



Foreigners flock to Taiwan's hills

NATURAL HIGH: Hailed by travel books as one of the best places in Asia for trekkers, Taiwan can count AIT director Stephen Young as a keen fan of its hiking trails

BY JENNY W. HSU
STAFF REPORTER

Visitors may have the impression that Taiwan is a developed country filled with bustling cities crisscrossed by highways.

This is not far from the truth, but there is another side to the country, said some of Taiwan's foreign hikers who view the nation's mountains as its most treasured tourists attraction.

"Taiwan's hills and mountains are incredibly beautiful. There are many hikes around the island that are not too difficult but still offer amazing views of flora and fauna," said Andrew Scott, an English teacher from Michigan who has hiked at more than 30 spots in his three years in Taiwan.

He calls his weekend excursions "lifesavers" from his busy schedule.

"My advice to any foreigners that come to Taiwan is to get out of Taipei or Taichung or Kaohsiung or whatever big city you are in as often as you can. Thrust yourself into the mountains of Taiwan because that's where you will stand in awe of the true beauty of this island," he said.

Taiwan is hailed by *Lonely Planet* and other travel books as one of the best places in Asia for trekkers, both novices and experienced. Its terrain is divided into two major parts — the flat rolling plains of the west and the rugged forests of the center and east which include East Asia's highest peak, Jade Mountain or Yushan (玉山), which reaches 3,952m.

For many Taiwanese, climbing Yu Shan is one of the three must-complete feats in order to be a "true Taiwanese," the other two being swimming across Sun Moon Lake and cycling around the island.

However, for a keen climber such as Briton Richard Saunders, who has written two books on hiking in Taiwan with a third coming out, the beauty of Yushan is second only to his favorite spot, Jianning Lake (嘉明湖) in Taitung, which was created by a fallen meteorite.



Above: AIT Director Stephen Young, left, his son Michael, right, and an AIT colleague are pictured on top of Hsuehshan. Below: Members of Richard Saunders' hiking club walk the Nankushan trail in Taipei County's Shihding Township.

PHOTO COURTESY OF AMERICAN INSTITUTE IN TAIWAN

"It is incredibly beautiful and quiet. It has less people so it is not as spoiled as Jade Mountain," he said.

Saunders also heads a hiking club that meets periodically to pound the peaks of northern Taiwan.

FEATURE

"The network of trails in Taiwan is by far more developed and comprehensive than in many countries," he said, touting the national park service as having done a good job in clearing or some off the beaten track treks for adventurers.

Julie Lanshee, a US writer and member of the hiking club, also credited the government with putting great effort into creating and maintaining the trails, such as stone steps seen in several spots in the Yangmingshan National Park, to make hiking possible even in the rain.

American Institute in Taiwan Director Stephen Young is another fan of Taiwan's hiking delights.

"I find the trails on the main hiking mountains to be well maintained, which is not easy given

the rain, rockslides and typhoons that Taiwan experiences. Trails in national parks are especially well maintained. I first hiked up Yushan in 1964 and Hsuehshan (雪山) in 1982, and the trails are much better today than back then," Young said.

THRILL SEEKERS

With more than 3,000 peaks nationwide, Taiwan appeals to die-hard thrill seekers as well as novices.

Saunders suggests starting with more straightforward hikes such as Cing Tian Gang (擎天崗) in Yangmingshan, Taipei or Pinghsi (平溪) in Ilan County.

Kuanyin Mountain (觀音山) on the south shore of Danshui or hikes in Taipei's Muzha area, Young said, are also good places for novices.

"My favorite beginners hike is the Teapot Mountain (茶壺山) in Chiufen. It is relatively easy and when you get to the top, you get a gorgeous view of the old gold mining town. After the hike, you can soak up Taiwan's tea culture by going to some of the tea shops in the area," he said.

For more advanced hikes, "the



sky is the limit," Saunders said.

The drawbacks of hiking in Taiwan for many foreigners is the lack of material readily available in English or in pinyin.

ENGLISH

"Taiwan could become more appealing to foreign hikers by putting out more information about hiking trails in English on the Internet. There are Web sites worldwide for hiking enthusiasts that have descriptions of various hikes as well as contributions from bloggers," Young said.

Many foreign residents in Taiwan have already discovered the delights of hiking. Taiwan has Yushan, the tallest mountain in Northeast Asia, and there are many other challenging peaks that foreigners might come here to climb if they knew about them, he said.

