

TAIPEI



The Young March of the Old Neighborhood

Back to Dadaocheng's Glamorous Age

Yanping N. Road: the Place for Go-getters in Taipei!

A Living Environment for Rich and Not-so-Rich

Conceived out of Musical DNA

Delicate Violin Crafting



TAIPEI

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Come to Town and have Fun!

Looking for Delicacies; Rediscovering Customs and Traditions

Taipei has thousands of attractions to keep people lingering. In this issue of *Taipei*, we'll help you explore the multiple cultural and historical developments of this city.

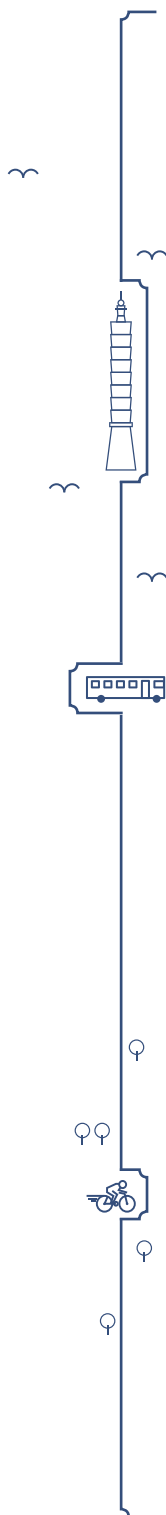
Dadaocheng is the starting point for Taiwan's modernism, and the cradle of its new cultural movement. This is the place where modern fine arts, music, literature, plays, songs, and cinemas arose, and all kinds of entertainment blossomed.

With government projects, such as Building Renovation, the URS (Urban Regeneration Station), the Datong Regeneration Project and the Community Planning Workshop, the new and the old have introduced energy and creativity into people's houses, spaces and lives, uniting the whole community. Civic power is something you can never underestimate; the diverse arts and culture shops and experimental spaces just keep your eyes busy day and night!

The blowing winter winds cool down the earth; it's a season for craving delicacies again. In addition to salty and sweet food, authentic specialties, and classic dishes at Jiancheng Circle and Yansan Night Market, there are also such delights as Hakka *bantiao*, pork knuckle, oily chicken, and Hakka stir-fry waiting for your taste buds. And you won't want to miss mountain and sea favorites from the native tribal villages, such as mountain vegetables, boar, and wild magao.

Besides the culinary feast, Taipei has cultural fruits from a variety of places just waiting for harvest. Emerging from an aboriginal tradition, wasted betel nut leaves are being transformed into everyday articles with a unique style, giving betel nuts a brand new meaning. From the traditional bright red floral variety to the simple and refreshing retro patterns, Taiwanese floral cloth, infused with Taiwan's ecology and life imagery, still maintains its charms at Yongle Market.

When eastern and western philosophies of the arts meet, what kind of creation will result? U.S.-based Muslim artist Manli Chao employs a sophisticated technique and a unique sense of aesthetics to create works of abstract style that are both tranquil and elegant. Born in Dadaocheng, Kuo Hsueh Hu contributed enormously to the development of fine arts and talents in Taiwan. Taipei City Government is now holding an exhibit displaying several reproductions of Kuo's paintings, as well as related historical photos, and the painting tools he employed. The accompanying interactive multimedia will allow people to enter the glorious world of Dadaocheng in Kuo's paintings. This winter, Taipei's abundant gourmet food and culture will not only warm your stomach, but satisfy your heart as well!



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The Young March of the Old Neighborhood

Back to Dadaocheng's Glamorous Age

Article | Xu Licen

Photos | Xu Bin, Tua-Tiu-Tiann International Festival of Arts



(Photo: Xu Bin)

TAIPEI

“The Old Town areas in Taipei are like aging beauties, while the newer ones are like pretty thirty-somethings. If you only visit the latest neighborhoods, you won’t get the whole picture of Taipei,” says Taipei City’s Department of Information and Tourism (台北市政府觀光傳播局) Commissioner, Chien Yuyen (簡余晏). She believes that Taipei is a city with a multiplicity of aspects. Many sites have special historical significance or they express the spirit and ideals of Taipei City. All of these places are worth visiting, and Dadaocheng (大稻埕) is surely one of them. Come check out these areas! You’ll see how they take a traditional beat and march to youthful drummers integrating old and new.

Gathering People from All Walks of Life; Setting Trends in Literature and the Arts

Dadaocheng has made an important mark on the pages of Taipei’s history ... even on Taiwan’s! Time’s fermentation has brewed an historical concoction here. In the early days, owing to Dadaocheng’s convenient location for shipping, an excellent port was opened, and the tolerance and aggressiveness of the local people allowed it to enter world trade exporting tea and camphor. It attracted foreign stores and many people marched in to do business and then stayed. A whole host of famous firms and successful merchants with political influence arose here.

It’s worth mentioning that Dadaocheng was also the starting point for Taiwan’s modernism, and the cradle of its new cultural movement. It was the center of activity for fine arts, music, literature, plays, and cinema. With this creative stimulus, all kinds of cultural activity and entertainment blossomed in Dadaocheng. The main axis was Yanping N. Road (延平北路) and restaurants, theaters and bookstores were everywhere. All of these contributed to the spread of salons and exciting places to gather and eat, and created the unique atmosphere of the Dadaocheng society of that era.

Tradition Rejuvenated Brings New Energy to Old Neighborhoods

Although Dadaocheng went through a long period of apparent dormancy, its unique history attracted many people with old souls to make it their home. The Department of Cultural Affairs, Taipei City Government (台北市政府文化局) points out the key reason why Dadaocheng became a cornerstone in the Reinventing Taipei Project: “This is a place where officials and civic groups are willing to invest.” Official departments are willing to push forward development projects in this area, many of which involve historical preservation, industry and culture. Civic groups have taken the initiative as well. The variety of new cultural and creative shops plus all the experimental spaces is a feast for the eyes indeed!

As the founder of the Tua-Tiu-Tiann International Festival of Arts (大稻埕國際藝術節), Zhou Yicheng (周奕成) says, “Dadaocheng represents the era when Taiwan and Asia entered the modern age. For us, it is not just a place to remember the past and dream of old ways – it is actually an innovative and creative place.” Perhaps visiting Dadaocheng will conjure up images of what it used to look like, but it will also reform the picture you have of Taipei, and let you weave your own city story. 📍



Tua-Tiu-Tiann International Festival of Arts puts Dadaocheng’s retro arty atmosphere on display. (Photo: Tua-Tiu-Tiann International Festival of Arts)

City Renovation



Cultural Creation

Experience the Charms of Old Taipei

Article | Xu Licen

Photos | Xu Bin, Yang Zhiren, Liu Deyuan, Taipei City Urban Regeneration Office



“Urban Museum,” the current slogan used to describe putting a whole city’s living environment and its resident humanity on display, has become the big new concept in metropolises around the world. Museums are no longer limited to the space within walls, but can encompass a whole street or community. Taipei City is currently home to, or planning, five wall-free museums: Beitou (北投), Dadaocheng (大稻埕), Bangka (艋舺), the south side of old Taipei, and Zhongshan Metro Mall (中山地下街). With tons of exciting human history, architecture, industry and the arts, Dadaocheng is an excellent venue to showcase city renovation and cultural creation. Its unique blend of new and old makes Dadaocheng fascinating and attracts people flocking in to savor its charms.

Restoring Historical Sites Is Trendy; The Old House Cultural Movement is All the Rage!

In recent years, a “Reinventing Taipei” movement has arisen. In Dadaocheng, historical sites have been restored, and old heritage houses renovated. Many shops specializing in culture and creativity have opened and numerous dramatic TV shows have been shot here. Tourists love visiting this neighborhood. The TV series, *La Grande Chaumière Violette* (紫色大稻埕), adapted from the novel by Shaih Lifa (謝里法), chose the restored Shin Hong Choon Tea Company (新芳春茶行) building as its main location. And while Tom Cruise was in Taiwan to promote his latest movie, he chose Dadaocheng as a



Flourishing in the old townsite, arts and culture shops have become tourist attractions. (Photo: Yang Zhiren)

secret spot where he could hang out with Taiwanese pop star, Jolin. When popular Japanese model, Rina Tanaka (田中里奈) came to Taiwan for a Taipei tourist experience, this was the place she visited.

The Department of Cultural Affairs, Taipei City Government (北市府文化局) believes that the process of “reinventing” should, in fact, employ new methods to rediscover old traditions, and then interpret them from a contemporary angle. Currently, there are several types of energy being generated in Dadaocheng: for industry, for tourism and for cultural creation. The Department of Cultural Affairs has put a lot of effort into renovating, reviving and reusing historical sites and buildings. The Department is also working on new ways to exhibit Dadaocheng’s history, and is always looking for new points of view

for interpretation. It also has plans to use several venues as cultural indicators and attraction spots: for example, Shin Hong Choon Tea Company, one of the few well-preserved mixed residential and commercial tea-culture spaces in Taipei. Dadaocheng Theater (大稻埕戲苑) is another example - an obvious choice to promote traditional Taiwanese theater and the glorious days when Dadaocheng was known as “the den of opera.” The Taiwan New Cultural Movement Memorial Hall (台灣新文化運動紀念館), which housed the Taipei North Police Station (台北北警察署) in the Japanese era is another example.

What’s more, the Department is capitalizing on the “Old House Cultural Movement” and using it as a mechanism with which to speed up the renovation

After renovation, Shin Hong Choon Tea Company displays its beautiful and elegant new look.
(Photo: Liu Deyuan)



of old dwellings. This process should also allow cultural service workers to provide creative ideas. Through civic participation, it is hoped that the city government, home owners, arts and culture workers, and private enterprises will build a new partnership for heritage preservation and renewal.

An Experiment in Regeneration; Working on Urban Renewal Together

The Deputy Chief Engineer of the Taipei City Urban Regeneration Office (台北市都市更新處), Zhan Yuqi (詹育齊) says, “The projects the Urban Regeneration Office executes are all about humanity.” Everything the Office did in Dadaocheng, including Building Renovation, the URS (Urban Regeneration

Station), the Datong Regeneration Project, and the Community Planning Workshop, was aimed at community development. These efforts involved people’s houses, spaces and lives, and united the whole community within the concept: “Dadaocheng Museum.”

Until now, Taipei’s “old townsite” projects have basically focused on districts that were developed early, including the three market towns (三市街): Bangka, Dadaocheng and old Taipei town. Such projects require a district with a large enough population and a certain scale of business. Dadaocheng has the historical background, and its prosperous commerce has been going on since its very earliest days. So whether the goal was urban regeneration or city renovation, it naturally became



Using regeneration as its main scheme, the URS project preserves an old building's original look. This photo shows the attic and beams in USR155 Tuan Yuan Dadaocheng (團圓大稻埕). (Photo: Xu Bin)

a perfect experimental place where government and civic groups could invest and try out “reinventing” techniques. The URS project is an example: the main scheme was to “regenerate,” and that meant something different than reconstruction, which requires destroying before rebuilding. Regeneration seeks to add new ideas to old structures; while improving the environment of the old neighborhood, bringing in industrial activity, and creating space for people who have passion for the city.

As of now, there are 5 conceptual stations in Dadaocheng. The Urban Regeneration Office provides these spaces as platforms for individuals and groups who wish to try out new ideas. They also bring together experts, scholars and locals to discuss possible ways to use these venues. So, at different

stages of experiment, a space might have different conceptual names or be following diverse business models, and the Office is happy to assess the results. “The point is to set up economic models; let people live there, and have them recognize and resonate with each other.” It’s like throwing a stone into water and watching the ripples spread. More and more people are attracted and become part of the wave.

One interesting thing is that many building owners in Dadaocheng do “wait and see” first. Once they observe successful examples of URS or Building Renovation, their own memories of family life in Dadaocheng often come back and trigger an interest and motivation to “renovate my old building and put it into use again.”



URS127 Art Factory provides art lessons, helping children to know Dadaocheng better.
(Photo: Taipei City Urban Regeneration Office)

New Arts and Culture Stores: Civic Groups Participate in Creation

The combination of urban renovation, the arts and fresh ideas in Dadaocheng has created a magnet effect! More and more young people with ideas for this historical neighborhood are getting into preservation and renovation. In this way, Dadaocheng's traditions and the wave of the future are connected seamlessly.

Recently, many individuals have gotten involved in the revival of heritage buildings in Dadaocheng. The former chairwoman of the Board of Directors of the National Performing Arts Center (國家表演藝術中心), Chen Guoci (陳國慈) bought an old building and renovated it into the renowned private museum: Museum 207 (迪化207博物館). This is a perfect example of "individually-realized heritage site revival." She believes that old community buildings can be a good location for museums. These buildings

tell their own stories and, thus, become an historical stage for preserving people's collective memories.

