China, Global History, and the Sea Pedagogical Perspectives and Applications"](#) Eugenio Menegon, Eytan Goldstein, Grant Rhode, Robert Murowchick, Thomas Kennelly, William Grimes, *Education about Asia*, Fall 2020

["In the Days of the Dutch"](#) *Taiwan Today*, Nov. 4, 2025

[Dutch Trading Post Heritage Network: Fort Zeelandia/Anping](#)

Watch: [Anping Fort to be renamed Fort Zeelandia](#) RTI, Oct. 13, 2022 (1'41")

Explore: National Palace Museum Taipei [Boundless exhibit](#)

[Centering Taiwan](#) Fort Zeelandia [Anping] and Fort Provintia entries; [Centering Taiwan](#) Koxinga entry

Discussion prompts: **1)** Taiwan's geographic location and presence of Europeans in the 17th century made it an important spot in global maritime history. Why do you think that Taiwan has often been overlooked in discussions of maritime East Asia? **2)** Using Google Street View explore the area around one of the following: Anping Fort (23.00170679575534, 120.16076386930241), Fort Provintia (22.998638026481036, 120.20255490033975), Tainan Grand Mazu Temple (22.996843902874446,

120.20191454601655). What do you see? Discuss the other types of establishments in the area, population density, how the people are moving around, etc.

Kaohsiung
Identity and the Environment
Milestone 5, 258 miles
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/mVnRMwgLCxnYb7uh9>

Read: *Daughters of the Flower Fragrant Garden*

[“Classical Trash: How Taiwan’s musical bin lorries transformed ‘garbage island’](#) *The Guardian*, 26 Dec. 2022

Combating Climate Change—Taiwan Can Help

https://en.mofa.gov.tw/News_Content.aspx?n=1575&s=34810 (official ROC position statement 2018)

Browse: [Ministry of the Environment](#)

Watch: [Understanding Taiwan: Environmental](#) (from Singapore Management University) 7 short videos

Listen: [What it Means to be Taiwanese for One Family](#), NPR, Ailsa Chang and Emily Feng, Jan. 9, 2024 (12”)

[Garbage truck music](#), news.com.au, Dec. 28, 2022; [Garbage truck music](#), Brian L, April 23, 2015 (each link is different music; these are the two most popular garbage truck songs)

Optional: [“Sisters and Enemies: A True Story of Two Sisters”](#) (Zhuqing Li, *Education about Asia*, Spring 2022)

Discussion prompts: **1)** How have history and government narratives shaped the lives of families on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, and how does that affect their identities? **2)** You viewed 6 short videos on the Understanding Taiwan: Environmental page. Which one had the most impact on you, and why? **3)** If you had to pick “garbage truck music,” what would you choose and why?

Fangliao
Food culture
Milestone 6, 286 miles
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/xvp6semkvLKSQLtG8>

Read: *Made in Taiwan* pp. 11-39 and “beige pages”

Discussion prompt: Choose a recipe from *Made in Taiwan* that appeals to you. Are all of the ingredients familiar to you? How far would you have to go to get the ingredients? Does your closest Asian grocery store have them? Make one of the recipes, and describe how it went. Share photos!! Would you make it again? On a regular basis or just for special events? Is there another recipe (or recipes) that you’d like to try?

Taimali
Colonization, White Terror, and Beyond
Milestone 7, 341 miles
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/rBHzt1rW1zpy3cEQ8>

Read: *Green Island*

The Boy from Clearwater Vols 1 and 2

[Transitional Justice in Taiwan](#); pp. 1-2, 6-9, 10-12, 21-22, 45-47, Thomas Shattuck, Foreign Policy Research Institute, Nov. 6, 2019.

Explore: [Centering Taiwan: Colonization](#)

Optional but highly recommended: Shawna Yang Ryan [Green Island archived webinar](#);

Lin King, translator of [The Boy from Clearwater archived webinar](#);

[Untold Herstory](#) film, TaiwanPlus (available through Aug. 2029) (1'52")

Discussion prompts: 1) Many in Taiwan see the period of White Terror as a period of colonization. Who might feel that way, and why? 2) Many in Taiwan see the Japanese colonial period as one that benefitted the island. Why might they feel that way?

