

Nº14

# 走台步



To raise up for  
social movements,  
and  
tenderly chant for the land -

**Lin Shengxiang,**  
a Haka musician

Roaming in the landscape  
of Taitung's mountains and seas

Marching to "Haipai" Taichung,  
for breakfast



The  
creation  
base  
for  
independent  
musicians





### Editor's Words

Indie music is crazy awesome cool! This edition of Taiwan Step presents you a special feature on "Indie Music", a total of 20-page exclusive interviews are here for you to grasp the most of the dynamic music pulse of indie music in Taiwan! Not only are we prepared to share with you the in-depth interview with musician Lin Shengxiang, we have also invited Taiwan music reviewer Chillouttree Chen to introduce to you the development of Taiwan Indie music. There are also 10 musicians/bands ready going to tell you their favorite hangout for their inspirations. To wrap up, 2 bands that are yet to release their works will share in person the endeavor they have made on their music paths. Well, enough said. Welcome you to flip through the pages according to the guidelines given, and come to Taiwan to listen to the music.

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**Lin Shengxiang**, a Hakka musician

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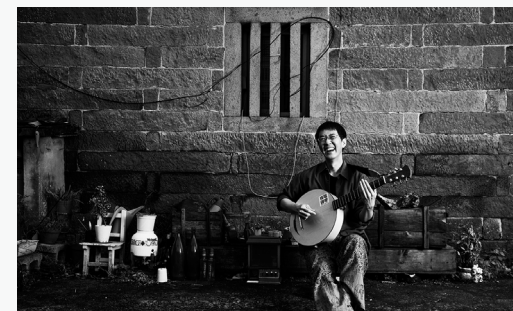
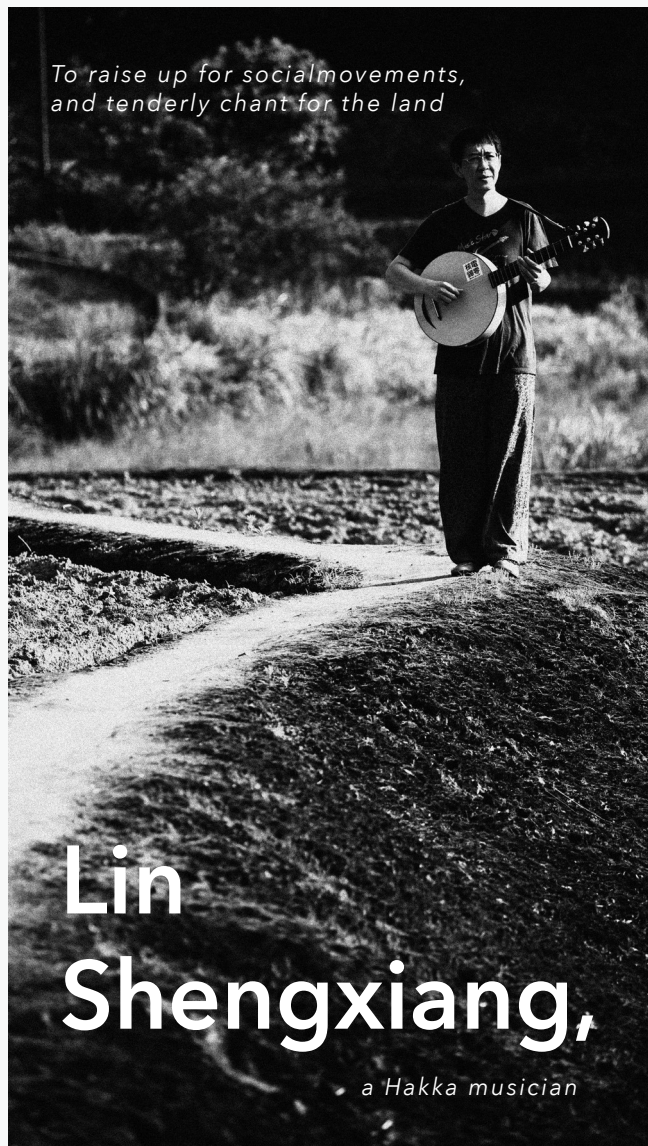
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Text/ Lu Yituan  
Picture/Jacky, Fashion Music

In the March-end DaGang concert, Lin Shengxiang, as usual, in a plain, floppy T-shirt, carrying a cloth backpack, played the six string banjo at the harbor, in fully spirited tranquility. In the end of 2013, he and his band published an exuberant album "My Village", which is elaborately made from the CD framing to the musical details, like transforming the god's magic into intangibility, leading listeners to the immersion of enchantment. This Hakka musician with decades of amassed performance can raise up for social movements, and tenderly sing for the land; this time, he wants to share his hometown sensation and the next-generation musical education. And now, he starts to write cheesy songs for the next generation.