Dadaocheng's best-known business model for arts and culture is the "art yard" series, created by Tua-Tiu-Tiann International Festival of Arts (大稻埕國際藝術節) founder, Zhou Yicheng (周奕成) and his partners. They rented a few old buildings in the district, did some minor renovations and brought in small shops and artists. They then created complex spaces such as ArtYard 67 (民藝埕) and ArtYard 1 (小藝埕), which became pioneers in cultural creation in Dadaocheng.

Later on, all kind of inventive stores and markets sprang up in this neighborhood, with businesses specializing in locally-grown groceries, Chinese herbal medicines, tea leaves, fabrics, and gourmet food. The Dihua Commercial District Development Association (迪化商圈發展促進會) even held the Dadaocheng Herbal Party (大稻埕本草派對), at which drinks and snacks made from herbal medicines

were sold by local vendors. In this way, visitors got to enjoy a trendy taste in a traditional neighborhood.

The reinvention of Dadaocheng is going strong, and the trial pedestrian-only project along Dihua Street from Guisui Street (歸綏街) to Nanjing W. Road (南京西路) received generally good comments when the Taipei City Government tested it this past September. The project is slated to continue till the end of 2017 and will incorporate the Lunar New Year Market (年貨大街) next year. This shows that people are holding a positive attitude towards local industrial development and urban regeneration in Dadaocheng. If one can say that Taipei City is a gigantic museum, then Dadaocheng has established itself as a “revived old yard,” and looks forward to having ongoing conversations with people. 📍



This Chinese herbal medicine shop makes trendy herbal drinks, which are popular among young people. (Photo: Xu Bin)



Urban regeneration stations in Dadaocheng

URS44 Dadaocheng Story House

44, Sec. 1, Dihua St., Datong Dist.

URS127 Art Factory

127, Sec. 1, Dihua St., Datong Dist.

URS155 Tuan Yuan Dadaocheng

155, Sec. 1, Dihua St., Datong Dist.

URS27W Film Range

27, Sec. 2, Yanping N. Rd., Datong Dist.

URS329 Rice & Shine

329, Sec. 1, Dihua St., Datong Dist.



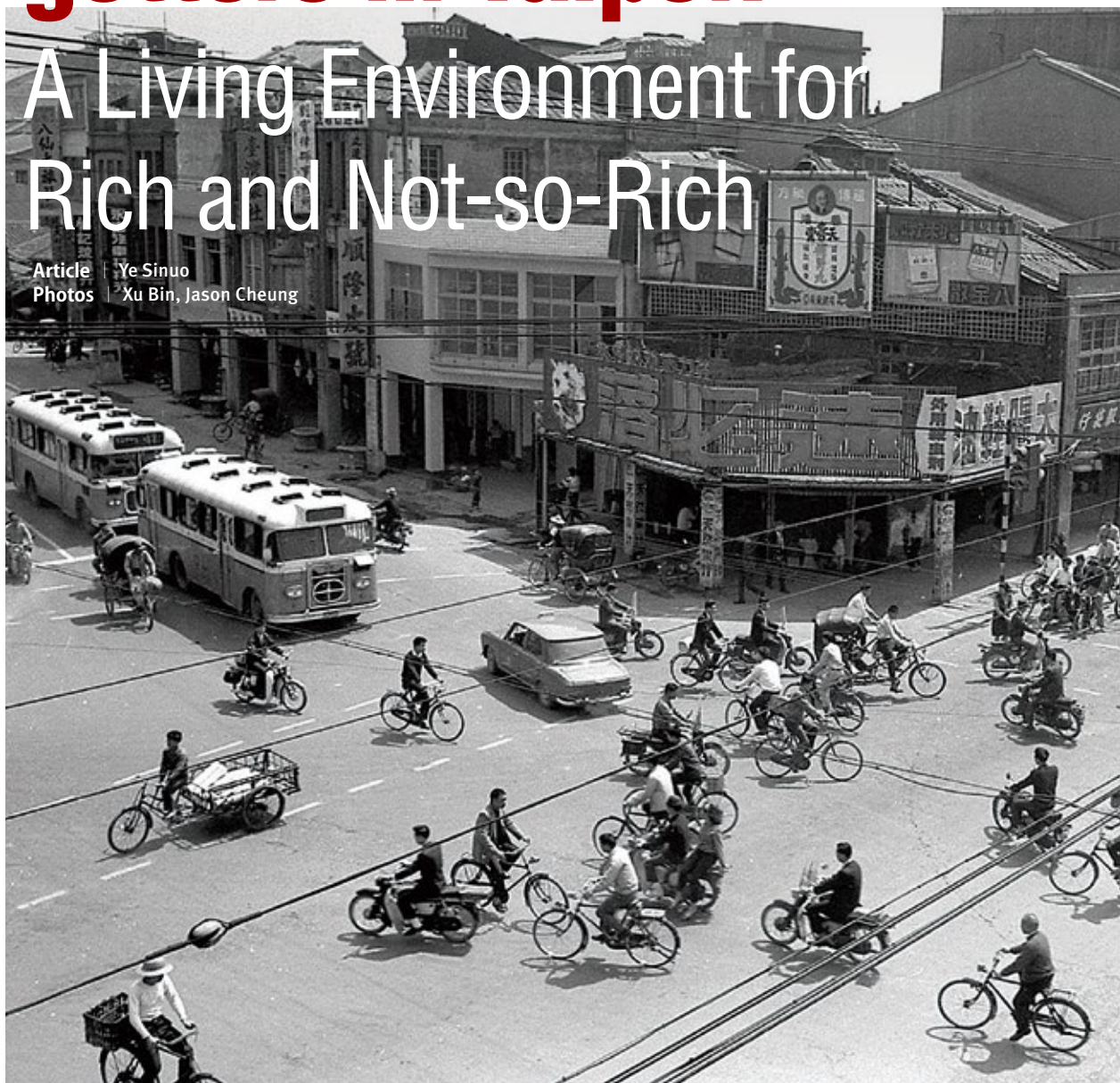
The former Fa Ji Tea Shop (發記茶行) has been renovated and is now the URS27W Film Range (城市影像實驗室). (Photo: Xu Bin)



Yanping N. Road: the Place for Go- getters in Taipei!

A Living Environment for Rich and Not-so-Rich

Article | Ye Sinuo
Photos | Xu Bin, Jason Cheung



Busy traffic at the intersection of Yanping N. and Chang'an W. Roads in 1967. (Photos: Jason Cheung)



There is nothing unusual about finding a 50-meter-wide store at the intersection of Yanping N. Road (延平北路) and Nanjing W. Road (南京西路) nowadays. But fifty years ago, only a top-notch, grand luxury store would have such a footprint. To many people, Ta Cheng Department Store (大千百貨) has a special place in their memory of Yanping N. Road, and stands testament to its old-time glory. The thoroughfare has gone through a long period of apparent dormancy, but is now in the process of recovering its former looks and bringing back the old glamor.

The Most Prosperous Trendy Neighborhood in Taipei

“When I was a kid, I most looked forward to my dad and mom taking us to shop for new clothes at Ta Cheng Department Store,” says Lu Guowei (呂國維), Chairman of the Zhaoyang Clothes and Ornaments Street Development Association (朝陽服飾材料街區發展協會). “Almost 50 years ago, when Ta Cheng first opened, all our neighbors rushed to see the very first escalator in Taiwan.” He also remembers that the neighborhood around the store was full of gold jewelry shops and importers. It was as trendy as the Xinyi district (信義區) is today.

Named Taiping Ting (太平町通) in the Japanese era, Yanping N. Road was one of the three main roads

in the Dadaocheng (大稻埕) commercial district. Wealthy businessmen, celebrities and intellectuals involved in political movements all frequented the area. It was very different from the Japanese-dominated “downtown” area.

With its open and chic atmosphere, the neighborhood created many Taiwan “firsts,” such as the first coffee shop opened by Taiwanese: Werther Café (維特咖啡廳), located next to Ta Cheng Department Store, which later morphed into the All Beauty Restaurant (黑美人大酒家). The first western-style restaurant in Taiwan, Bolero (波丽路) was at the intersection of Minsheng W. and Yanping N. Roads. Yanping N. Road was known as a cradle of authentic Taiwanese eateries in Taipei. Back then, the literati would go to such places accompanied

by yi-dans, ladies similar to Japanese geisha, who would play music instruments, reciting poetry or demonstrate other cultural talents.

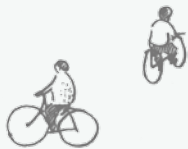
This kind of restaurant emporium prospered from the 1970's to the 80's; there were at least 15 on Yanping N. Road alone. “Businessmen would make deals at dance clubs,” says Lu. Growing up in the button and ornament business, he learned a thing or two about the way people do business.

Garment Biz Heyday Equals Neighborhood Growth

When business booms, everyone may get a chance to turn their life around, if they try hard enough. The affluence of stores along Section 1 of Yanping N.



In the 1920s, there were already numerous buildings on Yanping N. Road. (Photos: Jason Cheung)



Xu Liu Meihui has done business on Yanping N. Road for forty-some years, and the memory of those prosperous days is still fresh in her mind.
(Photos: Xu Bin)



Road naturally spun off into the rise of the ornament industry on Section 2.

“Back in the day, the store was always full of customers; quite often we didn’t get a chance to use the washroom all day long! The expensive high-end crystal products were kept by the counter so we could grab them and show them to customers,” says Xu Liu Meihui (徐劉美惠), the owner of Nan Chang (南昌行). About 40 years ago, the garment wholesale business was booming in Dadaocheng, so the need for ornaments and accessories, such as buttons and elastics, increased tremendously. At its peak, there were more than 200 accessory stores along a particular alley that was just a few hundred meters long. So many people and such traffic crammed into an alley 3 meters wide made for quite a busy scene!

At night, all kinds of entertainment lit up the night sky. After the opening of the First Theater (第一劇場), built by Japanese era tea tycoon, Chen Tianlai (陳天來), Da Qiao Theater (大橋戲院), Guo Tai Theater (國泰戲院), and Da Guangming Theater (大光明戲院) opened one after another. Many

people did business by day, and watched movies, danced and went skating at night. Xu Liu Meihui calls such people the “death squad”, because they didn’t pay much attention to their own health.

The Birth Place of Everyday Rice Cuisine

Crossing Taipei Bridge (台北橋), you will find that the look of Yanping N. Road changes dramatically, and now takes on an aspect reflecting the rougher lifestyles of everyday people. It was always busy here, day and night. Laborers from central and southern Taiwan would gather under the bridge, waiting for job opportunities to come along. Late at night, big trucks rambled along Yanping N. Road past the bicycle wholesalers of Section 3, where the scooter shops are today. Those trucks left before dawn, but people in the neighborhood were up already, busy making rice cakes for early bird workers.

“It looked just like the famous painting: Along the River during the Qingming Festival (清明上河圖) – crowded and busy, with nary a still moment,”

recalls Guo Shun Village Chief (國順里), Chen Yinghui (陳穎慧). She remembers that laborers rarely spent their money at department stores or high-end restaurants. They preferred ordering a bowl of noodles, some side dishes and a little drink as reward for their hard day's work. Yansun Night Market (延三夜市) developed gradually owing to such patronage.

The everyday needs of laborers also helped turn Guo Shun Village into the birth place of rice cuisine. Situated in a small alley, Lin Zhen Rice Cake Store (林貞稞行) is now 60 years old. Its second generation owner, Lin Yuqiang (林裕強) says that in the 1940s, there were mostly rice fields and mills in this neighborhood. Residents all made and sold rice cakes, so, naturally, it soon took on the moniker, "Rice Cake Street." "In the old days, if sales went well on a

particular day, you'd be sold out by closing time, no matter how many cakes you'd made." This short alley was always chockablock with people during Chinese festivals; you might walk for half an hour without making it back to the main drag.

New Energy Infuses Old Commercial District

Today, buildings have replaced those endless rice fields. There are no tricycles waiting under the bridge, but Yanping N. Road is still the most important arterial between Taipei and New Taipei Cities. And a new energy is about to burst: next to Ta Cheng Department Store, the old All Beauty Restaurant on Sec. 2 has just finished renovations. It's now a cool coffee shop where young artists of Dadaocheng come to interact. Led by the rising tide of hipster and retro

The old All Beauty Restaurant site is now a coffee shop.
(Photos: Xu Bin)





Rice Cake Street is the birth place of rice cuisine in Taipei, offering various dishes. (Photos: Xu Bin)




An art wall collage made of buttons in the Zhaoyang Fashion Accessories Market. (Photos: Xu Bin)



style, aging fabric stores at the intersection of Yanping N. and Nanjing W. Roads are starting to join in the cultural and creative renaissance too.

