

AUTUMN 2022

A Place to Chase Your Dreams

COVER STORY

Stepping on the Stage of Dreams:
Three Artists Share Their Taipei Dreams with the World

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TAI PEI 台北

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EDITOR'S
INTRODUCTION

BIG CITY DREAMS



Autumn is harvest season in Taiwan, and in Taipei, it's the time when workers from many different fields capitalize on all the hard work they've put in through the summer months, utilizing the city's many resources and opportunities to reap an unforgettable third quarter.

It is in this spirit that we bring you the stories of many in the Taiwan capital who have been able to carry their dreams from vision to reality.

Fall has creativity-infused happenings scattered all across the event calendar. It's no wonder that Taipei has served as inspiration to everyone from dancers to fashion designers and musicians. In our cover story, *TAIPEI* invites three artists to share how they made their big city dreams come true.

As the weather cools, there is no better time to enjoy some outdoor activities. A few of our feathered friends stop by, making Taipei a haven for birds and birdwatchers alike. Kids can enjoy one of the city's many inclusive playgrounds. And for those who prefer to get away from it all, how about a hike to the secluded waterfall wonderlands of Yangmingshan?

As for other equally stimulating pastimes, the Taipei comics scene is thriving, and *TAIPEI* has invited the noted up-and-coming author of *Pataauw* to share his vision of a Taipei daydream. As night falls, get to know the culture of *Ba Jia Jiang*, the guardians of the god, and the mysterious mainstays of the vibrant Qingshan King Festival.

Attitudes are changing in Taipei as well, and companies such as Yo Wash are leading the charge. Find out how this progressive business is helping the unhoused of Taipei, and challenging stereotypes towards those who have fallen on hard times.

Fall is full of local flavors, too, and whether it's fermented kombucha filled with local ingredients, or freshly-baked bread, *TAIPEI* has the food scene covered.

Finally, many Taipei pet parents dream of leading a carefree life with their fur babies, yet the road to harmony is often littered with potholes. Fortunately for us, an animal behavior expert extraordinaire is here, helping man and beast alike to live their best lives.

All this and more, as *TAIPEI* tumbles into fall.

▲ COVID-19 ALERT

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



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

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We hope you enjoy reading this issue of TAIPEI. If you have any suggestions, please do not hesitate to email or fax us.



Photo/Hsieh Chieh-Hua

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Stepping on the Stage of Dreams: Three Artists Share Their Taipei Dreams with the World

Author Elisa Cohen and Jamie R. Wood

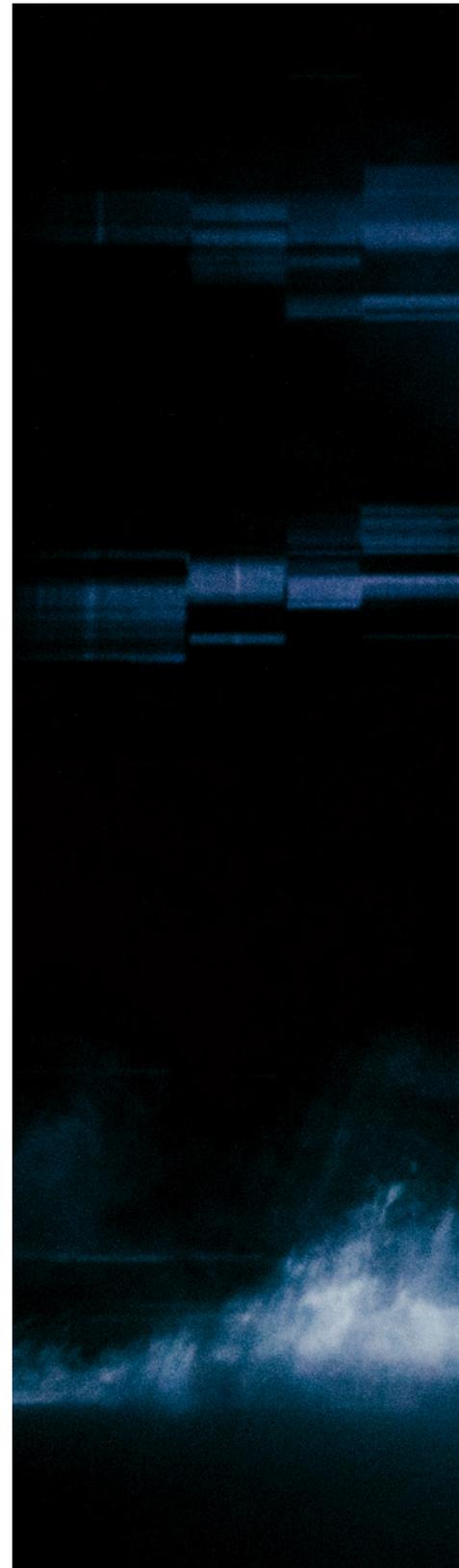
Photographer Ultra Combos, Ro-hsuan Chen, Shi-bang Wang, Dinghan Zheng, Xinyi Yu, Samil Kuo

What are the essentials to make one's dream come true? A determined mind? A burning desire? Strong convictions? All of the above, actually, but how about a little help from the environment? A place that provides opportunities and resources for those who are ready to shine.

Since 1875, the year of the official establishment of Taipei City, this has been a place for people to pursue their dreams. Ancient immigrants built their homes and businesses here, bringing prosperity to Taipei that has persisted to the present day. The small but mighty city now is the home of over two million residents, including people of many different nationalities, ethnicities, sexual orientations and professions. While these people live their dreams, the city's unlimited access to world-class companies across every industry and unparalleled resources for the arts community offer countless opportunities that one won't find anywhere else.

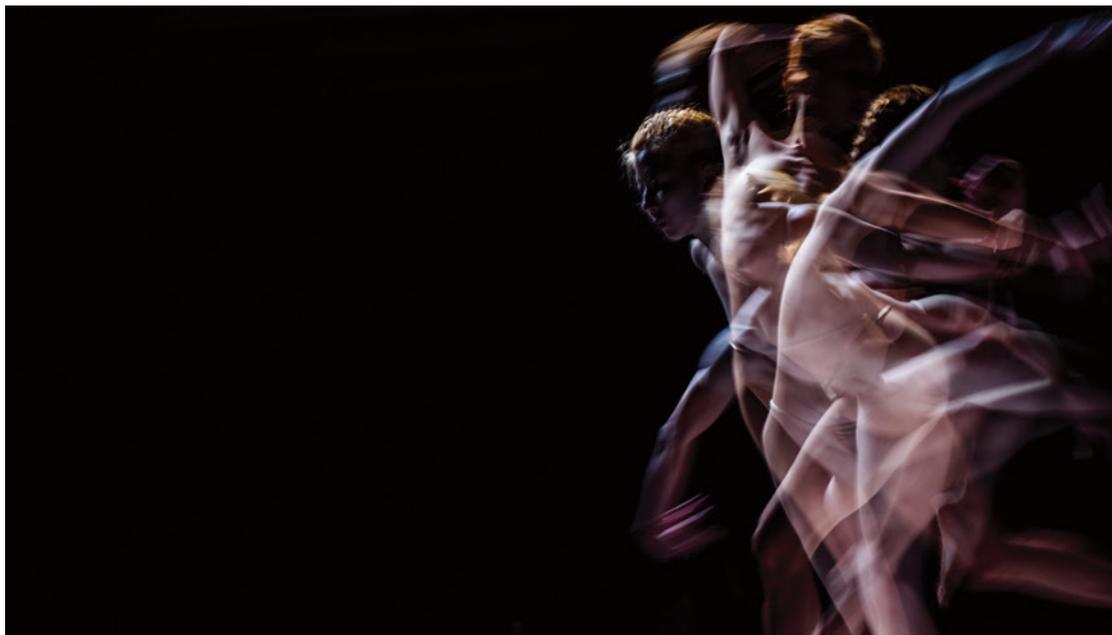
As the season shifts to artful autumn, a season when Taipei holds all kinds of artistic events, we have invited three groups of stars who are rising from their own artistic fields to share their stories of making their dreams come true in Taipei. From dancing, to fashion design to music, join us on this journey as we witness the moment when wish becomes reality.

01. Taipei continues to provide countless opportunities and resources for people in different fields so that they can pursue their dreams and shine. (Photo/Ultra Combos)



01





02



Spinning into the Spotlight

Dancer and choreographer Hsieh Chieh-Hua 謝杰樺

Artists often find inspiration in their surroundings. With rich cultures and natural resources, Taipei nurtures its local artists from their early struggles to the heights of success. Hsieh Chieh-Hua, a dancer and choreographer who established the Anarchy Dance Theatre (安娜琪舞蹈劇場) dance troupe, started off basing his choreography on his life experience in Taipei. He shares with us the different facets he has observed in the city and how he has laid a foundation to keep moving towards his next goal.

“There are all sorts of events and talents in Taipei. Everyone is exploring different possibilities and opportunities for innovation. Such an environment is close to creators’ mindsets, allowing us to take the path we imagine,” says Hsieh.

Different from other forms of art, dance performances are dynamic, and the artists usually express their thoughts on issues through relatively abstract things, like ideas or feelings. Therefore, they would need an open-minded audience that embraces diversity. “Taipei is a place where people are responsive and receptive

to novel things. So, it’s easier for us to find people to communicate with. To choreographers, Taipei is a friendly city,” Hsieh explains.

Taipei’s natural environment is also indispensable for artists. “A fascinating thing about Taipei is the accessible natural environment nearby,” Hsieh points out. He usually spends his time around Beitou (北投), traveling to downtown Taipei for meetings. On his way back home across Shilin District’s Zhoumei Bridge (洲美橋) in the late afternoon, he might see the green landscape of Yangmingshan (陽明山, Mt. Yangming), leaving a strong impression on him about what nature brings to his mind.

The fast-paced metropolitan areas bring creators endless inspiration, whereas the quiet suburbs present mountain landscapes that are perfect for eliciting self-exploration and self-reflection, allowing creators to think through whether their work speaks for their artistic ideas and thinking. “These two aspects of Taipei are the reasons why I feel comfortable living here,” notes Hsieh.

In addition, the Art Reuse of Vacant Spaces project launched by the Department of Cultural Affairs of the Taipei City Government (台北市文化局) helps many artists, including Hsieh, to establish their base in Taipei without having to pay heavy rents. Hsieh's Anarchy Dance Theatre sits at the New Beitou Art Space 71 (新北投七一園區), a former school campus that now has been transformed into rehearsal rooms and administrative offices. "Taipei gave me a base to live out my dream. Me and my team can focus on our work and don't need to worry about administrative work," shares Hsieh.

With a background in architecture and dance, Hsieh was invited to many art and cultural events as a performer or director, including directing the opening ceremony of the Taipei 2017 Universiade. Furthermore, Nuit Blanche Taipei (台北白晝之夜), one of the biggest art events in autumn, is also an important milestone and a challenge for Hsieh.

"In contrast to everyday theaters, Nuit Blanche is held in an open space, bringing many different challenges to artists." As this overnight event always aims to encourage the public to step into artistic fields that sometimes seem unattainable, Hsieh coordinated

a joint performance in 2019 for Nuit Blanche Taipei and Taipei Fashion Week (台北時裝週) that combines the elements of cultural relics housed in the National Palace Museum (國立故宮博物院) that people adore, in the hope that common scenes in their daily lives could somehow resonate the audiences. "It offers an opportunity for us to perform in front of those who aren't familiar with theater arts and will give us some different feedback. These are all interesting and fruitful experiences," Hsieh recalls.

While Hsieh manifests his experiences in different fields through performances by combining choreography, ideas of space, and technological elements to knock people's socks off, he encourages other artists to slow down, observe, and feel the beat of Taipei, an ever-changing city, as well as finding a suitable place as a starting point in this place where new and old, as well as nature and humanity combine to live out their dreams through their creations.

02. Hsieh creates many of his modern dance shows with inspirations from daily life, while using unique body language to express strong emotions. (Photo/Ro-hsuan Chen)

03-04. Hsieh is also known for directing and coordinating big shows such as Nuit Blanche Taipei and the opening ceremony of the Taipei 2017 Universiade. (Photo/Shi-bang Wang)



03

04





Sketching Aspirations on the Runway

Fashion Designer Xinyi Yu 余信誼

Fashion is a reflection of modern society, and Taipei is a city where you can find all kinds of styles and attitudes. Xinyi Yu, one of the designers selected for the New Breed Show (新生代品牌秀) of Taipei Fashion Week this year, shares with us how she was inspired by Taipei's architecture and created a unique series.

"My works are generally related to social issues. I hope to spark conversations with others by sharing what I've observed," Yu shares. She values the preservation of Taiwan's varied cultures, and feels distressed as she sometimes finds old houses in Taiwan being renovated without respect for the past. She thus tries to help more people understand the distinct beauty of old houses in Taiwan through clothing design.

"There are many eclectic buildings built in Taipei between 1895 and the 1920s, such as the Presidential Office Building (總統府), National Taiwan Museum (國立台灣博物館), and National Taiwan University Hospital (國立台灣大學醫學院附設醫院). These are all my sources of inspiration," says Yu.

The eclectic buildings draw upon multiple styles from different eras that are all equally fascinating to Yu. She transfers these styles into her designs, capturing the varied elements of these old houses, such as red bricks and animal figures, turning them into the colors, patterns, and decorations. "I like looking at old houses on Taipei's streets and observing how the interaction between these historical buildings and modern society develops vitality," she tells us.

