

走台步

Comic Sketching of Daily Living

Ecological Notebook Of The Wonderful Time - Zhuang Yongxin

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Self Learning - Opening Up Local Comic Markets - Wei Zongcheng

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Comics in the past were regarded as kid stuff that is neither serious nor mainstream, but today they have been treated as an important cultural expression, even an unique art. This long and winding evolution is the result of endless dedication of talented people. In the meantime, the long lost Taiwan comics are back, after getting rid of all the shackles and starting to set out their unique yet enriched voices.

From the mid-twentieth century to the last years of the century, Taiwan comics had seen their own distinguished styles, including the martial art "Zhuge Shiro", the folk "Auntie", the funny Ao Youxiang, the philosophic Cai Zhizhong, and the sui generis Zheng Wen. These all were the works of talents. Starting in the 90s when the massive arrival of Japanese comics with mature skills, diversified themes and division of work came on the scene, Taiwan comics became increasingly quiet. Local comic writers either fled overseas looking for a way out, or simply lost their local performing stage. When time came to the 21st century, however, things were changing. It all began with the rise of Doujinshi. Youngsters who had read comics since their childhood started to do their own comic drawing. They started with imitation and then created their very own stories and styles. In the beginning, the amateur works were circulating only within the circle of comic peers. The circle were then gradually expanded and, up to date, the yearly 2 or 3 times of comic Doujinshi gatherings have become important arts events, always attracting media and crowds.

In recent years, Taiwan comics have become more diversified. There are the Doujinshi styles which present skills similar to the Japanese ones, but the stories are very Taiwan, and the drawings are easy and fun to read; there are the highly stylized literary narratives, with a temperament of arts; of course, there are also the single-frame to four-frame comics popularized on Internet social networks, which are the new generation of comics aimed to attract eyes with innovative conceptions.

The coming issue of Taiwan Step has interviews with 7 comic writers, who have their own distinguished styles and merits, and readers will have a chance to look at the rich and diversified features of today's Taiwan comics.

Taiwan Step vol.12

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this is a totally DIFFERENT ERA!

Easy to get to know
the 2014 Taiwan comic
animation status quo

Text/Yenwei Zheng

You just can't imagine how big the changes of Taiwan comics are. Our impression on him always stays in the childhood. Under the dusk incandescent light, stalls on the ground display rows of pirated music tapes and cheap books, like chicks in the farmhouse chirping noisily to solicit buyers' attention. Everything's alive. Anything not existing can magically become alive. And this is the Taiwan miracle. With thin covers, having no book clothes, books such as "Doraemon" and "Saint Seiya" are bound into volumes with merely 4 or 5 episodes, naive like a childish patchwork.

In the middle schooling, the world runs around the text books, and everyone pioneers one's own world on the examination paper. The only way for me to get away from the unfittingly small table and chair is to dispose waste in the trash can. Embracing the moonlight, with the completely clean trash can carried in the hands, walking through the flowering shrubs and coconut woods near the building, and the warm rental bookstore is right deep in the other side. I went out empty handed, and came back sneakily, with a full bucket of taboos. Back then, I didn't know the pirated Japanese works were leading the fashion waves, and the "Youth Jump" could have as many as 350,000 copies printed each issue, and that was when the long repressed creative voices were crying out loud together with the lifting of martial laws and economic growth.

With a blink of an eye, the Internet, mobile phones and multi-screens showed up, making eyes very busy, and I slipped into the society with my fingers. When I saw comics again, I could barely recognize them. The 2014 Taiwan, comic readers are undergoing qualitative changes. New adult consumers for comics appear, meanwhile rental bookstores have been closed in recent years down to 25% in quantity compared with the peak time. Sales of Japanese comics have seen drastic drops, while the summer



large-scale Doujinshi activities can attract more than 1,700 creativity groups to join the ranks. Many pop Internet writers have seen the sales of their books surpass Japanese works, and the diversified information channels have triggered more creative styles and categories. The terminology "Otaku" has entered the mainstream of Chinese literature for 10 years, but if you are simply looking at comics by "Otaku", you may be drawing a wrong point. Comics have not only grown up with us, but also become oriented to international perspectives.

The major six literary categories of comic animation have set forth innovation and bring about aesthetic and exquisite visual feasts.

Spreading out the world map, we see the major three empires of comics: The American Comic, French BD and Japanese Manga. There are the three major comic categories: the humorous and ironic four-frame casual writing - Humour/Cartoon, global emerging common visual language literature - Graphic Novel, and small-scale publishing - Indie/Alternative. Basically, these three categories can be divided into six genres of literatures.

The French BD with the book size issues is not easy to operate, and has only the Big Spicy Publishing working on it in Taiwan, while the American Comic has had only sporadic issues in many years. Due to the geographical and historical backgrounds, Taiwan comics are mainly influenced by the Japanese Manga. The Japanese comic animation has not only captured the popularity, but also deeply rooted in the convenience stores, which are heavily relying on the Japanese comic puppet figures to run their bonus points collection activities. However, the reason why imperial cultures can penetrate like unhindered is after all relevant to unfair trading.

The Japanese empire takes commercial approaches to produce works - the single volume of "Naruto", for example, costs nearly 2 million NT to just produce. Taiwan has no way to compete even at the starting point. Furthermore, large mainstream comic publishers are used to cost reduction by introducing foreign commercial patterns for instant profits, in consideration that cultivating local creativity requires lots of effort yet not appreciated, so they are just not interested. All in all, these adversities have put Taiwan's creativity of comic works in an unequal position of competition from the very beginning. In the 90s when publishers were making a great deal of fortune out of the Japanese comics, they were kind of active in cultivating local writers with their earnings. Today when the comic market as a whole is in a downturn, writers of original works in the mainstream book market are suffering predicament. Some cutting-edge publishing houses, focused on either future



The 2013 International Comic Animation Seminar was themed with exhibition planning, and within a short six weeks not only the coursework but also a teamwork theme exhibition were accomplished. (Provided by Fancy Frontier)

found a breakthrough. If we detour round the imperial rules of game a little bit, we'll find that among the six comic genres, the highly localized humorous satire, native free small-scale publishing, and the visual literatures aiming at adult readers are all starting to appear interesting changes.

The Internet comics combines daily living to interact with readers for more fun.

In the first half of 2000, the Internet comic writers such as RIVER and Wan Wan began to thrive, completely escaping the shackle of traditional media-oriented publishing. Most of all, many of them have been very successful. They have extended the four-frame comic expression by combining real-life topics such as current events, office experiences and travels, to attract massive clicking and reading. Although their readers cover a wide range of ages, the main consumers are office workers, and that is a break of the common stereotype impression of "comic readers = Otaku".

The emergence and booming of blogs are critical to this wave of creative works, nurturing a variety of reading habits as well as reader/writers interaction fashions. When the Internet popularity has been solidly reflecting to sales, publishers and writers become more actively engaged. In addition to Taiwan writers, local publishers are also starting to introduce Japanese creative writers of similar comic essays, such as Takagi Naoko and Oguri Saori. Today, as Facebook becomes pervasive, this

digital or friendly literature creation, have been actively pioneering the Manga genre. However, compared with Mainland and Korea publishes which have built virtuous cycles of interaction with readers, the dereliction of duty of Taiwan publication policies are absolutely to blame.

Imperial invasion is not only seen in Taiwan. We can see similar conditions in every country neighboring an empire. Examples are Canada and Mexico neighboring the U.S., and Germany, United Kingdom, Norway... surrounding the French quarters. These comic small countries always have to find a way out. At this point of time, we have noticed that Taiwan writers have

Cosplay Field is a market aiming at the role-play groups, and the market segmentation is very well planned and uniquely featured. (Pictures by Grand Journey)



comic frenzy is further expanded in response to the Facebook layout and mobile reading by developing new forms of single-page comics. Popular writers include the more than 600,000 fans Mr. H. H. and Rolling Eyes! Ms. Undine, Mark of 300,000-400,000 fans, Cherng, and even Jie Jie whose recent work - Jie Jie Non Stop in Hong Kong, is focused on comparison of Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Small-scale publishers like Doujinshi and Zine manifest the neo-aesthetics of diverse comic & animation works.

However, today's most energetic environment of creative comic & animation in Taiwan actually comes from the small-scale publications. The small-scale publications involve two different social groups. One is the Doujinshi comic markets, an extension from the mainstream comic & animation or film/TV cultures, and the other involves Zine and independent publications which mix handicraft with illustration designs.

Today, the Doujinshi Publication & Exhibition Association has become the most important sub-market in Taiwan. An large event may involve Doujinshi writers and cosplayers, as well as Japanese idol dubbing, comic & animation singers on stage, along with relevant stores and gaming companies setting up onsite booths. It is an inheritance from the mainstream Manga, an imperial pop culture and style, and has become an important celebration for comic & animation fans.

Take the February 2014 exhibition - Fancy Frontier 23, for example, there were about 60,000 visitors and 1,700 participating groups, 194 of which were societies of original works. The September 2013 original works exhibition - ComicNova3, attracted 352 societies of original works to participate. Year 2013 alone had at least 71 market activities, large or small, not yet including photographic or small private gatherings. There were 1 or 2 events in average each week, a stunning high rate of events. In these events, one can easily spot comic celebrities including the more than 10 years old Long Life Creativity Society, as well as full-time creative comic writers such as VIVA, Bakunoya, Kinono, etc.