“We used to come here shopping for buttons and ornaments, now we want to recycle the arty energy we get from this community and foment change ourselves.” Artists Chang Yaping (張雅萍) and Chou Delian (周能安) from Shin Len Yuan Art Space (新樂園藝術空間) are trying to reform the neighborhood by helping young artists and old stores create work that will attract more people to come visit the Zhaoyang Fashion Accessories Market.

Even though time has moved on and things have changed, the atmosphere of a peaceful yet flourishing era still lingers around the forever trendy and avant-garde Yanping N. Road. 

Let's go to Bangka

Creating a Future with Tradition

Article | Lin Yingzu

Photos | Xu Bin, Huang Jianbin

About 10 years ago, with the exploding popularity of Japanese and Korean dramas, Guang Sheng Yi switched to selling teenage girls' fashions. (Photo: Xu Bin)



Bangka (aka. Wanhua 萬華) is one of the most famous garment wholesale districts in Taipei, with all kinds of clothing stores. You can find trendy togs and “Made in Taiwan” cotton underclothes. Furthermore, one can find tailors using patterning skills passed down from Shanghai (上海) Tang suit masters, and also many other delicate arts and crafts. Old stores and talented masters gather here, fashioning their own specialties, and standing witness to Wanhua’s development and change.

To help people learn more about Wanhua, the Taipei Office of Commerce (台北市商業處) has found and interviewed many stores and masters. It



is hoped that their inspiring stories will get people’s attention and change their impressions of Wanhua.

Fashion World: Garment District Keeps up with the Times

Thirty-some years ago, Dali Street (大理街) in Wanhua was the top street for clothing wholesale in Taiwan. But with the rise of the Internet and the change of consumer habits, it became a challenge for local store owners just to maintain the glamour of such a street. Founded some 40 years ago, Guang Sheng Yi (廣盛益) still attracts many customers, but its manager, Ms. Wang says that the ability to keep up with the trends is their strongest suit. “Being in the wholesale business, we need to have a better and sharper fashion sense than retailers; otherwise we’ll be washed up sooner or later!”

Guang Sheng Yi focuses on teenage girls’ clothing now, but in the early years, it mainly sold comfortable cotton t-shirts. About 10 years ago, due to the trends influenced by Japanese and Korean dramas, plus the amount of information available online, the store bravely switched to focusing on more fashionable clothing.

“Trends in the fashion world change rapidly, you just can’t keep a big inventory on hand. There’s not much hope of selling next year what doesn’t sell this year.” Ms. Wang says with a smile that on Dali Street, you can see clothing styles ever changing, and customers getting more and more clever. They used to shop for whatever was cheap, but now they’ve become more picky about the look. Design, shapes and how well the clothing items go together are what they look for now.

In addition to dealing with customers, placing orders with factories has become more challenging too. “Some factories simply stop supplying without warning. Even though an item might be selling well, the manufacturer might not have that fabric anymore, so they just won’t make it. We have to find another plant to produce it if we want to satisfy our customers’ needs.” Ms. Wang estimates that they work with roughly 20 factories. “Even though we’re busier this way, it’s the only way to guarantee that all items are ready to sell, and that we keep the advantage of wholesale, and not be beaten by online shopping.”



Focusing on underclothes and clothing for infants, Lao Wan Chang's (老萬昌內衣行) owner, Pei Chihpeng (left) took over this old store and won his customers' trust with good merchandise quality and service. (Photo: Xu Bin)

Wholesale: a Richly Human Enterprise in Old Townsite

Specializing in underclothes and babies' clothing, Lao Wan Chang's (老萬昌內衣行) second-generation owner, Pei Chihpeng (裴志鵬) recalls that, 48 years ago, when he started helping his father run the business, there were motorcycle and bike repair shops and pharmacies in Wanhua. Their store was near Wanhua train station, and many wholesalers came by. More and more, it was clothing stores that set up shop locally and a commercial garment district soon developed.

Pei stayed with his father's old store and has seen the transition of this neighborhood first hand. He laughs and says that his life is just like his last name, which is a Chinese character meaning: “Must love clothing.” “I have been with this store since I was six,” he states. “I grew up and have lived here all my life.” When he was a little older, he assisted his folks at the store on holidays. He helped to organize stock, learned how to introduce merchandise to customers and developed the savoir faire necessary to handle them. Ninety percent of Lao Wan Chang's products are made in Taiwan using high-quality soft fabric. Customers of all ages can find just the underclothes they are looking for here, and this is why this almost-half-century-old store keeps its loyal customer base.

Pei admits that Lao Wan Chang once lost its advantageous position in the face of Southeast Asia's low-priced competition. “But Taiwan's textile industry has always set a high

standard, so after a while, customers still come back to us. Even people living overseas will make a special trip to shop at our store when they are in Taiwan.”

Insisting on product quality and keeping his promise to customers, Pei makes sure his store is closed no more than 15 days a year, counting days off for typhoons and for the Chinese New Year period. “I’m worried that when our customers come to the store and find it closed, they’ll have to make an extra trip some other day.” Pei’s words express how he cherishes and considers his customers, and ably demonstrates the sense of humanity at work in this old townsite, Wanhua.



Tang suit pattern master, Lin Junqing has worked hard to learn how to make chi-paos since he was young. With their intricate designs, the Tang suits he makes have received praise from customers in Taiwan and overseas. (Photo: Huang Jianbin)

A Glamorous Business: Exquisite Skills Hidden in Alleys

Finding a store over 40 years old in the old town area is nothing unusual, and the masters and experts in those stores are the really fascinating treasures there. A Tang suit pattern master named Lin Junqing (林俊卿) toils hidden away at Section Nine Clothing Design (九段工坊) on Sec. 2, Heping W. Road (和平西路).



Section Nine is named for the highest level one can achieve in Taekwondo: the 9th dan black belt. The name symbolizes Lin's exquisite skills, which have earned him the top reputation in Taiwan, with clients that include politicians and celebrities. Patterning is crucial to building traditional *chi-paos* and Tang suits. If a suit is patterned well, it will be comfortable and fit the wearer much better. Talking about why he chose a career in making Tang suits, Lin says, "If you want to gain a foothold in society, you need to have a professional skill."

Lin came from a poor family which couldn't support him in school. At age 13, he learned that a *chi-pao* tailor made three times the daily wage of a

laborer, so he decided to apprentice with a master from Shanghai in Ximending (西門町). "The master was a Shandonger and always shouted his instructions at top volume. But his skills were second to none – a top master back then."

Lin started with basic button sewing, collar making and patterning, and step-by-step, he worked to become a master at age 18. With some savings, he started his own business, and with his acute business sense, he was able to zero in on the business opportunities present in the fashion market. He gave up the Tang suit career and went to work on clothing manufacture and wholesale, which made him a fortune in a short time. Lin describes: "30-odd

The Tang suits in Section Nine Clothing Design are patterned and designed by Lin himself, with styles and fabric design both traditional and innovative.
(Photo: Xu Bin)





Guo opened his store on Huaxi Street, hoping to find inspiration for his creations from people passing by.
(Photo: Huang Jianbin)

years ago, the monthly rent for a store in Wanhua was two hundred thousand NT dollars, but our turnover could be twenty million a month!”

Then, a bad investment cost him everything. But, at this low ebb, a thought flashed through his mind: “I have my professional skills, I know patterning technique.” Just like that, he started all over again in the Tang suit business. Master Lin has always taken a firm stand about technique, and has revived this almost lost skill to make exquisite Tang suits again. By doing this, he has revised his life map once more.

Tourism: Promoting Taiwan with Artistry

Ruby’s, an exclusive handicraft accessory store at the far end of Huaxi Street Night Market (華西街夜市), stands out from all the other old stores in

Wanhua. Store owner, Guo Chenming (郭丞閔) is only 30, but his excellent skills and design taste have earned him recognition in European circles.

Guo has been obsessed by metallic luster since he was a kid, but it was a coincidence that led him to the handcraft accessory world. “When I went to school in England, I noticed that many famous brand accessories were manufactured in Taiwan. Such delicate and intricate products had made Taiwan one of the top manufacturers in the world. When I realized that, I felt proud of being Taiwanese.”

He then transferred that pride into action. After he came back to Taiwan, he decided to learn from the experienced masters who did work for international companies. “Many of them are now at retirement age, and some skills become a challenge when hands and eyes get older. So I feel I have to pass these skills on.”



Guo uses his excellent skills to make uniquely-styled accessories. (Photo: Huang Jianbin)

Guo always tries to bring Taiwanese elements into his designs, such as using blue and white porcelain to replace precious stones, and adding opal to make stylish earrings. He also takes the tassels common in Oriental art deco, adds a little artistic twist of his own, and produces fine arts and crafts that integrate traditional with modern. As to why choose Wanhua to open the trendy accessory store, Guo has his own opinion: "People flow into Wanhua from various places and countries. Different customers have brought me brand new creative inspirations, and widened my vision."

Being the first developed neighborhood in Taipei, Wanhua has seen a lot of changes over time. Classic old stores carry on their traditions, and new stores

produce unlimited opportunity. On the B1 level of the Lungshan Temple Underground Shopping Bazaar (龍山寺地下街), one will find fortune-tellers, masseurs and souvenir stores. On B2, the Monga Longshan Cultural Arts B2 (艋舺龍山文創 B2), takes "Cultivating local designers, artists, and creators" as its mandate and is developing local brands. In addition, people can participate in craft making, performance art and interactive workshops, and also join guided tours of the area. So many ways to explore Wanhua's cultural and artistic world!

In you'd like to experience the glorious old times and the exquisite new age, why not pay Wanhua a visit, and enter the fabulous dream world of old Taipei. 📍

Stories Can Be Found Anywhere

Liao Ruohan: Multiple Cultures and Life Styles Gather in Taipei

Article | Tu Xinyi

Photos | Taipei 2017 Universiade Organizing Committee, Huang Yufan, Shutterstock.com



(Photos: Taipei 2017 Universiade Organizing Committee)

Not too long ago, the curtain fell on the highly-successful Taipei 2017 Universiade. In addition to the sporting events, what people talk about most is the amazing three-stage performance at the opening ceremony. Since this was a venue for young athletes, the opening performance naturally followed the Universiade's slogan: "For You, For Youth," and hired three young directors to mount the production. Directed by Liao Ruohan (廖若涵), *Hybrid Taipei* (匯聚台北) combined elements of metal shacks, signboards and Taiwan's night markets to show the lifestyles and culinary cultures that make up Taipei. Hybrid Taipei: Democratic Taipei featured scenes and symbols of voting, protesting and the "rainbow movement," as well as the music of the aboriginal band Boxing plus A-LIN, well-known Taiwanese pop star. The combinations and collisions recreated in the performance symbolized a transformative and advancing Taipei, and also showed director Liao's perceptive observations and feelings for her city.

(Photos: Huang Yufan)



Longshan Temple. (Editorial credit: Baiterek Media / Shutterstock.com)



Longshan Temple. (Editorial credit: asiastock / Shutterstock.com)

Q1 As a Taipeier, what's your impression of this city?

I am a Taipeier but many of the Tainaner Ensemble (台南人劇團) I work with are obviously from Tainan. Their impression of Taipeiers is that we are indifferent. This really surprises me. Maybe the life pace in Taipei is faster, so we appear to be a bit aloof. But, Taipei is still a city full of humanity. For example, on the MRT, strangers often care about each other or interact naturally. I just saw some elders playing with some strangers' children.

Q2 Where's your secret spot when you need to rest your mind or you feel frustrated?

What I like most is walking around Hsing Tian Kong (行天宮) and Lungshan Temple (龍山寺). Especially when believers are doing their morning chants and the incense smoke is billowing. This scene just blows my mind. It seems there's some invisible communication going on. The moment I enter a temple, my mind, heart and soul feel settled all of a sudden, and I am refilled with positive energy. When I feel down, I simply stay home and space out.

Q3 What inspired the creation of *Hybrid Taipei*?

The directive I received back then was “Taipei.” Our team discussed many aspects of Taipei during the creating process. At the end, we chose two key words to focus on: “Development,” because Taipei is a city in flux, with many changeable spaces and possibilities; and the other word was: “Transformation.”

The first image of the city we present is a metal shack, with many young people running and scurrying, showing that transformation is in progress. We also selected signboards, which many people might consider messy and ugly; but the traditional characters on them are so beautiful and symbolic of Chinese culture. By using them, we hope to let everyone see the deepest levels of the most real Taipei possible.

