

The Deaf of Taiwan

The Taiwanese Sign Language Community

There are approx. 80,000 deaf and hearing impaired individuals in Taiwan. Efforts to communicate the gospel to them are few. At present just a handful of individuals are engaged in evangelism or church planting among Taiwan's deaf. There are three deaf churches. A few other churches also have ministries for the deaf and hearing impaired. Recent years have seen a marked shift in Taiwan's attitudes toward deafness and deaf communication. A well-funded private program intends to provide all eligible deaf children with cochlear implants within the next twenty years. Parents of deaf and hearing impaired children are inclined to mainstream their children. The population of deaf institutions/schools is increasingly comprised of multiply handicapped children with children who are just deaf often enrolled in regular schools. At all education levels and in all academic institutions, including those for the deaf, Taiwan Sign Language (TSL) is neglected in favor of oral and written communication in Mandarin. The use of TSL is on the decline. There is an ongoing Japanese Sign Language video Bible translation project. However, since Japanese Sign Language is at most 50% lexically similar to one or more dialects of TSL, the translation will not be of use to Taiwan's deaf and hearing impaired communities.

Primary Religion:

Taoism, Buddhism

Disciples (Matt 28.19):

< 1%

Churches:

3

Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):

No Scriptures

Population (date):

82,558 (2002)



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Item Name	Item Note	
Have They Heard The Gospel?		Profile Summary
Call Themselves Christian (%)	<1%	
Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%)	< 1%	
Prophet/Good Man, But Not God's Son (%)	N/A	
Believe In The Local Traditional Religion (%)	99+%	
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is (%)	95+% (?)	
Number Of Pastors	3	
Number Of Missionaries Working	0	
Response To The Gospel	Taiwan's deaf population has mostly not had access to the gospel. At present there are just three churches for the deaf in Taiwan. In addition, a few churches have outreaches to and ministries for the deaf.	
Number Of Communities	4	
Comment (Number Communities)	4 (Kaohsiung City; Tainan City; Taipei City; Yungho, Taipei County)	
Number Of Churches	3	
Is The Word Of God Translated?	No	
Translation Medium	None	
Any Hindrance To Scripture Distribution?	?%	
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	The Scriptures are available in Chinese, but many of Taiwan's adult deaf population may not be literate enough in Chinese to benefit from the Chinese Scriptures. However, with the growing emphasis on oral and written Chinese language communication skills, a greater percentage of today's deaf children may be able to understand one or more of the Chinese translations.	
Countries Where People Group Lives		Group Description
Country Name	Taiwan	
Geography & Environment		Group Description
Location	Asia Country Taiwan	
Ecosystem Type	Semi-tropical	
Geological Type	Coastal	
Geological Type	Plains	
Geological Type	Mountain, Valley	
Geological Type	Mountain, Slope	
Elevation	Sea level to 3.00 meters above sea level.	
Longitude	Eastern Point: 121 deg 59' 15", Western Point: 120 deg 01' 00"	
Latitude	Southern Point: 21 deg 53' 50", Northern Point 25 deg 18' 20"	
Climate	Subtropical (north), tropical (south)	
Language & Linguistics		Group Description
Primary Language	TAIWANESE SIGN LANGUAGE	
Alternate Language Names	ZIRAN SHOUYU	
Dialects	KAHOSIUNG	
Dialects	TAIPEI	
Dialects	TAINAN	
Attitude Towards Mother Tongue	Indifferent	
Percent Monolingual (%)	Percentage decreasing particularly among those in their early 20's and under.	
Comment (Second Language)	Mandarin, Taiwanese	
Comment (On Other Mother Tongues)	Pidgin Signed Mandarin	

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Item Name

Linguistically Related Languages
Linguistically Related Languages
Neighboring Languages
Neighboring Languages
Neighboring Languages
Corrections To Ethnologue Entry

Item Note

JAPANESE SIGN LANGUAGE
KOREAN SIGN LANGUAGE
CHINESE, HAKKA
CHINESE, MIN NAN
CHINESE, MANDARIN
Name of language (Taiwan Sign Language); Population 82,558.

Literacy

Active Literacy Program
Publications In Vernacular
Comment (Literacy)

Literacy in Chinese is taught beginning in elementary school in all schools for the deaf or schools with classes for the deaf and hearing impaired.
None
Literacy is valued.

