Taiwan 2 Essay, Research Paper

Taiwan is an island located about 100 miles from China. It was originally part of China. But in 1949, the communists seized Mainland China forcing the nationalists to retreat to Taiwan. From then on, Taiwan is also known as Free China. The leaders of Republic of China, (Free China) hoped someday that the communists will be driven out of China. Therefore, they start to build Taiwan as a military base for such purpose. However, their dreams were never accomplished, instead, their efforts turned Taiwan into a economic powerful country. This is also known as the Taiwan Miracle.

There is another interesting information about Taiwan’s name. Despite Free China, Taiwan also has two other names, “Taiwan” (the one we call it) and “Formosa”. Let’s talk about “Taiwan” first. “Taiwan” means “terraced bay” to the mountain tribal people who originally lives in Taiwan. When the immigrants from China migrated to this island 3 hundreds years ago, they kept hearing the tribal people calling (the place where the Chinese landed) “Taiwan”. Therefore, they assumed that the island is “Taiwan”. Formosa, on the other hand, was called by the Portuguese sailors in the 1600s. It means “beautiful island”. Therefore, there are still people referring Taiwan as Formosa when they try to beautify Taiwan today.

Taiwan is a sub-tropical country that that is warm most of the year. The Tropic of Cancer passes through Taiwan in the southern part. Therefore, snow is unusual to most the Taiwanese here. But there are some places up in the high mountains that do get cold enough to snow. Because the land is hot and humid, it is the best for growing rice and other farm products. The farmers in north can grow two crops of rice a year in the north and three crops a year in the south. There are mostly mountains in the north part of Taiwan while plate farmland in the south.

The government of the Republic of China has some similarities to the government of the United States. The government is based on a Constitution and there is a President and Vice President. ROC has a National Assembly instead of a Congress and there are five branches of the government, legislative, executive, judicial, examination, and control. There are three major political parties and some other lesser known ones. The best party that control many resources of the country is the KMT, (Kuomintang), also known as the Nationalists. The second best party is DPP, (Democratic Progressive Party). And New Party. Well, from here I have to tell you that I am a partisan of New Party and I will interprete the three parties in MY WAY. Alright, let me give you detailed descriptions of the three parties. KMT is the oldest party in Chinese history. However, over the past 80 years, the whole party has turn from energetic and benevolent to decandent. However, such corruption was not the sole problem of KMT. The biggest trouble this party is facing is the infiltration of the independence idea. Because of President Lee, who is a total hypocratical Japanese renegade, he tries to lead KMT into an authoritarian that secretly seek the independence of Taiwan. Therefore please note President Lee’s decieteful actions and not to be fooled by the media that support him. Beside KMT, the second most important political party is the DPP. DPP is a party that is known for seeking of the independence of Taiwan. They think that only with the total separation with China would benefit Taiwan. They are the ideal radical leftists. However, because they are too idealistic, these partisans often use extreme and violent ways to accomplish they goals or to express their feelings. As a result, they are also known for their anti-government and belligerent behaviors. The last party which is also the party that I personally support, is the New Party. New Party is a pretty “new” party. it was formed, I believe, only 5 years ago by only 7 members of the KMT legislators. The reason that they form such party is because their ideals to reform the Taiwan government. 5 years ago, ROC government was controled by weak and corrputive KMT officials (so is now) that the anarchist DPP members disturb the domestic tranquility. They thought there is a need to restore the proper social order and long lost Chinese culture. Unlike the KMT and DPP, New Party do not think that “Money” has to go with “Power” and anything has to go the “hard way”, so they are peaceful fighters against the corruption and the violence in society. At that time, all the political critics believed that this party will not survive under the domination of KMT and DPP. However, over 5 years their support has raised from 5 percents to now 20 percent and is still steadyly growing. As people like me (well educated middle class) support this party, I believe Taiwan will be a better country.