05





06



07

05. Fresh out of school, young and talented designer Yu has won many competitions, including a Taiwan Fashion Design Award. (Photo/Dinghan Zheng)

06-07. Inspired by the eclectic buildings in Taipei, Yu brought architectural elements such as the color of red bricks and the patterns of window grilles onto the runway of Taipei Fashion Week. (Photo/Xinyi Yu)

Taipei also provides many resources for clothing production. “The materials I choose are all from Taiwan. I usually select fabrics at the Yongle Market (永樂市場) near the famous Dihua Street (迪化街) in Datong District and ask manufacturers to make or find particular fabrics,” Yu explains as she shows her works. The patterns on the fabrics of the dress are her own design, along with the exquisite pleats, which are all made possible thanks to the support of professional workers at clothing factories.

Yu’s graduation show, however, was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As she wouldn’t let her works over the years go unseen, she decided to participate in various competitions. In 2020, she was shortlisted for the Taiwan Fashion Design Award (時裝設計新人獎), leading her to be selected as one of the designers for the New Breed Show of the 2022 Taipei Fashion Week. “Being selected for the New Breed Show is a great affirmation to me. I felt more confident in taking the path of clothing design,” Yu recalls.

Taipei Fashion Week, the dream runway for many young talents in the fashion industry, is a twice-a-year event that brings together creativities and prospects of the fashion capital.

“Preparing for Taipei Fashion Week is really pushing the envelope!” Yu tells us. In only two months, she had to design 16 pieces of clothing by picking the right combination from among thousands of fabrics, materials, and colors, while making them acceptable to the mass market, which was completely different from the student shows she had participated in. However, it also broadened her horizon and laid a foundation for her future. “Some stylists came to borrow clothes the day after the show, and I started to receive some invitations for cooperation. I was even invited to overseas fashion weeks,” says Yu. These outcomes and feedback sent her a message that she had made it, and encouraged her to move further.

“Taipei is a city where creators have a chance to shine!” Yu says, adding that she considers Taipei a place full of vitality, with a variety of events and ideas coming up non-stop. With venues such as the Songshan Cultural and Creative Park (松山文創園區), Huashan 1914 Creative Park (華山 1914 文化創意產業園區), and POPOP Taipei (瓶蓋工廠台北製造所), creators also have spaces to exhibit their works and bring artworks into people’s lives.



08

08-09. As professional musicians, Geddes (left) and Lin (right) dream of creating a professional-level big band in Taipei.

10. With different ages, races and genders, the members of TPO bring diverse points of view to their music, which makes the band stand out in Taipei's jazz scene.



09



Swinging with Determination and Dedication

Taipei Professional Orchestra Big Band 踢霹歐樂團

The birth of the Taipei Professional Orchestra (TPO) Big Band was a beautiful accident. In 2020, when most people in the world were panicking due to the pandemic, it was conversely the right time for Jim Geddes and Derrick Lin (林克安) to form a band.

“For me, I’ve always wanted to form a big band in Taipei, because it is just a part of who I am,” says Geddes, the multi woodwind musician, band leader and the founder of TPO. Since many professional musicians based in Taipei had to drop out of their tours and shows disappeared in 2020, it couldn’t have been better timing for him to recruit talents to pursue the dream that has always been in the back of his mind.

Originally from the US, Geddes was among things a Broadway tour music contractor and a freelance musician who toured around the world. On the other hand, Lin is an active bassist in the local music industry.

The duo had known each other in Taipei for many years, yet were finally brought together thanks to their shared love of jazz.

Taipei's vibrant music scene immediately provided plenty of opportunities for the band to practice and experiment with new music. SMEXY, a live music restaurant on Minsheng East Road (民生東路) in Songshan District, is where TPO first started to swing away. “My first goal was to get the band to play the real, authentic swing, and then I wanted to create new music with the help of other members,” says Geddes.

As many venues in Taipei like SMEXY support the new blood, the band was able to create freely and grow quickly. “Music restaurants like this is exactly where the big bands in the 1940s and 1950s played. This is one of the ways how the music became popular.”

Lin, who now also plays the role of band manager, couldn't be more excited to share their most recent project. "Taipei Jazz Festival (台北爵士音樂節), for example, was a great platform that gave us a chance to experiment with our music, and the result was phenomenal," he says. As TPO made their name quickly in the last year, the Taipei Jazz Festival, the biggest jazz festival in Taipei, invited them on stage for the grand finale in 2021. "We got to feature Sauljaljui (戴曉君), an amazing indigenous rock star in Taiwan. Together, we've created new, fun and innovative music that made the audience go crazy," Lin recalls.

The show, now available for viewing on YouTube, indeed reflected the spirit of jazz fusion while expressing certain aspects of Taiwanese music. While TPO swings through the song, rock elements such as distortion pedals and indigenous instruments such as nose flutes are blended in, creating a harmony that mingles east with west. "Big band is like a container to me, and music is what you put in. If you put in interesting music, it comes out interesting," Lin summarizes.

For any young talents in Taipei who dream about going on the same big stage, Geddes and Lin both encourage them to be brave. "I've seen too many students being too shy to reach out to professional musicians," says Geddes. This is also why TPO is always happy to provide opportunities for young players to participate and

"hang out" at their open rehearsals. "The tradition in the US is that you have older guys in the band with all the experience, but you always have innovated younger players, too," explains Geddes. "It is for the old ones to pass on the tradition. But at the same time, young guys also keep inspiring and pushing the old guys with new ideas, too."

Lin also adds that new players can take advantage of the resources that Taipei has provided. "In Taiwan, Taipei is definitely the place to find the most jam sessions. That is how we train, practice and grow at the beginning." Many jazz players, including Geddes and Lin, started their music journey in Taipei by joining the jam sessions at Sappho Live Jazz now in the Zhongshan District. Rhythm Alley and Blue Note Taipei in Daan District, as well as Café Rossiya in Zhongshan District, are also where many players perform before and even after gaining fame.

The journey of TPO won't stop as the pandemic comes to an end. For Geddes and Lin, the next step is to dream even bigger. "My future goal for this band is to have a world-class big band in Taipei that every jazz fan who comes to Taiwan will be like 'TPO's show? That is going to be a great show and I must go!'" Geddes shares.

As a city full of possibilities, Taipei is ready for its future stars to shine. ◆

10



Taipei Birdwatching 101: A Dreamland for Birds and Birdwatchers

Author AYCC

Photographer Cheng-cai Chiu, Yengping

Outdoorsy people typically like to partake of activities such as hiking, biking, swimming and surfing. In Taipei, there is one more choice they can add to that list — birdwatching.

“Birdwatching is the most rewarding outdoor activity one can enjoy in both the city and the wild,” says Cheng-cai Chiu (邱盛材), a life-long bird photographer based in Taipei. “You can do it in the mountains, in the parks, or even from the window in your house!”

According to Chiu, Taipei’s superb ecosystem and perfect landscape creates natural habitats for birds, and the weather in autumn could not be more suitable for birding. Starting from September, winter migrants set off on their journey south to find suitable foraging habitats due to seasonal changes. With Taiwan being a

mid-trip supply station (or destination, for some birds), all kinds of birds stop by or nest at habitable places such as Guandu (關渡) or Yangmingshan, making Taipei a dreamland for birdwatchers.

As time rolls into migration season, we put together a birding guide with the help of Chiu for you to start your own birdwatching journey. “Expect the unexpected, accept the unacceptable,” Chiu also points out, highlighting the mindset any good birdwatcher should have.

As the weather and birds are both unpredictable, it is not 100% guaranteed that you will see what you want to see. On the other hand, there’s always the chance of spotting a rare find. “At the end of the day, it will always be a relaxing day in the wild,” Chiu says.

01





02



Before You Go: Dos and Don'ts of Birdwatching in Taipei

First things first. Prepare what you need for birding by using the checklist below.

- A comfortable hat to block the sun**
- Thin long-sleeved shirts and pants to avoid scratches in the brush and mosquito bites**
- A pair of light sneakers for outdoor walking/hiking**
- A multi-pocket vest/jacket (optional)**
- A pair of binoculars**
- Personal supplies/necessities such as water, food, medicine, notebooks, etc.**
- Mosquito repellent**
- A camera for capturing your spots (optional)**

Most importantly, always follow the principle of “Leave No Trace (無痕山林)” — take nothing but photos, leave nothing but footprints. Chiu also suggests wearing shirts with earth-tone colors to blend in with the environment and lower the possibility of startling the birds. When birding with friends, lower your voice and slow your movements to avoid disturbing any woodland creatures. If you're mentally and physically prepared, let the journey begin!

01. Birds like the Black-crowned Night Heron are commonly seen near a pond, where they can not only nest but also feast on fish. (Photo/Yengping)

02. Many birdwatchers gather in Daan Park, hoping to spot a rare find and capture photos of our feathered friends. (Photo/Yengping)

The Autumn Birdwatching List

Migratory birds are always the highlight of birdwatching in autumn. Chiu also graciously provides us with some suggestions on the endemic species in Taiwan that should also be added to the rare bird list of any true bird lover.

CHIU'S TOP WINTER MIGRANT SELECTS



Black-faced Spoonbill

黑面琵鷺

Being nearly extinct in the wild, the Black-faced Spoonbill is considered an icon when it comes to birdwatching in Taiwan. As the name suggests, they are covered with bare and black spots from their foreheads to their long, spoon-shaped beaks. Like any waterbird, they enjoy habitats such as wetlands or fish ponds, which makes Guandu Nature Park (關渡自然公園) a great spot for them to take a rest in Taipei.



Chinese Sparrowhawk

赤腹鷹

As winter migrants, Chinese Sparrowhawks' migration route ranges from Korea, to Taiwan and on to the Philippines. In Taiwan, these gray-back hawks with sharp, yellow or brownish-red eyes love to stop by Taipei's Beitou and Yangmingshan areas for a day or less, then move on to Kenting (墾丁) in southern Taiwan. September and October are the best time to see them heading south.



Greater White-fronted Goose

白額雁

Originating from the grasslands in northern Siberia, Greater White-fronted Geese are rare but precious guests in Taipei in autumn. The most important features of the birds are their pink beaks and white foreheads between their mouth and eyes. Taipei Geese Protected Area (台北市野雁保護區) in Wanhua (萬華) is the most recent place where they were spotted in the city in 2021.





Brown Shrike

紅尾伯勞

Small but fierce, Brown Shrikes are known for their speedy hunting skills, targeting small creatures like mice and insects. The black feathers around their eyes stand out from their brown and red plumage, making them look like the masked Daredevil. Brown Shrikes like to perch on the treetops, which makes them an easy spot if you're in riverside parks in autumn in Taipei.



Oriental Dollarbird

佛法僧

Even with a name in Mandarin that means "Buddha, dharma and sangha," Oriental Dollarbirds actually have no place in Buddhist scriptures. The name comes from their distinguishing tweedle that seems to say "but, po, so," which sounds like a recitation of the Triratna. These beauties have gradient bodies that transit from black to blue to emerald. They prefer open wooded areas such as the mountains in Beitou to build their nests in.



ENDEMIC SPECIES



Ring-necked Pheasant

環頸雉

Male Ring-necked Pheasants are characterized by a circle of white feathers on their necks that looks like a collar and the red skin on their face. Living on the plains, they are also known as the "pearl of the grasslands." Try your luck in Guandu Nature Park if you want to see a Ring-necked Pheasant in Taipei.





Mikado Pheasant

帝雉

A symbolic animal of Taiwan, the Mikado Pheasant (about 75-90cm in length) is the largest endemic bird species in the country. Males have a body of dark purple-blue plumage with horizontal white bands on their long tails. They prefer high-altitude habitats such as Daxueshan (大雪山) in central Taiwan and Alishan (阿里山) in the south, while Yangmingshan might be your best shot in Taipei. If not, check your New Taiwan thousand-dollar-bill, and you will find a couple!



Swinhoe's Pheasant

藍腹鷓

Similar to the Mikado Pheasant, Swinhoe's Pheasant (about 60-80cm in length) is also a big, blue bird. However, their white crest, red wattles and red legs distinguish them from Mikado Pheasants. In recent years, Swinhoe's Pheasants have been spotted in suburban forests such as Xiangshan (象山) and mountains in Nangang (南港) thanks to successful ecological restoration projects.



Where to Enjoy Birdwatching in Taipei



Guandu Nature Park

關渡自然公園

Sitting at the junction of the Tamsui (淡水河) and Keelung Rivers (基隆河), Guandu Nature Park is one of the largest habitats for migrating birds in Taipei. With abundant grasslands and wetlands, over 300 species of birds have been recorded in the park, including Black-faced Spoonbills, Crested Serpent Eagles (大冠鷲), and more. The park also provides regular birdwatching tours on weekends. In addition, Taipei International Birdwatching Fair (台北國際賞鳥博覽會) takes place here every year. In 2022, it will be held from November 5th to November 6th, including a series of activities such as a creative market and a birding workshop.