Doujinshi is a comic circle deeply baptized by imperial cultures. In contrast, as the Government are actively promoting the creativity industry, accompanied by the wide setup of visual related coursework in universities, Taiwan has set out to cultivate a creativity force with distinct literary context. These new talents are receiving more comprehensive knowledge simulation and academic training, and are more focused on the visual presentation of stylization. Today, this society of new talents is becoming more and more cohesive, and it is evidenced by rapid sprouting of emerging publications, activities and exhibitions, all happening in just a few years, unfolded in creativity stores, coffee shops, and the scholarly creativity market of the vintage Guling Street. Even the Garden City - a publication company, is engaged in the Zine exhibition and sales. Not limited to comics, these small-scale publications also involve photography, illustrations and various expressional forms that you can imagine, converging with the fashion of small fresh literariness, in the creation of another literary landscape. Those who are used to the Japanese mainstream culture may think this is already a deviation from the orthodox arena of comic & animation, but in the European continent festivities or bookstores, one can easily find many of this kind of independent works. Taiwan creativity representative team has two secret tricks: Nos:Book, and Taiwan Comix.

The visual literature has wide and profound topics, deep into the excavation of cultural and historical aesthetics.



Finally, let's talk about the emerging genre of expressional literature that is a world commonality: Visual Literature. This genre originates from America, starting in an era of American new comic waves of the 80s and then spreading to the European continent, and its coverage is so wide that even the translated Western version of Japanese Manga, if only it comes with high literary artistry and targets at adult readers, can be accommodated in this rank. The most remarkable breakthrough brought about by the visual literature is liberation of themes. In the long past, the mainstream markets operated by comic empires were confined to the themes of science fiction, super heroes, adventures, cops vs. gangsters, etc. In the recent 30 years, however, as the visual literature is gaining its footing, the range of themes have become wide enough to cover event reports, travel notes, philosophic thinking, gender identity, and even how to face the agony of losing beloved ones, among many other creative topics. The very few books of this type introduced to Taiwan in the past include "Arrival", "Quilt", and "Jimmy Corrigan - The Smartest Guy on the Planet". But now, as the Taiwan readers are changing their reading, there have been more and more of this type of books available. We see the

"Chronicle of the 80s" and "My Youthful Days, My Formosa" painting memories of growth with hands, and the "Creative Comic Collection" of works from Doujinshi AKRU that takes Taiwan history to create a brand new page, and even the Faces Publishing sets out the PaperFilm series this year, all for the hope of using the concept of film festivals to bring in the world visual literatures.

If we look closely why the Taiwan comic opens up its new page with these three literature styles, we'll see they precisely represent three different market sectors. In their own respective fields, these writers are rallying their readers, instead of face-to-face confrontations with the forceful Japanese youth fashion lines. Most importantly, we have realized that the creative works are not just the choice of individuals; instead, the market responses to these individual works manifest the local eagerness that is not satisfied. We have seen the humorous satire digging out the very native, intimate resonance, and the small-scale publishers accompany secretive hobbies, guarding them from being alone, and the desire of manifestation become ever bolder. And the visual literature, like all literary classics, lead us to touch the complication and profoundness never experienced before.

Major comic & animation activities are:

1. Doujinshi exhibitions: the largest national festivals of Fancy Frontier (i.e. FF) and CWT, both of which are Taipei based, in addition to the GJ in central Taiwan, and the WS in the southern Tainan and Kaohsiung. Large events are usually given after the Chinese lunar new year or in summer, while autumn and spring have mid-small sized events in between.
2. Original works exhibitions: the currently largest ComicNova is given regularly in every September.
3. Independent publishing markets: the oldest and most vintage is the Guling Street's Scholarly Market, along with the emerging publications-based exhibition markets, including Garden City Publishers, Not Big Issue, etc. Moreover, markets with a focus on creativities may also surprisingly show up from time to time.
4. Commercial Comics & Animation festivities: the February Taipei International Comics & Animation Festivals and August Comics Expo are today's two biggest annual events of Taiwan's Japanese comics.
5. Toy exhibitions: the annual Taipei Toy Festival had always been given in July, although was held in October in 2014.



Bookstores and Spaces

1. To visit Taipei's uniquely featured comic spaces, you must not miss Mangasick which presents a huge collection of Japanese alternative comics and Taiwan independent publishers' works, along with occasional exhibitions and live comic shows. For people fond of European styles, the Librairie Le Pigeonnier is a French BD, a treasure of visual literatures, while the CHO Pi located in Dadaocheng is focused on copies of British original paintings and works from the No Brow Press.
2. Fashion brands combined with toys and exhibitions have also constituted special comic and animation spaces. The Wrong Gallery Taipei located at the opposite of the Huashan Creative Park upholds its selling point of designers' toys and displays of original art works; there are also the similar stores such as Paradise and Monster Gear. The NMR street fashion clothing store also offers exhibitions from time to time.
3. The JoJo fans will never want to miss the Bucciarati Cafe, while the small fresh girls must go to the tot ta-ta cafe for a leisure break.
4. The Guanghua Market used to be a gathering center for comic lovers. Nowadays, the store worth a visit is Wawabook Store. The second floor of the Guanghua building was renovated into a gallery cafe, now a place for comic and illustration exhibitions. 5. Today, the most important gathering place for the Taipei comic lovers is Taipei Railway Station's underground shopping street, full of regular bookstores, Doujinshi bookstores, game stores, maid cafes, among many others. The nearby Ximending area is a place for youngsters gathering. The entire area includes the Wannien Building and Animate, places frequented by youngsters.



Text/Grace Tsui

Comic Sketching of Daily Living

Zhuang Yongxin_

Ecological Notebook For The Wonderful Time

Zhuang Yongxin, also known as Little Zhuang, uses a pen and a stack of manuscripts to constantly challenge the records of Taiwan comic history - the 1997 "Advertiser Notes" created a stunning record of 18 reprints, the 2009 "The Window" came with simultaneous APP issuing and was formally published in Spain in 2012; the 2013 "Chronicle of the 80s" and 2014 "Advertiser Notes Upgrade Version" established the peak of his comics career. But what he has been always staring at in the comics are the local landscape of Taiwan, the vintage humane touch, and the little things of the good old days, more or less lost in the wheel of time, hustling and bustling...

When did you fall in love with comics? What brought you to comics?

When we were young, video games were rare, and comics were commonly kids' favorite, because we didn't need much money to rent a whole lot of comic books from the store. We naturally fell in love with comics. Perhaps it's the gene inherited from my father, a graduate from the Department of Fine Arts, National Taiwan Normal University, I love painting, and I draw everything, including cartoon, TV series, and movies - anything I don't feel enough and anything I don't want to forget.

Which comic writers or works ever influence you?

Since my first encounter with comics, there have been many comic writers who influence me. I grew up with "Tinker Bell", now known as Doraemon, and "Black Jack", and therefore Osamu Tezuka and Fujiko Fujio are certainly in my favorite list. I'm particularly fond of Fujiko Fujio's science fiction short stories, and I'm also interested in Tetsuya Chiba's "Kung-Fu Kids" and "Ashita no Joe". In addition, Ryouichi Ikegami was the figure for imitation in our generation, and "Sanctuary" deserves to be a masterwork. As for contemporary Japanese comic writers, my favorites are Takehiko Inoue, Katsuya Terada, Katsuhiro Otomo, Matsumoto Taiyou, and Asano Inio. Taiwan comics writers such as Master Zhang Wen, A-tuie, and Mai Renjie have also enlightened and inspired me. Later on, my contact with European comic writes brought me a colossal change in the view of comic forms. My favorite European comic writers include Moebius, Milo Manara, Enki Bilal, Nicolas De Crecy, Tardi, etc.

What are the causes leading you to the current presentational format and painting style?

I've never insisted in any particular presentational format. The "Advertiser Notes", for example, made its debut in 1995 as a comic strip on the "High" magazine, with first-person narrative to record things of daily life like a diary; "The Window" adopts the storyboard concept with drawings to guide reading logic - text is hardly seen; "Chronicle of the 80s" was written as an essay first and then added with drawings. I kind feel every creative work is like an experiment in search for new possible.

**Do you feel hardship in creative works? What are your sources of inspiration?**

Drawing is a happy thing to do, and I can stay at the desk drawing for a whole day without feeling tired. The difficulty is how to allocate my time. I also have advertiser's and director's work to do. And my kid is still very young. I don't have much quiet time for work. I actually have only 2 or 3 hours available for work, and that is after taking the kid to school till noon. Or I may use fragmented time to do my work. I envy Stephen King who can lock himself in a lakeside cottage, writing for three months straight. So far, my inspirations are all coming from daily life, including perception of living and memories of life, as well as my very own view of the world.

What's your observation on Taiwan's comic environment and its future trend?

From my point of view, being a professional comic writer in Taiwan is a very hard work. What you have paid doesn't proportionally match up with what you have gained. Because the comic channels take most of the profits. Comic writers can't even guarantee to raise a family.

