



SUMMER 2022

Summer Passions

COVER STORY

Old Taipei Shops Shine with Their Passion and Legacy:
Honoring Traditions, Embracing Change

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TAIPEI

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EDITOR'S
INTRODUCTION

HOT- BLOODED SUMMER



With the arrival of summer, the temperature inevitably rises, but so too do the passions of the indefatigable folks who call Taipei home. As such, this season our theme is “Summer Passions.” We’ve got tips for staying cool during the hottest months of the year, and also some touching and intriguing tales of those who dedicate themselves with a fiery resolve to the unique jobs and places that make Taipei great.

Even when temperatures soar, there is still a whole lot of cool to discover in Taipei. In this issue’s cover story, we take you on a tour of some of the city’s most treasured businesses, from a century-old custom tailor shop, to a traditional maker of calligraphy brushes. Also see our feature article about a man who dedicates himself to preserving historic vinyl recordings — Taipei’s one-and-only record transcriptionist. In these charming cornerstones of old Taipei, it’s not just about passing down time-tested skills, but about preserving the passion these people hold for their chosen professions.

From there we dive into the heart of escaping the summer heat, with the City Scene section chockfull of destinations locals favor when they feel the need to chill out for a while. From refreshing retreats to historic landmarks and evening markets, consider this your guide to keeping cool even when the mercury heads north of 35.

Summer is also festival season. It’s the time to celebrate the birthday of the City God, vigilant protector of the Taipei citizenry. It’s also a great time to discover the wide variety of outdoor artistry on display, such as the many murals created by a local master painter. From birthdays of the gods to artistic inspiration, there’s a lot worth celebrating in the pages ahead.

As we all get outdoors in the summer months, it’s easy to see just how far Taipei has come toward becoming a city that’s warm and welcoming to people from all over the world. Our interview with Ambassador Chou outlines how the city is fast transforming into an international hub.

Last but not least, check out our summer culinary recommendations — the best of the best in food and drink when it comes to cooling off. All this and more, as *TAIPEI* dives into summer.

COVID-19 ALERT

- Please wear a mask and follow the epidemic prevention regulations imposed by the government when going out during the pandemic.
- There are many private profile pictures published in this issue, hence no masks are worn by the figures present.



► Join our lucky draw to win a prize by completing *TAIPEI*’s online questionnaire!

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ISSN: 24137766
GPN: 2010402342

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Tel: (02) 2562-5005
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This magazine was printed with environmentally friendly soy ink.
We hope you enjoy reading this issue of TAIPEI. If you have any suggestions, please do not hesitate to email or fax us.



Photo/Samil Kuo @ Taiwan Literature Base

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TAIPEI Subscription Services, Postal Wire Transfer: 6 Issues
Beneficiary Account No.: 16630048
Beneficiary Name: Department of Information and Tourism,
Taipei City Government

Domestic	NT\$180	Regular Mail
Hong Kong/Macau	NT\$540	Regular Air Mail
Asia/Pacific Region	NT\$660	Regular Air Mail
Europe/US/Africa	NT\$900	Regular Air Mail



Online reading:
www.travel.taipei/en > Media > TAIPEI

Department of Information and Tourism, Taipei City Government

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中華郵政台北雜字
第 1377 號執照登記為雜誌交寄
Price: NT\$30

Old Taipei Shops Shine with Their Passion and Legacy: Honoring Traditions, Embracing Change

Author Rick Charette and Elisa Cohen

Photographer Dinghan Zheng, Samil Kuo, Yenyi Lin, Department of Information and Tourism, Taipei City Government

Taipei is a dynamic metropolis where tradition and modernity live in harmonious integration. The city is home to a legion of large, bright, and colorful malls and high-street stores, and at the same time home to an almost countless number of proud old family-run shops that have deep roots in their local communities and reputations that reach across the city and, often, far beyond.

Inheritors of age-old wisdom and techniques, the generations that today run these enterprises devoutly carry on the traditions of their family seniors, with a passion and enthusiasm as warm as Taipei's famously hot summer weather. In this article, we bring you on visits to four of the city's most illustrious and cherished century-old shops. Each of these practices a different traditional trade. You'll learn about their business philosophy, the techniques they utilize, and how they are adapting their business practices as the community and city change around them.

You'll be getting to know a manufacturer of incense founded in 1897, a creator of decorative lanterns launched in 1915, a custom tailor of Western-style suits opened in 1916, and a maker of calligraphy brushes established in 1917. These visits will take you into three of Taipei's oldest and most historic areas in the western part of the city. Among the areas, Wanhua (萬華) District was Taipei's first place of Han Chinese settlement in the early 1700s, flourishing as a river port. The Dadaocheng (大稻埕) neighborhood took shape in the 1850s, and soon took over Wanhua's role as key river port engaged in international trade. Last but not least, Bo'ai Special Zone (博愛特區) originally lay within the old walled city built in the 1880s, and houses several core governmental offices of the country and historical buildings.

Let's head out to our first stop.



01

01. Many old shops with a century or more of history in Taipei continue their profession with passion, keeping traditional skills and spirits alive.





Lao Mian Cheng Lantern Shop

老綿成燈籠店

The Lao Mian Cheng Lantern Shop, standing at the north end of Dihua Street (迪化街), was founded in 1915. Lanterns of various colors and styles hang under the arched eaves of the old red brick house, adding a vigorous atmosphere to the retro neighborhood.

May May Chang (張美美), the third generation of the family who runs the business, and who has helped in the shop since childhood, shares with us that her grandfather began the business with the wholesale of sacramental joss paper, then shifted to lantern selling, which was also related to religious rituals, as temples usually light lanterns during festivals and celebrations to wish for good luck and symbolize brightness and peace.

"I was born and raised here, and it used to be very bustling," Chang says. The area at the end of Dihua Street used to be called Qiaotou Market (橋頭市場), which rivaled Yongle Market (永樂市場) at the beginning of the street. The streets were lined with vendors, and there were crowds of people every day.

She mentions that the painter Hsueh-hu Kuo's (郭雪湖) work *Festival on South Street* (南街殷賑), which outlined the lively scene of Dadaocheng in 1930. "If you look closely at the details in the painting, you can also find traces of early lanterns," Chang says, "This kind of early lantern is made of bamboo and woven by hand."

Lantern making seems intuitive, pasting paper or fabric on the concave lantern skeleton to prop up an ignitable hollow arc. As a matter of fact, all kinds of details are hidden. Hsin-yi Chang (張新怡), of the fourth generation of the family, explains that since the lanterns will be stretched out when they are unfolded, they are usually hung high, allowing people to look up from the bottom. Accordingly, special attention must be paid to proportion when drawing or writing the patterns or characters on the lanterns, so they can be shown evenly when unfolded. Hsin-yi also emphasizes the selection of bamboo. Only bamboo produced at a specific time has the tenacity and elasticity required to make lanterns. To make high-quality lanterns, Lao Mian Cheng makes no compromise on materials or techniques.

02





03



04

02. It takes years of experience to select the right materials for making bamboo lanterns.

03-04. Aside from traditional lanterns, Lao Mian Cheng also integrates new materials and innovative ideas to develop new products.

05. In 2020, Lao Mian Cheng designed many colorful lanterns for Lunar Valentine's Day in Taipei, lighting up the entire Dadaocheng community. (Photo/Department of Information and Tourism, Taipei City Government)

05



In addition to making lanterns for traditional temple rituals, Lao Mian Cheng is also constantly utilizing up-to-date painting and production methods in line with customer needs and marketing activities to create decorative lanterns in a variety of unique shapes, even exporting some lanterns abroad. The shop has previously cooperated with the Taipei City Government to light up the romantic atmosphere of Dadaocheng during the Lunar Valentine's Day with a pastel macaron lantern tunnel. This year, they also joined hands with Taipei Xia-Hai City God Temple (台北霞海城隍廟) in Dadaocheng to design a golden lantern for the Taipei Xia-Hai City God Cultural Festival (台北霞海城隍文化節), during which partaking shops in the neighborhood would hang golden lanterns to greet participating visitors.

Hsin-yi, who is in charge of brand management, has been proactive in promoting the innovative application of lanterns lately. She has registered the brand logo on the blockchain and recently made a large lantern with the Heart Sutra written on it into a Non-Fungible Token (NFT). Moreover, through a Graphics Interchange Format (GIF), the lantern can even rotate smoothly with a 3D effect.

"Lao Mian Cheng has accumulated 107 years of technique and experience, step by step from paper lanterns to NFTs," Hsin-yi says. The experience of four generations has allowed them to work with many different groups, making for many memorable and sparkling collaborations.

LAO MIAN CHENG LANTERN SHOP

ADD 298, Sec. 1, Dihua St., Datong Dist.
HOURS 9:30am - 7:30pm



06



Lao Ming Yu Incense Shop

老明玉香舖

Lao Ming Yu, located on Guiyang Street (貴陽街) in Wanhua District, has a history of more than 120 years since its establishment in 1897, and is one of the only venerable incense shops in Taipei. The shop in the ancient red brick house sells all kinds of sacramental supplies, such as joss paper stamped with gold and silver foil and colorful paper lotuses. People in Taiwan burn these goods after worshiping the gods and their ancestors, with the belief that they would receive them as offerings in the next realm.

Walking into the store with the light aroma of traditional Han medicine, Chyong-yi Huang (黃瓊儀), the fourth generation currently in charge of the business, shows us a bunch of incense packed in a red box. As she introduces, "This logo has been used since my great-grandfather was in charge, and now we put his photo on it as a commemoration." The pattern is said to have been hand-drawn by her great-grandfather, and it is still vivid after a hundred years.

Lao Ming Yu began its business when Huang's great-grandfather peddled around Taipei on foot with a shoulder pole. Hereafter, Lao Ming Yu relocated many times within the Wanhua area and eventually settled in the shop on Guiyang Street.

Growing up in the shop, Huang recalls that it was always crowded on Guiyang Street in the past. Pilgrims shuttled around the nearby Bangka Qingshui Temple (艋舺清水巖祖師廟), Bangka Qingshan Temple (艋舺青山宮), and Bangka Longshan Temple (艋舺龍山寺) to pay homage and purchased incense from the shop. Then the crowd went to the market to shop and dine. There were all kinds of food stalls gathered at the intersection, and the thoroughfare was once a famous breakfast street. "This used to be 'The First Street of Taipei,' which leads all the way to the estuary of the Tamsui River (淡水河). It was very bustling," Huang says.

Although the street is not as prosperous as it used to be, Lao Ming Yu is still the incense shop many natives of Taipei must visit during the Lunar New Year or other festivities. “Many customers say they can only find some traditional stuff here,” Huang points out. Lao Ming Yu’s products are made of scented powder ground and prepared from all-natural herbs and then kneaded with phoebe powder, with its natural viscosity. The exclusive formula has been passed down from the days of Huang’s great-grandfather. The gentle and calm aroma with a touch of warmth evokes comfort and relaxation.



07

Facing the impact of changing times, the old incense shop did not desert its traditional techniques, but turned them toward various products. Apart from the traditional incense sticks, Lao Ming Yu has also made various incense sticks of varied shapes and usages, as well as coil incense and horizontal incense, according to contemporary needs. Even customers who do not burn incense to worship the gods and goddesses can find a use for traditional aromas in their daily lives. The century-old shop continues to respond to the customers' needs and focus on making high-quality natural products. “We adopt fine materials and adhere to traditional practices, and people in need will continue to visit,” Huang says with pride.