Q4 What was the biggest challenge during the creation of *Hybrid Taipei*? How did you break it down?

The ways of performance are quite often affected by incidents. Originally, we had wanted to have flying objects and to present more 3D visual effects. It couldn't be done due to the physical restrictions posed by Taipei Stadium, but it did trigger other thoughts. At the end, we decided to use an LED floor screen to create depth of space, and created multi-layered 3D effects for the same reason.

Q5 Do you think Taipei is a city suited to the creative process?

Of course. In Taipei, information circulates quickly. If you want to start an event and make some connections, the time needed to advertise the venue, contact people and circulate information is very short.

Taipei is a city I'm familiar with, but it still gives me a lot of stimulation and ideas.

Q6 What are the unique creative elements of Taipei that impress you the most?

There are many elements of creation in Taipei; everyday scenes are interesting. For example, while taking the MRT, many buildings pass by and it always looks like a movie scene to me. We sit on the train without hearing the outside world, but beyond those windows, many stories are happening. This scene quite often gets my creative juices flowing.

Q7 Which movie would you choose to represent Taipei? Why?

The first thing that comes to my mind would be a film by Edward Yang (楊德昌) such as *A Confucian Confusion* (獨立時代) or *Taipei Story* (青梅竹馬). One reason is the theme, but mostly, Yang always uses a calm visual angle to observe Taipei and then projects it in the movie. To me, it produces a metropolitan atmosphere; but it's also like a surgical knife, dissecting the lives and emotions of Taipeiers.

Q8 In your work we quite often see experiments in “sound creation.” Where do these ideas come from?

Through sound, people always connect to images and space, but there are many elements of sensuous connections in it too. I once did a performance on an empty stage with no props. The actors imitated the sounds of boiling water, cutting vegetables, and the clangs of pots and pans. This forced the audience to imagine a kitchen for



(Photos: Huang Yufan)

Liao Ruohan

The resident director of Tainaner Ensemble and the director of Hybrid Taipei at the opening ceremony of the Taipei 2017 Universiade. Her works are delicate but show a strong will. In recent years, she's been fascinated by the quality of sounds that can be developed in the theater. Her most important works include *Play Games* (遊戲邊緣), *Anping, Our Town* (安平小鎮), and *Master A-chang's Radio* (阿章師的拉哩歐).

themselves. The interesting part was, the scene everyone in the audience imagined wasn't quite the same obviously!

Q9 How would you present sounds of Taipei?

I find it hard to use one single sound to represent Taipei. It all comes down to where you are. For instance, in the Beitou market (北投市場), you'll hear many different accents and sounds of food preparation. The most interesting part of Taipei is different neighborhoods and streets will have different sounds.

Q10 What do you like the most about Taipei?

To me, Taipei is a city where you always feel the warmth of life. It's not as well-organized as some Western cities, and it's different from Tokyo's fast and intense pace. Taipei is a little like suburbs but still very modern. It contains such mixed qualities but still presents a free and comfortable ambience. This is why I like Taipei, and hope people who are unfamiliar with it can open their minds to experience the warmth of this city. 🇹🇼

Stray Animals' Rights Count!

Huang Chingjung Protects Furry Kids

Article | Lu Yifeng

Photos | Huang Jianbin

Furry Kids, as some people call their pets nowadays, have become as important as family members in modern life. They are often pampered by their owners, although some have become a kind of social problem, abandoned and living on the streets. But many people from NPOs such as the APA (Animal Protection Association of the Republic of China, 中華民國保護動物協會) are trying to improve the situation for homeless animals. These compassionate souls are devoted to finding a nurturing environment for stray animals, and are developing new more-refined ways of taking care of them.

Turning Around the Future for Strays

APA Secretary General, Dr. Huang Chingjung (黃慶榮), spent most of his childhood around dogs, pigs and cows, and feels deeply for animals. When he came to Taipei and opened his veterinary clinic, he noticed the stray dog issue in the city and quickly became an activist, promoting amendments to the animal protection



For years, Huang has been reading up on animal care and updating his knowledge as it applies to the improvement of living conditions for stray animals. (Photo: Huang Jianbin)




laws. He joined the APA in 1999 and says with deep feeling: “It’s natural for me to speak up for animals, since I can’t bear to see them treated the wrong way. That’s why I propose all sorts of policies in the association, hoping that more furry kids will benefit from them.”



(Editorial credit: 4point Design)

Huang also says, “Currently, our association is promoting the projects ‘Sponsor and Foster’ ‘Lucky Bark’ and ‘Furry Food Bank.’” Known to animal protection activists as the “idea hamster,” Dr. Huang continues to devise ways of improving living conditions for animals. In the “Sponsor and Foster” program, people can make a monthly donation, which goes towards a particular animal’s care at the shelter; but sponsors can also take their four-legged friends home for a few days and spend some happy time with them. The “Lucky Bark” project is designed to reduce the pressure on shelters filled with pups. It works with kennels all over Taiwan to let dogs have a bigger place to run around in. “Furry Food Bank” uses its donations to buy better quality food for kennels, which, in turn, allows kennels to spend their money on hiring staff. With sufficient manpower in place, all the furry kids have a better chance of being taken care of properly.

Huang believes that even though the stray dog and cat problem has improved, he stills calls on animal lovers to get involved by making small donations, volunteering at shelters and kennels, and working with the association. Schools and groups are always welcome to visit Bali Shelter (八里收容所) and get closer to their furry friends!

“If everyone contributes a little, these furry kids will be treated a lot better,” Huang says. Moving forward, the association is determined to keep spirits positive, warm and bright, while it continues its good work helping stray animals have better lives. Let’s make the core virtue: “Respect for Life” a part of our daily lives! 

Start from Taipei and Venture Out to See Taiwan!

Reflections of Mikio Numata,
Chief Representative, Japan-Taiwan
Exchange Association, Taipei Office

Article | Jiang Xinying

Photos | Shi Chuntai

Taiwan and Japan have a long, tangled relationship going back to the 16th century. If you blow away the political dust, you'll see that the 400-year Taiwan-Japan story is a grand tapestry with many nations, cultures, languages, trading partners, arts and crafts movements, and other aspects of humanity woven in. In 1972, diplomatic ties between the two states were severed and relations entered a more practical phase with the set up of Japan Interchange Association (財団法人交流協會) and the Association of East Asian Relations (亞東關係協會). These two associations allowed each nation to participate in a non-governmental interactive platform, and thus continue working on economic cooperation. After 45 years, these two associations changed their names to the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association (公益財団法人日本台灣交流協會) and the Taiwan-Japan Relations Association (臺灣與日本關係協會) in 2017. By so doing, exchanges between these two nations has been confirmed, and stands as an important cornerstone of their friendship and mutual development.

Remembering the Good Old Days while Meeting Taipei Again

Mikio Numata (沼田幹夫) took office in July, 2014, but this wasn't his first visit to Taiwan. 47 years ago, college student Numata visited Taipei, which was just half its present size at the time. There was no MRT, no HSR (高鐵) – not even a bus route that crossed the whole city! The infrastructure of the east side was just being laid, and the current financial and economic center – the Xinyi district (信義區) was just a vast rice paddy. In the 1970s, Ximending (西門町) was at its peak; on Wuchang Street (武昌街) alone, there were more than 10 movie theaters! The neighborhood was considered a cornucopia of delicacies for young people, and an entertainment oasis for all Taipeiers. Young Numata was deeply impressed by the similar culture, understandable language, and fabulous eatables he found there. Almost half a century has passed, and now he is an ambassador who has seen it all in the diplomatic

Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association, Taipei Office

This is the window for connections between Taiwan and Japan. It is officially authorized to handle exchanges in economics, culture, academics and technology. It also provides assistance and consultation on immigration and visa issues, education, work and day-to-day problems for Japanese tourists and residents in Taiwan. Its scope includes all the official business an overseas embassy would do.

📍 28, Qingcheng St., Sunshan Dist., Taipei

☎ 02-2713-8000

🕒 Mon. to Fri., 9:00-12:30 am.
and 13:30-16:00 pm.

🌐 https://www.koryu.or.jp/taipei/ez3_contents.nsf/Top



Mikio Numata, Chief Representative, Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association, Taipei Office (Photos: Shi Chuntai)

world. He has been assigned to the USA, China, Hong Kong, and Myanmar, but Taiwan will be the last stop of his illustrious forty-year career. He compares metropolis of Taiwan with other international cities, and concludes: “To me, Taipei is the best.”

For Japanese travelers, Taiwan is very amenable, with the basic necessities of life all readily available. According to the Tourism Bureau’s (觀光局) statistics, in 2016, there were over 6 million trips taken between Taiwan and Japan about 4.29 million Taiwanese travelling to Japan, and about 1.89 million Japanese coming to Taiwan. In short, one out of every five Taiwanese went to Japan, and one out of seventy Japanese came here, with most of them visiting Taipei only. This variance in number is probably due to the difference in size of each country’s population, although there’s also a dissimilarity in the cultural knowledge of each place. Numata says frankly that Taiwanese people are more familiar with the local culture, traditions, natural scenery, architecture and food in Japan than Japanese tourists are with Taiwan outside of Taipei.

Making Friends with the Arts; Discovering a Different Taiwan

“If you visit Taiwan but stay only in Taipei, then what you will see is not Taiwan.” Having lived in Taiwan for more than three years, Numata can chat fluently in Chinese, and knows the beauty of every part of this land. He believes that each county, city and even small town should exploit their tourism potential, so that more travelers can experience the unique charms of Formosa.

From 2014 onward, the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association has been helping government and civic groups in the planning of many arts activities. For example, in 2014, the treasures of the National Palace Museum (國立故宮博物院) in Taipei: the jadeite cabbage with insects (翠玉白菜) and the meat-shaped stone (肉形石) made their first appearance at Tokyo National Museum (東京國立博物館). And, in 2015, the JTEA worked with Japan's NHK network to bring the Takarazuka Revue (寶塚劇團) to perform for a second time in Taipei. In 2016, Tainan's (台南) Chimei Museum (奇美博物館) and the Southern Branch of the National Palace Museum (故宮南院) in Chiayi (嘉義) mounted the exhibitions: *Omotenashi, Ceramics for Feasting and for Enjoying the Tea Ceremony* (待客之心—日本靜嘉堂精選陶瓷名品展) and *Japanese Art at Its Finest: Masterpieces from the Tokyo and Kyushu National Museums* (日本美術之最—九州、東京國立博物館精品展) respectively. It is hoped that these arts exchange programs will promote tourism in different parts of Taiwan.

Welcome to Taiwan! Take a Different Kind of Trip

Since the Open Sky Policy was included in 2011's Taiwan-Japan Air Transport Agreement, direct flights between a variety of airports in Japan and Taichung (台中), Tainan (台南) and Kaohsiung (高雄) have begun. And, no matter which starting port you choose, you can always add a train ride on TRA (台鐵) or HSR (高鐵) to enjoy the best Taiwan has to offer! You can drink in the scenery of this earthly heaven: Taoyuan (桃園) is famous for its numerous ponds, Hsinchu (新竹) is the city of wind, Miaoli (苗栗) offers breathtaking mountain vistas. You can journey down the path of tradition – Taichung provides several fun and historic railroad trips, Changhua (彰化) is known for its religious heritage, and Nantou (南投) is home to many places that preserve and demonstrate

the agricultural arts. Yunlin (雲林), Chiayi and Tainan are abundant, prosperous regions full of history and humanity. The “Deep South” cities of Kaohsiung and Pingtung (屏東) are famous for waves, tides and blue skies. In Yilan (宜蘭), Hualien (花蓮) and Taitung (台東), a nature-loving can spend all day exploring a scenic feast of plains, mountains and valleys. And let us not forget, last but not least, there's Taipei, our fabulous capital, a city of glory.

“My hope is that Japanese youth will make friends with their Taiwanese peers.” This is not just Numata's wish; it's something all Taiwanese young people can look forward to, as well. This island of Formosa has been part of the planet's landscape for hundreds of millions of years, yet, in many ways, the big boat called “Taiwan” is still a youthful voyager on the Pacific Ocean. And handsome, brave, passionate, rough hewn and innovative are the sailors on this boat. Ride the Kuroshio Current, hoist the sails and pull on those oars! We're sailing toward the world! 🇹🇼

Recommended

National Palace Museum

The collections in the museum date from the Neolithic Period until today, about 8,000 years, with approximately 700,000 artifacts divided into 19 categories, including painting, calligraphy, utensils, sculpture, and documents. However, the largest component comes from the Imperial Chinese families. The NPM is the largest museum in Taiwan, and is recognized as the premier center for Chinese research worldwide. For lovers of Chinese history, this is a place you just can't miss!