► Guandu Nature Park Website

03. The birdwatching platform in Guandu Nature Park provides a grand view for bird lovers to spot some rare treasures. (Photo/Yengping)

Huajiang Wild Duck Nature Park 華江雁鴨自然公園

With 28 hectares of space, Huajiang Wild Duck Nature Park is where the Dahan River (大漢溪) meets the Xindian River (新店溪), creating a muddy wetland landscape with abundant food sources that is perfect for waterbirds. Commonly spotted here are Eurasian Teals (小水鴨), Mallards (綠頭鴨), Great Egrets (大白鷺), Spot-billed Ducks (花嘴鴨) and Gray Herons (蒼鷺).

Taipei Botanical Garden 台北植物園

Taipei Botanical Garden is home to many resident birds, such as Black-crowned Night Herons (夜鷺), Malayan Night Herons (黑冠麻鷺), and Light-vented Bulbuls (白頭翁). As there's a lotus pond on the premises, waterbirds like Little Egrets (小白鷺) and Common Moorhens (紅冠水雞) are often found in the garden as well.

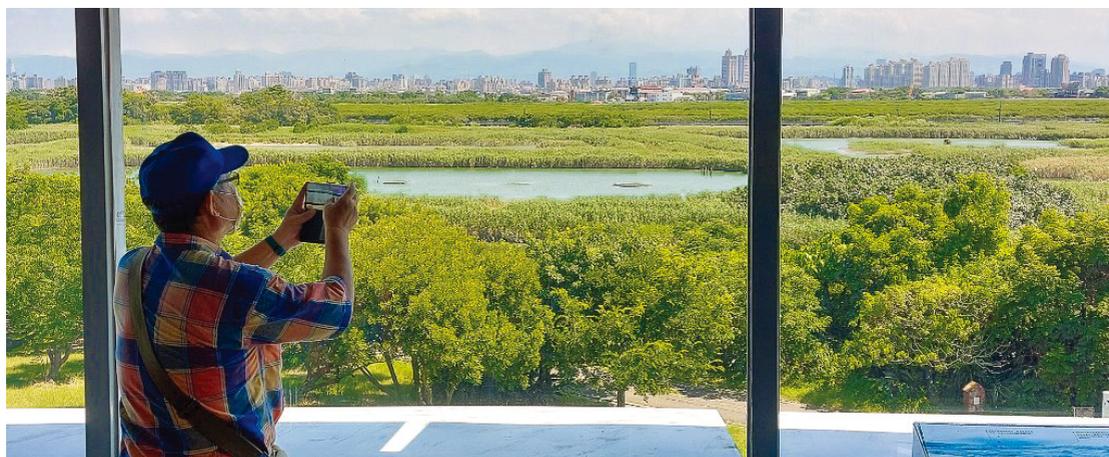
Daan Park 大安森林公園

Daan Park, known as the “lungs of Taipei,” is the most accessible birdwatching spot in the city. Most afternoons, you can see tons of birdwatchers decked out in their camouflage shirts, quietly waiting for the Taiwan Barbets (五色鳥) on the trees to tweet their midday song. On the other side of the park, bold Crested Mynas (八哥) and Pigeons are twittering away, enjoying the day as people nearby enjoy their picnic.

Yangmingshan 陽明山

Yangmingshan National Park (陽明山國家公園) is not only a perfect place for birdwatching, but a top attraction in Taipei in its own right. If this is your first visit, narrow down your areas of exploration to Datunshan (大屯山, Mt. Datun) and Miantianshan (面天山, Mt. Miantian), as the vegetation combines broadleaf forests, miscanthus and bamboo, making it a very biodiverse region. While Chinese Bamboo Partridges (竹雞) and Chinese White-eye (綠繡眼) are regular residents in the national park, you may also find Taiwan Blue Magpies (台灣藍鵲) or Collared Scops Owls (領角鴞) if you're lucky! 

03



Adventures in Taipei's Best Inclusive Children Playgrounds

Author Catherine Shih

Photographer April Chen, Department of Information and Tourism, Taipei City Government

A cool, crisp autumn day is the perfect time for children to run, play, and jump around outdoors. There are many inclusive playgrounds in and around Taipei City for parents to take their children to, satisfying their needs through open, interactive, and diverse facilities. We explore three inclusive playgrounds located in different areas of Taipei that cater to the dreams of these young wonderland adventurers.

01





02

Wenshan Forest Park

文山森林公園

Just 10 minutes away on foot from MRT Wanlong Station (捷運萬隆站) lies Wenshan Forest Park, a city oasis that just had its grand opening in April, 2022. Apart from the well-known Daan Park, this is also one of Taipei's many planned forest parks that offer children a safe haven to run amok amidst the chaos of the city.

Sitting on an 11-hectare-wide piece of land, Wenshan Forest Park is sectioned off into five different themed areas. The rope webs and grass skiing area of the playground are spread out on the hill, adding more excitement to play time. Not surprisingly, the biggest attraction for children is the 50-meter-long slide made with granite, featuring an S-shaped curve. To access the slide, children must climb up the steep steps on the side or traverse an artificial rock-climbing course alongside the slide first. By giving children a place to play securely and freely, it's no wonder parents flock to this forest park in droves.

For adults, the park offers many trails that were built based on the shape of the land itself, allowing them to stroll along the park or exercise with ease. For the flatter sections, gravel was laid down to create an easy walkway or footpath, while the steeper terrain saw planks and boardwalks installed for some sharper

drop-off sections. A series of hilly trails and a 1.5-kilometer skywalk connect two preexisting parks: Wenshan Jingmei Sports Park (文山景美運動公園) and Fuxing Park (福興公園), providing a grand view of the residential area in Wenshan District from the three-story high viewing platform.

01. Inclusive playgrounds in Taipei provide kids with fun and interactive spaces in which they can play together freely. (Photo/ Department of Information and Tourism, Taipei City Government)

02. The 50-meter-long slide in Wenshan Forest Park offers children all sorts of excitement.

03. While walking on the three-story-high skywalk, visitors can enjoy the beautiful view and fresh air.

WENSHAN FOREST PARK

ADD 17, Ln. 95, Fuxing Rd., Wenshan Dist.

03





04

Jiancheng Park

建成公園

Within a five-minute walk from MRT Zhongshan Station (捷運中山站), Jiancheng Park is another famous park in Taipei that has won the hearts of countless children. Located adjacent to Chifeng Street (赤峰街), otherwise known as “Blacksmith Street,” the park reflects the background of the industry in the neighborhood. The designer who created this park drew inspiration from the height of the blacksmith era, as shown by the placement of gears and tools on the lawn and an awning frame exhibiting an image entitled “Chifeng Blacksmith Shop.”

Perhaps one of the park’s most famous features is its tower slide — composed of two higher enclosed slides that look like a chimney above. Echoing the park’s theme throughout are images of blacksmith tools that sit atop the slide, which really show off its local charm and characteristics. A short, open slide is set up next to the tower. With its roller design on the surface, those with disabilities can also enjoy sliding from the top.

Other unique aspects of this park are the turntable and seesaw, which allow children to enjoy the feeling of both wind and speed, while also testing their balance and coordination. As is the case with any inclusive playground, they are both designed for two or more kids to share.

Not far from these facilities are the music chimes, which help develop children’s sensory experiences such as listening and tapping. As if all of that wasn’t enough, three kinds of swings are set up to fulfill different needs: a general swing, parent-child training swing, and bird’s nest swing. The bird’s nest swing allows people with disabilities to experience the feeling of zero gravity. With all of these facilities and more, it’s definitely worth checking out!

04. The facilities and landscape designs of Jiancheng Park incorporate features of nearby Blacksmith Street, such as screwdrivers and more.

05. The diverse swingsets in Jiancheng Park are suitable for children of all ages.

JIANCHENG PARK

ADD 35, Sec. 2, Chengde Rd., Datong Dist.

05



Tianmu Dreamland

天母夢想樂園

Located inside Tianmu Sports Area (天母運動公園) is Tianmu Dreamland, an interesting park which opened in 2020 and incorporates all the exciting features of a baseball stadium and sports park in one place. With four exciting, adventurous, and safe recreational facilities, namely the baseball-themed area, inclusive sandpit area, landscape slide, and zipline area, it is no wonder adults enjoy bringing their children here to explore.

The highlight of the baseball-themed area is the climber and slide, which stands over nine meters tall. Its body is supported by four baseball bats, four climbing frames composed of spheres and snake cage tunnels, and two rotating water tube slides. There are no stairs in the entire facility, so children have to climb up using their hands and feet. However, there is a small climbing net under the slide, where young children can experience the fun of climbing even if they can't enjoy the bigger facilities. Part of the ground is covered with green artificial turf and others with sawdust, making the ground soft and safe for children to step on.

The sandpit is equally fun for children young and old to enjoy. It is quite large in size, and there is even a tap that allows them to play with wet sand. Around the sandpit are some raised hills on soft mats for children to run around on and enjoy the rush of gravity. Next to the sandpit is the landscape slide area, which is designed with no stairs but a gentle, wide ramp so that kids with disabilities can also easily roll on with their wheelchairs to have fun on the slide.

Lastly, the slope of the zipline here is designed so that elementary school students can go up and down and pull back to the starting point by themselves. All of these facilities and more make for an exciting yet challenging experience for children. 

06. Tianmu Dreamland incorporates a baseball theme into a variety of facilities while keeping them fun and safe for kids.

TIANMU DREAMLAND

ADD 77, Sec. 2, Zhongcheng Rd., Shilin Dist.



Waterfall Wonderland: Finding the Falls of Yangmingshan

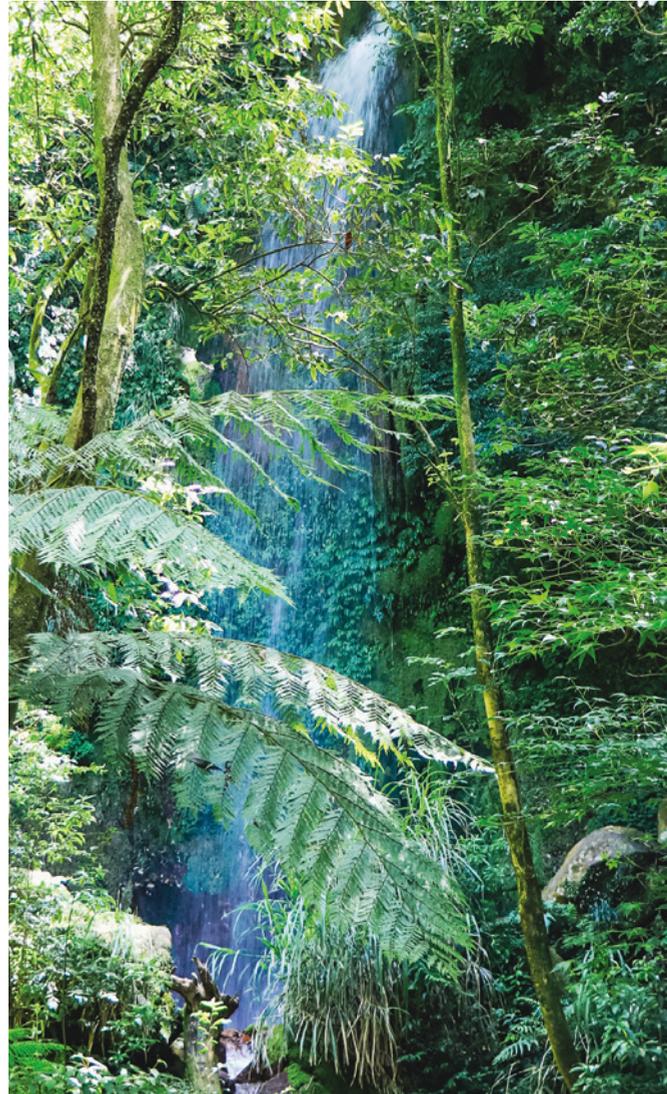
Author Nathan Ray
Photographer Taiwan Scene

Centuries ago, when the Portuguese explorers first sailed by, they were not wrong when they dubbed Taiwan “Ilha Formosa,” meaning The Beautiful Island. A true emerald isle, Taiwan’s natural beauty has long been highly reputed, and throughout history legions have been struck by its magnificence. Even in modern times, much of this natural beauty is preserved, and the enduring spirit of Formosa remains.

Copious rainfall coupled with the vertiginous topography manifest innumerable waterfalls all across the island of Taiwan. Taipei, the nation’s capital, sits within a basin and is almost completely encircled by steep, lush mountains. The city skyline is a contrast of towering, futuristic skyscrapers and the looming, ancient hills. Within the Taipei City limits, there are countless gorgeous waterfall vistas waiting to be discovered. So, we’ve compiled a brief list of short waterfall hikes that are perfect for a wonderful half-day excursion.

For this trip, we will venture up the mighty Yangmingshan, in search of a pocket of waterfall trails that are all within reach of one another. Yangmingshan is the grand behemoth that stands watch over Taipei, whose Qixing Peak (七星山主峰) pierces the sky at 1,120 meters above sea level. The sprawling Yangmingshan National Park is a highly diverse landscape famed for its multitude of hiking trails, dazzling floral festivals and pungent volcanic activity.

By far the most accessible way to explore the mountain is by car, but there are also many convenient bus services from Taipei. For example, MRT Jiantan Station (捷運劍潭站) on the Red Line (Tamshui-Xinyi Line, 淡水信義線) in Shilin District has bus services to the main bus depot on Yangmingshan, and from there you can access many of the trails or transfer to smaller bus services that connect to all the popular destinations.