Beginning in the early 80s, massive Japanese pirated comics were introduced to Taiwan. They were poor in quality and not well categorized either. Kids are innocent, they take whatever they could fetch. But the bad thing is the deeply rooted conception of the parents that comics spoil kids' mind. The consequence is even today the Japanese comics are still Taiwan's mainstream comics, filled up the bookstores where you don't easily see comics of Taiwan originals. Youngsters engaged in the comic industry tend to take Japanese styles, and adults talking about "comics" think "this stuff has no class" and despise them from the bottom of their hearts.

As a matter of fact, a comic story requires comprehensive skills that include screenwriting, drawing, modeling, storyboard, and art editing. It is an integrated art, a personal movie, yet too cheap in price to be treated equally with "text books" or the so-called "art". This is what's happened in Taiwan. Things are different in other places. I believe the drawing of comics is simply a form of expression, and it is the connotation of communication that really matters. Taiwan has talents of comic drawing but lack writers of touching stories. In Japan, the comic industry operates in a drawing-writing collaborative manner to make stunning production. In Taiwan, it is mostly a one-man job. I think it is appropriate for Taiwan to develop personal-style works. Adding quality to contents, however, requires authors to think markets in a global view, contemplate possibility of stretching stories to peripheral products, and be able to produce touching stories with highly identifiable styles, so that the works can find a way out farther and wider.

What do you think of Hong Kong's comic works and environment? Any comments?

I'm not very familiar with Hong Kong comics, though I did have several contacts with their comic writers. I think they are better than us in communication with readers, and more devoted to marketing, exhibition, and industrial cooperation. This is what we need to learn. And the newly opened Hong Kong Comics Art Center reflects the very truth.



Text/Winnie Hung; Picture by AKRU, Gaea Books

Comic Sketching of Daily Living

AKRU_

Working People In the Northern City

When did you fall in love with comics? What comic works influence you the most?

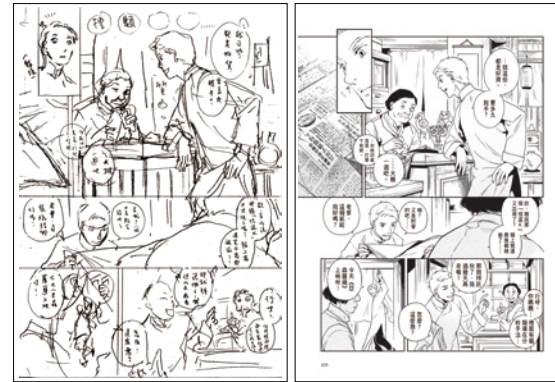
I grew up with Japanese comics, and I've loved drawing ever since. But the two are not absolutely connected - in fact they are two separate fondness, yet both immerse me within. The most impressive comic animation that affects me the most is Miyazaki Hayao's "Princess Mononoke". That was the time when I was a teenager, deeply impressed by the work of "Princess Mononoke" that so strongly interprets a world view, rarely seen in ordinary Japanese works. This is the work first ever enlightened me to acknowledge that creative works can have belief and life, and the impact of "what ideas an art work can convey" struck me and triggered my way of conceiving story themes.

When did you first publish your works?

My creativity works come in two different lines - one for commercial publications, and the other for Doujinshi. For the commercial line, the first publication is the single-volume "Wings of Kopule", and for Doujinshi, I had my original creative works published. Technically speaking, the first time I had my Doujinshi publication was in my high school years. Doujinshi in early days was conducted pretty much like a underground society. In early days, writers of creative comics would go to photocopy shops for simple printing and binding of their works. I joined the campus comic society in high school. We collected everyone's works and took them to the photocopy shop to bind them into a volume. The shop owner would put the photocopies or manuscripts of the Doujinshi works on a bookcase in front of the door for people to borrow and read. Whether photocopies or manuscripts, those were the media of my early contacts for exchanging ideas and reading Doujinshi works. And that was the beginning of my systematically collecting my daily works and the debut of sharing my creative works on a solid platform. Later on, I turned to Internet platforms to continue ideas exchange with peers. When I finally collected my works into volumes and sold them in an exhibition market, that was my first ever independent publication.

The majority of your comic works are based on the themes in the Japanese Occupation Era. Is that your preference?

It all started with an invitation from the Creative Comic Collection to create a short story about the 1935 Taiwan Expo, and that was the birth of "Flying Juveniles" - volume 1 of "Northern City Painting". Before then, I had no idea about the Japanese Colonial Era, and it was not until I finished reading the expo information about colonized Taipei that my eyes were brightened, and that was when I realized that we were not that inadequate of humane culture and material as I had thought. Taiwan in the 30s was a fashionable place, connected with the world. I was literally shocked and stated to pay attention to the years of our grandparents. Those were the days not very far from today, yet missing in the history education. So I decided to take the stories of the Japanese Colonial Era as the themes for my creative works.



left: "Gentleman Burglar" of "Northern City Painting II", the first draft of storyboard. /right: single-volume, page 105, finished draft.

What's the origin of your pseudonym? Which are the favorable characters of your own creation?

In my middle school years, I once made a graffiti drawing on my math textbook, which was a story about a brave beating a devil king, and I gave the leading character a chaotically spelled name - AKRU, inadvertently and unintentionally. It was not until my high school days when I was exchanging ideas with Doujinshi peers, I officially took AKRU as my pseudonym. I've been using that name ever since.

I like to create characters with distinctive personality and clear role in the play, and I'm always trying to operate each character to its excellence. For example, the owner of Painting House, a character in "Northern City Paintings", though not a leading role, is a key figure traversing through various characters to string up the whole series of stories.

What do you think of Hong Kong comics and its environment? Any comments?

General impression on Hong Kong comics is their bright styles, and my personal feeling is their American skin (emphasis on body structure and lighting) and Japanese bone (the rhythm of stories and performance), mixed up to create themes that particularly interest Hong Kong readers. However, Hong Kong also presents non-typical Hong Kong comics, which are not that into mainstream though.

Would you like to recommend places of Taiwan for small trips?

I like the Dadaocheng area where you can see the old-time faces of the streets, mixed up with new buildings, and many of the local businesses and living patterns still exude the traces of hundred years old or even farther back, and these are the real living things, not a museum display. The downtown Painting House depicted in my story still has some old buildings, which however are mostly broken up with past history, and not well preserved either. What a shame! The hundred-year old stores, temples, schools, and wharfs around the Dihua Street still stand, and the community has a consensus to develop the local features and promote local historical cultures to boost tourism that comes with depth and width.



61chi_

Dusk And Light Boom Simultaneously Between Lines

In docile short hair coupled with a pair of fine black-rimmed glasses, the young 61Chi has consolidated her footing in the international arena, as an independent creative comic writer. Studying in a graduate school on design, 61Chi has been not only a comic writer representing Taiwan to the French Angoulême International Comic Festival, but also a dual finalist for both the Kingdee Award and Golden Tripod Award. How does she use her paintbrush to manifest dusk and wonder in reality? And how does she transform the duality of reality and fabrication into lines to weave out the most obscure yet most warmest urban stories?

When did you fall in love with comics? What brought you to comics?

In my middle school days, a classmate brought a comic "Jump" to the class for everyone to read and pass on. That was my first ever contact with a real comic. As soon as opening the pages, I was immediately attracted...When time came to my high school days, I started to publish Doujinshi works with my own money, and used the Internet forums to share my works. And then I started to contact computer graphics, which made me feel like drawing things more complete, instead of just graffiti on textbooks. My academic major was graphic design, comics to me were more like pressure relief or amateur hobbies. It was not until I was selected in 2012 as a Taiwan representative to an International comic festival did I start to really look to the thing called comics, and kind felt engaging in the creative comic work may be a good way to go.

Which comic writers or works ever influenced you?

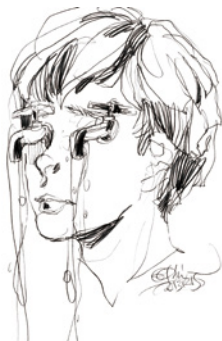
When I started to goof around in comic bookstores, Mochi-Mochi (also known as K. JUNO) was my favorite, and it is not hard to imagine the dramatic change of perception when one used to reading "Jump" suddenly encounter this strongly artistic, delicate line-styled drawing. Even up to date, my drawing on face, hair and cloth lines may still have the imprints from K. JUNO.

When I'm doing comic work, whether it is hue tuning or style stroking, I think of Egon Schiele.

I like Egon Schiele very much. I'm not quite sure which comic writer is my master or influences me the most. For example, I also like BASSO very much. His works, quite different from ordinary Japanese comics, explore life and the dark side of humanity, with more rigid lines and very special storyboard handling.

The origin of the pseudonym of 61Chi.

My original pseudonym was "Paraguay caterpillar", a nickname arbitrarily given by middle school classmates. We called each other "Paraguay" something. Today, these nicknames don't seem making any sense at all (laugh). So, I changed my nickname to the homophonic one - 61Chi.



61Chi Self-Portrait.

Did you ever hit any bottleneck in your creative work? What are the most identifiable traits of your own works?

At this stage, I don't feel that I can clearly grasp "human appearance". Due to the affection by Japanese comics, sometimes I feel the figures I draw are just in different clothes and hairstyles, without clear pictures of facial expressions. I've tried to blend comics in fine art. After all, my academic discipline is fine art all right, and it's natural for me to have a desire of applying what I've learned. Therefore, I like to apply watercolor painting skills in lines, hues and drawing composition. Well, I guess it is a very personal style!