Taitung

Agriculture

Milestone 8, 362 miles

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/XXPmEZdXXNnyMarT8>

View: [“Agriculture and agricultural products in Taiwan,”](#) James Lin, University of Washington Taiwan Studies Program, archived webinar

[A pineapple symbolizes the tense relationship between China and Taiwan](#), Emily Feng, NPR, Jan. 25, 2024

[How turkey became a popular dish in Taiwan](#), Emily Feng, NPR, Nov. 23, 2023

Discussion prompts: 1) What (if any) agricultural products cultivated in your state are exported to Taiwan? Are any of them subject to export limits or regulations from Taiwan, and if so, how and why? 2) Agricultural production can be politicized. How have China and Taiwan used agricultural products as political tools?

Ruisui

Indigenous Taiwan

Milestone 9, 426 miles

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/4Xw4THYn53TRnSih7>

Read: [“The Last Indigenous Village in Metro Kaohsiung”](#) *Taipei Times*, March 31, 2024

[Who are the Taiwanese Indigenous People?](#) Ciwang Teyra, *Commonwealth Magazine*, July 26, 2019

[Return to Innocence controversy](#), Chiung-Wen Chang, College Music Symposium, Oct. 1, 2009

Read/Listen: [One of Taiwan’s Top Pop Stars Sings in an Indigenous Language](#), Emily Feng and Hugo Peng, NPR, Dec. 28, 2022

[Elders Drinking Song](#) (sampled in “Return to Innocence”) provided to YouTube by Rock Records, Nov. 2, 2019

[Elder’s Drinking Song](#) (contemporary recording by Amis in Taiwan using indigenous instruments) TheLonelyBearClub, July 22, 2013

Enigma [“Return to Innocence”](#) Enigma, March 10, 2009

Explore: [Council of Indigenous Peoples](#)
[Centering Taiwan: Indigeneity](#)

View: [Pres. Tsai Ing-wen’s apology to the indigenous people of Taiwan \(text and video\)](#) Aug. 1, 2016
[Road to Legacy—Abao: The Voice of a Nation](#) documentary, TaiwanPlus, March 22, 2022 (42’)
[A History of Taiwan’s Indigenous People and the State, Prof. Ku Kun-hui](#) archived webinar

Optional recommended reading: *Puppet Flower: A Novel of 1867 Formosa*

Discussion prompts: 1) How are indigenous people in Taiwan reclaiming their identities, and how are the government, entertainment industry, and other entities trying to support them? 2) Why is it problematic to sample indigenous music in Western pop music?

Hualien
Religion and Mazu
Milestone 10, 473 miles
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/iwFBpMmyPNzFHXub7>

Read: [Tainan Grand Matsu Temple](#)

Watch (and read): [Birthday Celebration for the Sea Goddess Mazu](#), TaiwanPlus News, April 26, 2023
[Dajia Mazu Pilgrimage Draws Hundreds of Thousands](#), TaiwanPlus News, April 15, 2022
[Mazu: Taiwan’s Leading Goddess](#), Cathy Teng, photos by Lin Min-hsuan, tr. by Jonathan Barnard, *Taiwan Panorama*, April 2022
[Mad about Mazu: The Passion and Philanthropy of Pilgrimages](#), Tina Xie, tr. by Geof Aberhart, *Taiwan Panorama*, April 2022
[The Vitality of Faith in Taiwan: Chen Yi-hong’s Images of Folk Religion](#), Chen Chun-fang, photos courtesy of Chen Yi-hong, tr. by Brandon Yen, *Taiwan Panorama*, April 2022

Note: Mazu and Matsu are romanizations for the same Chinese character. Mazu may also be known as Tin Hau, Tianhou, Tianfei or other names.

Discussion prompt activity: Choose one of the videos above and observe 1) where and when the activity is taking place, 2) what is happening, 3) who is participating, 4) what implements, clothing, foods, etc. are included, and 5) other details that seem significant to you.