01

01-02. Hidden in the woods, Juansi Waterfall looks just like a thread of silk streaming from the sky, oxidizing the rocks below and turning them red.

 Please check weather and water conditions and exercise caution if entering any body of water.



02



Juansi Waterfall

絹絲瀑布

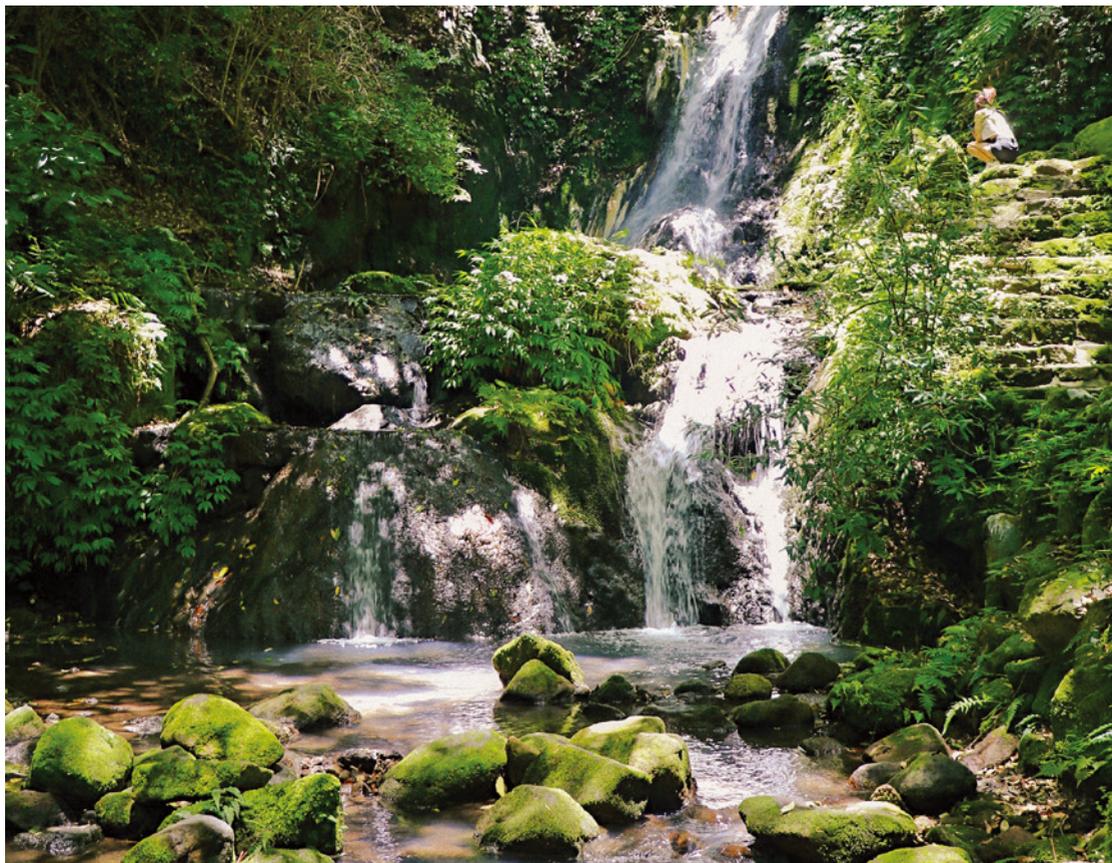
First on our list is Juansi Waterfall, a whimsical little waterfall and a hike with history. The trailhead is located on the side of Lane 101 of Jingshan Road (菁山路101巷) and is close to a small bus stop reachable by taking Bus S15 from MRT Jiantan Station to Juansi Waterfall stop. Bear in mind that parking is limited on the narrow street should you choose to drive.

This particular trail connects to the Pingding Ancient Canal Hiking Trail (坪頂古圳步道), which features a series of irrigation channels built to supply water to the local residences and farmland, with some dating as far back as the Qing Dynasty (清朝, 1636 A.D. – 1912 A.D.). The waterway beside Juansi Waterfall Trail (絹絲瀑布步道) is called the Shanzhuhu Irrigation Channel (山豬湖水圳), and it was built during the period of Japanese occupation between 1895 and 1945 for the cultivation of high-yield crops such as rice to improve the economy and lives of local residents. The channels themselves are literally right beside the path, so be mindful of your step as there are no guard rails for the most part. The bubbling of the clear water streaming by blended with the calls of the forest creatures creates a pleasant ambience.

The stroll is a cool and well-shaded jaunt through the jungle canopy with resplendent views down to the valley below. The path snakes its way around the mountainside until it arrives at the waterfall about one kilometer from the trailhead. The fall is formed across a fault. With the water source coming from Lengshuikeng (冷水坑) located in higher terrain, the water flow also causes oxidation on the rocks, which colors the stream reddish brown.

The name Juansi means “silk” in Chinese, owing to the wispy white appearance of the cascade which is best viewed from the bridge at the foot of the fall. Just on the other side is a rest area, and if you walk for another 50 minutes, the path continues further up to the Qingtiangang Grassland (擎天崗草原), known for its roaming water buffalo, and down towards the path are Dingshan (頂山, Mt. Ding) and the other historic canals of Pingding.

To check out the other two waterfalls on our list, it would be best to double back to the beginning of the trail.



03

03. The trail beside Xiaoyintan Waterfall allows hikers to get close to this refreshing wonderland.



Xiaoyintan Waterfall

小隱潭瀑布

Our second destination, Xiaoyintan Waterfall, feels like it could have sprung straight from a fairytale. The name literally means “little secret pond,” which is a perfectly descriptive name because it could very easily be missed while driving by, as the falls are tucked away inside a narrow gorge shielded by tall trees.

The best way to reach the little secret is to first head past it to Yangming Park (陽明公園), which is a destination famous for cherry blossoms in spring and maple leaves in autumn, and can be reached by taking Bus S9 from MRT Beitou Station (捷運北投站) or Bus S8 from MRT Shipai Station (捷運石牌站). From there, Xiaoyintan is a short five-minute walk south, back down the hill.

Xiaoyintan is a rest stop carved by Mother Nature, a tranquil little pocket of beauty. The waterfall spills down from on high, collecting into a few crisp waterholes that you can dip your feet into, but beware of slippery rocks. The milky water is caused by the sulfur in the river that can be traced up to the hot spring area in Yangmingshan, yet the water temperature is surprisingly cool and refreshing. There are many stepping stones giving passage across the streams and similar stone tables about the various levels. The entire area is well protected from the burning sun, so it's the perfect place for picnic lunch, especially on a lazy autumn afternoon.



Datun Waterfall

大屯瀑布

To reach the final destination on our list, return to Yangming Park and walk 15 minutes north past the cherry blossom trees and the Yangmingshan Flower Clock (陽明山花鐘). From there, the entrance to the Datun Waterfall Trail (大屯瀑布步道) is a couple minutes up the road. This stretch of trail is well paved with some beautiful lookouts over Taipei City. Just ahead, the road bends around the mountainside to meet the falls.

Datun Waterfall is the largest of the three falls on our list. The three-story high fall sits at the foot of the great Datun Saddle (大屯山鞍部), whose three peaks offer some of the best hikes in all of Taipei.

Following the main trail in, you will arrive directly at the higher end of the falls which run under a bridge before dropping down to a larger rest area below. The relentless torrent of water has cleaved the stone in several pieces, and there are massive boulders strewn about the pools. It is a reminder of the raw power of nature.

A short walk back down the nearby steps, and you can find some seating beside a small shrine embedded within the rockface. From here you can cross the stream and loop around to another small bridge or chill out with your feet in the water and watch the schools of fish that call this oasis home. 



04

04. Datun Waterfall is shaded by trees that block the sun, which makes it a good spot for resting during a hike on Yangmingshan.



Winter migrants, resident birds and birds alike enjoy a peaceful morning in Taipei autumn.
@ Daan Park



© Yengping

Exploring a Manga Artist's Daydream

Author Richard Williams

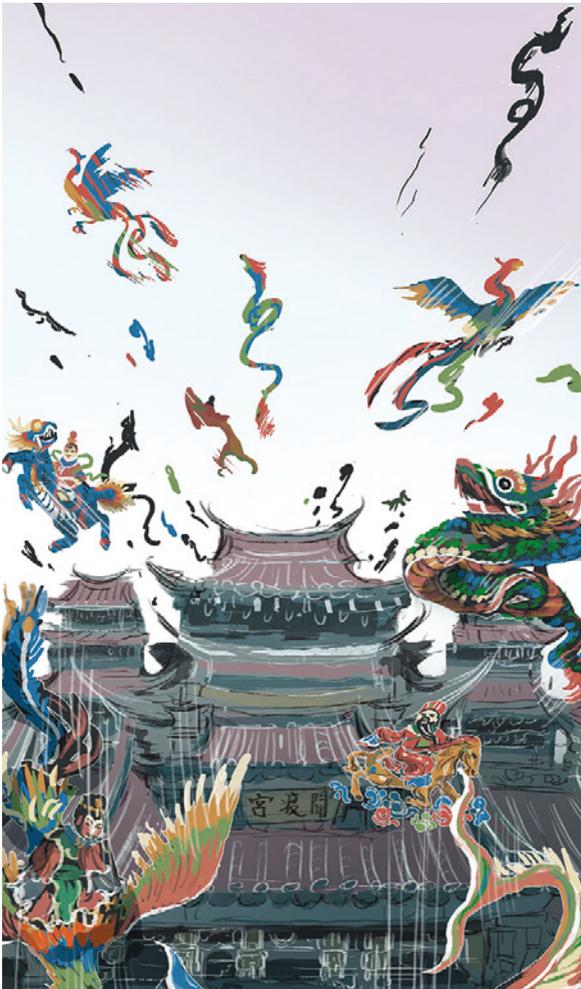
Photographer Samil Kuo, Taiwan Scene, Yenyi Lin

Comics Picture LINE WEBTOON

Taipei's northern suburb of Beitou (北投) has always conjured up a certain type of mysticism. Here, at the bottom of an active volcano range, fumaroles bubble and spurt sulfur smoke into the air. Rivers run hot with geothermal waters, and lakes steam throughout the year. Backed by the verdant peaks of Yangmingshan National Park, the neighborhood is one of the most naturally beautiful spots in the capital.

It is no surprise that Beitou's cultural history is as long and storied as that of the country itself. The Ketagalan indigenous people lived in this luscious valley long before the Chinese, Europeans, and Japanese colonized the island. The original inhabitants of the land called this area *ki-pataw* — meaning witch or shaman. They believed that mystic and magical people lived among the hot springs and sulfurous fumes.

01



02





01-02. Attractions such as Guandu Temple and Beitou Hot Spring Museum have become the colorful backdrop for scenes within the pages of Taipei-inspired comics. (Comics Picture/LINE WEBTOON)

03. Through the creation of comics, Chien hopes to show readers different aspects of Taipei. (Photo/Samil Kuo)

03

Birth of an Artwork

It is here in Beitou — among the intense spirituality, raw natural beauty, and rich cultural history — that comic book artist Jeffrey Chien (簡士韻) grew up. His debut serial online comic series takes its name from the old indigenous name of his neighborhood (though with a slightly different spelling): *Pataauw: The Witches of Beitou*. The series cemented Chien as a leader among the new wave of comic book artists in Taiwan — blending local histories and mythologies with 21st-century Taipei life.

Chien sketches the lives of eight young women. Ordinary, urban ladies on the one hand, but mysterious, mystical, and magical on the other hand. “I integrated contemporary scenes and the daily urban life of Taipei. I’m happier when I’m painting modern life,” explains Chien. “The witches’ characters are magical, fashionable, fiercely personable, and they all have their own interests and personalities.”

Going about their everyday lives — working in shops, as models, in offices — the witches struggle to keep their secret talents out of the public eye. *Pataauw* is a story of coming to terms with a complicated history and identity in the country’s greatest metropolis.

Revealing History

As the name suggests, Chien’s debut work was rooted in the history of his neighborhood. A history that for him was hiding in plain sight. “Actually, finding the information about the past in the neighborhood can be difficult, but I hope to draw readers in so that they can see the history,” says Chien.

The comic book artist first learned about the area’s rich history from his family, and this formed some of the plot lines of his work. From his mother, he found out about the legends of witches in the area. And from his grandmother, he also discovered the White Group — a secret collection of Japanese military advisors to the Chinese Nationalists when they took control of Taiwan.

In these elements of Taiwan’s history, Chien had found the major forces for good and evil that would shape his comic book world. In his stories, the witches battle to save their homeland from real estate development, and the developers are assisted by the historical White Group. “I didn’t know everything yet, but it struck me that this would be suitable for a comic book story,” he says.



04

Drawing Inspiration from History, Culture and Landmarks

As Chien started researching and forming his work, he visited Beitou's landmark historical venues. In 2015, he visited an art exhibition at the Ketagalan Culture Center (凱達格蘭文化館) — a place for indigenous history in Beitou — featuring artist Chiu Ruo-long (邱若龍), who also worked as the consultant on the movie *Warriors of the Rainbow: Seediq Bale*. The most expensive movie made in Taiwan at the time, *Seediq Bale* depicts the deadly battle between indigenous Taiwanese and Japanese colonialists in 1930. At the exhibition, Chien learned more about the local Ketagalan female shamans and how they were depicted by different artists. He also references a number of other indigenous beliefs, traditions, and depictions in his work.