LAO MING YU INCENSE SHOP

ADD 155, Sec. 2, Guiyang St., Wanhua Dist.
HOURS 8:30am - 9:30pm



08



09

06. Lao Ming Yu Incense Shop provides a wide variety of religious products. (Photo/Dinghan Zheng)

07. Locally handmade joss paper can only be found in a few old shops in Taipei. (Photo/Dinghan Zheng)

08-09. These incense sticks are made with formulas handed down within the family, with the founder’s photo printed on the package. (Photo/Dinghan Zheng)



Lam Sam Yick

林三益筆墨專家

Lam Sam Yick (林三益) is a traditional maker of calligraphy brushes located on the edge of Dadaocheng, one of Taipei's three oldest and most historic communities, on busy, many-laned Chongqing North Road (重慶北路). Especially rich in heritage commercial architecture, Dadaocheng has long been northern Taiwan's key wholesale/retail hub for traditional regional specialty goods, Chinese medicines, and floral fabrics.

Though masters of tradition, this enterprise is now also known for its modern entrepreneurial dynamism, esteemed as a model for other old-brand family ventures looking for new revenue pathways. It pushed into a brave new world in 2008 with the introduction of LSY, a cosmetic brush brand.

The enterprise was founded in Fuzhou (福州) in China's Fujian Province (福建省) in 1917. The decision to shift to Taiwan was made in 1946 as China's politico-economic situation rapidly deteriorated. Thereafter, the firm became the *longtou* (龍頭) or "dragon head" — i.e., unassailable leader — in calligraphy-related essentials throughout Taiwan.

However, says fourth-generation proprietor Chang-long Lin (林昌隆), as times changed the family faced new turbulence and a steady attack on sales — "The modern-day pen and keyboard 'invasion.' This became serious starting in the 1990s. Today, calligraphy is no longer taught in our elementary and secondary schools, and has become a recreational pursuit rather than a life necessity."

Seeking a new revenue pathway to augment Lam Sam Yick's calligraphy brush sales, Lin decided that the best course was to build on the firm's deep font of handcrafted brush expertise to create high-quality makeup brushes for women and facial-cleansing brushes for men. "In contrast to big brands competing in this sector, Lam Sam Yick remains nimble, and can provide both corporate and individual customers with custom-crafted designs."



10



11



12

10-11. Passing down the variety of skills involved in producing calligraphy brushes, Lam Sam Yick highlights its specialty in finding the right natural materials for diverse applications. (Photo/Yenyi Lin)

12-13. With its main focus on brush making, Lam Sam Yick has also turned its unique skill set toward manufacturing make-up brushes. (Photo/Yenyi Lin)



13

These upscale LSY items have been a stellar success, and are now sold in high-end retail outlets at major department stores. Lin states that each Lam Sam Yick calligraphy brush and LSY cosmetic brush is a unique handmade work of art with compellingly attractive lines, and that the company enjoys a steady stream of sales with overseas visitors looking for unique gift/souvenir gems.

Lin further explains the Lam Sam Yick philosophy: "What the calligraphy brush does is to assist the user in pursuing 'inner beauty.' With LSY, we have extended our accumulated craft wisdom to help users pursue 'external beauty' as well."

Beyond the master's exacting skills in brush construction, Lin says, in their craft there is a second crucial element — hair selection. "What sets us apart is that we excel in both areas. Each brush, calligraphy or cosmetic is used for a specialized purpose, requiring hairs with specific hardness, softness, elasticity, suppleness, absorption, etc. Starting in my father's time, we've experimented and scoured the East Asia region and beyond for the perfect purpose-specific hairs, with everything from sable to boar used."

"However, with eco-consciousness rising, we're also now using more synthetic hairs, while aware that plastics use has its own eco-issues. And responding to pandemic impacts, we've gone strongly online with calligraphy/cosmetic brush sales videos."

LAM SAM YICK

ADD 58, Sec. 2, Chongqing N. Rd., Datong Dist.
HOURS 9:00am - 6:00pm



Tom Tailor

湯姆西服

When it comes to the crafting of bespoke men's suits in Taipei, there is perhaps no name more iconic than the century-old Tom Tailor (湯姆西服). An enterprise that shifted to Taipei from Shanghai, China in 1945, this custom-tailor shop has long been a maker of formal Western attire for big-name political figures and celebrities. It proudly proclaims that it is renowned as the "Designer Suit Shop for Successive Presidents."

The firm is today run by Tom Hsu (許金地), the third generation of the family to take up the sewing needle and measurement tape. Tom Tailor opened in the French Concession of sophisticated Shanghai in 1916. According to Hsu, "Among our clients were the country's most lofty notables. For example, we crafted the wedding outfits for Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石) and Soong Mei-ling (宋美齡) for their grand 1927 wedding. Today these are on display at the Chiang Kai-shek

Memorial Hall (中正紀念堂)." The firm's master tailors were part of China's renowned Red Gang (紅幫) group of tailors, originally making traditional Chinese formal attire, who became dominant in the creation of Western formal wear in Shanghai for both Chinese and Western clients.

In 1945, in the face of increasing instability in China, the enterprise was moved to Taipei, in what is today known as the Bo'ai Special Zone, home to numerous important works of public heritage architecture, most notably the Presidential Office Building (總統府). "This was because, back then, this was one of Taipei's busiest commercial areas," says Hsu. "There was always activity, with businesses open well past midnight. Today things are quieter, and it is more a historical public/commercial architecture district."



14



15

14. With solid experience in tailor-made suits, Tom Tailor always focuses on the little details to make the most suitable outfits for its discerning clientele.

15. Tom Tailor collects various fabrics and textiles to produce suits according to the requests of its many returning customers.

16-17. Apart from preserving traditional skills, Tom Tailor also keeps up with the latest trends to design suits that meet the current fashion climate.

Hsu shares that by the very nature of his business, Tom Tailor has always simultaneously embraced tradition and modernity. “Our expert craftsmanship skills are a direct Red Gang inheritance,” he says. “We use such unique and unmatched techniques, originally created for Chinese formal attire, and hundred paths craftsmanship process. Yet at the same time, we are constantly introducing novelty, for we must keep up with the latest trends in suits,” Hsu adds.

The firm has always prided itself on being able to provide customers with the latest suit fashions from regions around the globe, which means exacting knowledge of both changing styles and fabric trends. As well, with an eye to creating a loyal life-long clientele among young Taiwanese consumers, it constantly creates young and chic designs that catch the eye of new generations and are reasonably priced for the general public. “A great many of Taipei’s citizens have had their first suit tailor-made at Tom Tailor,” says Hsu. He also mentions that the introduction of new styling is being accelerated now that the fourth generation of the Hsu family, which “Exists in a dynamically different sartorial world,” is entering the family trade. 📍



16



17

TOM TAILOR

ADD 90, Bo'ai Rd., Zhongzheng Dist.
HOURS 10:00am - 9:00pm

Refreshing Retreats: 5 Places to Chill Out in Taipei This Summer

Author Nathan Ray

Photographer Taiwan Scene, Taipei Water Park, Samil Kuo, Hydraulic Engineering Office, Taipei City Government

Around the world, summer is the time for fun in the sun. It's a time when people emerge from winter hibernation to thaw out their stiff bodies and work on their tan. Taipei City boasts a diverse range of green spaces, world-class hiking trails, and riverside parks, making it a remarkable place to call home and a hospitable destination to visit. However, the relentless summer humidity can seem overwhelming at times,

forcing the unaccustomed to seek refuge indoors. If you are one of those who are after some refreshing alternatives, we have five cool outdoor places for you to chill out this summer. Ranging from peaceful jaunts to historic mountain trails to fun for all ages at the downtown waterparks, our list caters to the whole family. Let's dive in.

01



Please be sure to observe weather and water conditions and exercise caution when entering any body of water, and always closely supervise children.



02

Hushan Hiking Trail

虎山親山步道

First on our list is Hushan Hiking Trail, concealed within the forest bordering the illustrious Xinyi District in central Taipei. Hushan, or Tiger Mountain, is home to one of the Sihshoushan (四獸山, Four Beasts Mountains) Circular Hiking Trails, an expansive network of trails crisscrossing the southern reaches of the Taipei Basin. This means there are numerous trailheads to enter and many paths to walk. This labyrinth of tracks runs throughout the peaks and valleys of the four beasts mountains, so named for the animals they are said to resemble: Xiangshan (象山, Elephant Mountain), Shishan (獅山, Lion Mountain), Baoshan (豹山, Leopard Mountain) and Hushan (虎山, Tiger Mountain).

The primary entrance to Hushan is tucked away behind Songsan Tsu Huei Temple (松山慈惠堂). It's located approximately 15 minutes on foot south of MRT Houshanpi Station (捷運後山埤站) on the Bannan Line (板南線, Blue Line), or there are buses running along nearby Fude Street (福德街) that can get you near the trailhead. From the very beginning, the trail splits into two, so you can walk a full circuit if you like. Take note

that there is one path to the left that goes up the stairs beside the temple and one to the right that will follow Hushan Creek (虎山溪), which comes into view within three minutes of entering the trail. The stream flows beside the path, attracting dragonflies, birds, and more small creatures. Stairs at the first stone bridge allow visitors to go down to the creek and dip their feet into the cool water. If you walk across the bridge and follow the trail for another minute, a flat square by the stream offers a safer option for hikers with young children as the depth of water is more kid-friendly.

In terms of hiking difficulty, Hushan is rather mild compared to the steeper ascents of the nearby Jiuwu Peak (九五峰) and Xiangshan trails. It's a gradual climb up the stone path beneath a canopy of tropical foliage, and the creek offers respite from the ambient heat of the concrete jungle.

01. Walk along the streams in the mountains and find a place to cool down in summer in Taipei!

02. The well-plotted Hushan Hiking Trail allows aquaphilic hikers to walk down to the creek and enjoy a peaceful moment.

Pingding Ancient Canal Hiking Trail

坪頂古圳步道

Next up is the Pingding Ancient Canal Hiking Trail, sheltered within the foothills of the mighty Yangmingshan (陽明山, Mt. Yangming) in the Shilin District. The closest trailhead to the city is about seven kilometers from the National Palace Museum (國立故宮博物院), and is accessible by bus from MRT Jiantan Station (捷運劍潭站).

The highlight of this trail is the series of canals — Pingding Ancient Canal (坪頂古圳), New Pingding Canal (坪頂新圳), and Dengfeng Canal (登峰圳) — which were carved into the mountainside by local residents for farming and domestic water usage during the Qing Dynasty (清朝, 1636 A.D. – 1912 A.D.). Pingding Ancient Canal, the oldest of the three, was constructed in 1834 and still provides fresh water, along with the other two canals, to the surrounding area. They capture clean mountain water from many small waterfalls and the runoff seeping out of the earth. Other than providing precious water to us, the area is home to many native animals. Small fish, frogs, and lizards can be spotted with a keen eye.

The main trail circuit is 2.3 kilometers long, and gently winds through the lush, green valley and crosses all three canals and Neishuangxi (內雙溪). Shielded by the thick canopy, it is a refreshing spot to wade in the crisp mountain stream. The smooth boulders by the creek are a prime location to sit down, meditate and absorb the ambiance of the forest. All in all, it is a rare blend of human history and the unadulterated beauty of Mother Nature.

03. New Pingding Canal connects to the stream at the end of the trail, where shallow water flows slowly by, and is a perfect spot for kids to dip in the water.

04. With the Neishuangxi streaming alongside, there are small waterfalls along Pingding Ancient Canal Hiking Trail for hikers to chill out beside.



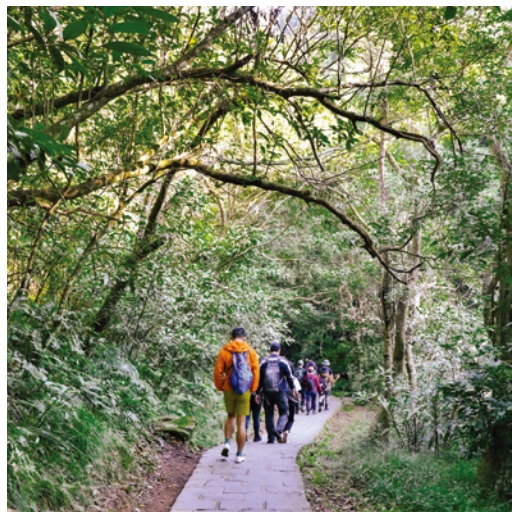
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Dagouxi Ecology and Water-Control Park

大溝溪生態治水園區

Third on our list is Dagouxi Ecology and Water-Control Park. It is situated in the Neihu District in northeastern Taipei. To reach the park, you can walk about 850 meters along Dahushanzhuang Street (大湖山莊街) from MRT Dahu Park Station (捷運大湖公園站).