Does "Design learning" make any tangible influence on your drawing style?

The design training helps me with graphic configuration, drawing composition, and cover font design. It also allows me to attach importance to overall touch of a work, and use design thinking to handle the entire work as a whole. As to the layout, movies influence me far deeper. For example, I use movie shooting storyboard to contemplate the drawing layout. Some readers comment on my comics as "very movie".

Your works contain a very strong cultural affinity. When you drew the Yonghe soy milk shops, did you feel extraordinarily excited?

Yes! It is often to spot pachinko shops and Shibuya in the Japanese comic scenes - the reality environment can be easily identified at a glance. Seeing McDonalds, Starbucks and Yonghe soy milk shops in comics can be a totally different experience for us!

What do you think of the Taiwan comic environment and its future.

As far as I know, Taiwan comic was once prosperous before immersing in silence. And then colossal changes happened - the emergence of Doujinshi and young comic writers...Although Doujinshi is biased to Japanese comic style, it has offered youngsters opportunities to contact comics. In recent years, the Angoulême Comic Festival has been inviting Taiwan to participate in the events. I can feel that the awareness of "We can find a way out" has been sprouting in the hearts of Taiwan comic writers. In addition, the Gaea Books and Creative Comic Collection have published many Taiwanese comics, which manifest the unique Taiwanese cultural humanity. I'm very optimistic about the future.

61Chi's impression on Taiwan.



Wei Zongcheng_

Self-Learning Without Teachers, Opening Up A New Page Of The Local Comic Market

I still remember the 2008 presidential election that made a second political party rotation and sent Ma Ying-jeou to the presidency with overwhelming victory. The next year, he boarded the chairmanship of the ruling party, with all the political power in his hands, and an unstoppable momentum. At this time, a comic named "The Advent of Emperor Ma" came out from nowhere. It depicts the historical struggles between Taiwan's two major

political parties, with an stunningly exaggerated Hong Kong style. In the comic, the familiar politicians were all put on stage, to make political struggles like fighting and politics like swordsmen's arena, and they fight one another. What a piece of work! This comic book instantly became a best seller, and was rapidly spread out on Internet, attracting massive media reports. The book was never printed enough to meet demand. This huge success led the author Wei Zongcheng to his career as a comic writer.

In fact, Wei Zongcheng's becoming a comic writer is not out of a sudden whim, and his success is not just a fluke either. As early as in his college freshman year, Wei had set up his own "Creative Comic Fights" website, that was open to various types of comics for publication, and even hosted competitions, dedicated to build a platform for Chinese creative comics. It was not easy to set up a website at that time. When his classmate were all busy playing video games, Wei, a layman of computers, immersed himself alone in the study of how to set up a website. He had his own way of thinking, and was very clear about what he wanted. He already had his own self-portrait. This is also manifested in his comic drawing. He doesn't have an artistic background, and never had any academic training of comic skills. He started with graffiti on textbooks like all high school students would do. But he has never stopped drawing since then.

That was a time when the Taiwan comic was at its lowest ebb, invaded by the massive advent of Japanese comics. It lacked innovation and thus lost its readers, and the result was closing of comic magazines, one by one. The comic lovers could not but take comic drawing as a leisure hobby, and Wei Zongcheng's website came to the rescue, becoming an ideal platform to embrace



His own self-portrait.



comic lovers' publications and exchange of ideas. Wei learned through the course of self discipline, trying to find his own way in the journey. To him, a self-learner without a teacher, the comic skills seem not to be the most important. He confessed that he learned comic drawing by reading lots of comic books. But the soul can never be learned - it belongs to one's own stories. So he decided to take things around him for inspiration and develop his very own comic styles. His drawing style is liberal, sometimes complicated while other times simple; sometimes adorable while other times exaggerative, and it all depends on the accentuation of stories. His story themes are also very versatile, ranging from politics to history, from men's compulsory military services to memories of erotic movies. All these are the themes of his comic creation. What has never been changed is that all the story elements are fetched from the experiences that resonate with local people. And his endless innovative ideals and humor go right through his thematic spindle.

So, when the "Advent of Emperor Ma" became a huge success, everybody would expect Wei to go this style all the way down. But he clearly comprehended that duplicating success only leads to repeated receding. He then turned to the erotic humor of "AV Terminal" series and the "Great Tongmenghui" series that funnily combines the character of Sun Yat-sun, the history of Tongmenghui, Lolita culture, and today's talent shows all together. In recent years, Wei has been focused on writing his full-length comic "Offerings War Record", for the first time combining Taiwan's religions with juvenile comics, and the splenderness of fights between humans and gods is nothing short of a rivalry against Japanese comics. Such a constant breakthrough of Wei has cultivated a bunch of his loyal readers, and supported him to become a full-time comic writers rarely seen in Taiwan.

Taiwan may not be short of pure artistic illustrators or comic writers, but the local commercial comic markets are overwhelmingly dominated by Japanese comic works. Nevertheless, a well

established comic environment should see arts and commercials coexisted. Therefore, Wei has been dedicated to produce comics that can bring up popular resonance and cultivate readers, with a great endeavor to make up the insufficiency of local commercial comics. He has the awareness of being a professional comic writers, and he's perfectly aware that Taiwan lacks space for comic strips on magazines. Nevertheless, he has committed to himself to publish two full-length comic sequels every year as well as one short funny comic in every two years. And that's what has pushed him forward in the comic creation. In addition to comic drawing, Wei also watches for current events. When his inspiration is exhausted, he would goof around the Sanxia and Yingge areas where he grew up. As a result, what he sees and hears have all become his endless sources for creation. And this is the comic spirit of his very own. In his early thirties, his comic peak is yet to come.



Wei Zongcheng's impression on Taiwan.

Text/ Huang Boxuan

Comic Sketching of Daily Living

Ye Mingxuan_

No Tricky Short Cuts Is The Way To Good Comics.

Ye Mingxuan, the writer of the strip "Unbound West World" published on the monthly "Dragon Boy", has a new comic book titled "Wizard Li Bai" which transforms the poet Li Bai into a warlock who kills demons. This single-volume comic book is published by Kadokawa Shoten, and posted online by Force Kadokawa.

When did you fall in love with comics? What brought you to comics?

In the very beginning, I was just fond of drawing, and had no idea of being a comic writer. It was about my college junior year when I won a comic award that inspired me a little, but I didn't treat comics seriously as a career to take. Later on during my job hunting, I won another comic award. At that time, the reopening of "Dragon Boy" was in need of some comic works. I decided to give myself a try for two years of time, and then I would decide whether or not to continue with comics. I've been drawing ever since.

What do you think of the Taiwan comic environment and its future?

Not many people drawing comics in Taiwan. Newcomers may find a way on comic magazines or online strips to sustain themselves, but drawing assistants can be a much bigger issue. Capable talents are not interested to be assistants, while training and cultivating ordinary drawers is quite a task to take.

Where are your favorite inspiration corners and travel spots in Taiwan?

On my vacations, I would travel back to my hometown Taichung, where the Feng Chia Night Market is a place I've frequented since childhood. I also like Yilan a lot, especially its traditional art center, which offers lots of performance, along with a vintage street.

Do you still go to performance and read comics?

I read lots of comics when I was a student. But today, I'm still following only "Ronin Swordsman" and "Jojo's Bizarre Adventure". The most recent three volumes of "Ronin Swordsman" really make me cry. How come such a long insistence in the endeavor! Recently, I reviewed many Disney animations, and was deeply impressed by the rigorous narratives within. They condense complicated scenarios in one and half hour, yet precisely catch the audience's emotions. This can be done only with long deliberate planning and constant contemplation.



Left: Ye Mingxuan's self-portrait. /Right: Ye Mingxuan's impression on Hong Kong.

What are the secrets of using comics to tell stories?

I used to draw with instincts, but then I learned storyboard from an editor in chief, and realized what a serious thing comics can be. To make a good storyboard, one has to know what to take and what to discard, so that genuine emotions can be infused to touch readers. Searching for information is a hard work has to be done. Things that must show up must be drawn. No tricks, no short cuts, no easy way to do it. Therefore, I'm quite slow in drawing...

In your comic "Wizard Li Bai", you depicted a lot of poets. What do you think of the differences between today's and yesterday's poets?

Poets in the past were more concerned about politics, and always had in mind what was happening. Their poems implied issues of the country. I think they were all youngsters filled with passion and compassion for the people and the country.

You used to be the chairman of a kendo club and possess a white belt. Is that right?

My father is a Chinese martial art coach. The young rebellious heart drove me to learn Japanese kendo. These backgrounds inspired me to be better in drawing fighting scenes. For example, people really good at using swords will not hold the hilts too tight. These details may not be noticed without hints, but are critical little things to realistic touch.

How about a few words to friends in Hong Kong?

I've been fond of drawing "Wizard Li Bai", and hope that you would like it!

The Wannien Building At Ximending

The Wannien Entertainment Holy Land Of Taipei Juveniles

Text & Picture/ Liugi

The Wannien building stands straight up in the heart of the Ximending area. Characters in red neon lights are hanging high, eye catching yet retro. After all, this is a forty-year old building, carrying countless young memories from the 70s and all the way through the time tunnel to this day. It has been the most remark landmark of Ximending, and showed up in Tsai Mingliang's movies from time to time.