The culture center — which is located just opposite the neighborhood's main tourist hub, Beitou Park (北投公園) — is depicted in Chien's comics. The story centered on Thermal Valley (地熱谷), an area with year-round geothermal activity. Other Beitou landmarks from past to present also crop up in Chien's work, such as ancient indigenous sacrificial relics still found on the neighborhood's nearby Qixingshan (七星山, Mt. Qixing) and Beitou Hot Spring Museum (北投溫泉博物館), which was restored from a Japanese public bathhouse. All of these form the background to the protagonists' quest. But, according to Chien, not all readers knew that the buildings and structures he depicted existed in real life. "The great thing about using Beitou as the background to my work is that fans of the comic book will then come to Beitou themselves to look around," says Chien. "They have the feeling they are walking around an amusement park."

04. Beitou Hot Spring Museum has a history of more than a century, making it one of the most important historical sites and landmarks in Taipei. (Photo/Taiwan Scene)

05-06. The magical witches (right) and an all-male witch-hunting group (left) make the storyline of *Pataauw: The Witches of Beitou* full of contrasts. (Comics Picture/LINE WEBTOON)

05



06



Shaping Characters with Independent Women in the Reality

While Beitou and its many overlapping histories provide a fitting backdrop to Chien's tales, it is the power and vividness of his characters that have grasped and inspired readers. Chien says he was informed by the strong females, classmates, teachers, and contemporaries that have filled his life. Even an experience at Beitou Hot Spring Museum informed some of his depictions.

When Chien visited the collection, he wanted to take photos even though it was forbidden. He found the middle-aged volunteer women (often affectionately called "aunties" in Taiwan) at the museum whispering to one another through lapel mics — much like secret agents. "This image made me realize that I can bring so many small things and interesting people in Taipei, such as those feisty aunties, into the comics," says Chien.

Chien was also inspired by another feisty aunty and a staple Taipei type — his stylish and liberated grandma. "After retirement, she began to live a very fashionable life. She would go out and socialize all day long," says

Chien. For him, it turned the idea of a stolid urban grandma on its head. Women in Taipei, whatever the age, can have a rich personal life, and don't need to feel weighed down by traditional images or expectations.

But the comics also present the stress and strain of modern urban life — the way in which friendships, relationships, and people in general come and go. Living in a part of Beitou and Tianmu (天母) known for their international residents, Chien found many of his classmates would disappear over the summer as transferring schools is always normal for international students. It impacted how he depicts the witches' unity. "In the comics, the witches have known each other for a long time, but their relationship is not close — I think it reflects a lot of people's experiences in Taipei," explains Chien.

07. The features of strong women in Chien's own life have been injected into the witches' personalities, making all roles in his story charismatic and charming. (Comics Picture/LINE WEBTOON)

07





08

A Comic Fan's Exploration of Taipei

Chien is now working on the third series of the *Pataauw* comic books, and walking around the city often helps him relax under high pressure. "Taipei Fine Arts Museum (台北市立美術館) is a sensation for people who enjoy modern exhibitions," he shares. "And if you like historical sites, Dadaocheng (大稻埕) is the place to go." While the former is the hub of contemporary art in Taipei, the latter was a trading port that brought prosperity to Taipei and has become the setting of many comics such as *Spirit in the Sky* (凌空之魂) and *Umwelt* (環世界), created by Daisuke Igarashi (五十嵐大介), whom Chien admires as a comic fan and an artist.

In his drawings and stories, Chien hopes to share the realities of the city's neighborhoods — the intertwined and unraveling histories and personal experiences. Getting out and experiencing those historical landmarks in Taipei is the most simple way to know the city. "It would be a pity if these places were important to our history, but there was only a stone monument left," he says, "I hope to be able to draw how people living in Taipei feel. That's different than a one-day sightseeing trip."

08. With a rich historical and cultural background, Dadaocheng has become one of the top choices as the backdrop onto which many manga artists craft their Taipei stories. (Photo/Yenyi Lin)



01

01. *Ba Jia Jiang* presents the most authentic religious scenes, making it the best way to learn about Taiwanese culture. (Photo/Bangka Qingshan Temple)

The Unique Tradition of the Eight Generals and the Highlights of Taipei Qingshan King Festival

Author Jenna Lynn Cody

Photographer Lujiang Ming, Samil Kuo, Bangka Qingshan Temple

Watching a Taiwanese temple procession is a feast for the senses — the sound of firecrackers, the smell of incense, the sight of the vibrant embroidered banners. One of the most fascinating aspects of these processions are the *Ba Jia Jiang* (八家將, Eight Generals). They walk in specific formations, wearing bright costumes, carrying a variety of implements and performing rituals as the guardians of the god processing behind.

The history and traditions of the Eight Generals are as vivid and intricate as the paint adorning their faces. We sat down with Lujiang Ming (呂江銘), an expert and author of several books on the Eight Generals, to learn more about this distinctive tradition and the big cultural event that is taking place in Taipei in autumn — the Qingshan King Festival (青山王祭).

Q1 — The Eight Generals are often seen in temple festivals in Taiwan. What are their origins?

The Eight Generals originated in Fuzhou (福州), China. The tradition only existed there, at the local Bailong An temple (白龍庵), dedicated to the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings or *Wufudadi* (五福大帝) — the Five Plague Gods, who help banish pestilence. The generals act as guards for *Wufudadi*, and clear the way during processions by capturing evil spirits before the god arrives.

When some Fuzhou residents decided to settle in Taiwan in 1745, they wanted those guards for protection. Therefore, they established a new Bailong An temple in Tainan (台南), southern Taiwan. Though there is still a Bailong An temple in Fuzhou, the tradition of the Eight Generals was lost there, surviving only in Taiwan and growing popular at other temples.

Over the course of time, the culture of Eight Generals has developed into 41 different types across Taiwan, which are named and cataloged by the composition of the troupe. They can all be broadly called *Jia Jiang* (家將, the home generals), but troupes from different regions prefer different names. For example, they are called *Ba Jia Jiang* (the eight “home” generals) in the south, but *Ba Jiang* (八將, the eight generals) in Taipei. There are also *Wu Lang Jiang* (五狼將) in Taichung, meaning the Five Wolf Generals.



02

Q2 — What role does each of the Eight Generals play?

For *Wufudadi*, the formation consists of eight generals in the back, and three non-generals in the front. That’s why we call them the Eight — rather than Eleven — Generals. In addition to the leader, named *Shiyi* (什役) or *Xingjuye* (刑具爺), who carries weapons for the troupe, the other two in front are *Wenchaiye* (文差爺) and *Wuchaiye* (武差爺). *Wenchaiye* carries a board (令牌) and receives orders from the god. He instructs *Wuchaiye*, who will let the generals behind them know what to do. Thus, *Wuchaiye* carries a flag to instruct the troupe.

The four generals at the front capture evil spirits, clearing the road before the god’s arrival. These are Generals Gan (甘), Liu (柳), Hsieh (謝) and Fan (范). Hsieh and Fan are the same as the tall gods *Qiye* (七爺) and *Baye* (八爺), who carry neck or hand locks, or a bamboo staff with a scooped end called a *jiegun* (戒棍).

The four at the back are named after the seasons, and are tasked with interrogating captured spirits. That’s why all the tools they hold are related to interrogation. For example, General Spring (春大神) holds a fiery iron pot. General Summer (夏大神) carries a water bucket to splash the demons if they pass out from interrogation. General Autumn (秋大神) carries a melon-shaped stick, and General Winter (冬大神) carries a snake-shaped metal whip to intimidate and force the demons to tell the truth. Some troupes use a real snake, but this is very rare.

When gods other than *Wufudadi* have guard troupes, they may differ, as each god has their own preferred generals. It’s possible to add more generals for larger troupes, but each general needs a distinctive face paint design.

02. The procession of *Ba Jia Jiang* consists of three officers, eight generals and one god, lining up in the order as shown left.

Q3 — Please explain the processional formation of the Eight Generals, as well as the meanings they represent.

There are many possible formations, but two popular ones are the *Qixing* (七星, Seven Stars) and *Bagua* (八卦, Eight Trigrams). The *Qixing* is named after the Big Dipper, and is believed to bring good luck. It's a crab walk or zigzag with several variations. The *Bagua* (based on Taoist cosmology) has the Eight Generals in dyadic circles. As they move around the positions of the different symbols, they create an eight-sided *Bagua*. The *qi* (氣) from that formation rises to the *Bagua* in the temple's ceiling design, and protects the whole area. The *Bagua* should be moving to work; unlike a ceiling, the Eight Generals are ambulatory, so this is a deeply significant formation. There are 64 total combinations in the movement, each with a different meaning.

Q4 — Tell us about the clothing and makeup of the Eight Generals. Are there any special designs or meanings?

Their dress features papier-mâché headdresses, embroidered clothing and distinctive shoes with bells. The face makeup follows fundamental design rules, but temples can get creative within those boundaries. Many makeup artists are tattoo artists by profession, and the designs ought to be scary, as they are catching evil spirits, so they must be more frightening than the spirits they seek. The idea is to “fight poison with poison.”

Often, the colors of the generals are based on red and green: the red generals carry neck locks and the green ones carry hand locks to detain evil spirits. Blue is one variation on green, and orange a variation on red. In



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the past, only certain colors were common, but now, new designs and colors (such as purple) are becoming popular. If the troupe is participating in a multi-day festival, they should wear the same makeup designs each day so the gods can recognize them.

To give some examples of the meaning of their makeup, General Hsieh was hanged, and thus has a white face. He is associated with a white crane. General Fan drowned, giving him a black face, and is associated with a monkey.

The generals of the four seasons each have a distinct pattern based on items and animals related to *Guanyin* (觀音), a Buddhist deity. Spring is decorated with an upside-down gourd (葫蘆), and Summer has a lotus design. Autumn incorporates a parrot design, with a beak-like feature and often feathers. Winter has a tiger design; sometimes a whole tiger body design is chosen, but sometimes just the face.



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03-05. Each general has his own unique facial features. General Winter (left) is distinguished by a tiger design, General Hsieh (top right) is associated with a crane, while General Spring (bottom right) has an upside-down gourd on his face.

06. Locals gather every year at the Qingshan King Festival, joining the large-scale event that is believed to bless the whole Wanhua area.

Q5 — Are there any etiquette rules or taboos to be aware of when watching the Eight Generals in a temple procession?

There are many rules, in fact. Don't touch or talk to the Eight Generals when they are in the parade, as they are like gods when performing. Don't cut across a troupe of them walking or in formation. If they're creating the *Bagua* formation, this will ruin the *qi* and destroy the *Bagua*. Furthermore, don't talk to them or linger, especially while they are getting ready, and if possible, ask for permission if you want to take a picture when they are taking a rest. Try not to take pictures of them eating or drinking.

Traditionally, menstruating women should not attend temple processions or watch the Eight Generals. However, in modern times it's acceptable to go. Regardless of gender, it's strongly recommended not to come if something unfortunate has happened in your family, such as a death, as you'd be bringing that bad luck with you.



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Q6 — The Taipei Qingshan King Festival is known for having such generals. Can you share some highlights of this?

The Qingshan King Festival is for Lord Qingshan's (青山王) birthday, which is October 23rd on the lunar calendar. Lord Qingshan has his own guards in the festival, and they are typically called the "Ba Jiang" or "the Eight Generals," not "Ba Jia Jiang" or "the Eight Home Generals." His generals have the hand lock and neck lock, and the others are named after the weapons they carry. The person at the front is usually a child; audiences find it cute to do this. He's thought to be a type of bird and carries a gourd, and his job is to light the way for the troupe.

In Wanhua (萬華), where the Bangka Qingshan Temple (艋舺青山宮) is located, the troupe emphasizes the red and green face paint. There are usually four of each kind, carrying different weapons, for a total of eight. The Qingshan King Festival is the only event you can see them each year, making it a unique experience.



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07. The generals at the Qingshan King Festival are led by a child who carries a gourd to light up the road for the procession.

08. Generals Hsieh and Fan can both be seen in the procession of the Qingshan King Festival. (Photo/Samil Kuo)

09. Bangka Qingshan Temple has a history over 150 years, and plays the role of religious center for local residents. (Photo/Samil Kuo)

Q7 — The night patrol at the Qingshan King Festival is a highlight of the event. What makes it so special?

Lord Qingshan acts as a City God for Wanhua/Bangka, because the settlers who moved to Wanhua after a local skirmish in 1853 took the City God to what is now Taipei Xia-Hai City God Temple (台北霞海城隍廟) in Dadaocheng (大稻埕). Thus, Wanhua needed a god to perform that role.

As Lord Qingshan manages the affairs of both our world and the underworld, he was asked by locals. If a god manages both worlds — corresponding to *yin* (陰) and *yang* (陽) or light and dark — his troupe will also come out at night, guarding the neighborhood. Thus, we have the night patrol ceremony at the Qingshan King Festival. It's also considered more interesting, mystic and fun at night.

Lord Qingshan troupe's "jurisdiction" ranges from Changsha Street (長沙街), to Huanhe South Road (環河南路), to Ximending — basically the whole Wanhua area. Firecrackers are lit along the parade, lighting up the night. Participants shout and make all kinds of noises along the way, trying to scare away the bad spirits. It's truly an immersive event that allows you to enjoy an authentic Taiwan experience.