The park boasts sweeping grassy fields abutted by gentle hills; perfect for parents to let their kids or dogs run free. The quaint stone path meanders through the small wetland as it traces the stream up the valley. Once you duck under the cover of the canopy, the remaining walk is cool and well-shaded.

There are plenty of places to rest along the way, but the prime destination is Yuanjue Waterfall (圓覺瀑布), about a 20-minute walk from the trailhead. It has lots of seating available to enjoy a picnic and waterfall views. You can also dip your feet into the water if the mood takes you.

This trail is also part of Section 4 of the Taipei Grand Trail (台北大縱走), a network of mountain trails that span across Taipei for 92 kilometers. So, if you continue climbing you will reach Bishan Temple (碧山巖) and can journey further on to Jinmianshan (金面山, Mt. Jinmian) or even all the way to Yangmingshan. If you decide to have a chill afternoon instead, just stay in Dagouxi Ecology and Water-Control Park. It has one of the most easily accessible waterfall trails in Taipei, and is perfect for a summer day trip.

05. Yuanjue Waterfall is one of the most easily accessible falls in the Taipei City area.

06. Shaded by greenery, Dagouxi Trail leads people on a leisurely hike in the mountain forest.

Taipei Water Park

台北自來水園區

If you want to amp up the thrills, then head to number four on our list, Taipei Water Park in the Zhongzheng District in southern Taipei. It's within walking distance of MRT Gongguan Station (捷運公館站) on the Songshan-Xindian Line (松山新店線, Green Line).

One of the highlights in the park for outdoor fun in the summer is the Xiaoguan Yin Shan Ecological Hiking Trail (小觀音山生態登山步道). It is a shady trail hidden in the back of the park, leading hikers to one of the oldest



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reservoirs in Taipei — Guanyinshan Reservoir (觀音山蓄水池). This century-old reservoir is the most important source of tap water in Taipei, and it compares favorably with other international underground palaces. Entering the cistern walkway (reservation required), you can not only keep cool in the summer heat, but also travel through time and space. If the summer sunshine is too hot to handle, you can also hide inside the Museum of Drinking Water (自來水博物館), where the development of Taipei's water supply system is displayed within the confines of exquisite Baroque architecture.

During these vacation months, Taipei Riverside Children's Fun Carnival (台北河岸童樂會) is held by the Taipei City Government at the Taipei Water Park from August 19th to 28th. The carnival brings in more inflatable water slides and pools to the park, allowing kids to have great fun under the sun. Please note that full admission is NT\$80, and for children under 12 and students the price is NT\$40.

07. With a history over a century, Guanyinshan Reservoir has been preserved as a historic site in Taipei. (Photo/Taipei Water Park)

08. Museum of Drinking Water, designed in the Baroque-style, is also a popular check-in spot in Taipei. (Photo/Taipei Water Park)

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09. The pier in Dajia Riverside Park is a good place for citizens and tourists alike to enjoy water activities such as kayaking. (Photo/Samil Kuo)

10. It is especially recommended to watch the Fountain of Hope on summer evenings to avoid the heat while enjoying the sunset view. (Photo/Hydraulic Engineering Office, Taipei City Government)

09

Dajia Riverside Park 大佳河濱公園


Last but not least on our list is Dajia Riverside Park on the banks of the Keelung River (基隆河), at the northern edge of central Taipei's Zhongshan District and close to Taipei Songshan Airport (台北松山機場). The best way to access the park is to take the bus or ride a bike.

Taipei is wedged between the Keelung and Tamsui Rivers. There are several bike paths within its bounds, with the shortest about eight kilometers and the longest coming in at 47 kilometers, and many playgrounds, exercise facilities and parklands to discover just outside the city's floodgates. An expansive park stretching west from the Dazhi Bridge (大直橋) — Dajia Riverside Park is connected to all the riverside parks that wrap around Taipei. Because of the interminable bike paths, cycling here is a fantastic way to view Taipei from another vantage point. It's a vast and dynamic playground with plenty of space to play.

The highlight of this section of Dajia Riverside Park is the Fountain of Hope (希望之泉). Sitting on the west side of the long and narrow park, the fountain spouts



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once every hour from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., producing water jets that are over 70 meters high. From July to August, extra shows with splendid illumination effects will take place twice nightly at 7:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. With each session lasting 15 minutes, visitors can watch the amazing show by the river while enjoying the instagrammable background view of The Grand Hotel (圓山大飯店). In addition to the fountain, there is also regular play equipment like slides and swings. The shaded sandpits have diggers, too, so remember to bring your buckets and spades to build some sandcastles. 

Find Yourself in a Cool Place: Renovated Old Buildings in Taipei

Author Jenna Lynn Cody

Photographer Taipei Info Hub, National Center of Photography and Images, Taiwan New Cultural Movement Memorial Museum

As summer comes to Taipei, you might find yourself trudging down a hot sidewalk, the bright sun in your eyes and sweat on your brow — and face mask, if the COVID-19 pandemic continues. On sizzling subtropical days like this, cool indoor spaces where you can take a breath and find some shade are most welcome.

In recent years, Taipei City has been busy renovating a plethora of buildings dating from the Japanese colonial era (1895-1945), turning them into places where one can learn about the culture and history of Taipei, as well as how the city continues to evolve. They also make Taipei an inviting city in all seasons.

Taipei Info Hub (臺北記憶倉庫), the National Center of Photography and Images, Taipei (國家攝影文化中心 台北館), and Taiwan New Cultural Movement Memorial Museum (台灣新文化運動紀念館) in the renovated Taipei North Police Station (台北北警察署) are three such repurposed spaces that offer a respite from the summer heat. In these centrally-located spots, all built between 1913 and 1937, you can cool off, enjoy heritage architecture, take in a free exhibit or recharge and reflect at a café. No matter how hot it is outside, there's always something new to see or learn in all of these historic destinations.

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01. Hidden in plain sight within the concrete jungle of Taipei, some of the city's heritage houses offer a cool space in summer where you can learn the history of the city. (Photo/Taipei Info Hub)

02. The warehouse harkens back to the good old days of Taipei with its red brick exterior. (Photo/Taipei Info Hub)

03. Exhibitions and the bookshop provide useful information about the historic context of the building. (Photo/Taipei Info Hub)

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Taipei Info Hub

Built as a warehouse in 1913 by the erstwhile Mitsui & Co., Ltd. (unrelated to the extant company of the same name), Taipei Info Hub, also called the Former Mitsui & Co. Taipei warehouse (舊三井物產株式會社北門倉庫), is located across from Beimen (北門, North Gate) — the only city gate in Taipei that retains its original design. The original brick building sported an attractive semicircle gable, unique in that it was adorned with the diamond-shaped Mitsui & Co. company symbol.

When the building was renovated as part of the Taipei Western District Gateway Project (台北西區門戶計畫) in 2016 after more than half a century of neglect, it was determined that the brickwork on the original gable was too weak to be renovated in situ. As such, a replica was installed outside about 50 meters away from the original site; the original gable of the warehouse that was cut and preserved at the time can still be seen as you enter the building.

Taipei Info Hub houses a bilingual exhibit on the history of forestry and trade, as Mitsui engaged in the export of resources such as tea, rice, camphor, salt, sugar, tobacco and coal. Adjacent to both the railway and Dadaocheng Wharf (大稻埕碼頭), and near several



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historic sites from the Qing, Japanese and post-war eras, the building tells the story of the commercial development of the city and its trade routes, in addition to rotating exhibitions.

For those seeking to escape the heat, Taipei Info Hub also boasts a bookshop and café with ample seating, WiFi and a wide selection of drinks.

TAIPEI INFO HUB

ADD 265, Sec. 1, Zhongxiao W. Rd., Zhongzheng Dist. (Near MRT Beimen Station)

HOURS 11:00am - 7:00pm (Closed on Mondays)

National Center of Photography and Images, Taipei

Located a short walk from Taipei Info Hub, the National Center of Photography and Images (NCPI) opened in 2021 with the aim of facilitating the preservation and exhibition of photography and image-based arts of cultural and historic importance. Currently it is the only national-level specialized photographic institute in Taiwan. Stepping inside NCPI's cool interior, be sure to pick up bilingual brochures before either ascending the restored staircase to the exhibitions on the second and third floors, or sipping coffee at the sleek café and adjoining shop. The exhibitions on the upper floors are operated by the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts (國立台灣美術館). This summer, be sure to catch the exhibition "Specularity/Reflexivity: Contemporary Image Arts after the 1980s," displaying Taiwanese contemporary image arts after 1980.

The L-shaped building was designed by Japanese architect Setsu Watanabe — his only known work in Taiwan. Constructed in 1937 for the Osaka Mercantile

Co., Ltd., the minimally adorned modernist façade centers a Japanese-style spired turret on the roof. As war loomed on the horizon and the colonial government began to conserve resources, the building became the last Japanese-era reinforced concrete structure built in Taiwan. Long-term residents of Taipei may remember, however, that the turret was not always there. Although part of the original structure, it was demolished in 1968 to make room for a fourth story; by then, the building housed the Taiwan Provincial Highway Bureau (台灣省公路局), predecessor of what is now called the Directorate General of Highways (交通部公路總局).

In 2014, the building was designated as a heritage site by the Department of Cultural Affairs, Taipei City Government (台北市文化局), and renovations began, restoring Watanabe's vision and giving visitors an immersive sense of Taipei's past.

NATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY AND IMAGES, TAIPEI

ADD 70, Sec. 1, Zhongxiao W. Rd., Zhongzheng Dist. (Near MRT Taipei Main Station)
HOURS 10:00am - 6:00pm (Closed on Mondays)



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04. The National Center of Photography and Images, Taipei, has a unique style, integrating oriental and western architecture. (Photo/National Center of Photography and Images)

05-06. While paying a visit to a photo exhibition, do slow down and enjoy the tranquil atmosphere of the hallway and staircase. (Photo/National Center of Photography and Images)



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Taiwan New Cultural Movement Memorial Museum

The Dadaocheng neighborhood north of Taipei Main Station (台北車站) is one of the oldest in Taipei, and its wealth of traditional architecture has attracted tourists for decades. Few, however, compare in scale to the Taipei North Police Station, now the Taiwan New Cultural Movement Memorial Museum. If you need a break from exploring the area on a sweltering day, this spacious museum with a restored pre-war façade is just the place.

Built in 1933, the station also served as a detention center. In the ensuing decades, the edifice was replaced with red tiles and a third story was added. Renovations began in 2014, and the choice of exhibit was intentional: Taiwan Cultural Association (台灣文化協會) founder Chiang Wei-shui (蔣渭水) had been imprisoned at the station's former site in the 1920s. The New Cultural Movement in Taiwan encouraged understanding of Taiwanese culture and history through performances, lectures, essays and a newspaper, the *Taiwan People's News* (台灣民報).

07. The old police station, once a symbol of authoritarianism, has been turned into a museum memorializing the fight for democracy in Taiwan. (Photo/Taiwan New Cultural Movement Memorial Museum)

08. Exhibitions at the Taiwan New Cultural Movement Memorial Museum show the various ways Taiwanese people sought autonomy while under the boot of colonization. (Photo/Taiwan New Cultural Movement Memorial Museum)

09. The old sector-shaped detention room is now a part of an exhibit in the museum. (Photo/Taiwan New Cultural Movement Memorial Museum)

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Entering the museum, the first thing you see is a stunning original staircase lined with pale blue tiles. Looking down, the original floor of the entryway is visible under glass. Visitors can enjoy a mostly-bilingual exhibit on the New Cultural Movement to learn more about the history of Taiwanese people fighting for democracy and autonomy. They will also find the sector-shaped detention room and jail within the building as part of the old police station. To take a break during a visit, check out the small café and shop in the museum.