Compared with the modern East commercial circle, Ximending is old. But just like the Wannien Building opened 40 years ago, Ximending is still a stronghold for youngster gatherings. It offers a variety of less expensive entertainment as well as diverse and rich sub-cultures, and is also a tourist attraction that is intimate to the Taipei folk entertainment tourists definitely do not want to miss. Meanwhile, the Wannien Building is exactly the congregation of all the diversified entertainment. Forty years ago at its opening, the building had been famous for its then novel skating rink - the "Wannien Skating Palace" was the most fashionable dating venue for youngsters. Going with youngsters' chasing after novelties in a frenzy for new things, the Wannien Building had been renovating itself as years went on. Later when MTV came to the scene, Wannien Building joined the rank as well. In the 90s when the Japanese comic & animation were sweeping through Taiwan, Wannien Building became a perfect place for comic bookstores, which directly import first-hand comic products from Japan, including the latest comics & animations not launched yet and limited offers of peripheral products, among many others you could imagine. Such a congregation made Wannien Building a sacred place for treasure hunting by comic lovers. This is also a place equipped with novel and diverse video games when the new gaming came to town. When Chen Shuibian, a then Taipei City Major, launched a campaign against video games, Wannien Building amazingly escaped the purge, and has since been operating up to this day. Today, it is one of the few video game centers in Taipei. On its entire fifth floor are all sorts of gaming machines, accompanied by bustling players all day long.

As time goes by, Wannien Building now looks old and its space also a bit narrow. But it is still the unshakable landmark for the young. One can find any young favorites in this entertainment castle, including fashion cloths, sports shoes, watches, perfumes, cell phones, gaming devices, toys, and of course comic magazines. Its B1 floor is a gourmet market, where you can find the famous old-time stores like "Golden Ribs" and "Shangdong Beef Noodle" among well-known stores offering tempura, jelly tapioca pearls, bitter teas, meal packages, hot pots, and steaks. Whether you are looking for noodles, rice, or snacks, walk around the market, and you can always be satisfied.

The Wannien Building does not grow old as time goes by. It has seen the changes of young cultures in the past 40 years, and will continue to be filled up with young and energetic atmosphere.



Retrospection Of Young Days For The Thirty Something.

Taoyuan's Fan Page

Text & Picture/ Sharky Chen

Twenty years ago when I was still a elementary school student, the Ake Comic Convenience Store was opened in a small alley on the Zhongzheng Road right in the business center of Taoyuan. That was a small comic bookstore, with first floor displaying non-pirated Japanese comic books, and second floor displaying peripheral products. Back then, I visited the store every week by buses, and chatted with the owner. And I was told about the concept of "copyright/authorized Chinese version" (My entering the publishing business might have been well edified by the owner). After my middle school days, Ake Comic Convenience Store moved to the current location, and changed its name to Fan Page, which has been used ever since. Walking into the store embraced by the shelved Japanese comic books, as well as Hong Kong comics such as "World Paintings" and "King Legendary", along with many puppet figures and collectibles. In the high school days, when the day was done I would visit the store with my pals, leaving behind all the tests and examines. All we wanted to study were the graphic characters inserted in the black and white squares filled with drawings. We believed that such passionate comics hid magic that could change the world. These comics had never failed us. They provided us, a gang of juvenile boys and girls, annoyed by adolescent troubles, with strength to fight against the world.

Today, I'm in my thirties, and busy works have occupied all my time. Whenever I feel depressed or troubled, I go to Fan Page to look for answers in this spiritual castle built with comics, which gives me courage to move on.

一刻館

桃園縣桃園市民生路99號／03-3397249／午後至晚間十點。無公休。



Text/Vick Picture/Yellow Book

Daily Living: Casual Painting

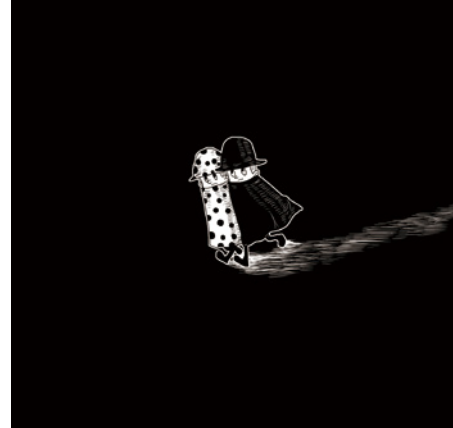
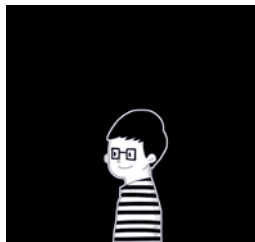
Yellow Book_

Floating Scent of the Seemingly Light Sorrow~!

On an ordinary day when checking a facebook homepage, the author came across a popular fans page, where the pages of neat lines and illustrations without much words inspired him to start up the new page of Yellow Book. People are naturally curious about this pseudonym. After all, nothing is erotic in the illustrations! The illustrator may have been answering this question for numerous times. All in all, it is like this: using simple imagery to set forth distinct contemplation space for conventionally established daily concepts and values, and even to stimulate retrospection. And it is this inspiration that triggered the idea of using the pseudonym of Yellow Book.

Born in late 80s, his major was visual communication. In his exploratory stage, he had already been highly interested in illustrations. Spending most of his time reading comics, he doesn't watch much TV. He's particularly fond of "One Piece", and his favorite artist is Alfons Maria Mucha, whose works are aesthetic and full of designs and adornment. His official job is a web designer, and his usual place for doing creative work is home, instead of bookstores or cafes most Wengings (young writers) would choose. On his sources of creation, he says that his inspirations just pop up abruptly without reasons, because there always are stories and figures running around on his mind. He grasps inspirations and thoughts, nurture them, and present them with illustrations. Compared with other illustrators' works, he doesn't think his are particularly exquisite. For instance, works like the once popular "Life Series" may take just half an hour to finish the framework drawing, if things go really well. "It is the conceiving that really takes time!"

Doing illustrations on the Internet was in the first place purely a sudden whim to make his colleague laugh. He never thought his works would be spread out by readers. He and his colleagues were all caught by surprise. He then continued to produce quite a few series, one by one, depicting odd love affairs that are sweet yet annoying. Among the most popular ones are: The lovable "Tina's Annoying Love Affairs", the "Key Point Classroom" always having misplaced key points makes readers unwittingly laugh, and the "Greedy Itou Miki" who likes to announce her exotic comments after feasting. Talking about the reasons why his works are popular, he shyly replies, "It's bashful to say this about myself!" Anyone who has read his works will find it not hard to know why. In this technology dominated era, exquisite drawing style is no longer an essential



condition; instead, it is a spot of elements, seemingly simple, relaxing, yet capable of rapidly touching the reader's heart to resonate with daily life. Many comic and animation characters no longer take the traditional lovely roles, but their popularity has not been affected a bit. "Being able to raise resonance is the key to attracting readers," says he.

How to raise resonance? The "Floating Sorrow" just released in January this year is a very good example. "The reason I'd like to publish this series first is mainly because it has larger room for discussion! The open ending gives no specific point of view, so that readers can have their own interpretations." Taking off his previous shyness, one can feel his fully loaded thoughts and ideas. Being a part-time illustrator, he also talked about how he looks at the career path of an illustrator. He thinks Taiwan is no short of skilled illustrators, but only the ones heading to commercial fields are receiving attentions. In contrast, in the highly mature Japanese comic & animation markets, many not-exactly-commercial, art-oriented illustrators with unique personal styles can have their own footing in the market and attract attentions. When asked if he's worried about the future of non-commercial illustration, he smiles and says, "Well, I have a full-time job, so for the time being, the Yellow Book isn't really in need of too much commercial contact." Though featured with simple fabrication of creative works, he is certainly not against commercial cooperation. The cat and other characters in his work "Urban Nonsense", for example, are being used by the apparel brand YEEELO for T-shirts.

When asked about his impression on Hong Kong and Macau, he says his impression on Hong Kong is the local cousins, especially the siu mei. Although he has never been to Hong Kong, the Eslite bookstore entering the Hong Kong market will bring the book "Floating Sorrow" over there. He hopes to visit Hong Kong when his "Floating Sorrow II" is published. He wants to personally experience the foods and everything other than that. Readers interested in his series of works can check his facebook to find out his irregularly published old and new works.

「Yeslow Book」FB: <https://www.facebook.com/Official.YellowBook>
YEEELO: <https://www.facebook.com/yeeelo>



Text/ Tang Meiwen Picture/ Ms. Undine

Daily Living: Casual Painting

Ms. Undine_

The "Rolling Your Eyes" Life Practitioner

In the dictionary, eye rolling comes in two meanings. One is the eye expression to reveal agony from being troubled or disappointed. The other means not welcoming. It is also known as "Hygienic Eyes"

In early 2013, the "Rolling Your Eyes!" fans page on facebook made its debut in the colorful and wonderful Internet world. It's been just a little more than a year that the website has attracted 670,000 clicks of the "like" button, and been crowned as Queen of populace on facebook. Ms. Undine, a queen from the rolling-eyes planet, makes fun out of rolling her eyes. She always faces petty grievances in daily life with her signature styling: light pink blusher, white sweat shirts, three lower eyelashes at tail of the eye, and a frenetic pose of "Rolling Eyes", scoffing them off. Ms. Undine, an expert of rolling-eyes life practitioner, is straightforward yet soft-mannered, and has huge stomach for food. She accurately interprets things in modern life, big or small, and marvelously present the psychological dramas of everyday life of you and me. Whether it is an annoyance of silent resentment or a moment of broken rationality, let's roll our eyes with Ms. Undine!