Q8 — Are there any suggestions for foreigners who want to participate in the Qingshan King Festival?

Taipei is an open city, so there's no need to buy a ticket. Anyone can come. Just be sure to follow the etiquette rules, such as not cutting across the troupe, and don't get in their way when they're performing. Notice that all the festivals follow the lunar calendar. The Qingshan King Festival is so popular because it's one of the larger cultural events in Taipei. The actual festival takes place on the three preceding days, from October 20th to the 22nd on the lunar calendar, with the largest festival on the third day. On the Western calendar, that will be November 13th to 15th this year, starting in the afternoon and going into the night. 📌



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09



Breaking the Stereotypes of the Unhoused: Yo Wash Creates a New Look for Taipei

Author Fuafu

Photographer Samil Kuo, Dinghan Zheng, Yo Wash

"If our standard of judgment is to determine a person's character by hard work, diligence, effort and seriousness in life, then it is impossible for us not to see how they deserve respect."

— abstract from Lin Li-Ching's novel *Workers* (做工的人)

On an ordinary Saturday morning, the famous street art installation known as "Rainbow Six (6號彩虹)" outside Exit 6 of the MRT Ximen Station (捷運西門站) was transformed with a brand-new look. The work was done by local unhoused people hired and trained by Yo Wash (友洗社創) to clean up the city and the community, simultaneously removing the stigma surrounding unhoused people, and regaining their self-confidence and dignity.

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A Social Experiment with the Unhoused

The origin of Yo Wash began with Lin Li-Ching (林立青), who is known as the “Worker Writer.” Lin, who has been working as a construction supervisor for more than a decade, published his novel, *Workers*, in 2017. It is based on his own experiences and observations of dealing with the working class. The book has attracted much attention, and was eventually adapted into a TV series that made its critically-acclaimed debut on HBO.

True to the essence of the novel, Lin has always been passionate about sharing his insights on class injustice and respect for labor rights, which is why the stories and hardships faced by the unhoused have also drawn his attention. By chance, at the end of 2021, he was able to take on an additional role as an employer, leading unhoused people with a desire to work to rediscover their sense of self-reliance.

“When the pandemic was most severe last year, Ximending (西門町) in Wanhua District was the first to suffer in Taipei. There was a huge reduction in part-time jobs, and the unhoused were unable to find work and did not know what to do,” recalls Lin.

One day, Lin was volunteering to support Sweet Potato Jelly (涼粉伯), a local dessert shop in Wanhua who used their store as a supply station during the pandemic, hoping to clean the environment so that they could reopen their business. At that time, some unhoused people in the neighborhood were watching and expressed their desire to help. Lin immediately let them try out the cleaning equipment. Even though they had no experience in cleaning, they were very engaged in the process.

This gave Lin a flash of inspiration: Would it be possible to develop an organization that provides professional cleaning services and recruits unhoused people to work there? After cleaning a few venues, Lin found that he was able to earn some revenue and give it back to the unhoused people who participated, and thus, at the end of 2021, Yo Wash was born.

01. Yo Wash hopes to eradicate the stereotypes projected toward the unhoused by providing cleaning services to the society.

02. Whether rain or shine, members of Yo Wash have to operate heavy machinery to complete their cleaning jobs.

A Home for the Unhoused

Why has Wanhua, with its long history, turned into a gathering place for the unhoused in recent years? Formerly known as Bangka (艋舺), Wanhua was the earliest settled area in the north. During the Qing Dynasty, Taiwan's economic center of gravity gradually shifted northward, and commercial activities flourished in Wanhua, with convenient water transportation along the Tamsui River. Merchants, sailors and workers gathered around the docks and developed plenty of business opportunities.

The glory didn't last long, however. The river suffered from a serious siltation problem in the Japanese era, forcing freight transportation to move from river to land, and shifting the commercial center from Wanhua to Dadaocheng.

03. By training the unhoused, Lin hopes that they will be able to earn a living and become self-reliant. (Photo/Yo Wash)

Due to its early development, the land space in Wanhua gradually became overcrowded, and social changes caused the labor force and businesses to leave. In addition to the impact of migrant workers coming to work in Taiwan, the laborers who gathered in Wanhua in the early days were aging and losing their competitiveness in the market, so they had to rely on temporary jobs to survive. Wanhua, which is not far from Taipei Main Station (台北車站) and has much open public space, has become an area for the economically disadvantaged and unhoused to stay. As a result, both governmental and non-governmental social welfare organizations are gradually starting to provide care services for the unhoused in the vicinity.

"Some people are really unlucky and have such bad luck and fate," says Lin. The reasons for becoming unhoused are complex, and they find comfort in the interpersonal connection and empathetic care they receive in Wanhua. Some stores are willing to show their appreciation and solidarity at important



moments. For example, the aforementioned Sweet Potato Jelly and social welfare groups also helped to send epidemic prevention supplies so that the epidemic would not spread, and the neighborhood could gradually get back on the right track.

Yo Wash was established in Wanhua to help unhoused people find the rhythm of work and familiarize themselves with the operation of high-pressure cleaning equipment. Initially, one or two unhoused people were guided by professional foremen in their work. Although it is inevitable to experience turnover and learning obstacles, six members have been able to operate independently since training began in March of this year.

“What I can do is to provide job opportunities. The physical work is exhausting, but surely rewarding,” says Lin, who admits that it is a great challenge to work with the unhoused, but he still wants to hold on to his ideals and help the unhoused to acquire a skill to survive.



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(Photo/Dinghan Zheng)

04-05. A well-known writer in Taipei, Lin is also a hands-on boss who is heavily involved in all the day-to-day activities of Yo Wash.

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A Clean Environment Brings Back a Sense of Social Identity

In the past eight months since its establishment, Yo Wash has achieved many milestones, mainly by cleaning the floors of arts and cultural venues, religious buildings, and stalls and stores such as Kishu An Forest of Literature (紀州庵文學森林) and Bopiliao Historic Block (剝皮寮歷史街區). Other accomplishments include cleaning ten elementary and middle schools in northern Taiwan to maintain safety standards, and cleaning the temple grounds of Taipei Xia-Hai City God Temple (台北霞海城隍廟) on Menstrual Hygiene Day along with the non-profit organization With Red (小紅帽), which fights stereotypes against women, just as unhoused people deal with negative stereotypes against them.

Yo Wash also takes on special projects, such as death scene cleaning and restoration of the deceased's house. "Cleaning the deceased's house requires special care in disinfection and cleaning steps, and it requires patience with the smell," says Lin, though the hard work involved speaks for itself.

Meanwhile, the most unforgettable experience for Lin was participating in the blessing procession at Chi-Tian Temple (啟天宮) in Wanhua in April. Wearing the temple's pink uniforms, Yo Wash members followed at the back of the Mazu (媽祖) parade and were

responsible for cleaning the traces and dust left by the firecrackers. To many Yo Wash staff members, this is not only an act of service to the gods, but also a way to repay their blessings.

The trip also included cleaning with the famous YouTuber "Mimosa Go (含羞草日記)," who has over a million subscribers. This helped the unhoused staffers gain notice by the public, and also helped them gain acceptance as members of the local community, changing the previous situation where they were rejected and criticized, thus increasing their confidence and recognition of their work.

"I think it is important for the members to see the results of the cleaning work," Lin says. After washing the temples and public spaces, all the members would take a special detour to see if the places they had cleaned themselves were still clean, and would even take the initiative to clean them again to maintain their shiny appearance.

The same consideration was given to the art installation "Rainbow Six" in Ximending, especially since many unhoused people have benefited from the employment opportunities and life adjustments brought forward by the Ximending shopping district. With gratitude, Yo Wash cleaned the facades of Ximending. Many local schools and venues, with a grateful heart, issued certificates of appreciation for Lin's employees after the cleaning was done.



06. Many attractions such as Kishu An Forest of Literature use the services of Yo Wash, giving the unhoused a job opportunity and Taipei a refreshed look. (Photo/Yo Wash)

07. Yo Wash also invites people to experience cleaning work from time to time, hoping to create a society where the public lives in harmony with the unhoused.

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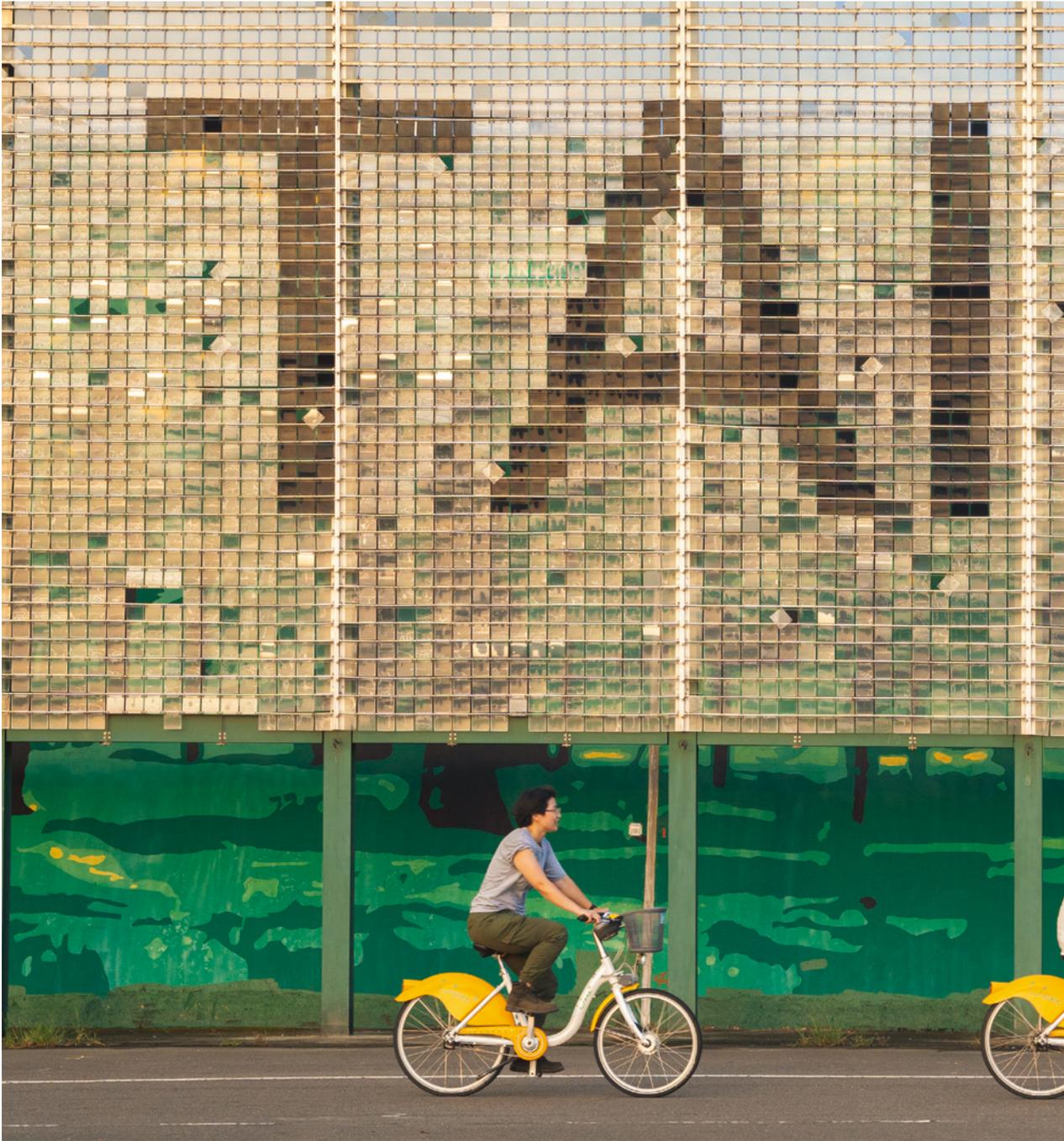
Creating Self-Esteem Through Action

Although the members of Yo Wash have endured some bad life experiences, they are also eager to be needed by society. They have gained self-reliance through work, and found meaning in cleaning, slowly proving to themselves and others that they have the ability to survive independently.

Even though Yo Wash is still facing challenges such as the relocation of its warehouse and unstable business volume, Lin has not forgotten to spread his positive energy to more social welfare organizations. Recently, some of Yo Wash's equipment was loaned to Homeless Taiwan (台灣芒草心慈善協會), which also originated in

Wanhua and helps unhoused people to become independent. Yo Wash also takes part in training sessions set up by Homeless Taiwan to teach unhoused people about on-site procedures and action items, so that they will not be overloaded when they start working.

“There are many people who have opinions, but the point is not what you say, but what you do,” says Lin. His actions demonstrate both his support for the unhoused and respect for their labor. Through concrete solutions, the underprivileged are given the opportunity to contribute to society, to eliminate prejudice and discrimination, and to be accepted by the community again. This is what makes social innovation so valuable. Yo Wash will continue to do good work and prove the greatness of small gestures. ◆



A group of young people cycle along the path in a riverside park, riding together to meet a hopeful future.
@ Yanping Riverside Park



© Samil Kuo



01

Taiwanese Kombucha: A Bubbly Sweet and Sour Taste Integrating Local Flavors

Author Fuafu

Photographer Samil Kuo, Min Min Kombucha

Kombucha has become the new star when it comes to healthy drinks in Europe and the United States, and is gradually becoming popular in Taiwan as well. It can easily be made with quality Taiwanese tea, herbs, and fruits nourished by the local terroir, giving birth to kombucha flavors unique to the country.