For more English information on hiking in Taiwan, check out www.hiketaiwan.com or the Taiwan Tourism Bureau. Saunders' books are available in major bookstores or at the Community Center.

Indian community holds vigil for Mumbai victims

BY LOA IOK-SIN
STAFF REPORTER

Members of the Indian community in Taiwan held a candlelit vigil in Taipei on Sunday to remember those who died in the terrorist attack in Mumbai last month.

"This is not the first time that India has suffered a terrorist attack — we've lost two prime ministers to terrorist violence and, since 2002, over 6,000 people have lost their lives in India in these mindless acts of violence," Amit Narang, deputy director-general of the India-Taipei Association, told a crowd of more than 250 Indians living in Taiwan gathered for the vigil.

"All Indians are feeling this deep sense of outrage and anguish — not against any organization or

state, but against an ideology of hatred, an ideology that believes in using violence against innocent civilians for resolving problems," he said.

A massive terrorist attack targeting landmarks in Mumbai last month killed more than 172 people — including about 30 foreigners — and injured nearly 300.

"All Indians, in spite of differences in religion, social customs, languages and traditions, stand as one in opposing this ideology of hatred and violence," Narang said.

After the brief remarks by Narang, the Indian national anthem was sung and a minute of silence observed.

M.G. Patel, better known as "Kaka" in the Indian community in Taiwan, said he felt especially

strongly about the tragedy as a native of Mumbai. However, he also believed that the attack was not on Mumbai alone.

"Indians often say 'the world is my family,'" he said. "So, it's not only [an attack] on India, but on the whole world — everybody in this world must stand united."

While shocked by the attack, Indians' Association of Taipei president Lal Gajwani remains hopeful that the power of love may prevail.

"Terrorist acts are done by misguided people with no religion or state in mind," he said.

"Hopefully, these misguided people will realize one day the power of love, peace and non-violence, then we can bring them back to the right track," Gajwani said.

Mormons remember Christmas story

BY JENNY W. HSU
STAFF REPORTER

More than 1,000 people traveled back 2,000 years at the weekend to witness the birth of Jesus Christ in a Bethlehem manger as the English-speaking members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints presented their eighth annual Christmas pageant at the Tianmu amphitheater.

Sitting on a horse led by her husband, Leone Grimley, who played Mary, said the experience was a bit uncomfortable and made her wonder what it must have been

like for Mary to travel so far on a donkey while pregnant.

"I didn't know what I was getting into when I said yes to the part. But I do feel the spirit whenever I am playing the character," she said, explaining the feeling of the spirit as a "warm and fuzzy" feeling in her heart.

Ross Chiles, the bishop of the English ward and an entrepreneur, said the pageant is a wonderful reminder for people that "Christmas spirit is not found in a shopping mall."

"The story of the nativity and

the birth of the Savior is what Christmas is really all about," he said.

Chiles said that for many foreigners in Taiwan the pageant is a slice of nostalgia of what the holiday is like back home.

"I was so touched when everyone sang the Christmas carols together. It was a wonderful feeling to listen to the beautiful music. This is the first time I have really heard the story of Christmas and I am so glad I came," said Deng Mei-li (鄧美麗), a member of the audience.



Chung Cheng Armed Forces Preparatory School President Hsia Yu-Jen, right, and Doris Brougham, the founder of the *Studio Classroom* magazine, pose on Friday after signing a contract to help improve the English proficiency of teachers and students at the school.

PHOTO: CNA

The promise that led to a mission to spread English

HONOR: For her half-century of teaching in Taiwan, Doris Brougham received the nation's highest non-military award

BY SHELLEY HUANG
STAFF REPORTER

It all started with a promise. Doris Brougham was only 11 years old when she made up her mind to help people in Asia. It was at a Christian rally for young people, where a pastor asked how many of them would be willing to go to Asia to help people there. Brougham raised her hand and made a promise to God.

"After World War II, a lot of Americans were thinking, we need to go out there and share what we have with the rest of the world. For those of us who are church-going people, they often challenged us to go to Africa or Asia or India," she said.

Later on, she had a chance to go to Eastman School of Music, a prestigious music school, but gave it up to go to China instead, because "if you promised, you have to do it."

Brougham grew up to become a teacher, CEO, editor-in-chief, trumpet player, leader in the Christian community, permanent resident of Taiwan, and founder of Overseas Radio and Television, which produces radio and television programs all over the world. Now 82, Brougham has taught English to hundreds of thousands of people in Taiwan, and her English-teaching magazine, *Studio Classroom*, is read by 600,000 people every month.