Group Description

Economics

Subsistence Type
Subsistence Type
Average Annual Income
Income Sources
Trade Partners
Modernization / Utilities
Comment (Economy)

Industrial
Agriculturalists
per capita income in Taiwan is US\$14,188 (2000); per capita income for the deaf is certainly lower
family, social welfare, employment
N/A
Fairly well integrated into Taiwan's economy. Taiwan is a modern high-tech polity.
Estimates between 1992 and 2002 of the unemployment rate among the hearing impaired range from 25%-80%.

Group Description

Community Development

Health Care (Quality)
Comment (Health Care)
Diet (Quality)
Water (Quality)
Shelter Description
Comment (Energy)
Clothing
Transportation
Infant Mortality Rate
Life Expectancy
Leading Cause Of Death

Very good
Good to Very good health care.
Very good
Very good
Apartments; homes.
National power grid, run by Taipower, the government-owned electric power utility.
Western clothing.
Cars, motor scooters, public buses, taxis, trains, airplanes, subway (Taipei).
6.93 deaths/1,000 births (2001 est. for general population).
Men 73.81, women 79.51 (2001 figures for general population).
Cancer (leading cause of death in 2000 for population of Taiwan).

Group Description

Society & Culture

Family Structures
Neighbor Relations
Authority / Rule
Social Habits/Groupings
Cultural Change Pace
Identification With National Culture
Self Image
Judicial / Punishment System
Celebrations

Patriarchal, like the rest of Han Chinese.
N/A
N/A
Taiwan's deaf tend to have minimal interaction with non-deaf other than family and coworkers.
Rapid
Integrated
Depressed
N/A
N/A

Group Description

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Item Name	Item Note	
Recreations	In Taiwan deaf and hearing impaired individuals participate in the same range of sports and recreation as members of the general population. In addition, a number of local and international organizations promote sports among the deaf and hearing impaired population: the Chinese Taipei Sports Association of the Deaf, the Chinese Taipei Sports Federation for the Disabled, the International Martial Arts Federation of the Deaf, the Kaoshiung City Physical Education Exercise Association for the Hearing Impaired, the Taichung City Hearing Impaired Physical Education Exercise Association, etc.	
Attitude To Outsiders	Very receptive	
Attitude To Change	Very receptive	
Youth		Group Description
Labor and tasks (6-12 year olds)	School (6-12 year olds).	
Youth Greatest Needs (teens)	Vocational training.	
Education		Group Description
Primary Schools	4	
Secondary Schools	3	
Language Of Instruction Early Years	Chinese, Mandarin	
Language Of Instruction Early Years	Taiwan Sign Language	
Number Of Schools > 90% Homogeneous	4	
Comment (Education)	The total school enrollment for primary and secondary is 1,025 students in 2000. Pidgin Signed Mandarin is also a language of instruction.	
Church Growth		Status of Christianity
Reached Classification	Unreached	
Total Baptized	<1%	
Bible Schools	0	
Christian Clinics/Hospitals	Approximately 20 Christian hospitals in Taiwan.	
Christian Literacy Centers	not applicable. There are approx. 20 Christian bookstores in Taiwan, but it is not known how user-friendly these are for the deaf population.	
Religion & Response		Status of Christianity
Religious Practices & Ceremonies	"The Chinese place great importance on filial piety; thus, ancestor worship is a central part of Chinese New Year activities. On the first day of the year, at the moment that spring arrives, one must loudly set off firecrackers, make an offering of red dates, winter melon and peanut candy and other confections before images of the gods, Buddha's, and ancestral tablet, then the whole family worships the gods and ancestral spirits by burning paper money. " (Government Information Office, Republic of China www.gio.gov.tw/info/festival_c/html_e/ancestor.htm)	
History Of Christianity In Group		Status of Christianity
Year Began	Late 1970's	
By Whom	Japanese Missionary	
Significant Events	1990, founding of Kaoshiung Sign Language Church (PCT), Taiwan's first indigenous church for the deaf.	
Comments (History of Christianity)	In addition to the sign language churches, a few other churches have ministries for the deaf. However, typically 5 or 10 deaf or hearing impaired individuals are reached by each of these ministries.	
Scripture		Status of Christianity
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Literature	no	
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Film/Videos	no	
Missions and Churches		Status of Christianity

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Item Name	Item Note
Organization Name	Presbyterian
Year Started	1990
Number Of Congregations	3
Organization Name	Deaf Missions
Comment (Organization)	There are two deaf missions: Deaf Ministries International which is a church and does outreach and the other is Toyo Roa Kirista Dendo Kyokai (Christ Oriental Deaf Church) which is formerly a missionary organization. There is one worker and one congregation for the Deaf Ministries Int'l.
Number Of Congregations	1