But let's back up for a moment. What exactly is kombucha? For the uninitiated, kombucha is a fermented tea drink that combines tea, sugar, and a "mother (a symbiotic culture of bacteria and yeast,

or SCOBY)". The not-so-secret ingredient is the process of fermentation, which has been developed in almost every human culture around the world.

The fermentation process allows microorganisms to break down food into small molecules that can be better absorbed by the human body, and produce trace elements at the same time. It is a process that takes time to infuse food with rich, mature flavors and extends the shelf life of food. Wine, vinegar, sauerkraut, cheese, soy sauce, miso, and kimchi are all common fermented foods.

The Process of Making Kombucha

Yo-Si Chen (陳宥希), the founder of Min Min Kombucha (茗茗茶香檳), a Taipei-based brand, shares with us how kombucha is made. The first step is to brew tea. Black tea is the most common type used for kombucha, but oolong tea works just as well. Add sugar, and let it dissolve into the tea broth. Then let the tea cool down, pour it into a sterilized glass jar, add SCOBY, and cover the jar with a cotton cloth. Place the jar in a dry and well-ventilated place away from light, and it's almost done. Now, it's fermentation time.

The tea broth first undergoes aerobic fermentation. The bacteria start to digest sugars and tea ingredients in the tea broth, and slowly form a biofilm at the top, which covers the tea broth and then facilitates anaerobic fermentation, which is completed in anywhere from five to seven days.

The process may seem simple, but the proper fermentation of kombucha depends on whether the producer has the correct knowledge of good hygiene and environmental control. Chen says that she disinfects all the containers and tools with 75% alcohol and is rigorous when it comes to the details of

the process. She has brewed close to 200 batches of kombucha and has never had any problems with mold or spoilage. Chen reminds people who make their own kombucha at home that if they see mold or anything that looks like lint on their kombucha, they must throw away the whole barrel and use clean SCOBY to start again.

The SCOBY, which is indispensable to the production of kombucha, isn't a single strain of bacteria or a type of fungus, but is instead a symbiotic product of yeast, lactic acid bacteria, and acetic acid bacteria. Since kombucha is rich in probiotics and vitamins, infants and children under two years old, and people with extreme allergies to alcohol, caffeine, and yeast are advised to avoid the drink.



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01. Made from yeast, sugar, and tea, kombucha is a sweet fermented drink that has become a top choice when it comes to healthy beverages worldwide.

02. Yo-Si Chen, founder of Min Min Kombucha, is devoted to making kombucha with organic and eco-friendly ingredients.

03. The SCOBY is indispensable to the production of kombucha and a symbiotic product of yeast, lactic acid bacteria, and acetic acid bacteria.

The Philosophy Behind Hand-brewed Kombucha

"I used to drink up to five cups of sweet tea drinks a day!" Chen laughs, admitting that she was dependent on sugary drinks, but that changed drastically after she came into contact with fermented beverages and kombucha. She began her research on fermented food after trying homemade plum wine, and found the taste phenomenal. She then found kombucha popping up over and over again as she pored over every conceivable bit of information on the subject. She decided to try making it, and imported her first SCOBY from a like-minded cultivator. The first batch she produced made her fall in love with the drink.

Kombucha has the theanine and antioxidants of tea and healthy bacteria. It is low in sugar and caffeine, and it allows people to experience the charm of fermentation in a short time. After Chen devoted herself to the world of kombucha, it became natural for her to give up her addiction to sugary drinks. Once her friends and family tried her kombucha, they were enthusiastic about it and expressed their willingness to buy it, and so her new passion quickly became a business opportunity.

"Kombucha is a vehicle through which I can realize the issues I care about," she says. Having worked in community development and non-profit organizations, Chen has always been concerned with sustainable, organic, and environmentally-friendly agriculture. By developing her kombucha business, she can take tangible action to support the organic production of tea, fruits, and spices in Taiwan.

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04. Through her kombucha business, Chen is now able to take concrete actions to support the production of organic tea, fruits, and spices made in Taiwan.

05. A variety of kombucha flavors such as organic rose, Irwin mango and Kyoho grape from Xinshe have been developed.

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The Uniqueness of Kombucha in Taiwan

The key to good kombucha is good raw materials. Chen carefully selects organic black tea from Yilan (宜蘭), tea leaves from wild tea trees in Nantou (南投), oolong tea that was the first to be certified as carbon neutral in Taiwan, and wild fish mint tea. She uses either one kind of tea or a blend of two teas as the base for her kombucha. She also chooses ingredients such as organic roses, grass-cultivated red-fleshed rainbow guavas, and Irwin mangoes, Kyoho grapes from Xinshe (新社) in Taichung (台中), lemon balm, and mountain pepper for secondary fermentation. Over time and much experimentation, she has developed a variety of kombucha flavors.

Compared to Europe and the United States, which do not produce tea, and India and China, which are export-oriented, Chen believes that Taiwanese tea has superb quality, and the aroma of different tea leaves are very distinct, which make flavors more layered

when they are used in a fusion of other ingredients. A local Taiwanese brand is able to produce, brew, and sell tea directly to the consumer, taking it all the way from the farm to the bottle. Therefore, Taiwan definitely has what it takes to develop specialty kombucha, just as it has enjoyed much success with the third wave of specialty coffee.

“Taiwan has a rich variety of local produce, and more and more farmers have come to support sustainability and environmental protection. I believe that as long as the brewers put their hearts into it, they will be able to offer international customers a taste of kombucha that they have never tasted before,” says Chen.

Chen hopes that other kombucha brands will also make the best use of Taiwanese products, create tea recipes unique to Taiwan, and encourage more people to really enjoy good food again. Starting with kombucha, she hopes people will rediscover the connection between what they eat and drink and nature itself, while also learning about the traditions and innovations of fermentation.



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Places to Enjoy Kombucha in Taipei

Starting her business online, Chen's Min Min Kombucha will soon be available at the three branches of Breeze Super (微風超市) in Taipei this October. In addition, Chen shares with us a few restaurants and cafés in Taipei that offer their own homemade kombucha.

COFE (喫茶咖啡), a café located in an old house on Dihua Street in Dadaocheng, offers kombucha made with dried coffee fruit and another variety made with oolong.

Draft Land, one of Asia's 50 Best Bars in 2019, pairs rum with Chinese mesona and mixes the two with kombucha to make a cocktail. Its subsidiary, Daily by

Draft Land, has launched a roselle kombucha that allows customers who cannot drink alcohol to enjoy a slightly tipsy feeling.

Orchid by Nobu Lee (蘭), a restaurant that was given a Plate award in the 2020 Michelin Guide for Taipei, has a non-alcoholic "Juice Tea Pairing" in their lunch and dinner drink selections, among which is a variety of homemade kombucha to go with their meals.

Through an exquisite and healthy kombucha, Min Min Kombucha has made the most of the characteristics of Taiwan's local quality tea, fruits and produce, and brought them onto the dinner table in a different form.

06. One of the easiest ways to enjoy kombucha is to dilute it slightly with sparkling water to add extra flavors.



The Versatility of Kombucha

Besides drinking fermented kombucha on its own, Chen introduces several ways to experience the drink's versatility.

✓ Blend it with other beverages

The simplest way is to slightly dilute kombucha with sparkling water to give it an added taste and texture. You can also use it in cocktails, mix it with coffee — which creates a taste similar to Sicilian lemon coffee — or add it to green latte or fruit smoothies.

✓ Make it into a sauce

Kombucha can be mixed with oil, vinegar or other seasonings to add flavor to dishes. In addition, while fermenting kombucha, you can also make vinegar by taking a part of it and prolonging the fermentation time.

✓ Eating the SCOBY

The SCOBY at the top of the kombucha is also edible. It forms slowly from the lignocellulosic biomass of acetic acid bacteria, has a taste similar to coconut jelly, and is full of probiotics and cellulose.



(Photo/Min Min Kombucha)

✓ Skincare and cleansing

Kombucha is full of active yeast, so you can take an appropriate amount and apply it to your face as skincare and an exfoliant (not recommended for those who are sensitive to alcohol). Similar to Eco Enzymes, kombucha can also be used as a cleansing agent to remove many kinds of grime from biological sources.

✓ Other applications

In addition, kombucha can also be used in the polish for sourdough bread. Chen has even collaborated with farmers to make kombucha into compost for organic peppers, and has since been wondering what other crops she might experiment with after the harvest. ⚡

A Baker's Dream: A Tour of Three Scrumptious Bakeries in Taipei

Author Catherine Shih
Photographer Samil Kuo

As the hot summer months draw to an end and autumn nears, the heartwarming aroma of mixed wheat and cream fills the air. The sight of round, plump rye bread or thin, crisp baguettes on display in bakery windows are the dreams of bakers and hungry customers alike. We've uncovered three scrumptious bakeries throughout Taipei, sharing their unique ways of making bread and the concept of hometown flavors ingrained in their recipes.

01. From ciabattas to vegan bread, there are plenty of high-quality choices when it comes to baked goods in Taipei.

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Sousan Tseng Bakery

曾全穀物酸種烘焙所

MUST TRIES: Whole grain sourdough bread, and Picual olive oil bread.

With her humble beginnings in Yilan (宜蘭) in northeastern Taiwan, Sousan Tseng is best known for a very specific type of bread: whole grain sourdough. One Internet user recalls meeting Sousan more than two years ago at a local market in Yilan. “Before [Sousan] had even arrived,” the netizen remarks, “the booth was packed and already filled with people lining up! Ever since, I have always remembered her.”

Not surprisingly, the main raw material in making bread is flour. Sousan, however, uses organic wheat locally grown in Taiwan, as well as imported organic wheat and rye. To top it off, she utilizes raw materials that come from local farms which employ environmentally friendly farming methods as much as possible. Compared with regular commercial instant yeast, a type of wild yeast used by Sousan, grown in Yilan, is more time-consuming and requires more skill. This is due to the external impacts of factors such as temperature and humidity on yeast cultivation.

Even with all these complications, however, Sousan still insists on using Yilan-grown wheat due to the cleanliness of the water and organic wheat seeds — giving the wheat its wild charm. Sousan’s dough is also distinguished by a sweet aftertaste after baking. The Picual olive oil bread is elevated even more by the scent of oil and makes a perfect meal with eggs. Many customers suggest having the signature whole grain



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sourdough bread plain first to taste its simple but profound flavor. After that, you can enjoy it with any flavor of jam or cheese to upgrade the delight bites as you like.

Sousan’s bread is available in Taipei, at a shop where you can also try her delicious coffee and whole wheat desserts. You may also check her Facebook fan page for updated information about which weekend market she may show up to with her freshly-baked bread.

SOUSAN TSENG BAKERY

ADD 9, Sec. 1, Xinsheng N. Rd., Zhongshan Dist.
HOURS 11:00am - 7:00pm (Closed on Sundays)
WEBSITE www.facebook.com/sousansister/



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02-03. Sousan Tseng Bakery’s whole grain sourdough bread is made from organic wheat grown in Taiwan, giving it a light fragrance and soft texture.



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04. Tearing the ciabatta bread piece by piece with one's hands is the most authentic and tasty way to enjoy it.

05. Made by a French baker, the baguettes and ciabattas at Chichi Artisan Boulanger are a vital component for a perfect European-style meal.



Chichi Artisan Boulanger

潘先生烘培坊

MUST TRIES: French baguettes, ciabattas, signature croissants (available in chocolate and raisin flavors), and cinnamon rolls.

Having just opened in March 2022, Chichi Artisan Boulanger is a traditional French bakery located on a quiet section of Anhe Road (安和路) in Daan District, just a short walk from MRT Xinyi Anhe Station (捷運信義安和站). The French head baker, along with his Taiwanese wife, worked tirelessly day in and day out to open up their own bakery in this quaint corner of the city, and have been enjoying some early success.

The store isn't massive, and is thus able to maintain its small bakery charm. With its large glass display windows, freshly-baked bread is laid out every day and put on display for hungry passers-by to ogle while going about their way to work or school.

Chichi Artisan Boulanger focuses mainly on traditional French bread, as well as croissants, baguettes, brioches and more. Each type of bread is handmade with flour directly imported from France and is baked to the highest standards of quality and taste. Chichi manages to find their unique taste and surpass expectations, with their baguettes consistently ranked the most delicious in the city among local customers.

Upon walking in, you are quickly greeted by the aroma of French baguettes, traditional European bread, and

large ciabattas on the shelves. The authentic baguettes are known for their crisp crust, while the texture inside is fluffy and soft. The ciabattas remind many customers — especially those from the Europe — of a hearty home-cooked meal with vegetable soup. To preserve the fiber of their ciabattas and maintain the chewy texture, the baker also points out that the best way to enjoy it is to tear it piece by piece with your hands, not cutting it with a knife.

CHICHI ARTISAN BOULANGER

ADD 129, Sec. 2, Anhe Rd., Daan Dist.
HOURS 11:00am - 7:00pm (Closed on Mondays)

05





Hip Pun Vegan Bread

嬉皮麵包

MUST TRIES: Cinnamon rolls, French bread with red bean and cream, Mexican-style bread with salted butter, and bacon cheese baguettes.

