Taiwan**

COUNTRY OVERVIEW
CAPITAL: Taipei
POPULATION: 22,974,347
ETHNIC GROUPS: Taiwanese (including Hakka) (84%), Mainland Chinese (14%), Indigenous (2%)
LOCATION: Eastern Asia, islands bordering the East China Sea, Philippine Sea, South China Sea, and Taiwan Strait, north of the Philippines, off the southeastern coast of China
CLIMATE: Tropical; marine; rainy season during southwest monsoon (July to August); cloudiness is persistent and extensive all year
RELIGIONS: Mixture of Buddhist and Taoist (93%), Christian (4.5%), Other (2.5%)
LANGUAGES: Mandarin Chinese (official language), Taiwanese (Min), Hakka dialects

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND
TEACHING STYLES – In the classroom, teachers stand at a podium in front of rows of desks and may use a microphone. They are prominently seen and heard. Preparing students for exams is a priority, and teachers will often volunteer extra hours in the evening or during the summer. Teachers will openly ask questions to allow students to display their knowledge of facts.

LEARNING STYLES – Students often learn by watching and listening to the teachers and doing written assignments from textbooks, in addition to rote memorization and drills. Therefore, analytic thinking and creative writing will need to be encouraged. Students will generally not challenge a teacher.

INSTRUCTIONAL SETTING – Class supervisors such as a class leader, a vice leader, a minister of hygiene, and a minister of order are appointed by teachers. These student supervisors assign other students to various tasks such as cleaning the classroom, monitoring social conversations in class, or taking student lunches to the kitchen. There is a single computer room shared by all classes in Taiwanese schools. Even in high school, students are given 40 minutes of mandatory nap time, where they will rest their heads on their desks.

DISCIPLINE AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT – There are very few discipline problems in Taiwanese classrooms due to heavy family expectations and the fear of bringing shame to family. However, a Department of Discipline still exists at most schools where teachers will send students who have misbehaved and a decision will be made on the type of punishment. Some teachers will ask students with lower test scores to sit in the front row of the classroom. This is based on the principle that bringing shame to students motivates them to study harder.

EDUCATOR- STUDENT RELATIONSHIP – Complete respect for a teacher is one of the five categories of obedience in the practice of Confucianism. Students will stand and bow when a teacher enters the room.

STUDENT- STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS – Since some schools will group students according to their academic abilities, it will often cause hard feelings amongst them. Students have become very competitive, and peers will sometimes view student supervisors as bullies.

POLITE/ IMPOLITE TOPICS & BEHAVIORS – One’s salary and the cost of purchases are appropriate topics of conversation. As a guest, it is considered an insult if someone turns down the offer of an alcoholic beverage.

**All information from the “CIA World Factbook” and “Understanding Your International Students: An Educational, Cultural, and Linguistic Guide” (October, 2010)