Whether you prefer to enjoy a cool drink and learn about commercial history at the Taipei Info Hub, admire image-based arts at the National Center of Photography and Images, or learn about intellectual movements in 1920s and 1930s in Taiwan, this summer the coolest places to be, literally and figuratively, are in Taipei's renovated historic buildings. 

TAIWAN NEW CULTURAL MOVEMENT MEMORIAL MUSEUM

ADD 87, Ningxia Rd., Datong Dist.
(Near MRT Daqiaotou, Shuanglian and Minquan W. Rd. Stations)

HOURS 9:30am - 5:30pm (Closed on Mondays)



01

After-Hours Shopping Guide: Exploring Taipei's Evening Markets After Dusk

Author Catherine Shih
Photographer Yengping, Taiwan Scene

When the summer heat begins to rise upwards of 30 degrees Celsius, the residents of Taipei have no choice but to hide indoors — only daring to venture outside once the temperature cools down. Local evening markets, which operate starting in the late afternoon, and continuing until the blazing sunsets, are the premier choice for many office workers just getting off work.

Whether it's shopping for daily necessities or just enjoying a nice meal, these are but a few of the great places to experience the passion of the townspeople and sample local street food.

01. Even if you miss the traditional market in the morning, evening markets in Taipei that open from afternoon to night still offer all kinds of daily supplies for purchase.

📍 Wanhua District Shuanghe Market

Located in Wanhua District, about a 15-minute walk either from Wanhua Station (萬華車站) or MRT Longshan Temple Station (捷運龍山寺站), Shuanghe Market (雙和市場) is known for offering budget-friendly fruits, vegetables, and ready-made home-cooked delights. Hundreds of stalls selling local food are lined up side by side, beginning from about three or four o'clock in the afternoon until seven or eight in the evening. Steamed Bun King (饅頭王) sells the ever-popular Taiwanese steamed buns, for example, and offers a whopping variety of over 10 flavors, including meat buns, cabbage, taro, brown sugar, and sesame

— at a price of just NT\$10 each! Other stalls sell fresh and seasonal fruits, such as pineapple, mango, and dragon fruit, which are harvested around June or July, the height of summer.

If you're looking for spices and ingredients for making the perfect curry at home, Shuanghe Market is also the place to find affordable onions, potatoes, turmeric, ginger, and red shallots.

Another important stall to also check out is Jinwei Fried Chicken (津味炸雞), known for its mouthwatering fried chicken. Refusing to use frozen meat, the owner serves up tender chicken which is deep-fried to perfection, giving it a juicy yet crispy taste. One really cannot go wrong shopping at this local evening market!



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02-03. Steamed Bun King sells not only various flavors of buns, but also pan-fried stuffed buns that are made on the spot!

04. All items on offer at Jinwei Fried Chicken are fried upon ordering so guests can enjoy hot, fresh, and hearty food.

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Neihu District Wende Evening Market & Jinlong Evening Market

Neihu District is known as the Silicon Valley in Taipei. With new and fancy buildings going up one after the other in Neihu Technology Park (內湖科技園區), it's hard to imagine there are traditional markets hidden within this high-tech zone, making Wende Evening Market (文德黃昏市場) an even rarer scene.

Situated at the edge of the science and technology park area, Wende Evening Market offers a large variety of food options, including both ready-made hot food and fresh vegetables for the white-collar workers in the park to shop and feast on after the work day is done.

One such stall selling *douhua* (豆花, tofu pudding), Yunaichuan (芋芳川) often sells out within two hours of opening! Using organic soybeans, their tofu pudding is soft and velvety. The brown sugar water is another secret to their deliciousness — sweet but not cloying, baking into the toppings such as sweet peanuts, red beans, taro balls, and tapioca.



Another stall worth checking out is Long's Crispy Roast Duck (阿龍師脆皮烤鴨放山雞), which offers freshly roasted duck and chicken. Customers flock here for their dishes' juicy meat and crispy skin. One can choose a half duck for only NT\$160-NT\$180 (depending on the size), while a big family can share a whole juicy roast duck at the price of NT\$300! The stall only operates on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and on weekends, so make sure you don't come away empty-handed.

Other famous foods in the vicinity also include Wende Fried Chicken (文德炸雞), selling every variety of fried food one can imagine — from sweet potato fries, to chicken steak, and even squid balls. Meanwhile, Colife (可來富) is a local bakery and pastry shop that runs all day, providing simple but delicious sandwiches and bread from brunch time to the late-night snack hours on weekdays.



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05. Vendors and customers in Wende Evening Market always interact warmly, making shopping a charming routine. (Photo/Taiwan Scene)

06. Organic soybeans make the tofu pudding at Yunaichuan extra solid and richer than others. (Photo/Taiwan Scene)

07. Though it comprises just a short alley, Jinlong Evening Market is an important place for residents in Neihu to do their afternoon grocery shopping.

08. From sweet potato balls to sausages, Mama Lin serves up many memorable childhood flavors.



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Going a little north from the center of Neihu District, there is another evening market that is a favorite among local residents. If one passes Jinlong Road (金龍路) in the morning, it might be hard to believe that the quiet residential street would turn into a hustling and bustling market after dusk — yet Jinlong Evening Market (金龍黃昏市場) is such a magical place for every local family.

Lying only two kilometers away from Wende Evening Market, Jinlong Evening Market targets local off-duty salarymen/women who rush between work and family every day. Many stalls prepare bags of fruits and vegetables that are already weighed for families of four or five, saving parents of double-income families more time on shopping after work. As night falls, the prices of products drop during the final sale, and that's when young single workers generally swarm in for a steal.

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Freshly-prepared street eats are another time-saver for busy families. Here there are also well-known local food stalls such as Mama Lin (林媽媽市場炸物), known for their large and small sausages, sweet potato balls, chicken legs, and salted crispy chicken. Their menu changes randomly, so you might also find French fries, sweet potato strips, red vinasse pork, and shrimp rolls if you arrive on different days. In addition, they are famous for their black herbal tea and Chinese herbal tea — the perfect drink to cool down on a hot summer day!



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📍 Xinyi District Yongchun Market & Hulin Evening Market

Just a five-minute walk from MRT Yongchun Station (捷運永春站), beside Songshan Road (松山路), sits one of Xinyi District's most important markets, Yongchun Market (永春市場). Operating as both a fully-functioning day market and evening market from the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Taipei residents of all ages and occupations can come here any time of day to find anything they need. As if that wasn't enough, Yongchun Market boasts the largest square footage and number of commercial vendors in Xinyi District.

After decades of operation, there are many well-known stalls in the market, including the prize winners of the Taipei Traditional Market Festival (台北傳統市場節), which includes Chun He Sticky Rice (春和油飯), known not only for their sticky rice, but also for their red turtle cakes, radish cakes, and sweet rice cakes. Treasure

Mountain Pork Balls (白金山手工貢丸) wins customers' hearts with their handmade pork balls that go perfectly well with a hot pot meal. And then there's Shang Wei Xiang Fish Balls (上味香魚丸), who makes juicy meatballs with fresh fish or seafood such as cuttlefish. Another hidden gem is Shandong (山東老店), which is highly recommended by gourmet experts for their handmade steamed buns fermented with sourdough.

Interestingly enough, the second floor of Yongchun Market holds a second-hand goods market every weekend, which stands as the only second-hand market operating within a traditional market in Taipei. Held every Saturday and Sunday beginning at 9:00 a.m., countless customers come hoping to find hidden gems and treasures among the stalls. Here you can find antiques such as coins, as well as low-priced genuine and defective products from local department stores. There is often room for bargaining, so customers can enjoy the satisfaction of getting a good deal!

If that wasn't enough, just a stone's throw away from Yongchun Market sits Hulin Market (虎林市場), which is set up on Hulin Street (虎林街) close to Exit 5 of MRT Yongchun Station. Here the market transforms itself into an outdoor market, separating itself from its neighboring indoor Yongchun Market. Some of the famous stalls include Dong Jia Fried Chicken (東加炸雞), which operates only four-and-a-half hours a day from 3:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., sometimes selling out before closing time. What makes this stall different is their special recipe for marinating the chicken, which is a combination of mixing apple sauce with garlic.

Another stall, Taiwan Chicken King (台灣雞大王), sells sugar cane chicken (甘蔗雞), which is a type of smoked chicken with hints of sugar cane added. If you like another famous Taiwanese dish, boiled brine chicken (鹽水雞), you can find it here as well. Here the meat is

separated into that which comes from male and female chickens. The latter has a fattier composition than the former, giving customers more options other than lean meat.

Also located on the same street are popular stalls such as Zhuan Yi Douhua (專一豆花), a small stall with 40 years of history that sells *douhua* with classic toppings of tapioca and sweet peanuts. Moreover, Chubby Mom (大肥媽) is known for their Taiwanese burrito, a flavorful roll filled with vegetables and ingredients such as carrots, radish, and pork slices. Operating only two days of the week, Thursday and Sunday, consider yourself lucky if you are able to snatch one! ⬇



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09. Many fruit and vegetable vendors at Hulin Evening Market organize their products by variety and weight, allowing customers to shop easily.

10. If you visit Yongchun Market on weekends, don't forget to go treasure hunting for bargains at their second-hand market!

11. Incorporating traditional ingredients such as chestnuts, shiitake mushrooms, and scallops into their recipe is the secret to the deliciousness of Chun He Sticky Rice.

12. Rolled with lots of vegetables boiled in broth, Chubby Mom's Taiwanese burrito is refreshing and nutritious.



Spend some time in Taipei's markets in summer and you'll find great deals on seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables.
@ Binjiang Fruit and Vegetable Wholesale Market



© Samil Kuo

Summer Roaming with the Taipei City God

Author Jenna Lynn Cody

Photographer Samil Kuo, Taipei Xia-Hai City God Temple

Amid the bustling Japanese-era shophouses lining Dihua Street in Taipei's Dadaocheng neighborhood, a colorful temple draws throngs of visitors. The temple itself is modest in size, but bursts with colorful decor and human activity. If it seems older than the other nearby historic buildings, that's because it is. Built in 1859, the temple has stood for more than 160 years. What's more, it's clear that this ornate temple is the center of religious activity along the southern stretches of Dihua Street.

This is the Taipei Xia-Hai City God Temple (台北霞海城隍廟), easily one of the most historic spots in Taipei, with a distinctive name and unique provenance.

Furthermore, every summer the temple and surrounding neighborhood comes alive as the City God's birthday is celebrated with two processions, each with their roots in ancient tradition. Usually taking place in June, the Taipei Xia-Hai City God Cultural Festival (台北霞海城隍文化節) offers opportunities to explore and enjoy a historic, revitalized Dadaocheng as the weather warms up.

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01. The celebration of the Taipei Xia-Hai City God's birthday is an important religious event in Taipei.

02-03. Since its establishment in 1859, Taipei Xia-Hai City God Temple has served as the religious center in the Dadaocheng community.
(Photo/Samil Kuo)

History of the Xia-Hai City God Temple

Many cities in Taiwan have city god temples (城隍廟). The City Gods — each a distinct deity connected to their city — watches over the city's affairs and residents, both in the earthly settlement and its corresponding city in the afterlife. The term comes from the words "city (*cheng*, 城)" and "moat (*huang*, 隍)". That is, the name of the god evokes the boundaries and defenses of a city. Residents pray for good fortune and the amelioration of natural disasters, and the City God in turn dispels malevolent spirits and pestilence.

"He's like the mayor who protects the city," says Titan Wu (吳孟寰), head of Public Relations and Cultural Affairs for the temple. "And the Xia-Hai City God is the oldest city god in Taipei," he adds.