"I was on a mission," she said. When she was only 21 years old, she traveled to China by ship for six weeks.

"When you get on a boat, it's a lot harder to go back home. The boat slowly pulls out and you keep seeing the people on the shore," Brougham said.

Having been evacuated several times due to the Civil War in China, Brougham could only take her trumpet with her and had to leave much of her teaching materials and notes behind. When she arrived in Taiwan in 1951, people were still calling it Formosa.

"The east coast [of Taiwan] was a place that really needed a lot of young people to help because it wasn't very advanced. So I went to help the tribes people in Hualien City high schools. I taught music, children's education, as well as the Bible, whatever people needed," she said.

In 1951, she started her first radio program. Using one of the first tape recorders in Taiwan, she made her home into a recording studio and recorded gospel music programs for women and children.

"You can reach more people by broadcast. People from the Buddhist temples listened to our programs, too. Once, a Buddhist nun

came from the temple and said, 'I listen to your program, do you think you can get me a Bible?' So it was a good way to keep in touch with the people, even the fishermen along the shores," Brougham said.

She began her English-teaching career in 1960, when she moved to Taipei.

"I thought, if we make an English program that has to be more interesting than 'this is a book' or 'this is an apple.' I thought I could make a studio and we'll have an article and people can ask questions and discuss about it. That was why it was called *Studio Classroom*," she said.

Brougham said she tried to teach people "English that you can really use," instead of things such as slang, because she thought that if people spoke slang incorrectly, they would be looked down upon.

"I try to teach English that you don't have to worry about saying," she said.

She also believed that in order to understand a culture, learning the language is a must.

"We can be different but still understand. We can appreciate each other's cultures better and take the best out of each culture," she said.

Brougham uses a lot of music in her lessons because she believes that using music can speed up the learning process and make it more fun.

"Music is the language of the soul," she said. "Words get into your mind, but music touches your heart."

Having been a teacher for almost all of her life, Brougham saw teaching as a process of taking away people's fears. For example, a swimming teacher has to take away people's fear of the water, she said.

"If you make things less complicated, you can have fun and go to the next step. In teaching, you have to lead people. Make it simple. Take away the fear of embarrassment or failure," Brougham said.

Brougham says she doesn't want to retire yet because she loves her job, which is her isn't really a job, but her way of life. "Are you going to stop helping people just because you get older? It depends on how you look at what you do, if it's just a job, you should retire. If you hate your job, then you should retire at 50 or 40. But if you like what you're doing, it's not a job, it's just being you," she said.

For her half a century of teaching and contribution to Taiwan, she was awarded the Order of the Brilliant Star with Special Grand Cordon, the nation's highest non-military decoration, by former president Chen Shui-bian in 2002.

"I think Taiwan has a very encouraging future. We can be proud of what we've done, and we have to keep the young people on the right track," she said. "That's what *Studio Classroom* wants to teach."

Why are many foreigners who pay taxes and contribute to the economy being excluded from the consumer vouchers scheme?

Pierre LaPorte
Chiayi City

A-hok says:

The Ministry of the Interior (MOI), authorized by the Special Statute for Distributing Consumer Vouchers to Boost the Economy (振興經濟消費券發放特別條例), set the criteria for the vouchers.

Foreigners from China, Hong Kong and Macau who are married to Taiwanese nationals and have residency in Taiwan are eligible, as are foreigners from other all countries who are married to Taiwanese nationals and have residency and a registered household in Taiwan.

Approximately 3,000 foreigners living in Taiwan without Taiwanese spouses are excluded from the scheme, even though they have residency and pay income tax.

Minister of the Interior Liao Liou-yi (廖了以) said the reason why foreigners without Taiwanese spouses were not included is that they were neither citizens nor very likely to become citizens. Foreign spouses may obtain Taiwanese citizenship after they meet the requirements stipulated in the Immigration Act (入出國及移民法), Liao said.

"[Foreigners] pay taxes because they earn an income. But the consumer vouchers are for nationals, which is a practice consistent with other countries," Liao said.

Vice Minister of the Interior Chien Tai-lang (簡太郎) said foreigners with Taiwanese spouses were considered "quasi-nationals."

Having married a Taiwanese is a prerequisite for foreigners to receive the vouchers because it means they are a more integrated part of the community, Chien said.



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