The fans must have been wondering what Ms. Undine looks like, what kind of a comic artist she is - the Queen of Rolling Eyes - to draw such stories that bring witty smiles on readers' faces, yet are spicy hot, stunning, and fabulous? As a matter of fact, this mysterious Ms. Undine is an otaku comic writer (This is a guy who called himself "Lo Wen", and once claimed in his facebook, "I've got to make a statement. It's me who created Ms. Undine. I'm an otaku writer! Please don't push me no more! I'm so bashful!") He has been drawing and reading comics ever since he got his memory, and he was an annoying boy who made messy drawings on textbooks and desks. He reads comics, so he certainly draws comics. "Crayon Shin-chan" was the first comic book Lo Wen ever read, and that made him a pervert since childhood. In early days, his favorite comic books included boys' comics such as "Slam Dunk" and "Dragon Ball" as well as girls' comics such as "Sailormoon" Then, he became obsessed with Junji Ito, and that led him to pioneer his perverting and collapsing style.



「Rolling your eyes, Ms. Undine!」
FB: www.facebook.com/MissUndine
Weibo: weibo.com/MissUndine

As for the origin of the pseudonym "Rolling Eyes!", Lo Wen's answer is, "I myself is a maven of rolling eyes. To me, it is easy and common like a daily routine. I roll my eyes on junky people, junky stuff, and even on overwhelming glee, anger, sadness and joy. Before setting up my fans group, I ran into many junky stuff, and I felt if I didn't roll my eyes, I would fail myself. The role of Ms. Undine is my all-time favorite, so I named this character Ms. Undine." Not out of a choice, the characters such as Undine and Jessie were naturally born. In fact, Lo Wen's creative inspiration usually comes from himself or surrounding people and things, and those are the sources of his endless inspirations. However, in the recent half a year, Lo Wen started to add a new set of comic stories sourced from petty things of daily life. He says, "I want these comic characters to have their own world; otherwise, readers are always confusingly binding the comic characters with me, and that's something really bothers me!"

In Taiwan, the profession of "comic animation and illustration" are full of predicament. But Lo Wen pretty much enjoys being a comic writer, and his father is very proud of him, even crazily publicize his comic writer son! "Aha! Go, Comrades!" These are the words Lo Wen would like to say to encourage the Taiwan comics. As for his point of view on Hong Kong comics, he says, "Honestly, I super love it!, I even collected the comics The Unparalleled! My fondness of Hong Kong comics is no less than that of Japanese comics. I really admire Hong Kong comics, because the realism style of their drawing requires a solid background, plus the color pages, making them like movies. Fabulous and fantastic!" Lo Wen hopes to exchange ideas and collaborate with Hong Kong comic writers in the future.

Already publishing the book "Rolling Your Eyes! Ms. Undine: The New National Exercise" in August 2013, Lo Wen set forth, again, his Line chart blocks at the end of this March! And again in August, there will be another secret product to make its debut (stay tuned!). Coming up are lots more far-sighted plans to carry out the slogan "Launch comic & animation, make products, create the Wens brand, and rule the Earth!" Lo Wen would say, "For the economy. Just do it!" And this is it!

The Beauty And Sorrow In The Far-Away Clouds **The Unworldly Paradise - Lanyu**

Text & Picture/Winnie Hung

This is a small island of Taiwan where one can embrace the breaking dawn. The island offers exclusive living rhythm and gestures. Whether by an airplane or a boat, travelers have to journey through layers of fogs to reach that beautiful seashore. The free-range pigs, chickens and sheep are the traffic lights for the islanders, which constitutes a fusion of animals and vehicles in the crossroad traffic. The speechlessly beautiful seacoasts and the randomly built wooden pavilions along the roadsides staggered one another produce a visual illusion. Here we are, the unworldly paradise - Lanyu.

Situated in the southeast of the island of Taiwan, Lanyu has a perimeter length of 38km around the island. Motorbikes are the most common transport vehicles. It takes only about an hour to ride a motorbike around the island. The Tao tribe living on the island is the only marine aboriginal tribe of Taiwan, living on fishing and hunting to sustain their self-sufficient life. The islanders' main vegetables include sweet potato and aquatic taro, and the ocean is the like their natural refrigerator preserving abundant fish for them. For this spiritual and heavenly island of Lanyu, the writer Shamen Lanboan has composed many moving songs, such as "The Sky Eyes", for his hometown, and the award winning singer Cheng Jinnien has also produced many popular songs while staying on this beautiful land.

The entire island of Lanyu is divided into 4 villages - Red Head, Coconut Oil, Lundao, and Dongchin - as well as 6 tribes. Among the 6 tribes, the first three tribes (Red Head, Fisherman, Coconut Oil) are located in the front mountains, while the latter three (Lundao, Dongchin, Yieyin) are located in the rear mountains. Between the Yieyin and Red Head tribes are the cross-island road, that facilitates commute between the two ends of the mountains. The high-latitude crossroad on the cross-island road leads to the commanding height of the island - Lanyu Weather Station, which overlooks the entire island. The Tao people are very friendly. Their polite and passionate manners impress tourists. This is a place to indulge oneself in slow space and leisurely rhythm. The daytime diving and nighttime hiking to watch twinkling stars on the sky accompanied by narrators, is the best way to experience the fusion with nature and enjoy the sentimental touch with great fun.

Fisherman Tribe

There is the beautiful Lanyu airport, an architecture in a puzzle-plate shape. Transport between Taitong and Lanyu is carried out by 20-seats small airplanes, run by Daily Air. The tribal territory offers one the most magnificent sunset views on the island. The Lanan Museum exhibits the Tao culture and traditional life styles, such as the puzzle-plat boats used to catch flying fish as well as the traditional houses and underground inhabitation. The Tao people, good at making puzzle-plate boats, set out on the sea in spring and summer to catch flying fish. And Lanyu is thus called the "Hometown of Flying Fish". Their traditional life patterns and yearly ceremonies were all shaped up by the flying fish culture. There is the renowned relish package food store called "No Hungry Don't Sit". And the marinated noodle store near the Lanyu Airport and the mixed Chinese-western delicious breakfast store "Shiluan" are also the must-go places for eaters.

Red Hade Tribe

The Lanyu Clinic (medical building) and post office are located in this tribal area. The Badawan is famous for its ecologic conservation of green turtles. In between end of spring and beginning of summer, strolling pleasantly on the slight slope of "Green Green Grass", watching the lily flowers all over the mountain reflecting with the spectacular coastlines, a casual glimpse at the sunset clouds makes everything breathtaking in its magnificence of beauty. The nearby "DuWaWa", a mountain lake, can be reached by an adventurous mountain hiking through lush forests bustling with wild birds and butterflies. Breathing the wonderful phytoncid, you'll be unwittingly embraced and amazed by a fantasy scene of the lake with withered woods emerging from the water straight up. Heading south, here is the reservation area for the species unique to Lanyu - Pearly Butterfly. Along the coastlines are eroded rocks in various shapes, such the sublime Dragon Head Rock and elephant-shape Sleeping Lion Rock, as well as the rocks with fun metaphors like the Helmet Rock and Hat Rock. In the neighborhood is the reality that Lanyu people don't want to face the most - "Nuclear Waste Storage". Immersing in the natural beauty and perceiving the locals' respect to life, one may well be stunned by the contrast scene of the anti-nuclear flags hanging high up door-to-door. When asked about the nuclear waste thing, Mulita, the owner of the B&B Mermaid said witty words, "Free electricity is no substitute for our people's health and the purity of the environment."





Yieyin Tribe

In the midway of the cross-island road overlooked is a large tract of beautiful black roofs side-by-side. Here's the aggregation of the best preserved "underground inhabitation" of Lanyu. The life styles of the elderly here are still preserved as traditional, simple and free. One of Lanyu's two cold springs, Yieyin Cold Spring, is located here, which has the fine granular white sand rarely seen on the island, and the intertidal area is covered by chlorella. This is the place where you can watch the skyline stretching to the oceanic horizon while enjoying the genuine, pure cold spring.

In response to the high temperature, high precipitation of rain and typhoons, the underground inhabitation is a collection of houses built layer by layer downward. It usually comes with 4 layers, and its wind resistance and drainage mechanisms are the wisdom inherited from generation to generation. The raised pigs, chickens and herds of sheep have their own living spaces around the houses, and never arbitrarily enter the houses where human live. The front gate of a house may have 3 or 4 pieces of doors, and a house with a gate of 4 doors usually indicates a respected elder lives in. Walking into the underground houses adjacent to one another, one will be embraced by the fragrance of green grass in front of the doors. The drainage system built with natural ancient architecture allows the underground houses fluctuating with the terrains to be free of hygienic problems of gathered waters or stinks. Even today, there are still architectural research teams from home and abroad coming over to study and learn this drainage system.