Dongshan (Yilan)
Traditional arts and culture
Milestone 11, 544 miles
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/EPpPK56Leh6mxAWYA>

Glove puppetry

Read: [Innovating Tradition: The Interdisciplinary Practice of Bodehi Glove Puppetry Theatre in Taiwan](#), Chih-Ching Chester Tsai, University of Nottingham Taiwan Research Hub, 3 March 2023
[Taiwanese Puppetry: Continuing a Rich Tradition](#), Stephanie Huffman, Taiwan Business Topics, July 10, 2018

Watch: [The Art of Taiwanese Glove Puppetry \(Budaixi\)](#), 僑務電子報, Dec. 15, 2016 (2'25")
[A Taiwanese Puppeteer and his Puppets](#), Focus Taiwan (CNA English News), Jan. 20, 2022 (5'15")
[Glove Puppetry: Your Window into Taiwanese Traditions](#), Trending Taiwan, Feb. 22, 2019 (3'41")

Chinese Knots--Watch and create: [How to tie a decorative Chinese good luck knot](#), WhyKnot, June 5, 2015

Lanterns --Watch: [Lantern Festival Lights Up the Skies of Northern Taiwan](#), TaiwanPlus News, Feb. 19, 2024

Lanterns--Create: (See appendix for template and instructions)

Discussion prompt activity: 1) Would glove puppetry appeal to your students/friends/classmates, and if so, what would they like about it? 2) Create one Chinese knot (use any kind of string, ribbon, yarn, etc. that you like) and one lantern using the instructions (video and template) provided. Report back on how it went, and share a photo of your final products.

Songshan Station, Taipei
Milestone 12, 612.1 miles
FINISH!

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/mVnRMwgLCxnYb7uh9>

Discussion prompts: 1) Think about what you knew about Taiwan before you started on this journey, and what you've learned since then. How will your classroom teaching change? What additional resources or information do you need to further incorporate Taiwan into your teaching? 2) A friend asks you, "why should I care about Taiwan?" What would your response be now that you've traveled around the island? 3) If you could visit in person, which milestone(s) would you want to see most and why?

Additional Resources

[Centering Taiwan in Global Asia](#), University of Pittsburgh Asian Studies Center

[University of Washington Taiwan Studies Program YouTube channel](#)

Milestones

The following milestones can be used independently, or as introductions to or in conjunction with the above readings, videos and assignments. They contain general information about the city or region as well as links to additional information and resources.



Songshan Milestone 1

Welcome to Taipei!

The round-island Cycling Route No. 1 starts at Songshan Station where you can take a commemorative photo at the 0km mark with the Formosan Black Bear, who is pointing the way. The brown sign on the left is used to mark Route No. 1 around the island, and the blue sign on the right says Songshan Station.

Taipei has two main train stations; one is the HSR (High Speed Rail) Taipei Station. Songshan Station is for the regular local trains. Near Songshan Station is the famous Raohe Night Market. [This link](#) lets you browse photos of the market and if you click on the map on the right and then go to street view, you can “walk” through the market area in the daytime. For specific food items, check [this blog with photos](#) of the types of food you will find.

Taipei is the capital of Taiwan, and the Presidential Palace is in the center of the city. Taiwan held its most recent election on January 13, 2024. How does one vote in Taiwan? Watch this [one minute video](#) on what to bring, how to vote and how each ballot is counted. This American journalist also went into a polling station during the January 2024 election to watch the manual counting process in this [90 second video](#). As you’ll see, officials write the Chinese character 正, meaning correct or positive, on the whiteboard for every five ballots. In this case, it’s used the same way that we do 4 lines with a cross-hatch to keep track of things being counted. Schools are often transformed into polling stations in Taiwan, given that Election Day is on a Saturday.

While you’re in Taipei, don’t miss [Lungshan](#), the oldest temple in Taipei. As the photos in the link show, this almost 300-year-old temple is probably one of the most visited temples by locals and tourists. Religion is not practiced in Taiwan in the same way it is in the West. The first two minutes of this [seven-minute video](#) explains how in Taiwan, like in many other East Asian countries, people don’t join one church and follow one religion’s practices and rituals, but rather blends in aspects of Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism into their beliefs and customs.

Lastly, here are [some photos of Taipei](#) from 1980 taken by American photographer, Leroy W. DeMery Jr.. Then, for contrast, take a look at Taipei’s skyline today on [this live camera feed](#).



Hsinchu Milestone 2

You've made it to the first stop in Hsinchu. Hsinchu Science Park, where TSMC headquarters is located, is called the Silicon Valley of Taiwan. Before the company was established here in 1987, Hsinchu had a long history as the administrative capital of the Qing Dynasty and the Japanese colonizers. You can see [the architecture the Japanese left behind](#) in what is now the Hsinchu Municipal Government Hall.