**Q:** During your college years at the Tamkang University in the 90s, you organized the Guangzi Musical Pit band. A few years after the graduation, you went back to Meinong, Kaohsiung, to create your songs. Would you tell us about your homecoming journey.

**Lin:** The homecoming course is nothing but simple. I had been watching the Meinong anti-reservoir movement, and the protest banners in the Zutaojiao Village were already raised up, which easily caught my attention. In 1994, I organized a ticket-selling concert in Tamkang to present the songs I wrote, and the earnings were fully donated to Meinong as a foundation for the anti-reservoir movement. In that occasion, I met with Zhong Yongfeng (who later became Lin's long-time Taiwan partner for lyric writing), director-general of the movement. After the graduation I had my two-year mandatory military service, and then stayed in Taipei for a year, during which I made my second performance tour "Come See the Land" (the songs of the tour are collected in the album "Formosa Wander"). One day, Yongfeng came to me in the old Tamsui three-section compound house and said, "Shengxiang, the movement is being heated up, won't you come to join us?" I seriously considered the proposal, and three days later, I stepped on the homecoming journey. I had my things packed in four big cartons and sent home.

**Q:** Your songs created in Meinong were intimately tied to the locality. How did you start your search for the music root? and how did you see the connection between the land the music?



**Lin:** My favorite band in my college years was Pink Floyd. But in time I realized that if we kept sticking to Pink Floyd's way in making music, we'd be distant from people here in Taiwan. Plus, we wouldn't overtake Pink Floyd anyway, in their style.

The 1998 debut in my hometown Zutaojiao Village was with my then band to celebrate the birthday of the god SanSheng Highness. Alas! We





were booed by the audience. The folks said, "Your music has no percussion and suona, then how can we celebrate the Highness's birthday?" I had a deep introspection, looking at the musical instruments we used, and then realized that such a rock-and-roll formation wouldn't bring my music home. Right at that moment, I made up my mind to use traditional musical instruments. So, later, the Jiaogong Band used suona, and gongs and drums were used for percussion. Since then, my music has been bound together with Taiwan traditional music. Use traditional elements to create my own songs.

The 1999 album "We Come To Sing Mountain Folk Songs" was dedicated to the anti-reservoir movement. And it was then that my music started to be accepted by the Meinong folks. This is a course of internality and externality. Sentimentally, this album



used traditional elements, which internally connects with the musical aesthetic experiences of the folks; and externally, this album won me the Best Song Writer and the Best Song Producer prizes of the 2000 Golden Melody Awards. That was the first ever for a Meinonger to win this honor, and certainly a big media event. Since then, I've been living in Meinong, and the songs I've written are mostly inspired by Yongfeng's and my living experiences in Meinong.

**Q: You have participated in many Meinong's local musical projects, and set forth social movements. Are there any changes in your mindset and composing work since your coming back? And what is your observation on the younger generations?**

**Lin:** I was young and energetic back in

1998. But now I'm in middle ages, and raising kids. In particular, the thing of "having kids" has literally brought me to a turning point of my works. I think of things in a wider and farther perspective.

In recent years, I started to create children's songs, with a desire to help my children prepare their juvenile music. My daughters need music in their lives. And I really want to prepare "good music" for her and her contemporaries. My children's songs are all recorded with real musical instruments, and the songs are composed in the same level as the ones I do for my regular albums. No compromise for children's songs. Not at all. Because I believe children should know about good musical as early as in their childhood. I don't want to see that children can only dance to the song "Little Apple". And I believe they need

good music in many different occasions, such as the school festivities. They do need decent music. I intend to gradually make up this absence. This is not only for my children, it is for the next generation as well, giving them more choices. For the children's songs I created, I always consult my daughters whether the songs are good and fun to listen to. The songs have got to cheer them up before it is a done deal. Well, one thing is for sure: if my own daughters cannot be entertained and cheered up, how can I expect the songs to be liked by others?

This is a thing never done by anyone before. It comes from daily life. Music is in actual living. And this is a sporty characteristic. I've become better not shy away from composing cheesy songs, which was my taboo before. In fact, previously I did write a cheesy song for the Liudui Games I participated in, which was a modern rock-and-roll relished march song. Nevertheless, the composition was oriented for the use by middle school students in the very beginning. It can be used not only in the occasion of games, but also in graduation ceremonies. The ultimate goal is to have the song accepted by adolescents. Even today, I'm still happy to provide

such songs, for free, for educational purposes. This year, I've received 20 plus invitations for seminars in rural towns, to introduce children's songs. In recent years, after having done many such jobs, I've perceived substantial transformation in me. Of course, I'll continue what I've originally been doing.