The 80 plus years old Lin Xinyu and his wife told us the faith and hopes of the Lanyu people, "We don't need money, we can fish and farm to be self sufficient, and we're happy and content with such a life." "Here, we don't really have the so-called private land. Wherever an unused land is available, there will be farming there. We harvest no more than what we need, and leave the rest for others to harvest. Well, this is good to all of us after all!" "I also harvest sweet potatoes and vegetables grown by others. It is quite all right." "We catch different fishes by the seasons, and catch no more than we need to feed ourselves, and set free little fish fry back to the ocean."



Dongchin Tribe

Dongchin Bay is the most perfect spot in Lanyu to welcome the dawn of a day. Every morning around 5 or 6 O'clock, strolling on the foggy road in pure fresh air, enjoying the French toast with bacon roll made by "Yameiya Breakfast", and then sitting in the Trance Pavilion, it's the time to embrace the first sunlight of the day. Heading along the seaside, and then crossing the neighboring seacoast to enter the "Lovers Cave" - a legend of sad and beautiful stories, here is the B&B green architecture, the Sky Eye. It caresses the pacific breeze, and lays you down to get you amazed by the waterfront green grass and twinkling stars all over the sky. There are diners like "Mermaid & Cat", "Wild Kids", and "Coastal Coffee" that offers delicious light meals, drinks and relish snacks. The "Xi Gang Cai Studio" engages in wood carving, painting, ceramic handicraft and creative art works, while the "Three Sisters Workshop" is specialized in Tao people's traditional ornaments and daily utensils, colorful in simple craftsmanship. The "Mountain Forest Workshop" and "Anti-Nuclear Diner" are run by artist Zhang Linshan and his wife, where you can see genuine designer's handmade woven garments and dyeing cloths, creative jewelries with totems of Lanyu owls, and home ornaments.

Lundao Tribe and Coconut Oil Tribe

This place is ideal for scuba diving and snorkeling. The Lanyu Beacon stands high up on the mountain peak, and the coastal rocks are carved by the magic nature into various rock landmarks

such as the Tank Rock, Five-Holes Rock, Damsel Rock, Hen Rock, and Dual-Lions Rock. The ocean people possess unmatched talent in colors. Looking out all around, you'll find yourself pleasantly submerged in colors - the bus pavilions, balloons hanging afloat in front of every house, the apparels, jewelries and necklaces going with daily dressing are all trippingly colorful in every piece of aesthetics. There are the bead art canoes of "Ina Traditional Handicrafts", the DIY color totem teaching & handicrafts, the relish dishes of "Canaan Garden Craft House", the bed & breakfast, snorkeling, woodcut, molding clay run by "Sanctuary Cultural Workshop". Their handicraft and coloring are mesmerizing and astonishing.

Coming to the Coconut Oil tribe, you'll see the only gas station on the entire island. The supply and passenger ferries from Taitung to Lanyu harbored at the Kaiyuan Harbor. The Farmers Association Supermarket and Ocean Supermarket offer a variety of daily goods for convenient shopping. The popular diner "Four Season Beef Noodle" offers signature dishes - "Spicy Pot Noodle" and "Marinated Noodle", with extinguished flavors.



Taiwan Flavor Steak

The Taiwan Version Itself Is A Crazy Thing

Text & Picture/Ajax Wang

Talking about steak, what's in your mind? Is it like dressed-up dating lovers depicted in the movies, accompanied by flowers and violin performance in a restaurant dating, immersed in romantic atmosphere for the night?

In Taiwan, "steak" is a sure thing. But the thing "eating steak" may be even more pervasive, and its connotation is richer as well.

More than 80 years ago, Taiwan's first "western restaurant" was opened. The western food at that time was no genuine western recipe at all; instead, it was curry mixed fried rice and fried pork tenderloin - Japanese-style "foreign cuisine". It was not until the period of U.S. Army stationing in Taiwan did the "American Club" introduce genuine western food like steak, pizza and fried chicken. The guests of the western-style restaurants were surely exclusively to the military officers and high-rank officials. Absolutely not for the general public.

As the local society became more and more open, there came the first European restaurant, and that was the time western cuisines became part of general public's daily life. Local restaurants began to imitate western services and cuisines, while the western restaurants started to grow. Not surprisingly, foods coming to Taiwan get Taiwan personality: gourmet foods started in high-price restaurants, and then went to the ones with ordinary prices, and finally gave birth to the parity-price steak affordable for everyone.

The parity-price "steak" is distinctive from others in that it is done by being placed on a hot metal plate to get grilled, and served with noodles, vegetables and a fried egg, spiced with sauces of Taiwan flavors. The sizzling sound from the grilled steak on the metal plate exudes rich personality and bustles native to Taiwanese people. The ongoing grilling and heating makes medium-grilled steaks

with a bit rawness delicious and accepted by Taiwanese eaters who are used to well-cooked food.

However, "parity price" is not good enough to satisfy everyone, because it is not cheap yet, not enough to cover the general public. Starting from nowhere, steak openly stepped into Taiwan's most vivid food battleground - the night market. So, the "night market steak" became the ultimate transformer of the steak once belonging to high-end restaurants. In the crowded markets, it is easy to see eaters in T-shirts, undershirts, and slippers, swaying their knives and forks and chewing big chunks of juicy steaks, seemingly to manifest with actions that the meaning of food is all about eating in the mouth, rather than the background cultural classes.

Is it insane? This is just beginning.

You know what, the Taiwanese-style pan-grilled steak is always served with noodle (it could be macaroni, spaghetti, or pure Taiwanese grease noodle or oolong noodle), which is commonly called "Iron-Plate Noodle". Entering a steak house and ordering just an iron-plate noodle without steak, you won't be treated as weird - don't ask me why eating just noodle in a steak house, cause I don't have answers - eventually the noodle took a solo flight, and became one of the must-have dishes in Taiwan's breakfast stores.

Is it insane? There's more!

To compete against cheap diner's steaks, "parity price" steak houses took the ride to the fashion of buffet, where the all-you-can-eat bread, salad, soups and drinks have become indispensable ingredients; some steak houses even serve both meat and vegetarian hot pots of genuine Taiwan flavors, along with shumai, fried refreshment, marinated pork rice, spicy hot food, small hot pot, chocolate pot, ice cream, and so on. Of course, all the food comes with "parity prices".

Insane, isn't it? Frankly, I think so, too. Taiwan still has quite a many orthodox, exquisite western restaurants though. Anyone having lived in Taiwan for some time may find this: this "insanity" stands for a fusion of the general public with creativity - after all, who says food has to be served in a certain way?! If only the way food is served pleases and satisfies eaters, it is a good way to serve and eat food.

Any food coming to Taiwan will become insane. Because the Taiwan food culture has always been a crazy-hat like carnival.



The Steak Inn, a steak house with 20 years in the business, is a traditional western restaurants, serving decent gourmet dishes from appetizers to desserts. In addition to steaks, Steak Inn has another spotlight - Canadian lobsters.

Address: No. 10, Lane 49, Section 1, Anhe Road, Da'an District, Taipei City/
Telephone: 02-27753011/Business Hours: 08:00-10:30、11:30-14:00、17:30-22:00

Regent Robins/serving the entree of char-grilled steaks, along with other buffet-style dishes. Private dining boxes are provided. This is a medium-high priced steak restaurant that has long been a hotspot for steak lovers.

Address: No. 10, Lane 49, Section 1, Anhe Road, Da'an District, Taipei City/
Telephone: 02-27753011/Business Hours: 08:00-10:30、11:30-14:00、17:30-22:00

Jimmy's Kitchen/one of the renowned vintage western restaurants, which serve steaks as well as buffet of grease chicken, grilled meat strings, sashimi, cakes and desserts. Its medium prices plus the delicious flavors are worth a feast.

Address: Floor B1, No. 77, Section 4, Ren'ai Road, Da'an District, Taipei City/
Telephone: 02-27117750/Business Hours: 11:30-14:30、17:30-22:30

Danny's Steakhouse/one of the signature restaurants owned by Deng Yougui, who is known as Taiwan's "Godfather of Steaks". With 40 years of experience as a chef, Deng aims to make his steaks "exquisite" and "international", and has conquered many gourmets.

Address: No. 58, Lequn 3rd Road, Zhongshan District, Taipei City/Telephone: 02-85011838/Business hours: 12:00-14:30、18:00-22:00

Lienyi Restaurant/The founder is a former chief administrator of the Formosa Plastics enterprise. His "Formosa Steaks" with tendon and bones are reputed in Taiwan with a firmly established market status.

Address: No. 186, Section 4, Nanjing East Road, Songshan District, Taipei City/Telephone: 02-25703131/
Business Hours: 11:30-14:30、17:30-21:30

Young President Steak House/This is an old Taiwan-style steak house favored by politicians and celebrities. Its thoughtful cuisine even reaches to the salad and after-meal fruits that are full of nostalgia of Taiwanese style. Its entree - the steaks, is second to none, worth a recommendation.