Hsinchu has a large population of Hakka people, who are originally from Fujian and Guandong provinces on the mainland. Hakka is also one of the [official languages of Taiwan](#). You can see some remnants of the Fujianese culture as seen in Hukou Old Street as seen [in these photos](#).

The tiny thin products known as chips are found in our phones, computers, microwaves, cars and countless other items we use every day. Morris Chang founded TSMC, the leading chip manufacturer in Taiwan, and #2 (after Samsung) in the world. [This link](#) provides a brief bio and his thoughts on the industry based on a talk he gave in October 2023. [This 7 minute video from Khan Academy](#) explains the purpose of a semiconductor chip and [this 8 minute video](#) shows how chips and wafers are made at a fab plant at TSMC.



Taichung Milestone 3

Taichung, where Giant Bicycle has its headquarters, is the third-largest city in Taiwan. The city is also home to hundreds of companies that make bicycles or bicycle parts. According to the [Taiwan Bicycle Source guidebook](#) (produced annually, with over 1100 pages!), Taiwan exported 1.99 million bikes in 2021, with an average price of about USD \$662 per bike. Almost 1 million e-bikes were also exported that year, but with an average price of USD \$1331! With over 800 companies that manufacture bikes and bike parts on the island, 80% of which are based in Taichung, there's a very high chance that your bike or e-bike has a connection to Taichung. According to [this 900-word article](#) by Bike News online, the United States imports almost 60% of its bicycle parts from Taiwan. In much the same way as chip maker

TSMC operates, these bike part companies focus on improving a single piece out of the 30-some bike parts, making themselves indispensable to bike manufacturers around the world.

Taichung is also home to [Rainbow Village](#). What was once military housing was painted colorfully and single handedly beginning in 2008 by a retired soldier, Huang Yung-fu (who died in Jan. 2024 at the age of 101), so the barracks would not be demolished.

Also in Taichung is the very lively [Feng Chia Night Market](#), located next to [Feng Chia University](#). The campus and night market are sandwiched between narrow, busy streets without pedestrian sidewalks. With motorbike riders riding close by, it can make for a slightly nerve-wracking experience for pedestrians. Maybe Taichung could encourage motorbike users to switch to e-bikes?



Tainan Milestone 4

Welcome to Tainan! For 263 years, Tainan was the capital of Taiwan, so there is a lot of history to be seen and experienced here. [Fort Zeelandia/Anping Fort](#), [the Koxinga Shrine](#) and the National Museum of Taiwan History are all here. [Here is a link to the summary of the exhibits](#) at the museum; each tab provides a description of a different time period in Taiwan.

[Many colonial era buildings](#) have been repurposed and are still standing in Tainan. The Hayashi Department store which operated as a Japanese department store until the end of the war was recently restored in 2013. On its roof top, there is a Japanese Shinto torii gate (possibly the only torii gate on a roof top in Taiwan) as well as holes in the wall from the bombing of Tainan in 1945 by the US forces. Scroll through [the photos on this link](#) to see.

Chiayi, just to the north of Tainan, is the birthplace of the famous Cloud Gate Theater choreographer, [Lin Hwai-Min](#) who has been celebrated in the United States and around the world for his performances that infuse Asian aesthetics into contemporary movement. Watch [this four-minute clip](#) with relaxing music by Satie to get a taste of his choreography.

What else happens in Tainan? The inauguration dinner for 16th President-elect Lai Ching-te was held here on May 20, 2024. [This 90 second news clip](#) shows some of the dishes which have been inspired by the five major ethnic groups and will use ingredients from [all 22 cities and counties](#) on the island.

Finally, just north of Tainan in Chiayi is one of the three Tropic of Cancer landmarks; [this one seems to resemble a space ship](#).



Kaohsiung Milestone 5

Welcome to Kaohsiung! Those familiar with the Chinese language will know that Kaohsiung is pronounced more like “Gaoshung” with a “g” rather than the “k” sound. Kaohsiung was known as “Takao” by the indigenous people of the area as well as by the Japanese during the colonial period. The Port of Kaohsiung is Taiwan’s largest harbor and it has a thriving arts and cultural scene.

The milestone photo shows art on the side of a building near the port. [This live camera](#) shows vessels coming into the port, as well as the former warehouses that have been transformed into art and music spaces at [Pier 2 Art Center](#). The port can handle up to 155 vessels per day and this [live map](#) will show you the names and origin of vessels arriving or departing there today. Can you identify the country of origin of all of them?