📍 221, Sec. 2, Zhishan Rd., Shilin Dist., Taipei City

🕒 Opening hours: 08:30~18:30

Extension of opening hours at night:
18:30 - 21:00 on Fridays and Saturdays.

Bringing Taiwan and the Philippines Closer Together

Angelito Banayo, Head of Taipei's
Manila Economic and Cultural Office

Article | Rick Charette

Photos | Bo Wei Chen

Political developments in the Philippines over the past four decades have often riveted the world's attention, and Mr. Angelito Tan Banayo has been front and center. Not as a spectator, but as an influential behind-the-scenes figure, notable as a key team member for a number of the most powerful names in national politics, working with them toward achieving more representative and progressive government for the people, and toward overturning old ways.

Today he is, by choice, leading a “quieter” existence, living in Taipei and leading the Manila Economic and Cultural Office (MECO), the Philippines Representative Office in Taiwan. His mission remains the same – bettering the lives of his fellow Filipinos by deepening the already friendly relationship between Taipei/Taiwan and the Philippines.

Banayo started his professional life as a businessman, heading several private corporations, meanwhile teaching Economics/Marketing at the collegiate level. His movement into the government/political realm came in the early 1980s; over the years, amongst his most well-known achievements has been service as the General Manager of the Philippines Tourism Authority, as advisor to President Joseph Estrada, and as officer in the presidential campaign of President Benigno Aquino III.

Path to Taipei

The change of occupation bringing him to Taipei came after assisting Rodrigo Duterte with his campaign communications and strategy in the latter's successful 2015–2016 run for the presidency.

“This is actually my first foreign assignment,” he states. “Before this I had always been based in the Philippines. In various roles I’ve had to work with other countries, especially ASEAN, and developed good relationships. At my age now, I wanted something closer to being in the foreign service, and with the agreement of President Duterte I chose to come to Taiwan. I was appointed in June 2016, and took up residence in November. Actually, I was the president’s very first appointee to the foreign service.” Beijing and other possibilities were discussed, but it was Taipei and Taiwan he wanted.

Impressions – Then and Now

“I love it here. I had been here several times previously, mostly as a delegate for conferences, most in Taipei. I’ve witnessed the progress. From 1987, when I first came here, the changes through the years have been quite dramatic.” He recalls how much of the Dunhua North Road area around today’s Sunworld Dynasty Hotel (台北王朝大酒店) (then called Asiaworld), at the time a key commercial district with much of the city’s east still remained undeveloped. This was also true of today’s sleekest commercial district, Xinyi District (信

義區), just 30 years ago scrubland and small farm plots, today home to skyscrapers that are dramatic world-class architectural designs.

“The nice thing about Taipei is that despite the rapid urbanization, the city has maintained a very good balance in terms of parks, greenery, and other recreational spaces – unlike back home, where it is all concrete buildings and very few parks. Taipei and other Taiwan cities all seem to maintain that positive ratio between open spaces and urbanized build-up that I really admire.”

“I marvel at the country – it’s not just the technology, but the hard work and patience. Through the years products have been improved, whether agricultural or industrial, little by little with continuing innovations. And whatever the target is, the approach is scientific. This is something I’d like to help Filipinos to emulate, bringing Taiwan’s knowledge and approach to the Philippines.”

A favorite contrast example is the custard apple, in Taiwan called Buddha-head fruit. “Back home it is increasingly rare, ever smaller, with more seeds, a

When in Taipei - The Banayo Mission

“Our two countries are very close. It takes just 1 hour and 45 minutes to fly from Manila to Taoyuan. And it will be even shorter now we’ve opened a new northern Philippines airport in Cagayan Province. But despite the physical proximity, Taiwanese and Filipinos don’t know each other well. I’d like to promote this, especially through cultural and educational exchanges. The core has long been trade and commerce, but by fostering warmer people-to-people relationships, this foundation will be deepened and strengthened.” Taiwan’s New Southbound Policy and visa-free access for Filipinos and nationals from other ASEAN lands are very welcome, he says – Taiwan’s “bonds of friendship with ASEAN nations will be strengthened, providing a blanket of security.”

burden to eat. In Taiwan technology, hard work, and perseverance has created a large market for a delicious fruit large, sweet, and creamy.”

He also mentions discussions he had with a high-level businessman friend about how the local medical sector is world-class, the friend stated that in his experience, Taiwan has the second best health system behind Sweden’s.

Free-Time Pursuits

“Living here, it’s so convenient to go to a park, to read a book or magazine or walk a bit. I also love heading up the trails on Elephant Mountain (象山)* every so often, for exercise. I missed this in Manila; there, you have to head out to the provinces. In my free time, normally I take long walks, or go jogging or brisk-walking. I live in Xinyi District, which has so many parks – that’s why I enjoy Taiwan. Unlike in the Philippines, even between areas of tall buildings you have pocket parks. The balance is quite good. You can’t argue with the success of Taiwan. Wherever you go, it is in evidence.”


How Filipino Travelers See Taiwan

“Filipinos are attracted to Taipei and Taiwan for a number of key reasons. One – they’re tired of Hong Kong. HK and Taipei are about equidistant, and Filipinos, especially the upwardly mobile and middle-class, visit HK frequently. I tell Philippine newspapers, ‘Try Taipei/Taiwan. The food is as good, and the shopping is cheaper.’ Filipinos love to shop – we perhaps learned our consumerism from the Americans. There are

good bargains here, in the night markets and even the outlet stores. We promote this on our website.”

The Taipei/Taiwan Tourism Experience – Adding Value

“In fact, basically, you cannot really add much more to what you already have in Taipei. More mature people like myself love the parks, and the greenery, but most Filipinos will probably be looking for something for the kids. When you bring your family here, I find there’s a lot for the adults – the excellent museums, parks, etc. – but for the kids, other than the zoo, there needs to be something like an interactive-type entertainment city, etc. Perhaps this would generate more tourism.

“Another thing, in Taipei and elsewhere, is to consider having street signage with larger English types. For those self-driving, it’s difficult to get by if you don’t understand Chinese characters. The translations on the bottom are quite small; especially at night, it’s hardly readable. It would be doing tourists a service to have bigger signage in English. A small thing, but it matters.” 



Ed. Note: Elephant Mountain is one of four low peaks that make up popular Sishou Shan/Four Beasts Mountain (四獸山). Xinyi’s south-side backdrop, the area is laced with easy to mid-grade trails, with splendid views over the city.

Nature Workshop— a Dream that Brews from the Mountains

Building a Bond between the Younger Generation and Native Tribes

Article | Zhong Wenping Photos | Yang Zhiren



Nature uses the leaf sheaths from betel nut trees to make well-designed articles for daily use. (Photo: Yang Zhiren)

Betel nuts have a long connection with Taiwan's aboriginal culture. In native society, the betel nut's popularity transcends tribe, identity, class, gender, and age. It is an offering: the Sakizaya tribe uses it to bring on wind and to summon spirits. It is a gift: the traditional Amis costume features a betel nut pouch design, from which women can keep betel nuts for the purpose of enticing men they're interested in. Indigenous people often offer guests betel nuts and piper betles to show friendship and respect. Founded last year, Nature Workshop (拿鞘) has woven aboriginal culture into their designs and given betel nuts a brand new cultural significance. They have taken masses of sheaths from fallen betel trees and used them to create articles for modern daily use. "We like to see what the sheaths of fallen leaves can be turned into," says Nature's founder, Liu Tawei (劉大衛).

Natural Materials Display a Trendy Sense with an Aboriginal Twist!

The sheath is the part of the leaf that wraps around the trunk or the stem of the plant. It used to be considered waste, and usually ended up discarded or burnt, which was indeed a pity. Liu points out that the biggest difference between the betel nut leaf sheath and plastic or metal is simply that it is a natural product. Depending on growth time, plant location, weather and thickness of leaf, designed products have a variety of appearances. The Nature Workshop team experimented with different levels of water temperature for soaking, different roasting times and temperatures, shrinkage rate control, bending angle, and the amount of pounding, to slowly determine the correct method of obtaining the ideal sheath shape. Thus, betel nut sheaths got a second chance at becoming an excellent natural material for creative design. Moreover, the material is non-



Natural Notebook and Natural Painting made from betel nut leaf sheaths. (Photo: Yang Zhiren)

Theater Market

(Sales center for Nature's products)

戲台市集 (拿鞘作品展售處)

📍 21-1, Zhongshan S. Rd., Zhongzheng Dist.

☎ 2397-1920#30

🕒 09:00 ~ 23:00

toxic, anti-bug, water-resistant, moisture absorbing, and uses zero chemicals in its manufacture.

Every job is the result of multiple experiments and serious development. For example, the “Natural Painting” uses leaves of different shades and intertwining grains, and required several handcrafting processes. The “Natural Notebook” is made using large, flat sheaths free of breaks or flaws, united into book form using a metal coil. The “Natural Flip Flop” features totems designed by Taitung’s up-and-coming Amis designer, Gao Caishuang (高彩霜). These are manufactured by betel nut leaf slipper producer, Betel Life, and show off the multi-tribe provenance and the integration of different brands in a truly gung ho way.

Ancestral methods often inspire new design ideas. For example, Ami traditional folding skills, used in the construction of stone hot pots, have



Natural flip flops adorned with delicate Amis totems often catch admiring looks! (Photo: Yang Zhiren)

been incorporated into the design of the warm and translucent “Natural Light” and “Natural Box.” Such products offer a new quality that is truly refreshing, trendy, and humanistic.

Taiwan’s many indigenous tribes have been through much conflict, but also a period of learning to accept each group’s particular ways. Finally, they have now reached a new era of understanding, tolerance and appreciation of each other. This spirit can be seen in the fields of cultural and creative design, where the depth and complexity of the different tribes and their handicrafts may be experienced. Among all Taiwanese, there can be no doubt that the indigenous people know best how to use materials from nature. The new generation of creators, like Nature Workshop, are forging a fresh style, while respecting the land and honoring sacred aboriginal spirits. Through these products, a bond has been built between the younger generation and tribal culture. 🇹🇼

Uniquely Red Floral Fabric Demonstrates the Taste and Look of Taiwanese Life!

Article | Zhong Wenping Photos | Yang Zhiren

Connoisseurs all know: if you are shopping for fabric, Yongle Fabric Market (永樂布業商場) is definitely the place to go! Xin Jing Mei (新經美), run by Xu Wanfu (許萬福), is the oldest brand in the market. At the mention of his vibrant red floral material, he first corrects the name. “Many people call this ‘Hakka floral fabric,’ which is incorrect,” he says. “This is the cloth every house in Taiwan used in the early days. It is also known as ‘Taiwanese floral fabric’ or ‘Granny’s fabric,’ but it is not used just by the Hakka people.” Then he changes the direction of his words and says with a smile: “But then, thanks to the Hakka Affairs Council’s (客委會) promotion, this floral fabric’s never been out of fashion!”

Yongle Fabric Market is one of the main fabric wholesalers in Taiwan. (Photo: Yang Zhiren)





Run by Xu Wanfu, Xin Jing Mei mainly sells traditional floral fabrics, and knows its customers' desires very well. (Photo: Yang Zhiren)

Xin Jing Mei 新經美行

📍 21, Sec. 1, Dihua St.,
Datong Dist. (Room 39,
3rd floor, Yongle Market)

☎ 2556-7539

🕒 06:00 ~ 18:30



Flowerly Patterns Gain Popularity among the More Traditional

In the 1950's, with US aid, Taiwan's textile industry started to boom. Textile companies, such as Far Eastern (遠東) and Tai Quan (太全), took Japanese fabric as their template, and selected patterns they thought Taiwanese would like. Then, they asked local artists to create a new style of fabric painting. The imagery usually included cherry blossoms, peonies, Chinese hibiscuses, and/or daisies. The elaborate designs plus the "lucky" red floral pattern gained this cloth a wide popularity. People used it to make quilt covers, bed sheets, even towels and sleeve protectors, all of which helped bring a bright and sunny atmosphere to post-war Taiwan.

In 1946, Xu's father left Taoyuan and opened Xin Jing Mei in Yongle Market. It soon became the fabric store with the most floral patterns on the market. In fact, fabric emporiums from all over Taiwan came here to buy their supplies. From his years of experience, Xu knows everything there is to know about his clients' preferences. He says that in the old days, the bigger and redder the floral patterns were, the better they sold. But now it's completely the opposite! The younger generations like the more-elegant, simpler and unique styles. Patterns that were unpopular in the old days, such as basic blue, green, or black, or the small tung flower style that represented Hakka culture, have now become the most popular.