Address: No. 174, Jiankang Road, Songshan District, Taipei City/Telephone: 02-27608027/Business Hours: 11:00-14:00、17:00-21:00

Star Restaurant/This restaurant used to be the favorite of Chiang Soong May-ling, and also a gathering place for scholars in old days. It has preserved its original nostalgic relish since re-opening. In addition to the steaks, the Chinese borscht is also one of its signature dishes.

Address: Floor 2, No. 5, Section 1, Wuchang Street, ZhongZheng District, Taipei City/Telephone: 02-23815589/
Business Hours: 10:00-22:00

Cow on Fire/This is a Kaohsiung-based restaurant, famous for its Argentina-style roast beef. Its waiters walk through customers with a dining car full of different parts of the beef to take orders, letting customers enjoy different beef flavors in one shot.

Address: No. 122, Zhongzheng 3rd Road, Xinxing District, Kaohsiung City/Telephone: 07-2352000/Business Hours: 11:30-15:00、17:30-22:30

Bolero Restaurant/The first ever western restaurant of Taiwan has been running for 80 years. In addition to its very original "foreign dishes", it also offers modern steaks and German pock hocks, with medium pricing. It is a must-visit restaurant for those in seek of nostalgic vintage.

Address: No. 308, Mingshen West Road, Datong District, Taipei City/Telephone: 02-25560710/Business Hours: 10:00-22:00

The Sherwood Toscana/Its dry aging steaks stand out among all western restaurants. In addition to delicious steaks, Sherwood also offers exquisite buffet, an excellent choice gourmets definitely don't want to miss. Address: No. 111, Section 1, Mingshen East Road, Taipei City/Telephone: 02-27181188/Open on Monday thru. Friday, Saturday thru. Sunday.



Walk To Tsinghua University, And To Socra-Cat-Tes

Text & Picture/Glass Eater

Many writers, scholars and social activists are from Hsinchu. I came here to see my wife who has been studying in Tsinghua University for half a year, and will be a junior student next year. She studied abroad - here in Taiwan, as an exchange student. She chose the Taiwan Tsinghua University. Before the study, she helped organize the February Taipei International Book Fair, and then took a bus on her own to the university. Taipei was raining. She carried her luggage and went straight to her dormitory. Thanks to her, I've got reasons to come to Taiwan frequently.

Hsinchu is quieter than Taipei, yet the dining stores are as lovely. The Chenghuang Temple's rice noodle is fantastic. We walked from the Hsinchu Train Station to the Tsinghua campus, crossing long railroads. The distance was merely a few fingers long on the map, but it took us 3 quarters to get there. Touring Hsinchu, without a company, can be a bit lonely. It is advised to have someone to accompany, to chat with. The walk will be pleasant and distance will be shorter. Here we are, Tsinghua campus, in a blink of time.

Rumor has it that someone proposed that some of the school campus lands should be recalled for not being used. The school president's reply is: We are famous for studies of

atom, so bigger campus makes it easier for us to make explosions. Upon hearing this story, I laughed abruptly. In the campus, I've got to know writers Yang Jiaxian and Zheng Shengxun. The one-man publisher, a long-hair weirdo, graduated from here. I guess this is a place to nurture both art and science talents. The time of my staying here was too short. What a shame! Sunday and Monday were the days I couldn't sit in the class.

Coming to Socra-cat-tes for dinner, what surprised me were the books and literary magazines all around. Unfortunately, I'm not addicted to books. What a pity! I came across the book "Summer and Smoke" written by Hong Kong writer Leung Pingkwan in the 70s. This is one of his early works. There are also Young Du's novels. Many Wenqings (young writers) spent their precious young days in printing their manuscripts here, a campus restaurant accompanied by cats and books.

She said boys liked to ask girl waitresses to take photos with and asked for their phone numbers. Well, she said so. How dared would I look around? I didn't want to get trouble with her! How cozy the cats are! They came in, wanting to be petted by people. The store name has a "cat" in it. It is where the romantic atmosphere begins to permeate.

Nearby were a middle-aged couple. The woman, talking and weeping, didn't touch the meal at all. The man was listening, while eating. I'd never seen such kind of pouring out one's sadness. They were gone, leaving an intact meal set. The waitress seemed not knowing what to do with it. I could not but take a few glimpses at them, and then checked whether my wife noticed that. Luckily, I wasn't be detected. "What is their relationship, you think?" She asked in Cantonese.

"No matter!" I replied in Mandarin. Stories come and go day by day, anyway.

I asked her classmates to play basketball. What a nice day. No rain. Jumping, shooting, and running in total sweating. What a retrospection of getting back to school days again.



Convenient Stores - The Only Topic Of Today

Text/ Chen Yingheng

Whether it's a foreigner living in Taiwan's urban areas for a while, or a hustling tourist to Taiwan, it seems always inevitable to buy something in a convenience store at a roadside, on a mountaintop, in the first floor of an office building, or at a corner of the streets, envious of having such a convenience store as a helping neighbor.

The not so-big store space is filled with daily living mechanism. For example, preordering MayDay concert tickets, buying high-speed rail tickets, eating delicious microwave food, fetching the just arrived home-delivery "1984", and in the afternoon thunderstorms, sitting in the store and sipping the Wenqing green milk tea, immersed in a trance.

To visitors from Hong Kong and Macau, it could be a stop-by for a bottle of drink or a request by friends before setting out for fresh food such as royal balls or spa eggs as souvenirs. Convenience stores are must-visit tourist attractions on this lovely island. Literally, to those who had lived in Taiwan before, such souvenirs help relieve their homesickness even better than pineapple cakes and marinated duck tongues would do.

When we are used to enjoying the convenience and services from the chain stores run by enterprises and conglomerates, unwittingly immersed in this little happiness, do we ever notice anything else other than the convenience stores?

While living in Taipei, I befriended the owner of a lunchbox store. She runs her store based on the concept of healthy, safe, and delicious food as well as loving Taiwan image upheld and propagated by convenience stores. As a mother, she wants customers to be able to eat lunchboxes with "mama tastes" every day. And she sticks to low-sodium recipes. To make fresh food, she goes to the market to buy fresh ingredients early in morning, every day.

It was about the year of 2009 as I recall. It was at the lunchtime, when she was preparing lunchboxes and talking to me, "This is a bad time! It doesn't matter how bad the economy is, people have to eat. The utilities and many other things are becoming more and more expensive. This is a hard time for business..." Using the clamp in her hand, she pointed to



the convenient store across the street and said, "No matter how cheaper my lunchboxes are, I just can't compete with the stores;

besides, they offer drinks for only extra 10 bucks, plus collection of points for doll figures.

Probably starting from that day, I began to realize the little happiness we Hong Kong and Macau visitors eagerly look forward to is invisibly shadowed by the horizontal and vertical integration maneuvered by giant enterprises.

In this Age of 22k salary, people would certainly like to spend less for more. Aiming at this predicament, convenient stores uphold the "coin strategy", allowing consumers to feed themselves with a few tens of bucks. The low-price strategy has helped convenient stores take a large portion of the eating-out markets. The good business has indeed encouraged investors, and offered consumers choices of cheap food as well. However, when a single enterprise owns colossal retail channels, it will be empowered to bargain with quantity orders of materials, and manipulate the market prices through monopoly, thus be able to engage a price competition. When it controls all the sectors from fields to dining tables - farming, transport, production, warehousing, and retail - this is really something deserves a huge attention. Rather than flagrant monopoly in joint price hike of, say, coffee, oligarchic dominance takes a step-by-step approach to choke up peripheral businesses, making competitors hard to survive.

Today, the small-medium food stores in Hong Kong and Macau are facing the same predicament. It's not that their products are no good, nor their services or operations are bad; it is the ever increasing rental pressure they have to face with, and loss of their workers to big enterprises. Today, we helplessly watch relish food stores in "glorious retreat" one by one, replaced by the chain stores that can afford the unimaginable rentals. Waiters of tea restaurants quit and turn to the chain stores as clerks. In the well developed, free economic systems of Hong Kong and Macau, such business alternation seems no surprise at all. We are apathetic to it, and satirize it as an "industrial upgrade". When the day come, there will be no street vendors and small stores, but chain stores owned by conglomerates. With such a highly concentrated business pattern, how can we say this is a free economy?

Next time when you visit Taiwan again, my advice is to patronize street vendors, to order a black-white cut or taste Sishen soup. You'll not only experience the versatile and rich food culture of Taiwan, but also "eat out" justice and business sustainability. As for the mother running lunchbox business, she in the long run failed to continue her healthy lunchbox business. Well, she did amass quite a connection with people from her doing honest business, and now she's real estate agent.

台港說話表達大不同

台灣-婉轉客氣、模稜兩可



香港-單刀直入、點到為止



Call me **Jie Jie**, a Taiwanese in Hong Kong, observing subtle differences between Taiwan and Hong Kong, and using paintbrushes to write down interesting things that pop up from nowhere. Through this fan page, my wish is to build a bridge of mutual understanding between Taiwan and Hong Kong. May the bitterness of life be, let Jie Jie bring you joy and fun. His first illustration book "Jie Jie Non Stop in Hong Kong" depicts the differences between Taiwan and Hong Kong as well as funny and interesting things. The book is scheduled to publish in Taiwan in August this year.

台港餐飲業大不同

台灣餐飲業-客戶永遠至上



香港餐飲業-客人要被教育



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