**Q: Your music is filled with life/living/land emotion, in constant pursuance of new possibilities of musical creation. How do you think of getting to know Taiwan through your own creative works?**

**Lin:** Generally, my music fans may think the album "Daisy Night March" is my classic work. But I think my latest album "My Village" is the best of my works. The reason is simple: A creator always wants to surpass his own preceding works. My works are all conceptual creation, with each album telling stories. "We Come To Sing Mountain Fold Songs" is about the social movement, "Daisy Night March" is about the agriculture, "Facing the Darkness" is about the urban labor workers, "Planting Trees" is about organic plantation, "Born Wild" is about female destiny, "Earth Bookroom" is

Lin Shengxiang

Born in Meigong, Kaohsiung, a lead singer, guitarist, Yueqin player, trichord player, music composer, lyric writer, and producer.

about literature...what I believe as always - music is right there. I'd like to leave it to the listeners to interpret!

**Q: What are your favorite Taiwan scenes?**

**Lin:** The beautiful prairies in my hometown Kaohsiung Meinong, Taitung Chihshang, and Pingtung Manjhau, as well as the magnificent mountains in Kaohsiung Liuguai. In Meinong, just sightseeing the rice paddies and mountains is good enough to satisfy your scenery hunt desire and pacify your mind. These beautiful sceneries, the rural landscape of Taiwan, have all been composed in my songs.

# The music that penetrates underground,

*indie music encroaches on the mainstream market- Taiwanese indie music culture*



Text/ Chillouttree Chen  
Picture/ StreetVoice



*Should I give a description of a scenario just like a kid who first came to see an elephant in the zoo? Feeling impatient and anxious to explore, beside oneself, fidgety and worried about missing what should not be. With much thought, perhaps Hush, the band that just had its big-scale solo concert debut should be brought up as an introduction to the history of indie music.*

**StreetVoice - music platform for the release of Taiwan Indie music, a gathering place for emerging and avant garde music makers from all walks of life.**

Hush's music started to appear on StreetVoice, the Taiwan music platform a few years ago. After more players joined in, the trio made their first debut one night at the Kafka on the shore, somehow witnessing something one yet to tell. Since then, the Hush has frequently published new song. It hit multiple rankings on the site's annual billboard chart and was selected for entry into the "Ten New Groups of StreetVoice 2012." Even though the internal shuffling had once turned Hush back into a lone singer band a few months ahead the TICC concert, the players saved the day by inviting singers from We Save Strawberries, Elephant gym and Deserts Xuan to join in. In a way, the performance wrapped up beautifully by an indie supergroup.

Mary see the future, IGU band are the bands that appeared at about same time as Hush did. They all participated in "The next big thing," the program jointly presented with Legacy and were selected as one of the ten new bands. They have all published splendid works in recent years, built up their solid fan base and entered into the varied winning lists in Taiwan after outdoing the



rest in the much fierce competition.

Although often being muddled with indie rock, indie music in Taiwan market is basically understood as being originated from rock music, and has proliferated into the different lines of post-rock, British rock, punk and metal rock, using a few regular keywords such as "Crystal Music," "underground society," "Chthonic and Freddy" and "Formoz Festival," "The Wall" and "White Rabbit Records." In recent years, there are numerous papers and feature articles available for grasping the flow of this music history. "The other side of the spectrum" has adopted the view point of folk songs and pop (music) in compiling rock-like music, or opts for acoustic instrumental music to present a relatively gentle artistic sensibility. This style

is absolutely attributable to A Good Day Records, the album label. Yet, according to international categorization of Indie pop, this kind of music has brought about a refreshing style for its development of the "flowers and grass series" for the audiences in other areas.

### **A new look on the inter-stimulation between Indie vs. mainstream, commercial vs. underground music, creation vs. marketing.**

Cheer Chen was once the leading literary female figure in Taiwan, Hong Kong and China, and must have been very popular among you all. Acting like another style of Taiwan exported popular culture, she has affected many new artists and has become a hot figure. It was until the major return of

the "refreshing music style" that the local music makers and fans have started to realize the limitation of this kind of style. Subsequently, different kinds of styles have determined to be passed that much tread path and opt for the diverse explorations. Indie vs. mainstream, commercial vs. underground is often the tangled concept. An excellent example is that it was Sony, the mainstream company that released all of Zhang Xuan's album while her music characteristics and spirit are undoubtedly acknowledged by the majority of the indie music fans, making it really hard to set a clear demarcation between mainstream and indie music. In retrospect of the history of music, it has always been a norm to see the collaborations of the aforementioned opposing sides. Today, the need for a call for integration and reformations has

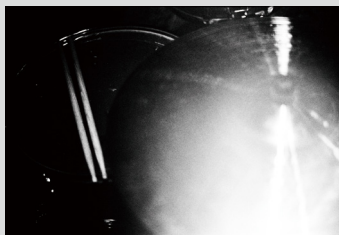
become even more noticeable. In the early years, the first grade female singers that wished for transition in their album style would all look for Sandee Chan to write the songs and music for them. Recent years have seen the integration of both the mainstream and underground as Sodagreen keeps singing the songs and music by Wu Qing-feng. Hebe of S.H.E is the most stereotype figure of this style.

