

Cycling Taiwan

A Virtual Multi-Disciplinary Introduction to the History and Culture of Taiwan

A Feature on the Prizewinning Curriculum and an *EAA* Interview with the
Winners of the 2026 Buchanan Prize, Anne Prescott and Yurika Kurakata



Abstract

Cycling Taiwan: A Virtual Multi-Disciplinary Introduction to the History and Culture of Taiwan is the 2026 Franklin R. Buchanan prizewinning curriculum, created by Anne Prescott and Yurika Kurakata for the Five College Center for East Asian Studies (FCCEAS), a National Consortium for Teaching about Asia (NCTA) National Coordinating Site. Until recently, there have been very few resources available which address the history and culture of Taiwan, and even fewer resources appropriate for secondary students. These materials may be used both by K–16 educators for their own professional development or in the high school or post-secondary classroom. *Cycling Taiwan* consists of readings and other materials that almost exclusively use primary sources, and many amplify the voices of people living in Taiwan. Sources include writings and webinars by scholars (both Taiwanese and other nationalities), documentaries produced by Taiwanese, written and video news reports by journalists, museum exhibit websites, and more. Activities such as cooking and crafts have been incorporated to give students and teachers with differing abilities the opportunity to express themselves. The inclusion of activities which use Google Street View is designed to help users understand the conditions “on the ground” in Taiwan. This curriculum is freely available at fivecolleges.edu/fcceas.

The Franklin R. Buchanan Prize is awarded annually to recognize outstanding pedagogical, instructional, or curriculum material on Asia designed for K–12 and college undergraduate classroom use. For further information please [visit the Buchanan Prize page](#) on the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) website.

Anne Prescott is the Director of the Five College Center for East Asian Studies and a national co-director for the National Consortium for Teaching about Asia (NCTA). Anne manages programs to support teaching about East Asia in K–12 schools and builds relationships among faculty members and programs at the college level.

Yurika Kurakata is former Director of the East Asia Resource Center at the University of Washington. Prior to that, she was the Associate Director of the Donald Keene Center of Japanese Culture at Columbia University. Currently based in Seattle, she continues writing and working on curriculum on East Asia.



Cycling Taiwan: An Introduction

The [*Cycling Taiwan curriculum*](#) is freely available at the Five College Center for East Asian Studies website and may be downloaded and used by anyone.

Until recently, there have been very few resources available which address the history and culture of Taiwan, and even fewer resources appropriate for secondary students. These materials may be used both by K–16 educators for their own professional development or in the high school or post-secondary classroom.

Participants cycle (both virtually and the distance in reality) 612.1 miles around Taiwan, completing readings, viewing webinars/videos, exploring websites, and responding to discussion prompts for an introductory unit and twelve location-based milestones.

In addition, text and photos with general information as well as links to information and resources for each milestone can be used independently, or as introductions to or in conjunction with the readings, videos and assignments.

Individual units may be used independently, and instructors may select from the readings, other resources, and discussion prompts as appropriate for their classrooms.

The inclusion of activities which use Google Street View is designed to help users learn about the human and physical geography of Taiwan.

612.1 Miles in 12 Milestones

Discussion prompts and links are included for each milestone. Please view the [*Cycling Taiwan curriculum*](#) for further discussion prompts and links.

1: The Starting Point! Songshan (Taipei):

Start at Songshan Station where you can take a commemorative photo with the Formosan Black Bear, who is pointing the way! Songshan District in Taipei is home to major landmarks like the Raohe Street Night Market, Songshan Cultural and Creative Park, and Taipei Songshan Airport.

Discussion prompt: *Why does the China-Taiwan relationship matter to the US and to other Asian countries?*

Link: [*How China's Threat of Invasion Is Changing Taiwan*](#)

2: Hsinchu

Hsinchu is home to the high-tech hub, the Hsinchu Science Park—the Silicon Valley of Taiwan—where the headquarters of TSMC, the leading semiconductor chip manufacturer in Taiwan is located.