Kaohsiung is also known for electing its first openly gay legislator, Huang Jie, in the January 2024 election. If you want to learn more about what Huang wants to achieve in her newly elected role, [read this article](#) (or listen to it being read in under five minutes).

Lastly, watch [this 90 second news clip](#) showing how trash is sorted by residents and then collected when they hear the “Maiden’s Prayer” or “Für Elise.” This isn’t unique to Kaohsiung—garbage is collected in the same manner throughout Taiwan. The music might remind you of an ice cream truck. As the news clip describes, disposing your garbage together this way is a chance to connect with your neighbors. Would you be interested in trying this in your neighborhood?



Fangliao Milestone 6

You've arrived in Fangliao—almost at the southern tip of the island! Known as a small fishing village in Pingtung County, local farmers harvest plenty of grouper fish as well as eels. China has historically been a big importer of the grouper fish, but banned its import from June 2022-December 2023 for political reasons. Japan is a major importer of eels. The Kuroshio Current, also known as the Black Current, brings baby eels to the area between

November and February. As this 2 minute [news clip shows](#), eel farmers from all around the island come to Fangliao to get their catch. Each baby eel sells for around USD\$3.50, meaning a single catch can fetch around \$10,000 USD.

With the abundance of seafood, the Shuidiliao Market in Fangliao (as well as the many night markets on the island as you can see in the photo above) are not to be missed. Taiwan has developed its own, unique food culture and identity as Clarissa Wei notes in [this interview here](#).

As we get closer to the southern-most tip of the island, there are a few interesting geographical points worth noting. The first undersea internet cable connecting Taiwan and the United States was laid near Fangliao in 1999, as noted in [this article](#). These cables are vital, connecting islands not only in East Asia but around the world. If you're interested in a short primer on undersea internet cables, [this short article](#) will explain. Some of these cables, particularly the ones that connect the Matsu Islands have been [damaged more than a few times by Chinese vessels in recent years](#).

The section of Highway 1 which runs from Jiadong, to the north of Fangliao, through Fangliao is one of five strips of public road that can be used [for emergency military jet landings and take offs, in the event of a war](#). This is also part of our cycling route, so you may want to keep a watch out for things above your head!



Taimali Milestone 7

Congratulations—you’ve made it around the southern tip of the island and arrived in Taimali!

One third of the township’s population is made up of the indigenous Amis and Paiwan peoples. In Paiwan, Taimali means the place where the sun rises. Indeed, many beautiful sunrises can be seen here including the island’s most beautiful train station, [Duoliang Station](#). As a train

exits a long mountain tunnel, the Pacific Ocean will appear right away, with waves crashing just a hundred feet away. Check out [this live camera here](#) and you’ll hear the sound of the waves, and maybe even see a train coming in. If you just want some relaxing sounds, listen [to this three minute recording](#) of the waves, birds and chickens that you’ll hear on the Taimali seaside on any given morning (click on Play in the middle of the page).

The National Human Rights Museum, which houses the White Terror Memorial Park is on Green Island, is off the coast from here. If you want to learn more, the Museum’s website has a [timeline about the White Terror](#) as well as numerous oral history interviews of those who were imprisoned there.

Lastly, on a lighter note, Green Island held a three-day Mazu festival in 2023; the first time in 300 years! Catch some of the action of the Mazu Festival which involved over 1000 worshippers and 30 boats in this 90 second [news clip here](#).

Image: *The Horrifying Inspection* by Taiwanese printmaker Huang Rong-can. It describes the hostile environment in Taiwan shortly after the February 28 incident, which marked the start of the White Terror period. Image credit: Jun Li (Huang Rong-can) (1916-1952), Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



Taitung Milestone 8

Taitung is home to rice fields and fruit farms. Check out [this live camera feed](#) of the lush green rice fields in Taitung, and the surrounding road with the occasional car and motorbike passing. The fruit farms grow [sugar apples](#) (also known as custard apple or atemoya), oranges and other tropical treats. These fruit farmers have been caught in the middle of an export ban with China as shown in this [two-minute](#)

[news clip here](#).

