

TRANSPORTATION

Taiwan is located at the crossroads of East Asia's busiest air and sea routes. Situated on the edge of Asia's continental shelf, the island is 1000 kilometres south of Japan and 300 kilometres north of the Philippines. Transportation between Taiwan and the rest of the world is well developed and major East Asian cities can be reached in a few hours by air. With the recent completion of several ambitious transportation projects, Taiwan has substantially modernized its internal transportation system. Some gaps, however, remain to be filled before a thoroughly efficient and convenient transportation network is established. For example, consistent with Taiwan's population distribution, most transportation lines are concentrated on the island's west coast. Transport channels linking the eastern and western coasts are inadequate and inconvenient due to the mountain chain, which ranges vertically through central Taiwan.

MARINE

Taiwan has five international harbours, two of which have been built since 1979. The island is serviced by scheduled Taiwanese, American, and other foreign-flag lines. Taiwan's port traffic has increased dramatically over the last 20 years. From 1980-1987, total freight handled in Taiwan ports increased 95 percent to 227 million metric tons. Harbour facilities are being expanded to accommodate the rapidly increasing traffic. According to the *Economist*, Taiwan's shipping industry, especially container operations, has expanded considerably in recent years. In 1988, the volume of freight carried by Taiwanese flag vessels totalled 77.5 million tons, and Taiwan had the third largest cargo container fleet in the world.

Kaohsiung Port is located on Taiwan's southwest coast and is the largest and most heavily used harbour on the island. Kaohsiung Harbour is the world's third largest container port and tenth largest port overall. The port has three separate container terminals capable of storing over 34,800 containers. In recent years, several major shipping lines have moved operations to Kaohsiung from Hong Kong and Singapore which are too congested for further expansion. Kaohsiung has become a major centre for trans-shipping containers due to its favourable location along the major sea corridor for trans-Pacific shipping.

Keelung Harbour is a natural harbour situated on the northern shore of Taiwan, capable of handling vessels up to the 30,000 ton class. Taichung Port is an artificial harbour on the west coast of Taiwan, accommodating vessels of the 60,000 ton class and primarily handling bulk cargo rather than container traffic. Taichung Port is located midway between Keelung and Kaohsiung and has relieved some of the congestion at these two harbours. Hualien Harbour, situated on Taiwan's east coast is a relatively small harbour, and is capable of handling 50,000 ton class ships. Suao Port, on the northeastern coast of Taiwan is expected to handle an increasing amount of freight tonnage. In the past, Suao Port has mainly handled coal shipments.

AIR

Taiwan is accessible by air from almost any part of the world and occupies an important position in international air transportation. Chiang Kai-shek International Airport at Taoyuan serves Taipei and the northern region of Taiwan. The Kaohsiung International Airport serves southern Taiwan. Many foreign airline companies have operations on the island and all but one of these firms run both