When Retro Innovation Meets Living Aesthetics

Floral fabric has been around Taiwan for half a century. With changing times, newer and more advanced fabrics and dyeing techniques have been developed, but Taiwanese floral fabric still maintains a customer base. In Bloom (印花樂), another shop in Dadaocheng, has gotten rid of any trace of the traditional red and pizzazzy features the floral fabric used to have, and now draws more from Taiwan's ecology and life imagery in its design creation. The result is an original printed fabric creation, which is not just stunning, but has also changed people's views about traditional cloth.

In Bloom's finished designs combine the designer's subtle observations with a thorough comprehension of local life, which is very different from the more market-oriented floral fabric. They also echo the younger generation's sense of purpose and retro feelings for this land. For example, the Taiwan Crested Myna bird pattern reminds people of the tough conditions Taiwan's native species encounter. "Old Buildings & Old Majolica Tiles" and the "Window Grill" series recreate an aesthetic of Taiwan's old days, while expressing a solid and elegantly-classic vibe. These fabrics are not only used in quilt covers and pillowcases, they are also for purses, book slippers, water bottle pouches, fabric paintings, lanterns, and many other creative products. Floral fabric hasn't faded away; it can still arouse feelings that are tender, poetic and even sensational. And it's ready to amaze you all over again! 📌

In Bloom renders life imagery on its fabric. With its freshness, it's popular among the younger generation. (Photo: Yang Zhiren)



In Bloom (Dadaocheng store)

印花樂 (大稻埕本店)

📍 28, Minle St., Datong Dist.

☎ 2555-1026

🕒 09:30 ~ 19:00



Conceived out of Musical DNA

Delicate Violin Crafting

Article | Zhong Wenping
Photos | Yang Zhiren

Repairing and making violins requires many tools and fine skills. (Photos: Yang Zhiren)

There are many talented aboriginal musicians in Taiwan, including some famous singers and the Taiwu Children's Ancient Ballads Troupe (泰武古謠傳唱隊) who won over the audience at the Taipei 2017 Universiade opening ceremony. But there is one indigenous musician who is considered a “national treasure” – Lu Guangchao (陸光朝) from Tianmu (天母). Lu was certified a Master Violin Maker by the Czech Republic, and is one of few Taiwanese who specializes in fixing, playing, tuning and handcrafting violins – a music master indeed!

Born with an Ear for Music; Advanced his Skills through Practice

Born in Puyuma, Beinan Township, Taitung County, Lu is the son of an aboriginal musician, Lu Senbao (陸森寶), uncle to the famous singer, Chen Jiannian (陳建年). Pop star A-Mei comes from the village next to his. He never did learn how to play a musical instrument, but he has perfect pitch, and can tell instantly when something is out of tune. He says: “Everyone says that aboriginal people are born with an ear for music; it might be so.” He laughs at himself, claiming he was the “couldn’t sit tight” kind of guy, who left home early, joined a monastery, enrolled in an army school, then found work as a policeman and a tour guide. He ended up being a salesman for a company that produced musical instruments and at age 43, he found himself working as an assistant violin repairman. Before long, his boss sent him to the Czech Republic to learn how to repair violins at an advanced level, and this became the turning point of his life.

“I was basically a rookie who knew nothing, and almost got sent back home!” In the Czech Republic, the manager told him to do just one thing every day for two weeks: install lining strips. It sounded simple but it wasn’t. He checked his natural haste and eagerness when facing new challenges, and just tried hard to do a good job. The two weeks passed and the manager gave him another task without saying much more. “At that moment, I knew I had passed the test.” Six




The path to becoming a professional violin maker is full of obstacles, but Lu has never gotten bored with it.
(Photos: Yang Zhiren)

months later, he got his certificate, but his weight had dropped by 20 kilos. When his family met him at the airport, they could hardly recognize him. “I looked like a skeleton floating through customs.”

In the music industry, he is known as “Lu the Brave.” When it comes to repairing violins, he shows no hesitation, no matter if it’s a Stradivarius or a Guarneri from 17th-or-18th-century Italy, a fiddle that is several hundred years old, or one worth hundreds of millions of dollars. Some violins are badly made and not easy to repair, but he never turns them down. “The more I repair, the better my skills become. Each violin has been through a long journey, and, hopefully, it will have the chance at a second life.” During the repair process, Lu imitates the player’s bowing technique in order to fine tune the instrument according to how it’s normally played. His intention is to make sure the violin will return to the musician in the best possible

condition for peak performance. He smiles and says that what worries him most is when he encounters a player with extreme aural sensitivity. “There are some tones that can hardly be heard, so there’s not much I can do by way of adjustment.” In such a case, he talks to the violinist and then tries to repair according to what he has heard. “Therefore, in addition to good fixing skills, a violin repair master also needs to be a good listener and communicator.”

One time, Lu spent a whole week repairing an old fiddle. The night he finished, an elderly foreigner with gray hair came into his dreams and thanked him. Next morning, while looking through some papers, he discovered that his dream visitor was the same man who had constructed the old violin! This experience of spiritual communication, transcending time and space, still inspires him today. This is Lu’s “Musical life with a soul” and day after day, he never gets bored with it. 

Welcome Chinese New Year in Red!

When one thinks of Chinese New Year, it's all about "red!" Chinese New Year couplets pasted by the door are always red, as are the decorations everywhere you see. While the whole Taiwan is infused with fiery red, families busily get together to enjoy traditional delicacies and worship their deities. Wherever you go, you will hear laughter and people greeting each other with a hearty "Gong Xi" (which means "Congratulations!") This is the season when a feeling of warmth is uppermost in Taiwan; and tourists shouldn't miss the temples and other places that are popular and crowded with people. Experience Taiwan in a way that is very different from other times of the year!



Homespun Style Makes Diners Feel at Home The Nostalgia of Wafting Aromas and Savory Flavors

Article | Zhong Wenping

Photos | Yang Zhiren



Situated in an old residence, Jinjiang Tea Room brims with nostalgia.
(Photo: Yang Zhiren)

In Taipei, the earliest settlement for members of the Hakka ethnic community was around today's Nanjichang Apartments (南機場公寓) on Section 2, Zhonghua Road (中華路2段), in the city's south area. Transportation arteries met in this area, thus bringing business opportunities. A scattered Hakka settlement gradually took shape as ever more members moved in, with Nanchang Road (南昌路) emerging as the enclave's heart, and Hakka setting up shops there and in

the adjoining stretch centered on Tongan (同安街) and Jinjiang Streets (晉江街), and Tingzhou Road (汀州路). This explains the choice of location for today's Taipei City Hakka Cultural Park (台北市客家文化主題公園), and why two of the city's most popular Hakka restaurants are also located in this area. Each directly connects with this local historical provenance.

Old Dishes Done in Fresh, Trendy Ways

Jinjiang Tea Room (晉江茶堂) is a restaurant tucked into an old residence inside a narrow, cozy alley. The head chef, Xie Fengming (謝豐明), says that traditional Hakka cuisine can be described in three words: “salty, fragrant, and fatty.” Hakka foods were originally considered mere accompaniment for the few bowls of rice in order to have enough strength to work. Modern folk, however, prefer lighter foods, and therefore some fine-tuning on his traditional recipes were done. His *bantiao* (粄條), a type of flat, thick noodle, is not fried in oil. Instead, a subtler mix of soy sauce, mushroom, and dried shrimp is used, enhancing fragrance while eliminating greasiness. For his “cold spring” oil chicken (冷泉油雞), fresh mountain free-range poultry is first cold-marinated in stock, then removed from the pot to rub with oil and salt for glossy and moist purpose. Eaten with a homemade orange sauce, it is ultra-tender, with a smooth surface texture. Besides these, a variety of new dishes have been added, such as a tomato and fresh fish pot, and a pickled cabbage and sirloin pot. These creations are sure to attract adventurous younger folk. In recent years, water lily, a traditional Hakka vegetable, originally gathered in the wild but now farmed, has become very popular. Quickly fried with ginger slivers, sesame oil, and red chili peppers



Hakka *leicha*, or “pounded tea”
(Jinjiang Tea Room)



Stir-fried *bantiao* (Jinjiang Tea Room)

over a high heat. The result is a mildly spicy dish, highlighted by long jade-green stems that are super spicy. Beyond such staples as dried *bantiao*, one might choose pork lard rice, featuring piping-hot rice topped with soy sauce and pork lard. With its moist, silky texture, each mouthful is laden with a rich, nostalgic old-time flavor.



"Cold spring" oil chicken (Jinjiang Tea Room)

Jinjiang Tea Room

晉江茶堂

📍 No. 1, Jinjiang St.,
Zhongzheng Dist.
(中正區晉江街1號)

☎ (02)8369-1785

🕒 11:00 ~ 14:30
16:30 ~ 21:00



Pork lard rice
(Jinjiang Tea
Room)

Homemade Specialties the Hakka Mom Way

Every mother is her family's kitchen god, magically crafting endless waves of good food for young and old to enjoy. This is especially true of Hakka moms, and you can well imagine how a visit to Gan's Huofang's (甘家伙房) house will regale your five senses with platter upon platter of chicken, pork knuckle, and Hakka stir-fry, each bigger than a washbowl. The owner seeks to recreate the hospitality displayed in her own home when she was young, where guests were plied with culinary wonders and encouraged to eat to their heart's content. Head chef, Gan Ruiqin (甘瑞琴) says that, in the past, the Hakka commonly experienced periods of extreme poverty, and so understand the hardness of food shortage. A wide variety of vegetables were pickled, which extended the storage life of ingredients and limited the amount of waste generated in the making of such items as *fu cai* (福菜) and *meigan cai* (梅干菜), which are two type of pickled mustard greens, and pickled sour bamboo shoots. At Gan's, the pork knuckle are stewed with bamboo shoots, with the result that the meat absorbs the savory flavor and the shoot chunks absorb the oil. This dish, a light medley of sweet and sour, free of any greasiness, is an essential Hakka entree when fêting others.

In early days, three sacrificial items were requisite for Hakka worship ceremonies: a whole chicken, pork, and dried squid. The chicken was immersed in stock and simmered over a low fire, then removed from the wok and rubbed with salt, rice wine, and sesame oil. The recipe hasn't changed much today and no dips are used. This is a renowned Hakka banquet dish. Both the pork and dried squid are cut into smaller





The ample portions and friendly dining atmosphere at Gan's Huofang have turned many first-timers into regulars. (Photo: Yang Zhiren)



Hakka-style stir fry
(Gan's Huofang)



Braised bamboo shoots with pork knuckle
(Gan's Huofang)



Corn chicken (Gan's Huofang)



pieces then stir-fried with green onion. The result is a popular Hakka stir-fry of strong, aromatic flavor, irresistible when combined with rice. The succulent, zesty flavor and rich texture make each bite a gratifying taste treat. 🍴

Gan's Huofang

甘家伙房

📍 No. 2, Sec. 3, Tingzhou Rd., Zhongzheng Dist.
(中正區汀州路3段2號)

☎ (02)2367-8806

🕒 Tues~Sun 09:00 ~ 20:30

Down Home Countryside Flavor with “Shanshui” Nutrition The Natural and the Heroic— From Taiwan’s Indigenous Villages

Article | Zhong Wenping Photos | Yang Zhiren

A world apart from the common “new immigrant” (新移民) food, the cuisine of Taiwan’s indigenous peoples has had a resurgence in its cities lately. Proprietors go out of their way to ship ingredients and additives from their home villages. Savi, owner of Hasila Food indigenous restaurant, says: “Mountain vegetables, mountain boar, wild *magao* (馬告; a spice from the may chang tree)... these are all things that cannot be replaced by lowland ingredients. To present true tribal flavor, no trouble is too great when it comes to ingredient selection.”

Reproducing Tribal Village “Good (Eating) Times”

Located in the grid of small connecting streets between Zhongshan North Road (中山北路) and Linsen North Road (林森北路), an area renowned for good food and drink, and for the lively noisiness of izakaya, Hasila Food began 8 years ago. Opening the menu there, one is immediately seduced by the natural bounty offered up by Taiwan’s fecund forests and streams. It’s like being part of a “mountain natural-food show.” Betel nut flowers are first blanched and then chilled to make a simple salad topped with a white cream sauce. The cream compliments the crispiness and sweetness of the flower to create a dish



The interior at Hasila Food indigenous restaurant is simple, clean, and comfy; native singers often perform weekend evenings.
(Photo: Yang Zhiren)

that is truly pastoral in taste and texture – pleasant in appearance and taste. The mixed wild boar skin, served cold with just a soupçon of homemade sauce and garlic, is thicker and chewier than that served at most *heibai qie* (黑白切; assorted-cut foods) eateries. Of limited availability but extremely popular in tribal villages is



Betel nut flower salad (Hasila Food)



Cold mixed wild boar skin (Hasila Food)



Tribal peppery-spicy chicken (Hasila Food)

the grilled tilapia. This fish, abundant in our mountain streams, is wonderfully succulent and fresh, free of any “fishy” scent or taste. The recipe calls for the abdomen to be cleaned and then stuffed with cloves of garlic and fresh basil, before being salted and grilled.