Taiwan is a crowded island. Imagin 21 million people living on an island that’s only 36,000 square km, including all the mountains and unlivable areas. If you do some serious calculations, you would find out that in some big cities like Taipei, the density of population averages over 1500 persons per square km! Therefore, if you travel on Taiwan, you will usually see people. Sometimes, even if you climb a mountain or hike far into the woods, you will still find a little farm village hidden in the jungle, or students on a picnic, or soldiers on maneuvers.

There are three major groups that live on the island of Taiwan. The first group is the Chinese that migrated to Taiwan 400 years ago to avoid the chaos and war in China. These people have their own dialect (Taiwanese) and customs. However, although they consider themselves as Taiwanese, they are still Chinese. The second largest group living in Taiwan is the Mainlanders that came over 40 years ago when the Nationalists fought the Communists. Because these people are often well educated and sometimes wealthy (despite the soldiers that came along), they efforts helped to shape the present country. The last group is the aborigines who have been living in Taiwan for more than thunsands of years. These people are like the Indians in American who face considerable problems. These three groups were living in harmony few decades ago. However, the DPP has been trying to emphasize that the Mainlanders are not truely Taiwanese but Chinese Pigs. You see, they believe Taiwanese are NOT Chinese (this most frustrates me!) . They declare that once Taiwan is independent they will kick all the Chinese Pigs out. The problem is that there are people like me who is half Taiwanese and half Chinese Pig…

Taiwanese are friendly and nice people. Most people who do not know about Taiwanese may think that they are just like those poor third world country people who have low education rate, and abuse the natural environment. Well, I am here to prove that Taiwanese are very kind and considerate. If you ever come to Taiwan, you will find that Taiwanese provides the foreigners with extra help and care. If you go to a grocery store without knowing even a Chinese word, you will find that the Chinese in the store, even the other customers will all be your aid to find the things you want to buy. Sometimes you will even get a discount. That’s why there are more westerners coming to Taiwan for jobs now, or for vacation. Also, there are far less mental illness, alcoholism, social disturbances, and violent crimes in Taiwan compare to elsewhere.

Religions in Taiwan

Most Chinese on Taiwan are Buddhists. Buddhist temples, shrines, and statues are found all over Taiwan; in Changhua, there is a 72-foot high statue of Buddha, and in Taichung there is an even taller statue of Milwofwo, the Happy Buddha. The oldest and best-known BUddhist temple in Taipei is Lungshan Temple, which is about 250 years old. “Lung-Shan” means Dragon Hill; the temple is always busy with worshippers and toursists. Chinese usually do not go to a group service, but rather go to the temple individually when they have a desire to do so. In Chinese temples, you will see statues and statuettes of other gods, goddesses and saints, and you will be impressed bye the elaborate roof carvings of animals and human figures. You will see incense being burned and paper money and food offerings being made for the gods. In addition to Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism are also important philosophies of Taiwan. Chinese are very tolerant about religion, and they see no difficulty in considering themselves to be Buddhist, Confucianist, Taoist, and even Christian, all at the same time! Other Chinese don’t concern themselves too much with any religion. Generally, it is important for Chinese to pay respect to older people. Children must respect parents; wives must respect husbands; brothers and sisters must respect each other. This practice is called filial piety, and is part of the philosophy of Confucius, plus a blend of Buddhism, Taoism, and five thousand years of Chinese thought.

Weddings

Weddings in Taiwan are increasingly similar to those in western countries. Chinese brides now wear the same kind of wedding gown as the Americans, but the traditional color of red is still very apparent at Chinese weddings. Many Chinese wait until they are almost 30 years old before getting married. The man often will postpone marriage until they have completed their schooling, their military service, and are more sure of having a secure job.

Funerals

Funerals in Taiwan may seem odd to the westerners. For on thing, white, not black, is the color that is often seen at funerals. Also, some Taiwanese perfere to invite a lot of people to come to the funeral, so the family might sometimes pay people to attend even though they do not know the man who died. Fortunately, these cases occur less than before. Part of the funeral ceremony includes the burning of paper money and otherpaper objects, in the belief that the smoke will carry the real object up to heaven for the dead person to use. Families usually burn huge paper house, paper mercedes, paper servants, paper appliances for their loved ones.