The Xia-Hai City God Temple's history is uniquely colorful. This City God was brought to Taiwan by immigrants from the town of Xiacheng (霞城), near Xiamen (廈門), China in 1821. Originally located in Wanhua, the Xia-Hai City God was transported north to Dadaocheng in 1853 after a skirmish between immigrant groups in Wanhua's Bopiliao (剝皮寮) neighborhood. 38 men gave their lives to defend the Xia-Hai City God on his journey north, and they are memorialized in the temple today and help the City God dispel wicked spirits. The god himself resided in a temporary location until 1859, when the current temple was built.

In addition to the 38 Brave Guards, one can also pay tribute to the wife of the City God (for a happy marriage and attentive husband) and the Old Man Under the Moon, or Yuexia Laoren (月下老人, also called the Matchmaker God, who helps people find their soulmate), and the Buddha as well, installed in the temple during the Japanese era, which added a touch of religious syncretism to the temple. Other historical figures such as Liao Tianding (廖添丁) are also memorialized there. Liao, Taiwan's 19th century Robin Hood, hid the money he stole from wealthy houses to distribute to the poor at the Xia-Hai City God Temple.

When the Xia-Hai City God came to Dadaocheng, the area was sparsely settled. "It was the place where rice was dried. But then in the 1920s and 1930s, the area began to prosper as companies were set up to export Taiwanese tea," Wu explains. "Although the temple has been renovated, it has never been expanded," he continues, noting that it retains much of its original Qing Dynasty-era flavor.



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04. In addition to the City God, the temple is also famous for hosting the Matchmaker God. (Photo/Samil Kuo)

05. With their faces painted in colors symbolizing the gods, the Eight Generals, said to have the power to exorcise demons, play key roles in the nighttime parade.

Roaming Dadaocheng with the City God

The Xia-Hai City God's birthday is May 14th on the lunar calendar, which typically falls in June on the international calendar. In 2022, it will fall on June 12th. His birthday is celebrated with several events and formal rituals, the most notable of which is the parade (遶境) on the eve of his birthday. "The parade is held the day before, because he shouldn't travel on his birthday," Wu explains.

This procession carries the god around the neighborhood, accompanied by his "army", including Generals Fan and Hsieh (范謝將軍), also known as Grandfathers Seven and Eight or Qi Ye and Ba Ye (七爺八爺). These are just two of the "tall gods" that are large representations of gods often found in temple parades you may see. Depending on the year, different numbers of performing troupes join the parade, which may include lion dances, dragon dances, more tall gods, and the Eight Generals or Ba Jia Jiang (八家將), with their distinctive colorful face paint.



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“We do this birthday parade because if the City God is always in the temple, this feels too far away. It’s better to be engaged in daily life, and go around to the people. In the past, there was a specific day for regular people to come and pray on his birthday,” Wu says.

Legend has it that as this parade is held during the sweltering summer months, young women coming outside to greet the City God would get sick from the heat and faint. The City God is said to have taken some of these young women to keep him company. In order to stop this, he was given a wife — and the tradition of married women praying to the Wife of the City God for domestic harmony was born.

What few realize is that there is more than one City God processional. In addition to the daytime parade, which is livelier and attended by locals and tourists alike, there is another one held at night, on May 11th on the lunar calendar. This parade is more solemn. The City

God sends his army to visit the Earth God, or Tudi Gong (土地公) temples, marking the city’s boundaries in the four cardinal directions as well as the central Puyuan Earth God Temple (普願宮) on Guisui Street (歸綏街). The northernmost point is He An Temple (和安宮) near Hami Street (哈密街), which the procession is sure to visit as the devotees at this temple, historically, were their allies in the 1853 Wanhua skirmish.

The purpose of the night parade is to banish wicked spirits and eliminate pestilence from the town. “The parade is at night because that’s when the bad ghosts come out, and the City God aims to clean them out. That’s why he has his army and generals. The night parade goes to all the smaller places, because that’s where the bad ghosts are,” Wu notes.

06. Several different folk performance groups, such as dragon dancers, join the parade honoring the City God.



07-08. Traditional religious parades and performing arts integrating innovative styles make the Taipei Xia-Hai City God Cultural Festival a diverse experience.

09. The Xia-Hai City God is also presented on a dragon boat before the race, praying for good luck for the teams.

10. By integrating traditional religious activities and modern cultural events, the Taipei Xia-Hai City God Cultural Festival aims to attract more people to explore the community.

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The Taipei Xia-Hai City God Cultural Festival

The Xia-Hai City God Temple preserves tradition, but does not cling to it. In recent years, they have worked with the Dadaocheng community to host the Xia-Hai City God Cultural Festival in the weeks preceding the City God's birthday. The festival aims to highlight the heritage and history of Dadaocheng and support the neighborhood's ongoing revitalization.

During the festival, participating shops hang yellow lanterns to indicate that they are hosting some special experiences to celebrate the City God's birthday and showcase Taiwanese history and tradition. These

might include restaurants or tea shops offering special menu items, or Chinese medicine shops or other businesses related to traditional goods and industries holding small exhibitions, shop tours or DIY activities. There are also non-religious parades and stage shows, Taiwanese opera, shows by children's groups, Hakka, Indigenous, Hoklo and immigrant performers, as well as art installations.

"We do this because we want people to get to know traditional culture, especially in Dadaocheng as there is so much history here," Wu says. "It also helps local industries because most of the people who come for the cultural festival will make purchases from the local shops," he continues.

In Connection with Other City Events

The Xia-Hai City God Temple not only hosts the City God's birthday celebrations and cultural festival, but sponsors a dragon boat team as well. One week before this year's official dragon boat races, a small parade winds its way from the temple to Dadaocheng Wharf to bless the team and boat for the competition. The activity also enables the City God to enhance his protection around the waterfront.

Meanwhile, as the temple hosts the most famous Matchmaker God in Taipei, it is also involved in Taipei Valentine's Day (大稻埕情人節), a city-organized event usually held around *Qixi* (七夕, Chinese Valentine's Day) in late summer. Activities are held at Dadaocheng Wharf, not far from the temple, and culminate in a spectacular fireworks show over the Tamsui River.

There are plenty of ways foreign visitors can participate in the cultural events hosted by the Xia-Hai City God Temple, including joining the traditional parade or taking part in the online activities. "For the City God's birthday parade, the most important thing is to just come and learn about it," Wu says. "Watch the exhibitions and traditional rituals, visit the Chinese medicine or tea shops, and most importantly, feel the lifestyle and atmosphere of this old Taipei community." 

TAIPEI XIA-HAI CITY GOD TEMPLE

ADD 61, Sec. 1, Dihua St., Datong Dist.

HOURS 6:16am - 7:47pm



► Taipei Xia-Hai City
God Temple Website



► Taipei Xia-Hai City God
Cultural Festival Info

10



Meet LeHo, The Young Painter Putting Taipei Under the Kaleidoscope

Author Seb Morgan

Photographer Samil Kuo, @kevintsg, @tw_ghostcat

When most people head to Taipei's riverside parks, it's normally for the long, ambling pathways that trace the waterways from Xindian (新店) and Nangang (南港) all the way up to Tamsui in the north. But over the past few years, it's the park's floodwalls that have become of increasing interest. In Rainbow (彩虹), Dajia (大佳), Zhongzheng (中正), and several other riverside parks, running sections of these concrete barriers have been turned into colorful canvases — just one of the vivid changes brought to Taipei by the city's growing community of street artists.

LeHo (何彥霖) is one of these transformative painters. With his whimsical subjects and palette of pastels, he

isn't what most expect when the word "street artist" comes to mind. And yet, anyone who has spent any amount of time in Taipei or Kaohsiung (高雄), will have likely wandered past one of his enchanting murals.

Hailing from Tainan (台南), this soft-spoken painter has been bringing splashes of his mellow magic to walls, embankments, and apartment buildings across the capital city. Additionally, he's been working with nine other contributors on *Taipei New Story* (台北新畫堤), a project to turn the city's riverside parks into "an urban picture book." We sat down with LeHo to discuss graffiti, street art, and the spectrum of twists he's been bringing to the scene.

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01. Inspired by local elders' memories of plucking fish from the ground at the riverside after a flood, LeHo created *Riverine* (水邊) for *Taipei New Story*, a project he co-produced with Taipei City Government to tell the stories of Taipei's rivers.

02. Connecting his art to the lives of Taipei locals is an essential component of the multifaceted meanings behind LeHo's works.
(Photo/@tw_ghostcat)

02

The All-Taiwanese Artist

Perhaps the first thing you notice about LeHo is his laidback, approachable demeanor. It's fitting then that the 27-year-old artist's moniker is a play on *lí hó*, or "hello" in Taiwanese. "While I was working on my first street art projects down south, *lí hó* would always be the first thing I'd hear from the neighbors every morning," he says. "Incidentally, *lí hó* sounds a lot like my English name, Leo Ho, so the name stuck pretty quickly."

As might be apparent from his preference for soft and soothing hues, LeHo started out as a watercolor painter. "I was experimenting one day, and I got to thinking what my work would look like painted directly onto a wall," he recalls. "My work was picked up on social media, and I was invited to take part in Kaohsiung's 2016 Wallriors Street Art Festival (高雄前金國際街頭藝術節). That was where my journey really started."

One of LeHo's first large public projects, *Jellyfish Princess* (水母與猴), was completed in 2017 in Kaohsiung's Weiwu Mi-Mi Street Art Village (高雄衛武迷迷村), and shows a pair of gibbons swinging through a dreamlike bloom of drifting invertebrates. A year later, he returned to the area to create *Calling* (天空之門), a diptych of two fantastical creatures, a Pegasus and a flying seahorse, set opposite each other across two four-story apartment buildings.



Animal Aesthetics

As is likely apparent from LeHo's growing portfolio of public art, his work is characterized by the use of animals. "I see animals as carriers of information, human emotions, and stories," he says. "Animals are a way of connecting the viewer and the painting. When you encounter an animal, you always get a reaction, whether the animal is curious, scared, or happy to see you. Contrast this with humans, and we can be impossible to read. Not being able to understand somebody can be a very lonely experience. So, by featuring animals, I try to foster a connection between the viewer and my work."

Street Art Meets Public Art

Since 2017, LeHo has painted at least 14 animal murals around Taiwan, most of which are in Kaohsiung and the Taipei area. "Honestly, I see myself as something in-between a street artist and a public artist," he says. "Street art is about expressing yourself; it's about conveying a message through the image. Public art, on the other hand, is more of a service. You're thinking primarily about how you can improve the environment; about the effect your work will have on the surrounding space."

As he usually creates murals that are inspired by local stories, LeHo does not consider himself a graffiti artist. "There's quite a lot of confusion between street art and graffiti. Graffiti is artistic writing. The creativity is often in the lettering or how you stylize your message," he explains. Creepy Mouse (異鼠), for example, one of LeHo's contemporaries, recently exhibited a graffiti art series in Tainan's Soka Art Center (台南索卡藝術中心) which featured messages in Chinese which were stylized into Germanic Gothic Script.

03. Believing that spiritual animals stand guard over our neighborhoods, LeHo hopes his creations can also bless the locals in a unique and culturally relevant way. (Photo/@kevintsg)

04. To LeHo, painting murals and creating public arts are the ways to carry street art from Taiwan to the world. (Photo/@tw_ghostcat)



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From Hip-Hop to Modern Graffiti

"I wouldn't say that my style is really hip-hop, but I do think it's important to recognize the relationship between graffiti art, street art, and hip-hop culture. There are four elements of hip-hop culture: breakdance, graffiti, MCing, and DJing," he explains.

In its most rudimentary form, graffiti has been traced back millennia. But hip-hop graffiti and street art originated in the U.S. during the mid-20th century, emerging in predominantly black communities in Philadelphia and later New York. With the invention of affordable spray paint, disenfranchised artists began "bombing" or spraying designs on subway trains, allowing them to exhibit their work across the city. This style eventually moved from trains to other outdoor areas.