Other strongly recommended offerings include the peppery-spicy chicken, the grilled sweetfish, and iron-plate wild boar. Each serving is generous and filling, and if you have a hankering for a lively and cheerful atmosphere, come on a weekend or holiday, when indigenous singers and groups provide background music for your dining pleasure. Sit back, listen and enjoy the close-to-nature flavors while you sip your favorite beverage. You might find

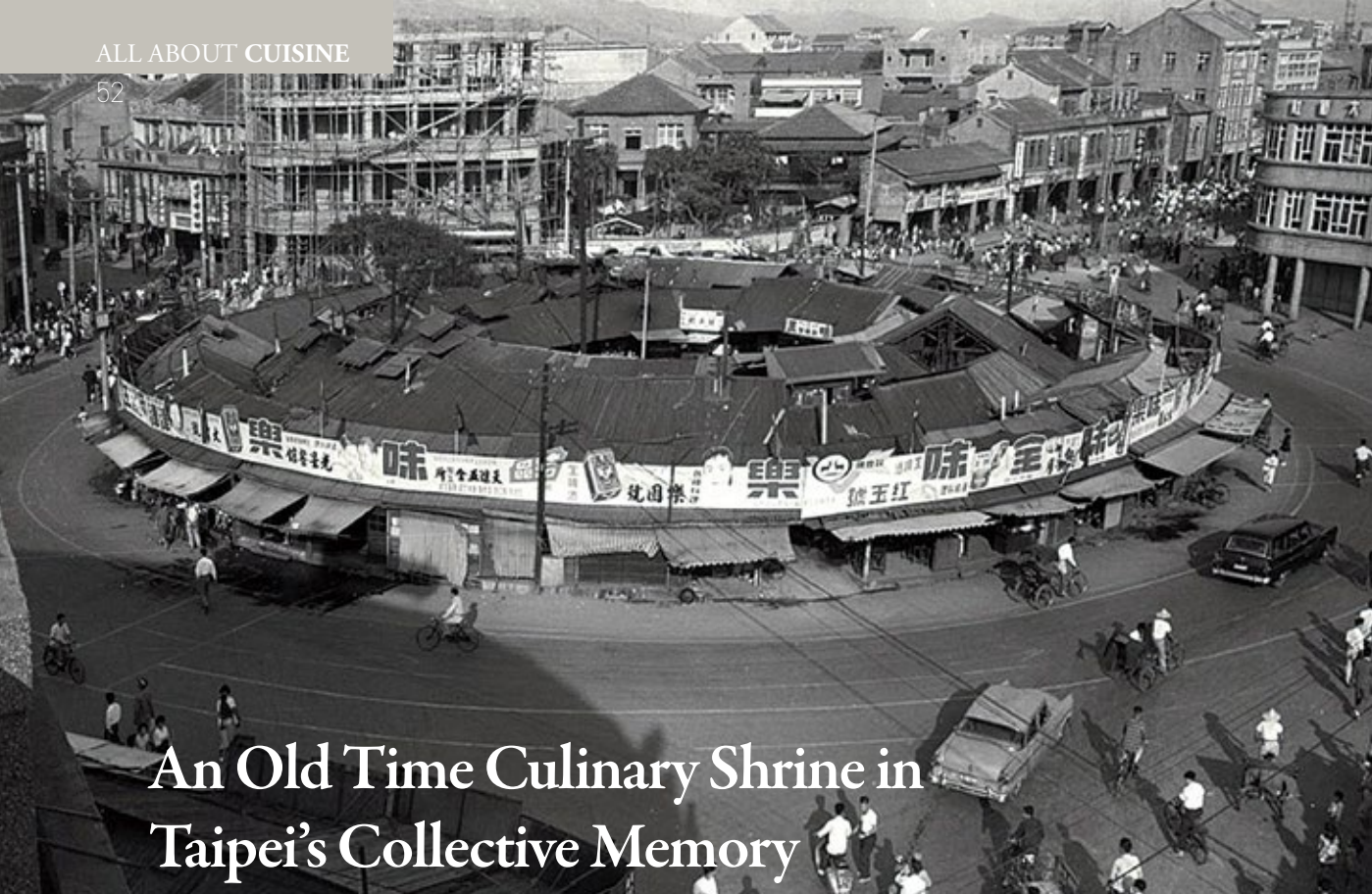
yourself moving in rhythm to the blissful sounds accompanying your meal! There is a type of heroic pride that’s intrinsic to local indigenous cuisine. Indulge yourself in a unique evening that’s guaranteed to put you in a thoroughly carefree mood—not a bad idea, is it? 📍

Hasila Food 哈喜拉

📍 No. 19, Ln. 77, Sec. 2, Zhongshan N. Rd., Zhongshan Dist. (中山區中山北路 2 段 77 巷 19 號)

☎ (02)2563-4992

🕒 17:00~02:00



An Old Time Culinary Shrine in Taipei's Collective Memory

Jiancheng Circle – Landmark of Taiwan's Snack Food Culture

Scenes around the Circle
in 1964
(Photo: Jason Cheung)

Article | Ye Sinuo

Photos | Jason Cheung, Taipei City Archives Collection, Parks and Street Lights Office, Public Works Department, Taipei City Government, Huang Jianbin

When people think of Taipei, snack foods and delicacies - Jiancheng Circle (建成圓環) immediately comes to their mind. To an earlier generation, it is the manifestation of a shared memory, where people from all classes came together looking for good things to eat. In the past, after rambling the night market around Chongqing North Road, and if you had a little extra time and money you might enjoy a movie at the Da Zhonghua Theater (大中華戲院) nearby. Even Terry Gou (郭台銘), Foxconn chairman, and Chu Ke-liang (豬哥亮), Taiwan's King of Camp entertainer, would often come here - Gou

to Tianshui Road (天水路) for beef soup, and Chu for the savory soy-braised pork on rice.

The Japanese era – a Snack-Food Emporium Forms

Jiancheng Circle is situated on the wide traffic circle where Nanjing West Road and Chongqing North Road meet in Datong District (大同區). Its reputation as a place for great snack food was first established during the Japanese era (1895-1945). In the 1900s, the opening of the Taipei to Tamsui (淡水) port town railway line made

Jiancheng Circle very busy. During the day it was a “circle park” where old folk come to play chess, chat, and exercise. When evening comes, it transformed into an emporium filled with countless eateries waiting for a visit.

During the Second World War, the Japanese government restricted nighttime electricity use. Lin Jiayin (林珈吟), a third-generation member of the family that owned Jin Chun Fa Beef Restaurant (金春發牛肉店) on Tianshui Road, recalls elders describing how everyone would sit in the dark by the roadside sipping beef soup during the blackouts.

During the war, as food shortages became serious, the Japanese government ordered food vendors to cease operations. The land at Jiancheng Circle was ploughed, and an air-raid shelter and water reservoir were built. Inspecting the site today,



During the Japanese era, the circle was already filled with vendor stands.
(Photo: Taipei City Archives Collection)

there is no way to see just how extensive the work was, but a look at the now uncovered reservoir is indicative. It measures 11 meters in diameter, and 2.2 meters high. From the scale of the facility, it is easy to imagine how densely the local population was concentrated in the old Jiancheng District (建成區), which the facility was built to protect.

The transformed Jiancheng Circle has become an urban oasis full of history meaning. (Photo: Parks and Street Lights Office, Public Works Department, Taipei City Government)



Heyday Efflorescence!

During Jiancheng Circle's heyday in the 1960s and '70s, it was as lively and boisterous as today's East District (東區). "Just like an open-air department store, snack foods, regional specialty goods, clothing, shoes – whatever life's necessities you desired of can be found here!" says Gao Haifeng (高海峰), fourth-generation proprietor of the old shop in Jiancheng Circle, Wan Fu Hao (萬福號). He started by helping with the family *runbing* (潤餅) business as a youngster. (*Runbing* (潤餅) is a type of steamed spring roll). He liked to climb up on the circle's iron railing on evenings to watch cars and buses, packed like sardines, swim past slowly.

Gao recalls the "open-air shops" (露店) – i.e., the street vendors along Chongqing North Road (重慶北路). Starting at the intersection of Chongqing North Road and Guisui Street (歸綏街), they ran all the way to the rear of Taipei Railway Station. Each night filled with a hubbub of voices, as though the city never slept. "During that time, there was a big line of cars parked outside

the *jiujia* (酒家; a winehouse/restaurant) every day. Business was very good." Lin Jiayin remembers how the *jiujia* were lined up like scales on a fish along Tianshui Road, and she still vividly recalls "*jiujia* ladies" (酒家小姐), dressed in *chi-pao*, as they served beef soup alfresco. Chemical-supply shops on Tianshui Road and bottle/container wholesalers on Taiyuan Road (太原路) nowadays are surviving vestiges of the Jiancheng Circle area, representing the streetscapes of its boom times.

Nostalgia for Old-Time Cheer and Great Flavors

During its heyday, there were over a hundred vendors in Jiancheng Circle, each barking out the superior taste their special methods and secret recipes produced. "Over one hundred stands squeezed into that small a space could only happen due to good relations and neighborliness," says Shen Binghong (沈炳宏), the third-generation owner of Long Huang Hao (龍凰號) restaurant. He further explains that the circle's business operators had great solidarity during that time. While customers savored Long Huang Hao's soy-braised pork on rice, he would help them order from the other stalls,

Today Jiancheng Circle is a public recreational space. (Photo: Huang Jianbin)



and also handle the payments. Empty plates would be counted, and accounts settled accordingly with neighboring eateries after closing time.

In the 1970s Chongqing North Road was widened, with many vendor stands demolished in the process. The traffic circle was then just a solitary lamp post standing alone at the commercial district's heart. Later, repeated fires brought on calls for the circle's reconstruction, but the result was insignificant. Now, the circle has been restored to its original appearance. It is now home to a green park with its air-defense water reservoir appearing again, restoring its heyday memories.

Though time goes by, what is unchanged is the unifying spirit between shops. The old traffic circle post office has been moved to its present spot on Chongqing North Road just a few steps away. Over time, many famous shops, faithful to tradition, have made the same decision independently to gather along the same road. These include Long Huang Hao, San Yuan Hao (三元號), Long Yuan Hao (龍緣號), and Wan Fu Hao (萬福號).

Traditional Circle Snack Food Culture

Just a few steps further on is Ningxia Road (寧夏路), in former times part of the Jiancheng Circle commercial district. It is now home to the culinary emporium-Ningxia Night Market (寧夏夜市). About 60% of vendors are run by second- and third-generation family members. "The Circle is a symbol of snack food culture; we hold a common belief that its sustainable development must be supported." These are the words of Li Qirong (李啟榮), the head chef at "Li Chang Bo Stinky Tofu" (里長伯臭豆腐), who grew up on Ningxia Road.



The pride and attention that vendors brought to the circle's fragrant foods continue despite a change in location. (Photo: Huang Jianbin)

Over the past 10 years, Ningxia Night Market has worked with the government to coordinate sewage removal and to install wash basins and faucets. It is also a pioneer in implementing a cashless payment system, and vendors have cooperated to offer the Ningxia Millennium Feast (寧夏千歲宴). This feast has revived the mutual support network and traditions of competitive unity practiced by vendors in the old days. It allows visitors to enjoy a full table of the night market's best snacking selections at the same time.

"Whatever happens with Jiancheng Circle, I'll always say I come from the circle because it is my root," says Shen Binghong. Jiancheng Circle, always streaming with people in days past, today serves as a park, is a garden where local fine-food culture is nurtured. The original "circle spirit" continues to bloom, as strongly as ever. 🍵

The Amazing Colors, Aromas, and Tastes of Local Snack Foods

Yansan Night Market's Inimitable Charms

Article | Jiao Tong

Photos | Yang Zhiren



Fried egg pancakes at Jinjin Soy Milk

It may be small in scale, but Yansan Night Market (延三夜市) is a night market I very much appreciate. It brings sparkle and shine to Dalongdong (大龍峒), and a uniquely distinguishing dash of charm. Also found along Section 3 of Yanping North Road (延平北路 3 段) are many morning market breakfast spots such as “Jinjin Soy Milk” (津津豆漿), where fried egg pancakes are sold, and the breakfast stall in front of No. 25-3.