Hip Pun Vegan Bread is an independent, animal-friendly, vegan bakery located near MRT Songjiang Nanjing Station (捷運松江南京站). All of their products are vegan and do not use animal byproducts such as eggs, honey, or milk. Therefore, even the pastries and bread are all made using animal-free yeast.

Hip Pun Bakery is unique in that they offer different bread on different days of the week (please check their Facebook fan page for further information). In addition, their store offers products such as old-fashioned bread, cakes, and plant-based drinks.

Perhaps one of Hip Pun's most famous products are their cinnamon rolls, which are topped with copious amounts of cinnamon powder and brown sugar. The body of the roll is solid, which keeps customers coming back for more. Moreover, the cinnamon powder is not too spicy and goes perfectly with their oat milk coffee!

Customers also rave about their French bread with red bean and cream as well. The exterior is a bit like a baguette, firm and chewy, but with a creamy red bean filling inside. Upon chewing, the cream instantly melts in your mouth, adding a further blast of flavor to the red bean puree.



06

Other delicious items to try would be the Mexican-style bread with salted butter, which is more like a dinner roll but paired with salted butter inside, making for quite the tasty choice. Or, if you prefer, you can also try their bacon cheese baguette — but don't be fooled by its name! Their bacon is comprised of Beyond Meat and their cheese is block cheese. 📍

HIP PUN VEGAN BREAD

ADD 7, Siping St., Zhongshan Dist.
HOURS 11:30am - 7:30pm (Monday to Saturday)
12:00pm - 6:00pm (Sundays)
WEBSITE www.facebook.com/HipPunBakery

06-07. Hip Pun's cinnamon rolls and Mexican-style bread are the most popular options amongst all of their products.



07

Ask a Cat Behavior Consultant for Cattitude Solutions

Author Jenna Lynn Cody

Photographer xFrame Official, Pet Buddy Cat Behavior Consultation and Training, Taiwan Scene

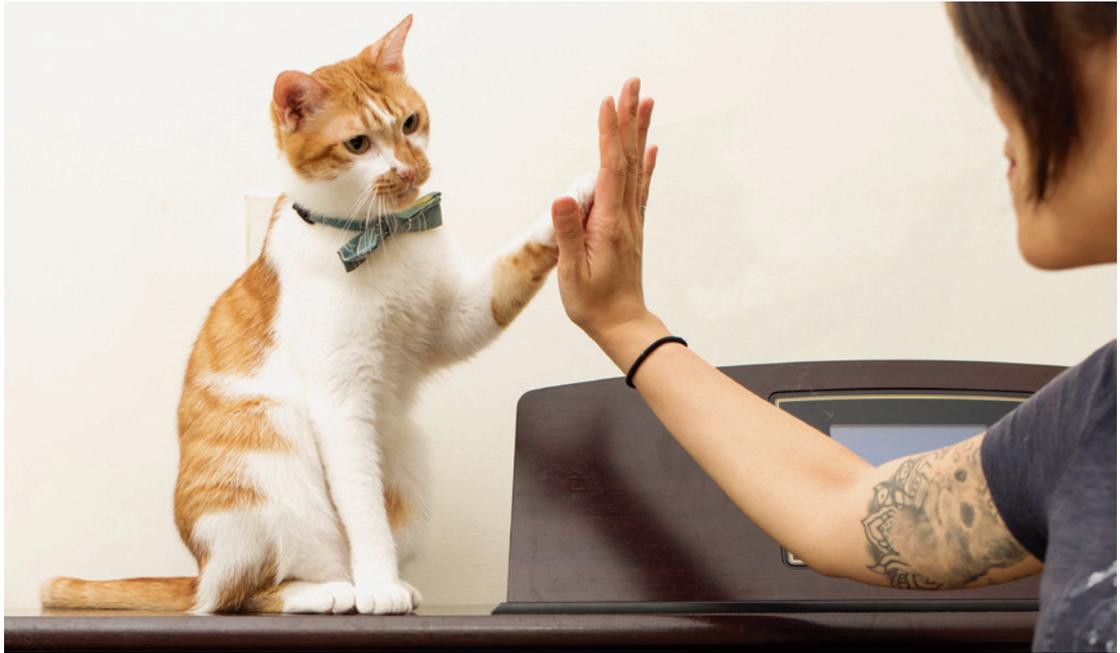
In Taiwan, the relationship between cats and humans has evolved over the centuries. Many shop owners often keep cats as mouse-hunters to avoid mice approaching their umami-rich dry goods or medicinal ingredients, and beliefs that cats are psychic or that their tails may bring bad luck are starting to give way. What's more, becoming "cat parents" has gradually become much more common. This change has created a need for cat trainers and behaviorists to help cat parents communicate harmoniously with their "cat children."

To better understand the art of "cat whispering" in Taipei, we spoke with Jill Su (蘇渝婷), the first cat behavior consultant in Taiwan to achieve "Elite Fear Free Certified Professional (FFCP)," status after undergoing the Canadian Companion Animal Sciences Institute (CASI) feline behavior science training and becoming a member of the Association of Animal Behavior Professionals (AABP). With over 20 years of experience, she is the founder of Pet Buddy Cat Behavior Consultation and Training (貼心毛寶-貓行為諮詢與訓練).

01



(Photo/xFrame Official)



02

What Does a Cat Whisperer Do?

If your cat is doing something you don't want it to do, like peeing around the house or scratching furniture, a cat behavior consultant can help figure out what's going on. Jill determines the cat's mood and needs, but her method is a little different; she works with cat parents online rather than going to the home.

For instance, if the cat is crying a lot or biting during the interview, she'll ask if that's the problem a client wants help with, and have the client show her the cat via the camera. Following that is a discussion on what's perplexing the cat parents, what the cat's needs are, and what can be adjusted to meet them.

"Often the issue isn't the cat," Jill says. "The problem may not be what the cat parents imagined, so I help them understand and solve it."

Perhaps the cat and parents may have a misalignment of personalities, or there's a misunderstanding. The cat may not actually be fierce or mean, and parents may be able to adjust feeding or interaction, or enrich the cat's environment.



03

01-02. Based on cats' moods and needs, a cat whisperer bridges the gap between cat owners and their pets so that they can live together peacefully.

03. Cat Behavior Consultant Jill Su has been helping cat owners solve cat behavior issues and rescuing strays for more than 20 years.

The Journey Begins

The career of a cat behavior consultant begins with a feline problem child and a cat parent — Jill herself. “When I was young, I had a cat who had a lot of problems — he would bite people or wake me up at six o’clock in the morning. So, I would search for solutions, but at that time we didn’t have Google, and it seemed Taiwan had very few experts in this area.”

“There weren’t many books, either,” she continues. “When I’d buy books, they’d usually be about veterinary medicine, tending a cat’s claws, or cat breeds. They didn’t teach you what to do when a cat was ill-behaved, so I tried to handle it myself.”

In adulthood, Jill continued to raise cats, but would still encounter problems, such as cats peeing outside the litter box or having a deep fear of leaving the house. She attended a course through the IAABC (International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants) to learn how to handle these issues. Sharing these experiences with her friends, she learned that there was a lot of interest in cat behavior therapy, and a need for these services in Taiwan.



04

04. Starting her career by training her own cat, Jill fully understands pet parents’ challenges in creating a stress-free home for cats.

05-06. When solving a cat behavior problem, it is not only about training the cat, but also educating owners who may misunderstand their cats.

05



Creating a Harmonious Life with Your Cat

Modern cat parents have been caring more for their fur babies' mental health needs in recent years. According to Jill, many couples who plan to live child-free tend to keep pets instead. "They love their cats just like their kids, hence the quality of life for their cats matters, too."

With families with cats increasing, issues with pets are getting more and more common. Jill recalls one of her client's cases, where two cats could not get along even after the owner took a class to become a trainer. Eventually, one cat was sent to her friend's home.

To Jill, however, the problem wasn't just about the cat who was sent away. "We trained the remaining cat together," Jill says. From food, to the environment, to the cats' individual personalities, the reasons causing the conflict might vary. As a cat behavior consultant, however, the final goal is always to help the owners create a place where cats feel comfortable and relaxed. "When that cat was ready, we brought the other one back and re-introduced them. Last week was the first

time after a month and a half that the cats had gotten along together. It was so touching; we could have given up and separated them, but now they live together in peace."

When figuring out what a cat needs, there are some triggers that can cause behavior to get worse, as it can initiate a cat's instinctive fight-or-flight response. Perhaps some movement or noise a cat parent makes can be frightening, or the cat may get stressed if another cat is too close. A cat behavior consultant figures out what those triggers are and finds ways to remove the trigger or redirect the cat's aggression.

Jill says the biggest challenge in her work is to get the cat parents to open their eyes and get over any biases they may have in order to communicate with their cats. "The cat parents can tell me what is going on, but it may not be the whole story," she adds. "This is why I have them turn on the camera: to see the real situation. Sometimes the biggest issue is the cat parents, not the cat. Often, we're really training the cat mom or dad!"

In another example, a cat parent of about 30 years was having trouble with his current cat, a very picky eater. "He thought people could just feed cats one thing, but cats aren't always like that. Some people think the cats are happy with the same food for years, but the cats don't agree," Jill notes.

To ensure a harmonious home life with your cats, there are many ways to improve your cat's environment, many of which are related to food. Be careful what you feed your cat, and offer them a diverse array of options. Watch the timing and proportion of the food, and wash their bowls daily. More generally, watch their habits and see what they do or don't like.

"If they're not happy they might become very picky, overgroom, or start eating foreign objects such as plastic or headphones, or chewing on furniture. This can be very dangerous. If they eat a piece of yarn and there's a needle at the end, it can be fatal," Jill says.

06





07

From Pets to Strays

In recent years, Taipei has seen a decrease in the number of stray cats. One key to this has been the TCCP (Taipei Cat Care Programme, 台北市街貓友善照護行動方案) launched by the Taipei City Animal Protection Office (台北市動物保護處), and TNR (Trap Neuter Release) projects initiated by activists like Jill, who have been evolving local understanding of the issue.

According to Jill, local neighborhoods in Taipei are more willing to tackle this issue than they were before. “We’ve just successfully neutered about 50 cats in the mountains near my home, with the help of volunteers and the support of local residents,” she shares.

Stray rescue can be arduous, however. Jill recounts one of the cats living on a small hill that they wanted to trap and neuter. After seven tiring hours of waiting in the hot, mosquito-infested bushes, the cat came out when they were preparing to leave. “That orange little

guy was really smart and knew what I was up to. So, he came out as I was leaving,” she says. “We’d tried to catch him, but he escaped. I realized he remembered. So, to get him to come out, I pretended I was leaving again.”

In addition, people understand now that strays need care, and more people are even willing to adopt older cats, whereas in the past most wanted younger cats and kittens.

“A lot of these strays are sick or have special needs, and I realized they needed care, too, so I founded an informal group for this,” Jill says. In Jill’s opinion, older cats are more stable, calm, and need love just like any kitten does.

07. Realizing they also need love and care, people in Taipei have become more and more friendly to kittens. (Photo/Taiwan Scene)

Helping Cats in Taipei

For Taipei residents who want to adopt a cat, Jill also has some advice. If you have a cat already, and are coming from overseas, bring it with you; it's best not to leave it behind or give it up. If you're already in Taipei, and are looking to adopt, you can look online, go to a shelter in places such as Neihu (內湖) or Ruifang (瑞芳), or reach out to an NGO (Non-Governmental Organization). It's better to adopt a cat who is two years or older, as their personalities will be more evident. "It's better to know the cat's personality first. A kitten is like a Kinder Egg, you never know what personality you'll get. It's a bit of a risk," she says.

In fact, personality fit is a very important factor. Jill recommends that outgoing people who often have guests in their home not get a shy cat. If you aren't prepared to offer a lot of time and attention, it's best not to get a kitten.

It's also important to consider a cat's health. Shelter life is very basic, and an adopted cat may have health issues. It's best to evaluate this in advance, so there are fewer surprises later and you can handle any health problems your cat may have.

However, if you only plan to be in Taiwan for a short time, and don't want to bring the cat with you when you move back home or to parts elsewhere, Jill recommends not adopting, as re-homing can be traumatic for the cat. "Cats can live up to about 20 years, and you need to deal with that," she says.



08

If adopting isn't right for you, Jill points out that there are other options, saying, "You can volunteer at a shelter and training center where you can help clean the environment while spending time grooming, feeding and playing with rescued cats." Taipei Stray Cats Protection Association (台北市流浪貓保護協會), where Jill has been volunteering since her youth, is always in need of extra hands for taking care of rescues, and offers a great chance to interact with cats young and old. 📍

08-10. According to Jill, rescuing cats takes patience and determination, but is always a rewarding experience when she knows that every cat on the street can live their best life.

09



10



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TRAVEL INFORMATION SERVICES

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

Information for Foreigners in Taiwan: 1990

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

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



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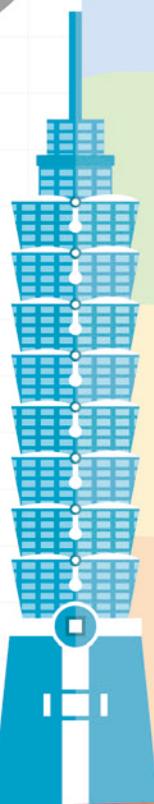
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