Hip-hop culture, graffiti, and street art didn't arrive in Taiwan until the 1990s, after it had spread internationally, through the works of pioneers like Fab 5 Freddy and Futura 2000. It quickly gained local popularity, though this was among very different communities to those who had produced it in the U.S. Taiwanese graffiti artists and street artists were mostly young, middle-class, and had fine arts backgrounds. Street art and graffiti were therefore a means of showing off artistic ability rather than a form of protest. Still, a lack of spaces where artists could paint legally meant that many went underground. However, as social acceptance of street arts has increased over the past few decades, the government has opened up more spaces and graffiti walls for artists to create freely.



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05. *Snow Goose*, conducted in Yingxueli, is a piece that turns fluorescent fireflies into wild geese who continue to accompany local residents, even after they have disappeared from the local environment.

06. Known for using animals as a metaphor for human emotions, LeHo hopes people can embrace true feelings in our lives. Even if they might be as complicated as tangled hair, they can be straightened out, like birds in mid-flight.

Brightening Up Taipei's Embankments

"Nowadays, there's plenty of opportunities to paint here in Taipei," explains LeHo. "Taipei Cinema Park (台北市電影主題公園) in Ximending (西門町) is one of the best areas to check out, and then of course there are citywide public art projects like *Taipei New Story*"—to which he has contributed a couple of murals. Most recently, he painted *Snow Goose* (螢橋雁), a dynamic duotone mural that stretches along an embankment in Zhongzheng Riverside Park near MRT Guting Station (捷運古亭站).

The goal of *Taipei New Story* is to tell local tales through street art, so with *Snow Goose*, LeHo says he aimed to bring back a part of Taipei's past that had been lost to history. During the Japanese occupation, the Zhongzheng riverside, then known as Kawabata Town, now Yingxueli (螢雪里), was a favorite local spot for catching fireflies as well as a habitat for wild geese. "The area has completely changed since then, so I wanted to reinterpret what it would have felt like to wander down here on a spring/summer evening eighty years ago," he says.

While not part of *Taipei New Story*, another mural that is particularly special to LeHo is *Interwave* (交織), near Dazhi Bridge in Zhongshan District's Dajia Riverside Park. "That area means a lot to me because I spent a lot of time there while I was studying nearby at Shih Chien University (實踐大學)," he recalls.

LeHo explains that the mural, a kaleidoscoping portrait of a woman with birds for hair, is a metaphor for the intricacies of human emotion. "That's another reason that I like to paint animals: we attach so much meaning to different animals, and so building them into my work really adds depth. You look at a bird and you see freedom, a rabbit represents vigor or energy, and an ox reflects strength."

"These are all characteristics that we can possess, too, and so I hope that my murals can be a reminder of that to people. I hope that they can look at them and realize that they can be just as free, just as vigorous, or just as strong." 📍

Making Taipei a Foreigner-Friendly City: Improving Multilingual Services

Author Rick Charette

Photographer Yenyi Lin, Taipei Performing Arts Center, Taipei Music Center, Taiwan Scene, Taipei City Office of Commerce, Department of Information and Tourism, Taipei City Government

Over the past decade, Taipei has been elevated to the elite among the most livable and best destinations for travel among Asian cities in many international indexes. Its flourishing business activities, rich and easily accessible natural resources, deep well of cultural attractions, and warm, inviting locals attract people from around the world both to visit and to live.

The city government continues to systematically improve the city's infrastructure, tourist attractions, public spaces, and online resources. One key focus is

making Taipei a city of multilingual information resources, providing maximized convenience for travelers and expatriates.

In this article we talk to Ambassador Tom. T.C. Chou (周台竹), one of the key figures in making Taipei an internationalized and foreigner-friendly city. On loan from Taiwan's foreign diplomatic service, he is the Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for External Affairs & the Department of Civil Servant Development (市長室涉外事務總監暨公訓處處長).

01





01. Taipei welcomes people from all over the world, and continues to improve its multilingual services and facilities. (Photo/Taiwan Scene)

02. Based on his previous diplomatic experiences, Chou leverages his profession to promulgate multilingual services in Taipei. (Photo/Yenli Lin)

02

Multilingualism Goals and Motivations

Chou shares that a central initiative in the city's internationalization and multilingualism campaign is the City Diplomacy 4.0 initiative. "I launched this in October 2020," he says. "This involves the city, relevant central government bodies, international groups such as foreign chambers of commerce," he further explains. "The project focuses on important government policy 'interest connections,' which helps establish long-term relationships. This input helps us greatly with our international friendly city and multilingualism efforts," Chou adds.

In terms of obstacles, he states, "Looking at our social capabilities, including infrastructures and education sources, no Taiwan city government is yet truly capable of pursuing full multilingual services. We are now in what you may call the initial 'bilingual,' i.e. Chinese/English, phase. This is the most popular, and easiest." According to Chou, a bilingual education system has been initiated in Taipei to increase the city's language capacities, with one-third of the curriculum taught in English. This year, 79 of 210 elementary/junior high schools are involved. The city is now seeking 100% participation by 2026. Long-term, he says, this will place Taipei at the forefront of bilingual cities in Asia.

Language Diversification in Taipei Tourism

Chou then turns to how different languages are being integrated into basic services. He points out, "Folks enjoy the benefits of our multilingualism efforts even before setting foot on the island — in their trip-planning stage back home. Our popular Taipei Travel Net, which is available in nine languages, provides extensive information on every relevant topic, from events to attractions, accommodations to dining, and much other practical information." The city's quarterly *TAIPEI* magazine, offering in-depth articles on travel/culture in English and Japanese, is also available in print and online. By covering stories of Taipei's unique events, places and lifestyle, the magazine serves as a window on the city for international readers.

A multitude of other helpful basic services in English and other languages have also been rolled out to make life in Taipei more comfortable and convenient for foreigners spending time here, short- or long-term. In terms of transportation, "Today there is much more English signage on the streets. And when using the Taipei Metro, inside the trains you hear stops announced in English, and there's also helpful instructions in English inside stations, including signboard maps and such info as train arrival times

posted on platforms. At bus stops, dynamic electronic signs give English info on bus route numbers and arrival times, and even weather info,” Chou says.

As for major city tourist attractions, he states, the general rule is that if an attraction has a website, its information is provided in more foreign languages other than English. On-site, travel service such as signage and guides will currently be in English at least. However, at famous indoor sites that are of interest to people of specific countries, notably Japan and Korea, services in their languages will be available. For example, Beitou Hot Spring Museum (北投溫泉博物館) has a website and offers pamphlets and guided tours in Japanese. As well, various attractions such as POPOP Taipei (瓶蓋工廠台北製造所), the National Palace Museum and the Taipei Music Center (台北流行音樂中心) have guided tours in English. Chou tells us, “I’m very impressed with the convenient multi-language auto sensor-activated audio-guide system at the Taipei Music Center’s Cultural Cube (文化館),” says Chou. “The system will detect the location of visitors and provide information of the exhibits accordingly and

automatically, which is more advanced than the audio-guide services I’ve experienced. This is something new for Taipei, and will also be rolled out elsewhere in the city.”

The Taipei event calendar is filled with a rich lineup of large-scale international events, from annual cultural festivals to sporting competitions to trade shows and much else of interest to travelers from overseas. Invariably, helpful information in English and other languages will be provided for these events, especially on their dedicated websites. For example, the Taipei Lantern Festival (台北燈節) attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors, and there is a wealth of English and Japanese information provided online and on-site at the different lantern-display areas. Many international groups such as country representative offices in Taiwan, Taipei’s sister cities, and international schools participate in the lantern displays, the festival’s huge parade, and more. By experiencing the event with multi-language services, foreigners can better understand the culture and meaning behind the lantern festival in Taiwan.



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03. Shops providing multilingual services post these stickers designed by the Taipei City Government, helping foreign visitors or residents to identify shops that they can easily communicate with. (Photo/Taipei City Office of Commerce)

04. Taipei Music Center and its on-site museum provide bilingual exhibition introductions and services. (Photo/Taipei Music Center)

Among the biggest of the city's international events coming up in the summer months are the Taipei Arts Festival (台北藝術節) and the Taipei Fringe Festival (台北藝穗節) in August. "In these COVID times, selected events have been successfully transformed into hybrid offline/online celebrations. The Taipei Lantern Festival and Nuit Blanche Taipei (台北白晝之夜) are prime examples. In this way people from all walks of life can participate in forums and watch magnificent performances without the need to be physically present," Chou states.



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05. Taipei continues to host international cultural events and work closely with artists from all over the world. (Photo/ Taipei Performing Arts Center)


06. Taipei Marathon (台北馬拉松), the city-organized international sports event, attracts runners from all over the world to participate annually. (Photo/ Department of Information and Tourism, Taipei City Government)

06

Looking to the Future

The city's multilingualism targets are intimately interconnected with City Diplomacy 4.0 multiculturalism promotion, says Chou, with those aforementioned "interest connections" at the core. This is about not only mere self-promotion, but also love and support between countries. Chou says, "Most recently, Taipei/Taiwan offered support on the Ukraine crisis to the primarily European Pact of Free Cities, and we organized the Wall of Democracy event at Taipei City Hall, involving citizens from myriad countries, most importantly Ukraine." This gesture fostered further bonds between Taipei and the international community.

Taipei also co-hosts cultural events with foreign representative offices and chambers of commerce to demonstrate its diversity. "Last year we had 18 such events, including the German Christmas Market, MassKara Festival and Loy Krathong Festival, and this will be a key area of expansion," Chou highlights.

With infrastructure and city development strategies incorporating multilingualism and cultural diversity, Taipei moves one step further toward becoming a foreigner-friendly city, one that warmly welcomes people from all over the world. 



At Taipei's riverside parks, you can find works contributed by local artists, made with all their incredible creativity and passion.
@ Zhongzheng Riverside Park



© @uu4uur



01

01. Eating spicy food is the most “tasty” way to cool down in the hot summer when the body inevitably perspires. (Photo/Shane Kong)

Hot and Spicy Food on Hot and Spicy Days

Author AYCC

Photographer April Chen, Shane Kong

We all know that Taipei’s summer sun is hot and spicy, but sometimes the best way to fight the scorching heat is to combat poison with poison — only this time, we are going to detox with some gastronomic delights.

While spicy dishes might gently numb your lips, eating spicy food to dissipate heat is a practice grounded in scientific fact. A moderate amount of spicy food can promote blood circulation and relieve the heat while you sweat, allowing your body to

regulate its temperature. Meanwhile, sweat evaporation also burns calories! If you choose the right variety, some chili peppers are anti-oxidants, and can even speed up metabolism.

In Taipei, there are numerous kinds of spicy dishes that can stimulate your appetite, even on the most stifling days. From mild soup stewed with chili peppers to the ever-addictive “hot” pot, this is the spice of life you need this summer.



Peeled Chili Peppers

While most people think chili peppers are both red and hot (thanks in part to the American rock band, no doubt), chili peppers in Taiwan are green, peeled, and still rock out like nobody's business. These peeled peppers are believed to have originated in Fenglin Township (鳳林鎮) in Hualien County (花蓮縣). Mr. Chen Qiujin (陳秋金), the godfather of peeled chili peppers, liked the taste of pickled peppers, but found the texture too hard with the skin still remaining. After peeling the peppers, the authentic and juicy peeled chili peppers were born.

Peeled chili peppers are green peppers that are fried after being peeled, then pickled with soy sauce, sugar, boiling water, and Shaoxing wine (紹興酒) or rice wine. Compared with mature red peppers, peeled chili peppers have a stronger aroma that is perfect for cooking soup or frying with other vegetables.

Meanwhile, fresh green peppers are plump and juicy, giving them a sweet aftertaste that is about more than just spiciness. The most classic dish featuring peeled chili peppers in Taiwan is peeled chili pepper chicken soup. Stewed with ginger slices, dried shiitake mushrooms, rice wine, and fresh chicken legs, this luscious soup is a mild option for spicy food beginners, and the prime appetizer for any summer feast.