### **Golden Indie Music Awards and the Golden Melody Awards, indie music to advance into the mass market.**

In contrary to the favored pop music styles that change annually and recognized by the Golden Melody Awards, Taiwan officials established the Golden Indie Music Awards a few years ago for the encouragement of

what the music industry dubbed as "setting up the strictest music making touchstone in the contemporary era." The setting up of Golden Indie Music Awards is just an effort made to define the categories and the features of good musicians. Despite the aftermath controversies caused by groundless labeling and definition of jazz music, a rare wave of hot discussion was stirred up by a group of jazz music makers that had returned to Taiwan after their past study in Belgium. The electronics music seemed to have gained their recognition finally after years of being treated as an oddity by the mainstream media. The Girl and the Robots, Salamander and Empty Space On a Chessboard are winners or selected teams that are quite representative in telling the prospect of DJ mixes and electronics music. Beyond the mainstream music, the rap hip-hop has been flourishing for years, MC Hotdog with its labeling effect, SoftLipa & Kao Inc , Dwagie & Kung Fu Entertainment are all heading for diverse styles with different capabilities and have all received their Golden Melody Awards.

However, the aborigines on this island (may have the highest potential) in winning the Golden Melody Awards. Examples are Taiwan Colors Music, WIND MUSIC and Wild Fire Music that continue to grow and develop. The precede tents Chen Jiannian , Puyuma ethnic group's Puyuma tribe where the town of golden songs locates, the



recently known Ilid kaolo and Suming, and the promoter of tribal youths' joining in the music industry are all worthy of their efforts they have made.

### **Simple Life, Mega Port Festival, Small Oyster Rock, The Gradual Rise of Music Festival and Live House**

The formerly "underground music" or "indie music" or music maker and singers or bands, are all moving towards the mainstream industry as the traditional album market faces impending elimination. We may say that they have been much recognized by the mainstream music industry to the degree far beyond the restlessness and toughness felt by some members that is in the mainstream industry. However, the foundation that supports the whole indie music is definitely the Live House and the widespread of music festivals that have often involved in the discussion of the municipal and cultural policies. The Simple Life that heads for Shanghai, the re-run of Mega Port Festival, the rising Small Oyster Rock are all gaining momentum as the supportive system gradually perfects by Blow, Xinmedia and TW Music Writing Group in Taiwan. The music outlook of the upcoming generation is taking its shape soon.



Music making to express the inner world, Music makes a better world —

## Huang Jie@ Taipei Witch House

Text/ Huang Jie

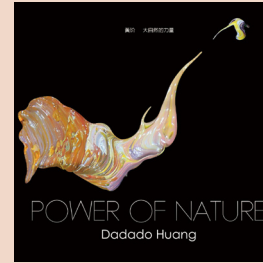
Picture/ A Good Day Records



**Q1: Would you like to share with us the origin of your creative works? And what are the ideas, thoughts and feelings that you would most want to communicate to the public through your musical creation?**

In fact, there is no ideology at all! If I must say something, it would be that I wish that music can make a better world. My music making is quite personal, it's all about talking to myself about my personal things,

it's quite enclosed. I am particularly happy when someone sympathizes with me, as I feel like there is someone that has the same experience as mine and know what I am trying to say. It feels quite good to know that you also know what I meant! When I first performed, I felt there is a barrier. I felt it was really awkward that we as a group of people that were not familiar with each other but shared my personal life or psychology privacy in the same space. It just turned fine as I sang on. I would only



### "The Power of Nature" album:

"That can't be resisted is the power of nature." Huang Jie said. This time, Huang has co-created and co-produced with The Girl and the Robots, Suming and Ze' Hwang, the 3 groups/singers were invited respectively for the most of the natural forces he deems they possess. The brisk and cheerful electronic dance music of The Girl and the Robots, the aboriginal sea songs of Suming and the always charming voice of Ze' Hwang are all fused into style of Huang Jie's folk songs.

Huang Jie's Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/dadado.huang?fref=ts](https://www.facebook.com/dadado.huang?fref=ts)

say that time will resolve all the problems.

### Q2: What are your favorite musical corners of Taiwan?

There are lots of places for music performances. But to me, the most meaningful one is the "Witch House." I am fond of Cheer Chen since my university time. Later I also knew that Ze' Hwang, Sandee Chan also sang there. So that house is really the sacred land for folk songs. Being able to perform there really means a life without regret, and that still holds true to me. Performing at the "Witch House" makes me feel like going through a group therapy. I particularly speak up a lot, update with people there my new songs or something. Through sharing, I figure out how my mood has developed in that period of time. Many good Taiwanese musicians were cultivated there. "The Witch House" is the place where you watch the performances with your feelings.