At the [National Museum of Prehistory and the Beinan Archaeological Site](#), visitors can see moon-shaped stone pillars, some 1500 stone coffins and other objects from the coffins. The Beinan culture was from approximately 1500 BC to 300 BC and this archaeological site was found during the Japanese Colonial Period. The museum notes that based on the archaeological evidence, Taiwan has been inhabited for at least 30,000 years starting with the Paleolithic people arriving from continental Asia. Scroll through [the museum site here](#) to get a brief outline of the different time periods of the island.

Taiwan's first bicycle trail, the [Guanshan Township Loop Bike Lane](#), is in Taitung. Built in 1997, the trail is lined with tall palm trees, passing over rice fields with water buffaloes grazing near the Guanshan Canal. It also seems fitting that the Guanshan Old Railway Station has been converted into the Giant Cycling Service center as seen in [these photos](#).

Photo by [LiangKai Huang](#) on [Unsplash](#)



Ruisui Milestone 9

Welcome to Ruisui, home to many so-called dude ranches. What can one expect to experience at a dude ranch in Taiwan? For starters, some of these ranches were simply farms that needed to make some business decisions to survive in recent years. So while the name might imply a full ranch experience, the ranches as seen in the photos [here](#) are dairy farms where visitors can feed cows and ostriches. The Taiwan government is also supporting these ranches to provide new experiences to increase rural tourism.

Many indigenous people live along the less-inhabited east coast of Taiwan, and visitors can experience traditional customs, including weaving, music, food, and festivals. The man in the photo is from the Paiwan tribe, and he's playing a traditional [nose flute](#). Relations between the indigenous peoples and Han Chinese have rarely been smooth, but the current DPP government has made an effort at recognizing them and furthering restorative justice.

Ruisui is known for its hot springs and tea plantations as well. The [Ruisui Hot Springs](#) is the only carbonate spring in Taiwan, and with plenty of iron in the water, it has a salty taste and a brown tint as can be seen in the linked photo. With a water temperature of 118F, it should make for a very hot soak after your bike ride!

If you're interested to learn how tea in Taiwan is picked by hand, dried then fried and formed into tea "balls", take a look at this [12 minute video with English subtitles and narration](#). Tea plantations in Taiwan have been affected by climate change in recent years however, as seen in [this 3-minute video](#).

Ruisui is also home to one of three Tropic of Cancer markers on the island. The marker has a white sundial as well as a huge kettle as shown in the images [in this link](#).

Photo: By 總統府 - 09.16 「第四屆國家文化資產保存獎」頒獎典禮, 由「排灣原音」表演節目開場, CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=63286182>



Hualien Milestone 10

You've arrived in Hualien, one of the most famous places on the island for experiencing nature. You probably heard about Hualien [when the magnitude 7.4 earthquake struck Taiwan in April 2024](#). Sitting on several active faults, Taiwan has experienced several strong earthquakes; the last large one in 1999 when thousands of lives were lost. Since then, Taiwan has upgraded building codes, retrofitted existing structures and became much better prepared. Fortunately, the 2024 earthquake resulted in far fewer casualties and injuries.

Hualien County is the largest county on the island, with mountains covering most of the land. The Taroko National Park and the Taroko Gorge are here, with breathtaking scenery of mountains, marble canyons and waterfalls that you can enjoy in this [four-minute video](#) that explains how the gorge was formed. It goes without saying that the area is rich in minerals and stones. Click on the plus signs at [this National Museum of Natural Science link](#) to learn about minerals and stones in Taiwan.

Here, you'll also see the third and last Tropic of Cancer marker in Taiwan, which is [the tall, curved marker shown here](#). The other two markers were a building that looked like a spaceship and a tower that resembled a white giraffe with a giant kettle nearby. Which was your favorite Tropic of Cancer marker?

This temperate climate is ideal for harvesting crops year-round, with plenty of fruits grown in this area. Five fruits from Taiwan are currently eligible for export to the US; can you guess [which five](#) they are? In addition to fruit, rice and sugarcane are the main crops grown in Taiwan. To learn more about the agriculture and environment, click on [this National Museum of Natural Science link](#). (Note: these museum links take a little time to load). Also, read [this article](#) about how one indigenous educator of the Hualien Indigenous Vegetable Center is trying to preserve the knowledge of edible plants. The article is written by Clarissa Wei, author of the cookbook you received, *Made in Taiwan*.

