Taiwan is an island situated to the east of the southeastern coast of mainland China across the Taiwan Strait. Facing the Pacific in the east, Taiwan is mostly mountainous while in the west the island is shaped by gently sloping plains. Since the seventeenth century, Taiwan has been an important trading outpost between East and West and its society has been characterized by records of travel, exile, migration and immigration with multiple foreign cultural influences. Its geography, history, society and culture have been the intriguing subject of study and provided a rich bonanza for interdisciplinary exploration, including social, cultural, historical, environmental, economic, political, colonial, postcolonial, and postmodern aspects, as well as the impact of democratization and globalization of the new century.

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