**>Witch House: No. 7, Lane 56, Sec. 3, Xincheng South Road, Da an District, Taipei (Exit 3, Gongguang Station, Taipei MRT)**



*The guitar music composed while sitting on the ground, a rustic, authentic sound-*

## Young David Band @Hsinchu Sea-house cafe

Text & Picture/ Young David Band



If youth means being candid, bold and speaking up, the Young David Band shall subvert your imagination about them. "From the first day till the sixth day" is an indie production by Young David Band, recorded by Wei Jun, the guitarist of Bearbabes, a famous indie music band. The first song "Beyond the four seas" describes the "pursuit" and "equality" in life, revealing the vast yet delicate creative concept and the band's creative concept and feature of music arrangement.

Young David Band's Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/youngdavidband](https://www.facebook.com/youngdavidband)

**Q1: Would you like to share with us the origin of your creative works? And what are the ideas, thoughts and feelings that you would most want to communicate to the public through your musical creation?**

Our band was established at early time, probably in 2008. We didn't think much but just wanted to form a band to sing and perform. Around 2011, my thinking grew matured as I listened to more things, and my individual style gradually took shape. The environment has greatly impacted us. Our school is located in a Hsinchu mountain. We were close to the mountain and the sea.

Often times, we just sat anywhere outdoors as we played guitar. Therefore we naturally have created the music that is closely clung to this land.

Taiwan also has its own music, Hakka folk songs and aboriginal music are all very beautiful. I hope to use these elements to relay the stories about my growth in Taiwan. The music is a bit rustic yet is truly authentic.

Music is now at our finger tips. There is an endless supply of music being put out on the Internet. With a tap of our fingers, the music will be played on and on. But which song will you remember? That is

the question we have thinking about. With music, we hope to make listeners remember that they have grown up in Taiwan, and each ordinary life has his own brilliant story.

**Q2: What are your favorite musical corners of Taiwan?**

I recommend the Sea-house cafe at Nanliao fishing port in Hsinchu. The shop is mainly decorated with wooden materials. It sells homemade pizza. The owner has also collected some folk instruments. The whole shop carries a primitively artistic aura.

**>Sea-house cafe: No. 189 Nanliao Street, Hsinchu (private transport is recommended).**



*The local rap, making humorous social and life topics -*

## Dwagie · Kung Fu Entertainment

@Southern Station Music Hall

Text & Picture/ Dwagie



Album "Not Listening": Brilliantly featured with the musical features, it is definitely the most musical album in Dwagie's album history! The previous albums had lyrics so mesmerizing that you ignore the musical composition. This "Not Listening" is distinguished with its spectacular composition, in which the unimaginable musical relish mixed up in the hip-hop fatty rhythms makes you unwittingly retrospect Tangniu's script lines, "Such a wonderful song that I won't be able to hear again. What should I do?"

Dwagie's Facebook:

[https://www.facebook.com/pages/Dwagie 大支 /267893688022?ref=hl](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Dwagie-%E5%A4%A7%E6%94%B9/267893688022?ref=hl)

**Q1: Would you like to share with us the origin of your creative works? And what are the ideas, thoughts and feelings that you would most want to communicate to the public through your musical creation?**

Established in 2003, Kung Fu Entertainment is not positioned to becoming a comprehensive Hip Hop artist, nor a cynical rapper, and therefore the lyrics created do not have hollow entertaining words crammed to depict sorrows and pretend sophistication. By caring and humorous ways, we spell the most straightforward social problems. We

participate in social movements, care for vulnerability groups, host charity concerts and gather artists from home and abroad to produce creative albums for charity bazaars...We use music to change the Taiwan rap culture! The rap developed in Taiwan certainly should come with the local cultural features other than just imitations of foreign counterparts. The Taiwan raps should be innovatively fused to create explosive momentum and be lifted to the international pop music stage.

**Q2: What are your favorite musical corners of Taiwan?**

The Southern Station Music Restaurant is distinctively featured with the train-watching dinning - a close encounter with the training whizzing by; plus the scheduled weekend or holiday musical performance including a variety of hip-hop, reggae, electronic music and folk songs. There are many foreign bands coming here to host small-scale concerts. For the major events like New Year's Eve and Christmas, the Southern Station hosts its own musical parties. This is the top congregation venue for the

southern musicians. When one finds no inspiration, this is a place for quietly sitting down and listening to the music, and it is a wonderful thing to watch trains passing by.

**>Southern Music Restaurant: No. 111, Lane 635, Section 2, Datong Road, Tainan City**

*Sing the touching stories dimly hidden in ordinary -*

## Sunset Samurai @Kaohsiung DOREMI Musical Square

Text & Picture/ Sunset Samurai



**Q1: Would you like to share with us the origin of your creative works? And what are the ideas, thoughts and feelings that you would most want to communicate to the public through your musical creation?**

In the summer of 2013, the four old friends (lead singer/guitarist Huang Shengfeng, guitarist/chorus Wang Lide, bassist/chorus Gao Zhexuan, and drummer Wang Renxian) met up together to give birth to the "Sunset Samurai" for a common course in music.