Best Food Treats in the Yansan Night Market Area

I recommend taking an “extended” night market approach, connecting the revived Jiancheng Circle night market (建成圓環夜市), Yansan Night Market, Dalong Street Night Market (大龍街夜市), and area delicacies. The Yansan market is bursting with

delicious flavor choices, unfortunately impossible to fully explore with just one visit. I am enamored with “Ye Family Five Spices Chicken Rolls” (葉家五香雞捲), “Master A-Bao’s Eel Noodles” (阿寶師鱈魚麵), “A-Cong’s Daqiaotou *Zongzi*” (阿礮大橋頭肉粽), “Taipei Bridge Head Soy-Braised Pork Rice” (台北橋頭魯肉飯), “Xiang Ji Pure Sugar Mochi” (祥記純糖麻糬), “A-Chun’s Congee Shop” (阿春粥店), “Shantou Shacha Beef” (汕頭沙茶牛肉), “Old Cheng’s Noodle Shop” (老程麵店), “Stir-Fried Squid Soup” (生炒魷魚羹), “Chiayi Shredded Chicken On Rice” (嘉義雄雞肉飯), Sun Way Tofu Pudding (杉味豆花), “Shi Family *Tangyuan*” (施家湯圓; *tangyuan* are a type of rice-flour dumpling), “Daqiaotou *Runbing*” (大橋頭潤餅; *runbing* are steamed spring rolls) – and especially with “Hsinchu Swordfish Rice Noodles” (新竹旗魚米粉).

Most sellers of rice-noodle soup in Taiwan’s north use thick rice noodles in rice-noodle soup stock made with pork meat and innards. At “Hsinchu Swordfish Rice Noodles” (新竹旗魚米粉) on Section 3, Yanping North Road, and “Yongle Swordfish Rice Noodles” (永樂旗魚米粉) in front of Yongle Fabric Market (永樂布市), instead use soup made with seafood and Hsinchu-style thin rice noodles. There seems to be no special reason for this beyond individual custom. In south Taiwan almost all stock for rice-noodle soup is made with seafood, and there is a clear preference for

thin rice noodles. In the north most sellers of rice-noodle soup also sell *heibai qie* (黑白切), meaning “assorted-cut foods” (already cooked and served fast), and use pork meat, innards, and soup bones to make their soup stock. “Dadaocheng Rice Noodle Soup” (大稻埕米粉湯) is a prime example.

Hsinchu Swordfish Rice Noodles is even better than its delicious competitor vendor located before Yongle Fabric Market. The swordfish,




Hsinchu Swordfish
Rice Noodles

soup, and rice noodles are all comparatively more delicate and refined, enhancing and lightening the taste, in contrast to the heavier, stronger color and flavor of more commonly



Sun Way Tofu Pudding

seen. A single fishball is also placed in a customer's soup. The swordfish and fishball teamed in my bowl gives me a distinct feeling of pleasure. Fried treats are also quite compelling – I'm especially fond of the fried tofu, fried oysters, red yeast meat, and chicken rolls. Dalong Street Night Market's Kuo Meals (郭記大塊肉羹), where the specialty is thick pork-meat soup, has a special place in my heart. 

This article is from the Chinese-language book *Savoring the Tastes of Old Taipei* (味道臺北舊城區), published by the Department of Information and Tourism, Taipei City Government. Based on over 10 years of in-depth culinary research, writer Jiao Tong (焦桐) spent almost half a year walking the Bangka (艋舺), Dadaocheng (大稻埕), and Dalongtong areas, trying the food and drink at countless shops, finally deciding on the best 167 for presentation, taking armchair travelers on an exploration of Taipei's old-time flavors.

Savoring the Tastes of Old Taipei

written by Jiao Tong / NT\$250 / Chinese version is available at major bookstores around Taiwan



Hsinchu Swordfish Rice Noodles 新竹旗魚米粉

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A Female Muslim Artist

Manli Chao's Outlook on the Artistic Life

Manli Chao uses squares and circles to express recurrence in the cycle of life.
(Photos: Huang Jianbin)

Article | Gao Suiping

Photos | Huang Jianbin

Up close, the color and variety is riveting. From a distance, the appearance is one of endless rings. The artwork of U.S.-based Manli Chao (張曼麗) – of squares and circles extending into infinity – employs a sophisticated technique and a unique sense of aesthetics to express how all living things in the universe have their own independent space. With the flow of time and evolution has come an awareness of the recurrent nature of the cycle of life, and a harmonious, inclusive worldview on what it means. “From the natural order of the universe comes order in life” (取法天地，乃成規矩) – Manli Chao’s brush reflects the unity of man and nature, following the Eastern Daoist philosophy of nature.

Eastern Philosophy meets Western Technique – Works both Tranquil and Elegant

Chao has loved painting since childhood, but she never received any formal art education in Taiwan.

It was only after moving to New York at age 27 that she entered a fine-arts program, enrolling at Queens College. While drinking in the “eye to hand” aesthetic taught by her professors, she allowed her subconscious free reign and dedicated herself to improving her technique, with her own unique style gradually emerging.

Having grown up in a military dependents’ village in Taiwan, then having lived on both coasts of the United States for 30 years, Chao has an intimate lifelong experience with the cultural spheres of different ethnic groups. This has cultivated an open and inclusive worldview in her thinking. After marriage, she converted to her husband’s faith, Islam, and, in accordance with the doctrine of aniconism, images of Allah, Muhammad, and other sentient beings are proscribed. This was not contrary to the philosophical boundaries Chao herself had long adhered to, and, moreover, she found that the




Chao's abstract painting style is deeply influenced by both Eastern philosophy and Western technique.
(Photos: Huang Jianbin)

religious interpretations espoused in the Koran made a deep impact on her creative principles. Combining the tenets of Eastern religious philosophy with the techniques of the West, she produces works of abstract creative style that are both tranquil and elegant.

Taipei's Eclectic Harmony—Brimming with Creative Nutrients

When she returned to her Taiwan home in 2011, Chao decided on Taipei as her creative base. She believes that Taipei's modern and stylish Xinyi Planning District (信義計畫區), and the cultural heritage of the old city in Dadaocheng (大稻埕) and other west-side areas, make a powerful demonstration of the harmony and synergy of modern and traditional in this city's landscape. The multicolored neon signage embellishes local urban aesthetics, and the cafes resident in every nook and cranny provide free-time oases where denizens can sneak away for a respite from the hectic pace of the metropolis. Each element in the grand city mosaic is worthy of her patient savoring, and provides Chao with an endless wellspring of creative nutrients.

In 2016 the government launched the New Southbound Policy. Chao says that for Taipei, an internationally renowned capital, each and every move affects the international image of Taiwan, and she recommends that future plans be formulated with Islamic art exhibitions as a possibility. Muslim artists from across the globe could be brought together for cooperation and cross-pollination. Such artistic and cultural exchanges would address the misunderstandings and stereotypes that of accompany race and religion, and highlight Taiwan's respect and tolerance for different ethnic groups, while promoting the New Southbound Policy and its goals. 

Taipei in the Paintings

Special Exhibition of a Young Man from Dadaocheng, Kuo Hsueh Hu

Article | Department of Information and Tourism, Taipei City Government

Photos | Liu Jiawen, Luo Ruoli

Walking into Taipei City Hall's west entrance, you'll see an almost 5-meter-tall painting right in front of you. This is *Festival on South Street* (南街殷賑), a classic work of artist, Kuo Hsueh Hu (郭雪湖), part of an on-going show called *Special Exhibition of a Young Man from Dadaocheng, Kuo Hsueh Hu* (畫中台北一大稻埕少年郭雪湖特展). The exhibit displays reproductions of Kuo's paintings, as well as related historical photos, and the painting tools he employed. The interactive multimedia will allow people to enter the glorious world of Dadaocheng in Kuo's paintings.



People can explore West Gate in the Old Days in motion via interactive multimedia.
(Photos:Luo Ruoli)



A display of Kuo's old gouache painting tools.
(Photo: Liu Jiawen)



Click on the screen of this interactive multimedia device and you'll discover secrets hidden in *Festival on South Street*.
(Photo: Liu Jiawen)

Transcend Time and Space to See the Good Old Days

Born in Dadaocheng, Kuo contributed enormously to the development of fine arts and talents in Taiwan. The theme of this exhibition is "Kuo at an early age." Among the artifacts, the most eye-catching piece is the exquisite and colorful gouache painting: *Festival on South Street*. This painting describes the joyful and crowded scene in front of Xia Hai City God Temple (霞海城隍廟) during Ghost Festival (中元節). The painting's signboards, buildings, characters and merchandise charmingly reflect prosperous scenes of life in Dadaocheng.

This exhibition has also invited literature and history scholars, Chen Roujin (陳柔縉)

and Juang Youngming (莊永明) to explain the imagery in *Festival on South Street*. For example, in the painting, one sees a store with "Club" written on it, and two crossed cues as well; this was actually a typical upscale entertainment venue back then: a Billiard Hall. The "Keep Left" sign reminds us that traffic used to proceed on the left in old Taipei. The movie playing at Yongle Theater (永樂座): *Burning of the Red Lotus Temple* (火燒紅蓮寺) was a box office hit at that time. The papaya candy, bananas and pineapples in the painting represent the image Japanese held of Taiwan as a tropical country. Some old stores in the painting are actually still doing business today. If you want to know what other secrets are hidden in the painting, just click on the multimedia touch screen at the exhibition; out will pop corresponding descriptions of what you are looking at.

Next, another Kuo painting: *West Gate in the Old Days* (昔日西門情景) appears in motion! Just wave your hands and you'll be part of a market scene where vendors are carrying loads on shoulder poles across the pushcart tracks, or energetically doing business with customers by the rails. There are 15 reproductions in the exhibit, including *Scenery near Yuan-Shan* (圓山附近), which won the Special Selection Prize at the Second Taiwan Art Exhibition, and *After a Rain* (新霽), which shows a typical Zhi Shan Yan (芝山巖) scene.

If you want an introduction to the Taipei in Kuo's paintings, please come visit the Discovery Center of Taipei (台北探索館)! 📍



Taipei in the Paintings: Special Exhibition of a Young Man from Dadaocheng, Kuo Hsueh Hu

📍 From now until Feb. 28, 2018 (Wed.) 09:00~17:00 (Closed on Mondays and holidays)

🕒 Special Exhibitions Hall, Discovery Center of Taipei (1st and 2nd floors, No. 1, City Hall Rd., Xinyi Dist.)

☎ 1999 # 8630

No photography, food, pets, long stick umbrellas or dangerous items are allowed in the exhibition.

Taipei City's Department of Information and Tourism recommends purchasing three souvenirs featuring designs from Kuo's paintings. These are the Festival on South Street backpack (\$630), a set of five file folders (\$199), and the 2018 desk calendar (\$250). If you like any of these, don't miss the chance to take them home!

📍 The Sales Center of City Hall's Publications and Souvenirs (left side of Ren'ai Road entrance, Taipei City Hall.)

🕒 Mon. to Fri.: 09:00~17:00
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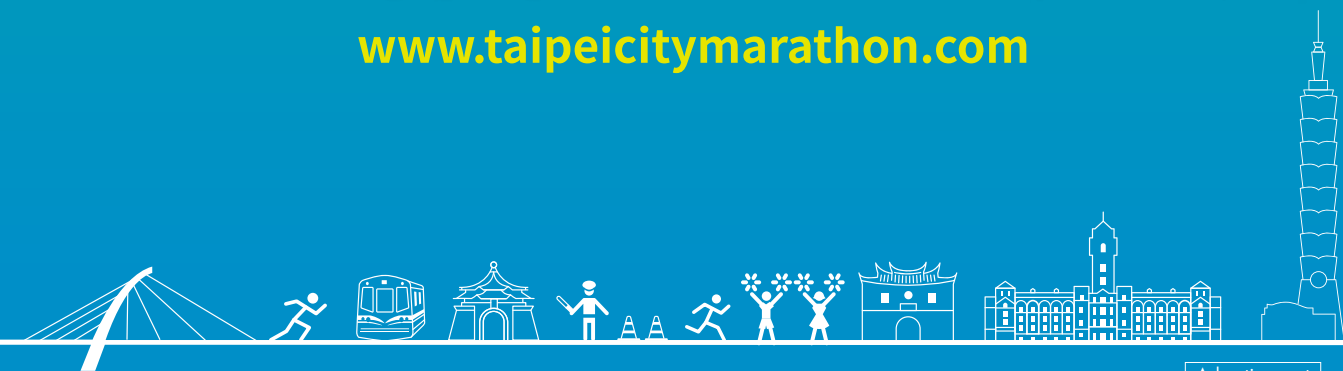
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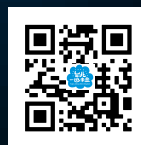
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