Discussion prompt: *What would the consequences be for you if Taiwanese semiconductor chips suddenly ceased to be available?*

Link: [Adapting to the Rise of Authoritarianism](#)

3: Xinwuri (Taichung)

Taichung—home to the famous Giant Bicycle company—is the third-largest city in Taiwan.

Discussion prompt: *What should your friends/students know about the Giant Bicycle Company, and why?*

Link: [How Giant Became the World's Biggest Bike Company](#)

4: Tainan

For 263 years, Tainan was the capital of Taiwan. It is home to many colonial-era buildings.

Discussion prompt: *Why do you think that Taiwan has often been overlooked in discussions of maritime East Asia?*

Link: [Anping Fort to be renamed Fort Zeelandia](#)

5: Kaohsiung

Taiwan's maritime and industrial capital, Kaohsiung has transformed into a modern, artistic waterfront hub featuring tropical weather, vibrant night markets, and scenic coastal views.

Discussion prompt: *How have history and government narratives shaped the lives of families on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, and how does that affect their identities?*

Link: [Classical Trash: How Taiwan's Musical Bin Lorries Transformed "Garbage Island"](#)





6: Fangliao

Fangliao, close to the southern tip of Taiwan, is a small fishing village, famous for fresh fruit and seafood.

Discussion prompt: *Choose a recipe from Made in Taiwan that appeals to you. Are all of the ingredients familiar to you? How far would you have to go to get the ingredients?*

7: Taimali

One third of Taimali's population is made up of the indigenous Amis and Paiwan peoples.

Discussion prompt: *Many in Taiwan see the period of White Terror (1949–1992) as a period of colonization. Who might feel that way, and why?*

Link: [Centering Taiwan: Colonization](#)

8: Taitung

Taitung is home to many rice fields and fruit farms.

Discussion prompt: *Agricultural production can be politicized. How have China and Taiwan used agricultural products as political tools?*

Link: [How turkey became a popular dish in Taiwan](#)

9: Ruisui

Many indigenous people live along the less-inhabited east coast of Taiwan. Visitors can experience traditional customs, including weaving, music, food, and festivals.

Discussion prompt: *How are indigenous people in Taiwan reclaiming their identities, and how are the government, entertainment industry, and other entities trying to support them?*

Link: [Council of Indigenous Peoples](#)

10: Hualien

Hualien County is the largest county on the island, with mountains covering most of the land. The Taroko National Park and the Taroko Gorge are here, with breathtaking scenery of mountains, marble canyons and waterfalls.

Discussion prompt: *The Dajia Mazu procession, Taiwan's biggest annual religious event, draws hundreds of thousands of worshipers. But how do devotees know the sea goddess, Mazu, is about to pass by?*

Link: [Birthday Celebration for the Sea Goddess Mazu](#)

11: Dongshan (Yilan)

The Yilan Park at the National Center for Traditional Arts features budaixi (bodehi) glove puppetry, where visitors can see live performances by masters of this art.

Discussion prompt: *Would glove puppetry appeal to your students/friends/classmates, and if so, what would they like about it?*

Link: [The Art of Taiwanese Glove Puppetry \(Budaixi\)](#)

12: The Finish Line! Songshan Station, Taipei

Discussion prompts: (1) *Think about what you knew about Taiwan before you started on this journey, and what you've learned since then.* (2) *If you could visit in person, which milestone(s) would you want to see most and why?*

An EAA Interview with the Curriculum Designers, Anne Prescott and Yurika Kurakata

Education About Asia Managing Editor, Jon Wilson, talked with Anne Prescott and Yurika Kurakata about the development of *Cycling Taiwan*.