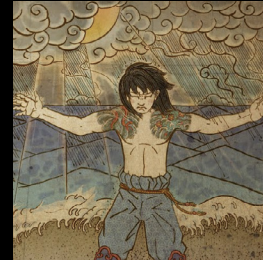
Taiwan is our home, and the Taiwanese

dialect is the most familiar language among us, which exudes a feeling of aesthetics in our words. Our musical works were inspired by the life around us, and even for a most ordinary person, there is a touching story to tell. We wanted to use our songs to lead audience to think and embrace challenges, and we simply used the songs to express the ideas.

**Q2: What are your favorite musical corners of Taiwan?**

It is the Kaohsiung DOREMI Musical Square, a place where we practice and rehearsal, full of memories of our music playing journey. It is literally our second home.

**>DOREMI Musical Square: No. 387 Qixian 2nd Rd., Qianjin Dist., Kaohsiung City**



Album "Sunrise": The "Sunset Samurai" music continues the tradition of Taiwanese folk songs, and endows it with innovative transformation and brave attempt. Perhaps it's the long accumulated suppression in the heart that needs a way out to get released, the music records the stories they know about and their daily life logs, and the songs are full of adolescent wanton madness, touching purity of emotional feelings, as well as a little bit of dusty and tiring smell, that are simple yet powerfully profound and exotically aesthetic!——Loh Tsui Kweh Commune/ Xiao Ke

Sunset Samurai Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/sunset.samurai2013](http://www.facebook.com/sunset.samurai2013)



*The improvisation urchin, composing the eastern mountains and seas and the folks' living episodes -*

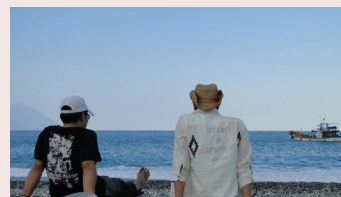
## Tom and Huck @AllStar Pub

Text & Picture/ Tom and Huck

**Q1: Would you like to share with us the origin of your creative works? And what are the ideas, thoughts and feelings that you would most want to communicate to the public through your musical creation?**

Tom and Huck, two independent singers in the Hualien area, started their musical partnership many years ago when a pub was looking for a guitar duo. In the beginning, they were simply satisfied to be the resident signers, for a few cups of wine, earning some pocket money, and making friends with musical companions. Not to their expectation, the two with similar personality gradually had their musical minds so synchronized that they improvised and played music out of whims, to entertain themselves, and the audience as well. The title of music urchin "Tom and Huck" was thus given by the audience.

On this land, the eastern back mountains, we take in the breaths of mountains and seas, and the folks' daily living, as the nutrition to grow our inspiration for music creativity, and we hope people listening to our music and songs can leave their sorrows and troubles behind for a moment, and feel like being immersed in the eastern landscape, looking high up to the mountains and relaxed like the blowing wind from the Chishingtun.



The first official album "Wolf 125" (published by TCMusic) was nominated for the 22nd Golden Melody Awards "Best Taiwanese Songs Album" and "Best Singing Group" categories, as well as for the Government Information Office 2nd Golden Music Creativity Awards "Best Folk Song Album" and "Best Folk Single- No-seats Train" categories. The second summer album "Flip-flops" (published by TCMusic) was nominated for the 24th Golden Melody Awards "Best Singing Group" category.

Tom and Huck official website:

<http://tomhuck.blogspot.tw/>

Tom and Huck Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/pages/%E6%B9%AF%E5%A7%86%E8%88%87%E5%93%88%E5%85%8BTomHuck/137237373008987](http://www.facebook.com/pages/%E6%B9%AF%E5%A7%86%E8%88%87%E5%93%88%E5%85%8BTomHuck/137237373008987)

**Q2: What are your favorite musical corners of Taiwan?**

Hualien AllStar Pub: The most "high" place in the nights of the back mountains, also a renowned stage breeding most of the famous eastern singers.

>AllStar Pub: 403 Linshen Rd., Hualien City (in the opposite side of the Hualien Municipal Hall)



*Singing, For The Homecoming-*

## Chen Yonglon @Tiehua Village

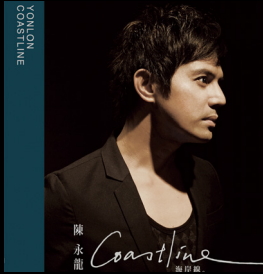
Text & Picture/ Chen Yonglon



**Q1: Would you like to share with us the origin of your creative works? And what are the ideas, thoughts and feelings that you would most want to communicate to the public through your musical creation?**

With the theme of "Singing, For the Homecoming", I performed for a long time together with the singers Kuo Yingnan, Chen Jiannian, Ji Xiaoqun(Samingad), Hu Defu, Banai...I saw them seeking simplicity and nature in their songs. Native Taiwanese sing like singing to far-away mountains, with voices going straightforward and

unadorned, seemingly to reach the other side of the mountains. I have published two personal albums: "In the Daylight Rains" and "Coastlines". When I was in training for Chinese sentimental songs, I needed a very intimate counterpart such as family member, a friend or a lover, to really express the love, hate and sorrow connoted in the songs. In these two completely different singing experiences, I had a chance to review my own meaning of "singing".