02

02-03. Peeled chili peppers have a unique aroma which brings out a rich flavor when simmered with chicken soup.

Recommended Peeled Chili Pepper Chicken Soup Restaurant in Taipei

LONG SIAN JU 龍涎居

ADD 2, Ln. 10, Yongkang St., Daan Dist.

HOURS 11:30am - 9:00pm



03



Red Oil/Chili Oil

Red oil, or chili oil, is a common sauce in any Taiwanese households. There are many types of red oil that are made from different types of peppers, which are widely used in several regions. Far above all the options, *Sichuan Chaotian* pepper (四川朝天椒) is the most common. To turn it into red oil, it needs to be boiled with vegetable oil (often soybean or sesame oil) and other spices and ingredients, including black peppers, star anises, onions, garlic, ginger, and sugar, elevating the pungent sauce with more rich flavors.

Red oil plays an important role in enhancing the taste of many common dishes in Taiwan, and *hongyou chaoshou* (紅油抄手, spicy wontons) is one of the most popular examples. *Chaoshou*, also known as wontons, is a home-cooked delight similar to dumplings, only with thinner skin. *Hongyou*, meanwhile, means “red oil” in Chinese. As the name suggests, this classic dish featuring red oil is easy to prepare. When the red oil-based sauce is poured on cooked *chaoshou*, numerous spice notes emerge, with pepper and garlic mingling with notes of soy sauce. Other common red oil dishes include red oil *dan dan* noodles (紅油擔擔麵) and red oil noodles with soybean paste (紅油炸醬麵), both upgrading ordinary street eats with but a few drops of red oil.

04-05. Based on the spicy *Sichuan Chaotian* pepper, one can still see the various spices refined in the red oil when it's drizzled on wontons.

Recommended Hongyou Chaoshou Restaurant in Taipei

LANFANG NOODLE RESTAURANT 蘭芳麵食館

ADD 95, Liaoning St., Zhongshan Dist.

HOURS 11:30am - 9:00pm



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Mala Dishes

Mala (麻辣, numb-spiciness) is one of the most popular spicy broths and cooking styles favored by Taiwanese. The soul of *mala* broth is *Sichuan* peppercorn, an aromatic spice that might potentially numb your tongue or burn your lips if you over-indulge. In the world of Chinese medicine, *Sichuan* peppercorn is considered a “warm” ingredient, often prescribed to ward off colds and get rid of humidity inside the body. Spicy *mala* broth, on the other hand, is a common way to bring the *Sichuan* peppercorn to the forefront of Taiwan’s culinary scene.

Usually served with stinky tofu and duck blood curd, the dishes are respectively known as *mala* stinky tofu (麻辣臭豆腐) and *mala* blood curd (麻辣鴨血). By simmering tofu and blood curds within *mala* broth for several hours, the dishes absorb the best of the flavorful ingredients. Get some tissues and water ready when having a *mala* meal, because the level of *mala* might make you tear up (and sweat too, we can’t lie). At most restaurants, you can choose how spicy you would like your dishes to be. Starting from mild is always a safe strategy. Usually, medium hot is still an enjoyable level of spiciness, while extra hot is suggested for experienced spicy-food aficionados only. 🔥



06-07. The *mala* broth seeps into savory stinky tofu and blood curds, making it one of the most popular hot pot options in Taiwan.

Recommended Mala Dishes Canteen in Taipei

YUN DING A-ER SPICY HOTPOT CANTEN
YONGKANG BRANCH 雲鼎阿二麻辣食堂永康店

ADD 13, Ln. 6, Yongkang St., Daan Dist.
HOURS 11:30am - 10:00pm

Soothing the Summer Heat with Herbal Dietary Therapies

Author Elisa Cohen

Photographer Samil Kuo, Taiwan Scene, Plu Kaow, dashu83, fanjianhua

During the sweltering summer days in Taipei, the hot sun and stuffy air can make one feel restless. In addition to gorging on iced drinks and escaping to air-conditioned rooms to get out of the heat, you can also use herbal dietary therapies to get rid of the humidity and heat in your body, bringing about a sense of calming coolness from the inside out.

TAIPEI paid a visit to Daily Health (德利泰), a traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) experience center in historic Dadaocheng, where founder Ching-niu Chen (陳清鈕)

introduced us to Chinese herbal ingredients and traditional medicinal materials that can be used to make tea or dishes to help alleviate heat and cool down in summer.

Chen also provided tips on how one can choose herbal ingredients for daily health maintenance and care. He went on to share the various interactive courses offered in the experience center, so that more people can learn about TCM materials, their applications, as well as the heritage and culinary culture behind them.

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Getting to Know TCM Materials in Daily Life

TCM materials such as jujube, Chinese wolfberry, astragalus and lotus seeds are commonly found in TCM stores all over Taiwan. Most people on the island have an image of such shops as dark and outdated places, housed in old and gloomy rooms filled with a dizzying array of smells. However, Daily Health has turned this stereotype around. “We present the ingredients in an unconventional way, hoping to arouse people’s interest,” Chen says.

In Daily Health, you will not only find diverse medicinal materials displayed in a bright and open space, but also learn about TCM ingredients in a very different way. The shop has even set up a hydroponic wall garden where herbs can be picked directly.

Chen notes that TCM covers a wide range of materials. There are plant-based herbs, as well as materials extracted from animals, and even stones and amber, rare materials that can also be used in medicine. He also shares that many of the spices we are familiar with can also be used as medicine, including cinnamon, pepper, chili, star anise and nutmeg.

Chen points out, “Spices are also a part of traditional Chinese medicine, and many of them can promote metabolism or aid digestion.” In Taiwan, spices are often wrapped in cotton cloth and used in meat stews and soups. The boiling broth helps to release the aroma and effects of the spices. Meanwhile, in India, the same ingredients are often mashed and stir-fried to make different kinds of curries.

In fact, Taiwanese home cooking has long incorporated ingredients with health benefits. For example, star anise is used in stews, and angelica can be cooked with soup to not only increase the flavor but also strengthen the body. Based on these practices, Daily Health hopes to remind people how often TCMs are integrated with our daily life, and encourage everyone to gradually become familiar with the application of herbs and spices.

01. Drinking herbal tea to alleviate heat from the inside out has long been a traditional way to stay cool in Taiwan’s hot summer climate. (Photo/Taiwan Scene)

02. Extracted from natural ingredients, TCM usually helps to alleviate discomfort.

Recipe for Heat Relief

"On hot days, everyone likes to drink cold drinks, but this tends to accumulate humidity in the body, so you can eat *Sichuan* peppers to remove the humidity and relieve the heat," Chen notes.

Sichuan pepper (*Zanthoxylum simulans*), native to the mountains of southwest China, is the main star of Sichuan's renowned spicy cuisine, with a strong, pungent aroma and a refreshing coolness that leaves a tingling sensation in the mouth. Eating *Sichuan* peppers can help with perspiration, as well as expelling humidity and stuffiness from the body. Sprinkling some pepper powder when frying meat and stir-frying vegetables not only enhances the flavor, but also helps to expel sweat and cool the body.

Mulberry leaves are also a great summertime companion. After drying and kneading, they can be brewed into a tea with a refreshing aroma like matcha, which can relieve dryness and heat and reduce swelling caused by fluid buildup in the body's tissues. In addition to mulberry tea, Chen also points out that the rest of the mulberry tree is a source of great nutritional value as well. The sweet and sour mulberry fruit is rich in fiber and iron, which can enrich the blood and help metabolism.

Furthermore, Chen also adds that fish mint (*Houttuynia cordata*) has anti-inflammatory effects, and can also reduce the body's internal heat and relieve pain. It is most commonly taken as a tea. To increase the cooling effect, mint can also be added, which will help to relieve heat and refresh the mind. Aside from drinking, some people also use fish mint in soups, or even chop it up and fry it with eggs, as the unique herbal flavor can help remove greasiness.

Chen also shares his personal secret to health and wellbeing. "I recommend drinking less bubble tea and more herbal tea!" He reminds us that the next time we are thirsty, we should not forget that there are healthier options besides what is available at drink stands found throughout the streets of Taiwan.



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03. Herbal tea brewed with fish mint and mulberry leaves helps to relieve heat in summer. (Photo/Plu Kaow)

04. Chen, the founder of Daily Health, shares with us how these medicinal materials can be applied on a daily basis.

05. Daily Health provides various blends of different herbal ingredients for tea, according to the needs of modern society.

06. In Daily Health, people can learn more about the origins and applications of diverse TCM materials.

Tips for Choosing Traditional Chinese Medicine

What are the details that people need to pay attention to when buying Chinese herbs? Chen points out several myths that have permeated the public's perception when it comes to choosing products. "Many consumers go for aesthetics, thinking that the bigger the material the better, or the whiter the material the better, but that's not how TCM medicinal materials should be selected," he says.

Chen goes on to explain that when it comes to many rhizome herbs such as Chinese angelica (*Angelica sinensis*), the shape of the native plant is actually very irregular. Especially large pieces may be re-manufactured through dehydration, whereby the significant nutrients will be lost in the process. In addition, natural herbs are almost impossible to be

completely white; products that are unnaturally white and red are usually artificially bleached or dyed. For example, the color of natural *Sichuan* pepper should be dark brownish-red. If the color of the pepper is too bright, it may have been achieved through artificial dyeing.

To further promote the everyday use of herbs, Daily Health also has a section with a variety of herbs of similar appearance so that interested consumers can carefully compare and distinguish the differences. Chen shares his hope and vision that "People will become more familiar with Chinese herbal medicine and pass on the knowledge and traditions that have been passed down from our ancestors."



Picking Up TCM Knowledge Through Interactive Experiences

Under the counseling of the Taipei City Office of Commerce (台北市商業處), Daily Health has developed a variety of interactive experiences to provide the public with the opportunity to understand Chinese herbal medicine and to give visitors from all over the world the chance to experience the local dietary therapy culture. Here, we'd like to introduce three activities that are fun and accessible for foreigners to grasp some basic understanding of TCM.

1 MEDICAL ORACLE CULTURE

At Daily Health, there are bamboo fortune stick buckets which are usually found in temples in Taiwan, as well as poem slips with corresponding numbers which serve as a reference for people to find the right remedy for their particular ailment.

Chen explains that in ancient times, when medical resources were not well-developed, people would go to temples to pray to the gods, receive medicinal oracle slips, and ask the gods to prescribe remedies to relieve their discomfort. Most of the remedies on the oracle slips are for ailments that people were prone to catch at the time. For example, people in early agricultural societies would be afflicted by health problems associated with hard labor on the farm, and prescriptions on the oracle slips would be written accordingly. The oracle slips provided by Daily Health are designed to address the contemporary problems of people today, such as problems of modern sedentary lifestyles, staring at the computer and mobile phones for a long time, and irregular eating habits.




2 FILLING PRESCRIPTIONS

The traditional way of filling a prescription is to use a traditional medicine scale to measure the weight of different herbs, and then wrap the herbs in paper according to the proportion of the recipe. Daily Health retains the early tools so that visitors can experience the traditional way of prescribing and dispensing medicine. For this activity, reservations are strongly encouraged.



(Photo/dashu83)

3 DIETARY THERAPY EXPERIENCE SEMINARS

Daily Health invites TCM doctors to events to share their advice for daily health maintenance and how to use TCM materials to prepare corresponding healthy dishes and teas, so as to familiarize the public with the daily applications of traditional Chinese medicine. These activities are held irregularly. Please check Daily Health's Facebook page for up-to-date information. 