Jon: *Congratulations Anne and Yurika on winning the 2026 Buchanan Prize and for your excellent work in developing the “[Cycling Taiwan](#)” curriculum! Did the impetus for “Cycling Taiwan” come from your 2022 prizewinning curriculum “[Walking the Tōkaidō](#)?”*

Yurika: Thank you, Jon. I really enjoyed working with Anne, Arlene Kowal, and John Frank on the [Walking the Tōkaidō](#) curriculum during the pandemic. It was an escape from wherever we were at that time, and I had the energy and interest to create a learning opportunity that could let teachers “visit” Japan wherever they were. I was up for creating another virtual program, especially given how there is typically little coverage of Taiwan in high school World History classes. There is so much for educators to explore, including Taiwan’s long maritime history, its many indigenous cultures, as well as our dependence on Taiwan’s chip manufacturing industry.

Anne: Thanks, Jon. So many participants told us how much they enjoyed [Walking the Tōkaidō](#) and indicated that they’d like to do a similar program to learn about another place in East Asia. In March 2023, I participated in the Fulbright International Educators Seminar in Taiwan, and I learned that not only is there a great interest in cycling in Taiwan, there is an established cycling route around Taiwan. I thought that would be the perfect way for educators to learn more about Taiwan.



Jon: Can you provide readers with a brief overview of how the virtual cycling component of the curriculum works? Do participants need to cycle the distances between each milestone in real life?

Anne: Participants cycle (or swim, or walk, or do some other form of exercise) wherever they are located. We use the My Virtual Mission platform, and participants log their miles on our dedicated *Cycling Taiwan* site. Participants then use My Virtual Mission's Google Street View interface to see where they've traveled and to engage with the island virtually. I set up the route using Taiwan National Cycling Route 1, which is an actual established route around the island.

Yurika: There is a set number of miles between each milestone. Teachers can "complete" those distances in any way that is accessible to them. We did have many teachers who actually cycled the entire distance. We counted any steps and miles that were walked, run, rowed or swum!

Jon: Did you have the set number of twelve milestones in mind before you began, and if so, how did you decide on these particular milestones?

Yurika: We initially came up with quite a number of potential milestones that we had to pare down. We also had to consider whether the topics related to a milestone would be relevant in a middle or high school classroom. Lastly, we wanted to be mindful of teachers being able to complete the program during the summer.

Anne: Our next step was to identify English-language resources—books, articles, videos, websites—that matched our topics. In addition to the ways Yurika mentioned about paring down the number of milestones, we eliminated topics that didn't have English-language materials. We also purposefully included fun learning tasks (food) as a break from heavier ones (colonization).

Jon: How long did it take you to develop the curriculum?

Yurika: It took several months for the initial development, and then several additional weeks for further refinement.



Anne: We did some preliminary planning in fall 2023, then we visited Taiwan in January 2024 to meet with professors and industry experts who could help us with the cycling part. Once we returned home, we finalized the resources, milestones, discussion prompts, and offered it to the first cohort in summer 2024.

Jon: *How has the feedback been from teachers who have completed the curriculum? What feedback stands out to you the most and has any of the feedback been surprising to you?*

Anne: I think many people are attracted to the opportunity to explore topics they might not otherwise encounter. We provide a lot of suggestions for further study—all those resources we had to cut due to time or cost. People also mention that they enjoy being able to “see” what’s along the route. Others really like the combination of physical activity and learning.

I love hearing from participants who say that the knowledge they gain has given them the opportunity to engage with others. One teacher reported that she had the program books sitting on her desk, and the books kept “disappearing” (and reappearing) as students picked them up to read. Another told me that she has found a new connection with her Taiwanese neighbor.

Jon: *Have either of you cycled the route in real life?*

Anne: I wish! Most of the route is flat, and I’d love to try it out. But not in the summer! I had read that many police and railway stations along the route have equipment for basic bicycle repairs, and in summer 2026 I was able to see for myself some of those places, which gives me more confidence to try at least part of the route!



Yurika: I have not, but it is supposed to be one of the most accessible cycling routes in Asia. Bonnie Tu, the CEO of Liv Bikes in Taiwan, completed the entire National Cycling Route 1 at age 57 as a novice biker. That should inspire us all to try!

Thank you Anne and Yurika!