The first personal album "Daylight@In the Rain", a re-interpretation of the classic works by Li Taixiang, a musical master, won the 2011 Years and Golden Melody Awards "Best Chinese Music Male Newcomer Award of the Year". The "Coastlines" album, styled with the neo-classical folk songs, won the 2013 Chinese Music Golden Melody Awards "Top Ten Golden Melody Award of the Year", and was nominated for the 2013 Golden Melody Awards Best Lyrics category, Best Composition category, and Best Song of the Year category. The third album "Mountain Peaks" is being produced this year (2015), and scheduled to be published in the end of June. It is hoped that the songs can once more communicate the emotional stories to every listener.

Chen Yonglon Facebook:  
[www.facebook.com/yonlon.chen](http://www.facebook.com/yonlon.chen)

**Q2: What are your favorite musical corners of Taiwan?**

Taitung Tiehua Village is an innovation from the abandoned Taiwan Railways old dormitory. It is a music settlement collaboratively built by Taitung musicians and art workers. Zheng Jieren, the soul figure of the village, is a music producer and a long-time good friend of mine. He opened up my musical views, leading me to knowing how to sing the hometown folks songs that we chanted since childhood, which is so touching and extraordinary.

**>Tiehua Village: No. 26, Lane 135, Shinsheng Rd., Taitung City**

Seeking the one to talk to and listening to each other -

## Misi Ke @Witch House

Text & Picture/ Misi Ke



**Q1: Would you like to share with us the origin of your creative works? And what are the ideas, thoughts and feelings that you would most want to communicate to the public through your musical creation?**

The birth of the lyrics and rhythms were mostly done in this small room of my own, or out in the fields of nature far away from the urban hustle and bustle. The stories written are all plain yet sensitively connected to life. While memories, to me, are the important ingredients of my writings. Besides lyrics and rhythms, friends are indispensable in completely presenting

the stories, and therefore in my musical dialogues I have Chienchien (drummer), Xuzhang (keyboard player), Dawei (electronic guitar player), and Jack (bassist). Being able to play music together is a rare thing of being at the same mind frequency, with a non-text pattern to talk in a language that may be understood by some. In fact, we all live such a plain life, yet with the special living experiences, we seek the person we can talk with and listen to each other.



The first official album "Game Play", a CD with whole new songs that I created, issued at the end of 2014, makes me feel that I'm out of my own physical body.

The acoustic guitar vibrates with my heart, forming the universe, in close resonance with me. I'm trying to tell stories from my perspective of seeing the world. So, I have my guitar with me, singing the songs of my own creation, and through the telling of the ordinary stories, maybe we can all come to something, a way to express ourselves. -My name is Misi Ke

Misi Ke Facebook:  
[www.facebook.com/misike524](https://www.facebook.com/misike524)

**Q2: What are your favorite musical corners of Taiwan?**

My favorite performance venue is the "Witch House". Over there, I can truly be with the audience with no distance, and in my singing I hear the breathing in the audience. In the Witch House, time stops, and it feels secure to tell secrets. The food menu is designed in a very witch-language way. My favorite dish is the "Big Breast Noodle" - the name may sound perplexed, but when you eat it, you'll realize what it means.

**>Witch House: No. 7, Lane 56, Sec. 3, Xincheng South Road, Da an District, Taipei (Exit 3, Gongguang Station, Taipei MRT)**

Short Diary Creation, Growing with Music and Chasing Dreams-

## Achau @The Wall, Wellspring Theater

Text & Picture/ Achau



**Q1: Would you like to share with us the origin of your creative works? And what are the ideas, thoughts and feelings that you would most want to communicate to the public through your musical creation?**

In the summer right after my graduation from the middle school, I wanted to write a song of my own. And since then, I've been writing songs. The songs I wrote are mostly about my stories, which set out from my extravagant young love. As time went by and my growing older to know more, I've been writing about the relish of life of recent years as well as my views on different stages in life. It all started as a diary-like work, and very fortunately, in the past years,

the work met with an opportunity to become a musical album. So, indeed there is a small group of people in Taiwan who grew up in listening to my songs, falling in love and out of love, and my songs stayed with them in chasing dreams. This, a genuineness, makes me feel the responsibility in the course of musical creation, to deliver good work.

**Q2: What are your favorite musical corners of Taiwan?**

In the years of middle school, I had an opportunity to watch a stage performance, and since then I've been obsessed and enchanted by the focus of performing by the players on the stage. In addition to the movie theaters and Live House, I'm also



Achau, a music producer The one-year independent singing tour "FaceSong" starting in June 2014 will come to the last stop in Taipei on June 16, 2015, at the Ximen Riverside Message Performance Venue, to come to a period. Also, I love to publish day-to-day trivial matters along with little demos.