Photo by [Su San Lee](#) on [Unsplash](#)



Yilan Milestone 11

We are getting close to the end of the 612-mile trip! As we bike through the mountainsides and coastline of rustic Yilan County, you might notice a slower and quieter pace. Dongshan and Yilan County are not yet connected to HSR (high speed rail) and only have local train service from Taipei. The 8-mile Hsuehshan Tunnel for cars, one of the longest tunnels in Asia (and the ninth longest in the world), runs through the mountain terrain.

In addition to the mountains, Yilan County is home to Suao Port, [where two new naval ships were commissioned in March 2024](#). A strategically located port, it is a mere 60 nautical miles from here to Yonaguni, an island at the western most tip in Japan's territory. There may be a [regular ferry service between Suao and Yonaguni in the future](#). There is an abundance of seafood and fish that are sold fresh every day at the fish market. Along the Lanyang Plains and river, silver eels are found.

This mountainous environment has been home to the indigenous Kavalan people who arrived 1000 years ago. Kavalan is [one of the 16 officially recognized indigenous tribes in Taiwan](#). In [this 7 minute video](#), you can see how the Kavalan tradition of banana leaf weaving to make clothes is still kept alive today.

Speaking of traditional arts, the [Yilan Park at the National Center for Traditional Arts](#) is located here along the Dongshan River. Popular for school field trips, this [short two minute video](#) tells you more about the kinds of art that can be seen and experienced here by visitors of all ages. One of the unique attractions at the Center is budaixi (bodehi) glove puppetry. This traditional theater practice has successfully made the [transition to the 21st century](#) and is enjoyed by young and old alike. In addition to displays of both traditional and modern puppets and stages, visitors can also see live performances by masters of this art.



Songshan Milestone 12

The Finish Line

Congratulations on completing all 612 miles around the island of Taiwan! Now that you've had a chance to ride around the entire island, what was most memorable to you? If you could visit in person, which milestone(s) would you want to see most and why? How do you think the island's culture, history and

society is represented (or not)?

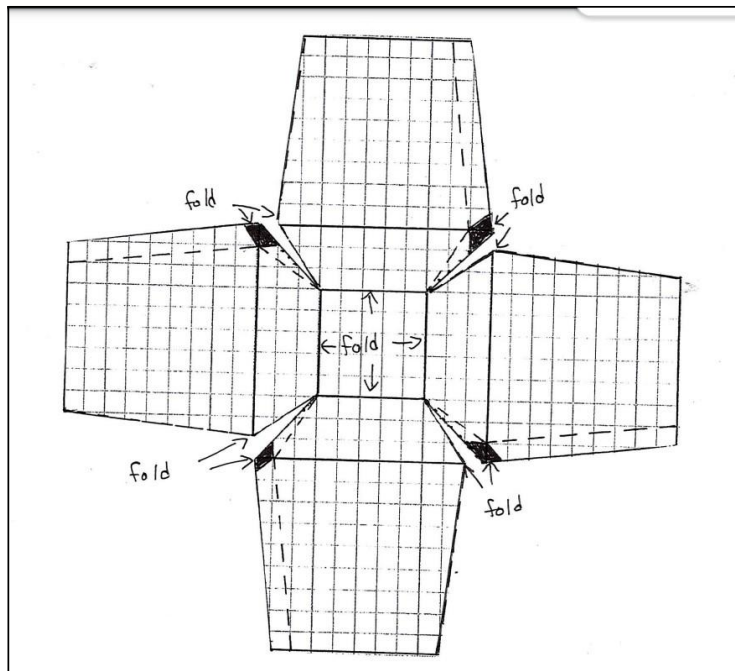
President-elect Lai Ching-te and Vice President-elect Hsiao Bi-Khim, profiled in her alma mater's [newspaper, the Oberlin Review here](#) begin their terms on May 20, 2024. We will learn more about their plans for the future of Taiwan, but one plan is the removal of Chiang Kai-Shek's statues as noted in [this news article](#). As similar questions arise in the US as well, this should give us some pause to consider the role of statues, memorials and museums.

The National Palace Museum in Taipei (which also has an [online Google presence here](#)), has many artifacts that Beijing's National Palace Museum is asking to be returned, including its [most famous Jadeite cabbage as seen here](#). Taiwan strongly refuses to return any of the artifacts. Which is the "real" Palace Museum then? There are many complex questions like this as we consider cross strait relations.

