Taipei is the capital of Chinese Taipei, with a population of three million people. New Taipei City comprises the suburbs which surround it, with four million people living in 29 different districts. Since their unification in 2010 New Taipei City has become the world’s most populous suburb (overtaking Yokohama in Japan).

The Marathon starts in the Wan Li district, to the northeast of central Taipei, and traces a route northwest through the Jinshan District to the northernmost district of New Taipei, Shimen. It is from these three districts that the race “Wan Jin Shi” derives its name.

The New Taipei City government has enthusiastically backed the Wan Jin Shi International Marathon joining AIMS for this year’s race, which was a landmark event for Chinese Taipei. The course follows the coastline of northern Taiwan for more than 20km, giving runners the opportunity to appreciate the scenic landscape. With gentle sea breezes and the lapping of the waves running the Marathon on this route does not just involve the physical effort, but brings with it a rare audio-visual experience.

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The race attracted about 12,000 runners. In addition to 100 international participants coming from 18 overseas countries, those who signed up for the marathon via the internet grew significantly compared to last year. Many of the top international athletes came from Kenya, but the rest came from different countries all over the globe. The first few finishers posted much faster times this year as a result of the race achieving a higher international profile.

There were 20 Kenyan runners participating in this year’s race, and they included both men’s and women’s winners. In the men’s race five Kenyan runners took an immediate lead. Three of them, Pius Muasa Mutuku, Kogei Hosea Kipkemoi, and Matyo Shadrack, were invited to participate after having taken the top three places in the Kaohsiung Marathon in southern Taiwan two weeks previously. But Josphat Kiptanui Too, who had signed up as an individual athlete, unexpectedly outran all the others, pressing ahead alone from 30km and going on to set a new course record of 2:19:13 – although the event record from 2008, over an earlier version of the course, is one minute faster than this.

Mercy Jelimo Too also signed up for the marathon as an individual, through the AIMS website. Running like the wind, she broke the event record with 2:38:18. Past champions Saitō Yuki (2011) and Sayaka Maeda (2012), just could not live with Jelimo’s pace and she had an untroubled win.

The New Taipei City Wan Jin Shi International Marathon offers the opportunity to run through some magnificent natural landscape, making it a highly popular event. Each year, race entries sell out within three days. The local organiser holds back some places and extends the deadline in order to allow international runners to participate.

The 2014 marathon is scheduled to be held in the first week of March. The entry deadline for international runners will be at the end of 2013. Runners are urged to sign up via the AIMS website for an unforgettable experience.
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