(Photo/fanjianhua)

DAILY HEALTH

ADD 26, Gangu St., Datong Dist.
HOURS 10:00am - 6:00pm (Closed on Sundays)



► Daily Health Website
(in Chinese)

Sound Tripping: The Life of a Vinyl Record Transcriptionist

Author Catherine Shih
Photographer Yen-Yi Lin

With the rise of digital technology and music streaming platforms, it's difficult for people nowadays to imagine using a hand-cranked gramophone to play vinyl records. Nevertheless, Friedman Wang (王信凱), founder and director of the Classical Palace Society (古殿樂藏) near MRT Mingde Station (捷運明德站), has devoted his entire life to the promotion and transcription of vinyl records here in Taipei.

Differences Between Shellac Records, Vinyl Records, and CDs

Unbeknownst to many, shellac records existed long before vinyl records. "Actually, shellac was sort of the 'father' of vinyl," Wang tells us. "The technology was just beginning to develop at the time, right around the era of the gramophone during the late 1890s to the mid-1900s." So, what's the difference? "When shellac records were born, one song could only be pressed on one record. But due to its material, it was very fragile and could be damaged if played too many times," Wang shares.

"However, with the improvement of technology, people began using plastic instead, which has become what we now know as vinyl records. But, in fact, the appearance is no different. It's only the material and technology that have changed."

Modern technology has brought about the digitization of sound. Hot on the heels of cassette tapes, CDs became the more popular music medium. With technology changing every day, the ways of listening to music have undergone change, too. "Actually, with the recent introduction of online music streaming, even CDs are becoming obsolete now!" Wang laughs.



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History of Taipei's Vinyl Records

Shellac records came to Taiwan in the 1910s, during the Japanese era, and began their journey of popularization. The local record industry reached its peak from the 1960s to the 1970s, as the production process of vinyl records was optimized, and so shellac records occupied only a small niche in the market due to its high price. "I remember most of the record stores were clustered in Gongguan (公館), since many of the professors at [nearby] National Taiwan University (NTU, 國立台灣大學) enjoyed listening, and were the minority who could afford [to buy records]" Wang recalls.

Regardless of the price, the passion of record fans still ran high. "There would be people hunting for specific records persistently. Rose Records (玫瑰唱片) near NTU would even send people abroad to import and purchase classical records!" Wang laughs. "Although it was very expensive, they would always sell out quickly!" he claims.



03

The Work of a Record Transcriptionist

Asked about how he came into this business, Wang recalls, "When I was a student, I enjoyed listening to the radio and recorded music. Later, when I studied history in college, I came into contact with historical recordings. Unlike most historical researchers who read documents for research, I felt that history came alive when listening to historical recordings. It's because of this interest that I began transcribing vinyl records."



04

01. Being one of just a few record transcriptionists in Taiwan, Wang is dedicated to preserving precious historical recordings.

02-03. One of Wang's prized possessions is a gramophone produced in the 1920s, well-preserved and still functional from the turntable to the needle.

04. Though they carry valuable recordings, shellac records are fragile and easily damaged.

If one looks closely, one might notice that shellac and vinyl records are actually covered with notches. As for the principle behind this technology, "Actually, the wave pattern of sound waves is what gets directly engraved onto the black film, and then the turntable stylus is what records these waves. The vibration is generated between the tracks, and the sound is then restored onto the record, foregoing any digital processing in the middle — capturing pure analog," Wang informs us. "My job is to re-transcribe and

preserve these historical recordings, so I call myself a 'record transcriptionist,'" he says proudly. "In fact, there are many people abroad already doing this, but the concept is still new here."

Considering the fragility of old records, Wang points out that any record that is precious and worth preserving should be transcribed. "It's similar to flipping through historical textbooks. If you keep flipping, they will eventually get damaged over time!" he shares. As such, many museums have begun digitizing precious historical texts by creating online or photo versions to study instead — keeping the original versions as treasures. Vinyl record transcription is no different. "We work by digitizing original recordings so people can continue to appreciate these sounds; otherwise, if they are played all the time, eventually they, too, will be damaged!" Wang proclaims.

Preparation & Process of Vinyl Record Transcription

"To be honest, transcription is not difficult...but it can also be very difficult!" Wang chuckles when we asked about how to transcribe a record. Apparently, there is no fixed process, and everyone uses different methods and equipment. "In the beginning, I experimented with transcribing from scratch. But because I didn't study professional recording, the equipment I used was very amateur, meaning a turntable, vinyl record, a computer, and a microphone." To Wang, the goal was simple: play the vinyl record out loud live and transcribe it in a way that everyone else could hear the same sound. But what followed was a series of trial and error.

"Actually, I compare it to taking pictures with negatives. In the past, photographers would frame the picture, adjust the external focus and lighting, and then press the shutter. Afterwards, they would develop the photos themselves, using different solutions and exposure levels, which ultimately affected the final product. And if they didn't like it, they would ask what went wrong? And how can it be adjusted?" Wang shares. Just as the process starts all over again until the proper photo quality is achieved, transcription shares the same process. Each link affects

the final recording, so it's necessary to constantly adjust the methods. For example, adjusting the distance and placement of the microphone is something that Wang repeatedly works on. "Just like 'focusing' a photo, I need to find the right place and angle to set the microphone to get the right sound. So, I guess my daily routine is to try, fail and try again!"

Challenges of Vinyl Transcription

When it comes to the difficulties of working in the industry, Wang sighs before answering. "In the past, due to martial law, music and sound recordings could not be released in large quantities," he explains. "Also, people back then were poorer, so it was expensive to buy genuine records. Therefore, pirated records came about." However, while the government and music creators tried to fight piracy, people began to have a bad impression of recording other people's work. "So, whenever I'd tell people I worked in vinyl transcription, they thought I was doing pirated music," Wang goes on.

The emergence of copyright and modern law has also further affected what can be transcribed. "In Taiwan, any records published for more than 50 years, or in which the songwriters have passed away for more than 50 years, becomes public property (without copyright) and can be transcribed. That's why transcribed works are mostly classical music," Wang informs us.

"Protecting copyright is important. I have no doubt about that. But my biggest challenge is that people don't know enough about the preservation of historical recordings. I honestly believe more people would work in this industry if they knew it involved preserving culture and history."

CLASSICAL PALACE SOCIETY

ADD 2F, 169, Sec. 1, Xian St., Beitou Dist.
HOURS Reservations required
TEL 0975-057467

How to Appreciate Vinyl Records in Taipei

Wang proudly claims, “Nowadays you can find many vinyl record meetings and lectures. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, I would hold meetings every Friday night at my studio for people to come and appreciate different music genres. Unfortunately, it has since been suspended, but recently I’ve been planning to resume again.”

Workshops, seminars, and book clubs for music fans are actually held by vinyl lovers themselves. “MarTeaux Café & Musical Performing Arts Theater (瑪多咖啡 & 十方音樂劇場), for example, is my friend’s place, where people enjoy all kinds of art performances, including

musicals, recitals and more. In fact, I host sharing sessions of vinyl records there often, too!” Wang shares.

For vinyl treasure hunters, Wang points out several secret spots too. “You can also check out Wind Song Music (韻順唱片) in the Shuanglian (雙連) area, a small store that has been operating since 1990. The owner is one of the pioneers who brings all kinds of vinyl records to Taiwan from overseas,” he shares, “For tourists, Syntrend Creative Park (三創生活園區) and Eslite Bookstore (誠品書店) have vinyl corners too. You’ll be sure to find treasures everywhere in Taipei!”



05

05-06. Wang’s studio, the Classical Palace Society, is where he transcribes records, with many of his works from the pantheon of classical music.

06



TRAVEL INFO



Service Hours: 6:00am - 12:00 midnight **Customer Service Hotline:** (02)218-12345

METRO TICKETS



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NT\$20 - NT\$65



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1 Day Pass
NT\$180/310/440/700/350

TRAVEL INFORMATION SERVICES

Tourism Bureau, Ministry of Transportation and Communication: 0800-011-765

Information for Foreigners in Taiwan: 1990

Taipei Citizen Hotline: 1999 (Outside Taipei City, please dial 02-2720-8889)

Taipei Travel Net: travel.taipei/en; presents travel information on Taipei City in Chinese, English, Japanese, Korean, Thai, Indonesian, Vietnamese, and Spanish



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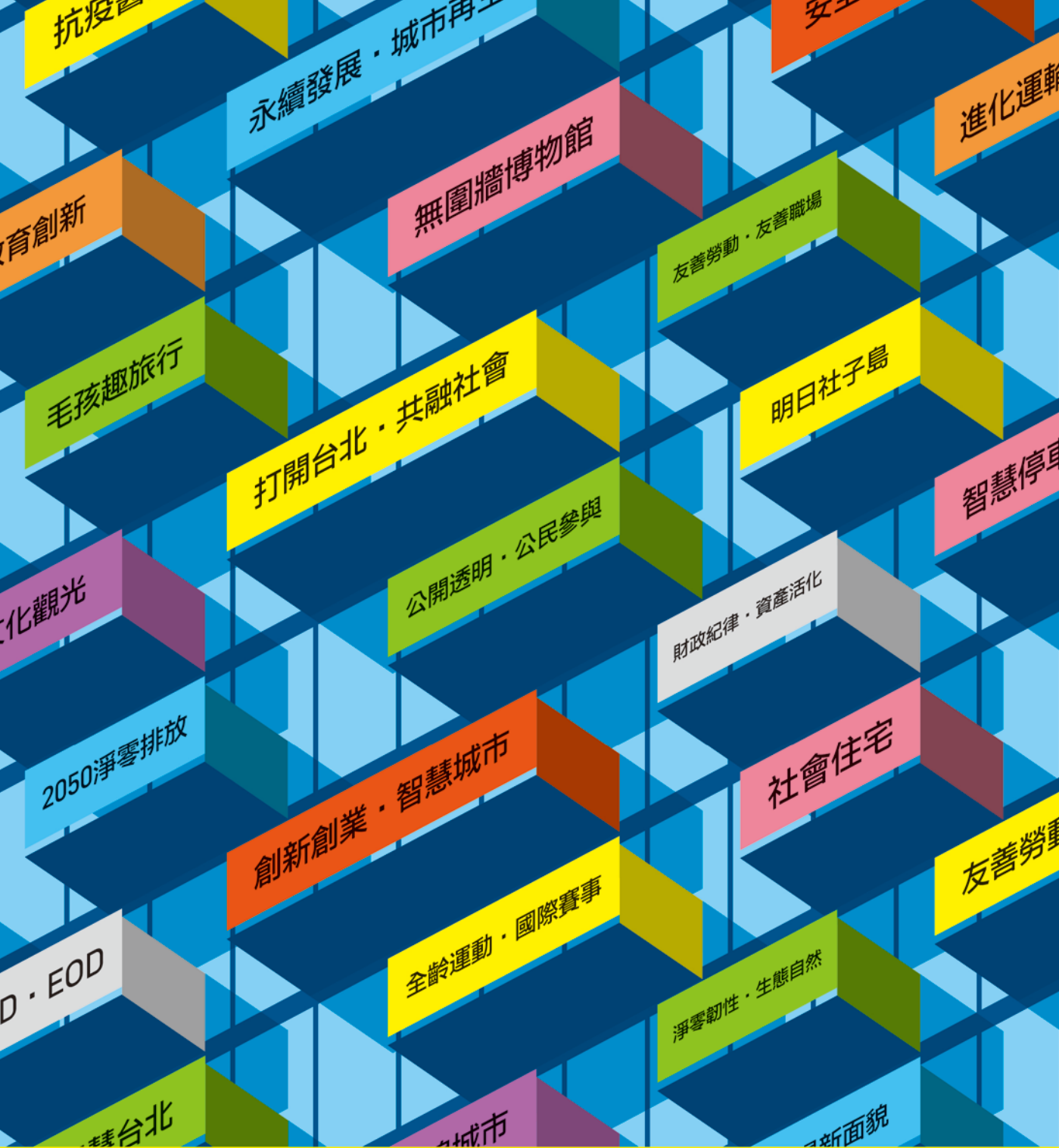
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