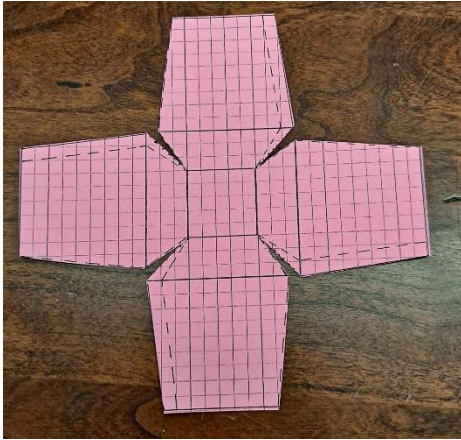
On a lighter and hopeful note, there are younger folks in Taiwan who are trying to use comedy as a way to improve cross-strait relations and bridge the gaps of misunderstanding, as you'll hear in [this eight-minute interview here](#).

If you have the energy left to take just a few more steps, you can consider running up [91 floors, or 2046 steps to the top of Taipei 101](#). Or if you just want to take in the view from the tallest building in Taiwan, watch [this 90 second clip](#) if you can stomach the height!

Chinese Lantern DIY instructions

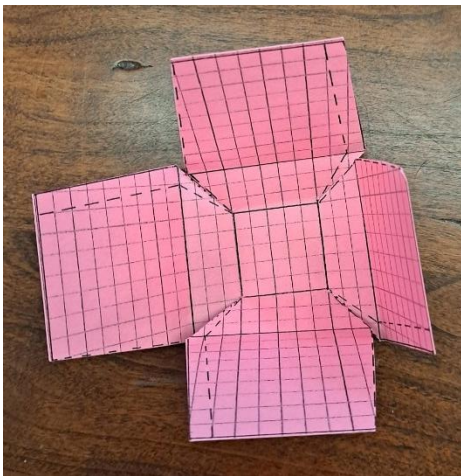


This template was sized to fit 6" square origami paper, but you can enlarge it and use any kind of paper you want.

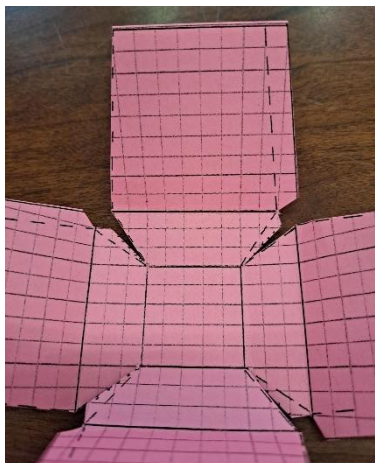


Trace or print your template on the paper. If you trace it, add the solid fold lines and the dotted fold/glue lines.

If you plan to hang the lantern as a decoration, make a hole in the center for a string. It might be easier to put that in before you glue the sides.

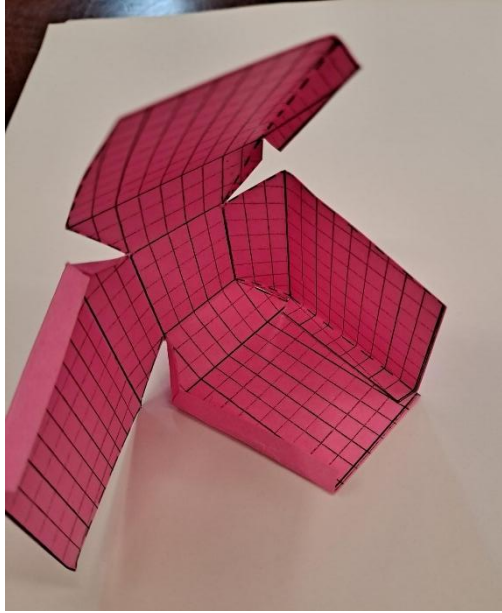


Fold (crease) the inner square (solid line) and outer square.



To make it easier to glue the sides, cut out the corners on the fold/glue lines.

Fold along the fold/glue lines.



Place one fold/glue section over the adjacent section and glue in place. I used a glue stick. If you have really good, small fingers, you can also glue the top short fold/glue section, but I just glued the long side fold/glue section. (White paper underneath to keep Smith College's Faculty Lounge tables from looking like a pre-school had invaded.)



Done! If you made a hole for a string in the top center, you might find it easier to put the string through before you glue the sides together.