SV: <http://tw.streetvoice.com/achauchau/>

Achau Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/achau.one](http://www.facebook.com/achau.one)

very fond of the spaces of Taipei's opera theaters.

Wellspring Theater: Located in the upper floors of the Wellspring Market opposite to the National Taiwan University campus, it can accommodate a larger audience, and offers more possibilities for the stage space design. I always think that this theater is an ideal venue for scheduled drama performance. It has convenient transportation facilities - From the Gongguan MRT station Exit 1, turning right, it's a three-minute walk.

**>Wellspring Theater : 10F., No.92, Sec. 4, Roosevelt Rd., Zhongzheng Dist., Taipei City 100, Taiwan (R.O.C.)**

The Wall: It's needless to say, if you're a fan of independent or rock music, and it sucks if you haven't been there! Because I love music professionals to come and perform, I've visited this place several times. It is hidden in a basement. In addition to the performing space, there are also a records store, group practice rooms, a tattoo shop and a bar.

**>The Wall : b1F., No.200, Sec. 4, Roosevelt Rd., Wenshan Dist., Taipei City 116, Taiwan (R.O.C.)**



*The illusive warming tender genre, dexterously depicting the expression of the being*

## Frandé @Wakin' Up Cafe' Apartment

Text & Picture/ Frandé

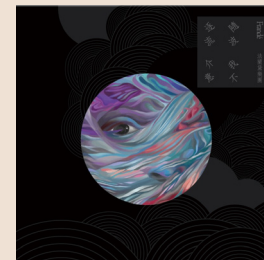
**Q1: Would you like to share with us the origin of your creative works? And what are the ideas, thoughts and feelings that you would most want to communicate to the public through your musical creation?**

Like people coming in different characteristics and shapes, music is attributed to different personalities. We the gang get together with each one of us holding one's own experiences of living and listening to music. When we collaboratively express our individual imagination and feelings in music, we create unique works as a collectively single entity. We love to create things, small or huge, ordinary or extraordinary, whatsoever, we just love to do it. I think what we are really trying to manifest is the meaning of some kind of "being".

**Q2: What are your favorite musical corners of Taiwan?**

We visit the Wakin' Up Cafe' Apartment a lot, which is near our studio. The owner of the shop used to play music in a band. The beautiful servers in the store are all contemporary well-known music band professionals. Goofing around there is like as cozy as visiting a friend's house. And the music played in the store exudes one-of-a-kind relish. Since the store is very close to our studio, we would go there after rehearsals, to listen to the music and contemplate things. Over there, we've had several interviews with the print media. We the pals used to sit there together, sharing our imagination of the "good old days"; and there, we used to conceive for our next CD album.

>Wakin' Up Cafe' Apartment: 2F 157, Section 2, Heping East Rd., Da'an Dist., Taipei City



Frandé, established in 2009, consists of the female lead singer Fran, drummer Meng Yan, guitarist Jiang Zhenyu, and bassist Zhe Yu. The album "Flattered" won the 2012 International Red Dot Award and Singapore Fresh Awards "Best New Group" category, and was nominated for the 2012 Golden Melody Awards "Best Album Package" category and Chinese Music Media Awards "Best New Band" category. The album "Drifting And I Don't Mind" won the 2014 International Red Dot Award and is nominated for the 2015 AIM Independent Music Awards "Best Album Package of the Year" category.

**Frandé Facebook:**  
[www.facebook.com/frande.music](http://www.facebook.com/frande.music)

*The connection between man and time-space, listening the sound of land-*

## 2HRs @White Rabbit Records

Text & Picture/ 2HRs



**Q1: Would you like to share with us the origin of your creative works? And what are the ideas, thoughts and feelings that you would most want to communicate to the public through your musical creation?**

The name of the band was inspired from a stage performance on a day of the high school years when we had only two hours of rehearsal before performing. And the name was used all the way to the college years, during which some of us needed to travel from Chungli and Tainan in two-hour bus ride to meet together in Taichung for rehearsal. To us, the 2HRs stands for both

time and space, because in the course of creation, we would always love to use science fiction themes for repeated thinking - what is the true relationship between man and time-space? Our music sets out from heavy accentuation on space, voyaging in the acoustic universe, and when people become fearful of watching the spectacular yet strange starry sky, the music silently pulls the scenes in front of their eyes back to the hometown they are familiar with, reminding them not to forget the essentiality of land in this era of modern technology.

**Q2: What are your favorite musical corners of Taiwan?**

The Lane 21, Pucheng Street "White Rabbit Records" near the National Taiwan Normal University is definitely one of the most representative distribution centers for independent music in recent decade. The store is not big, but the music quality is good enough to let visitors completely forget the existence of time. In the "White Rabbit Records", the clerks have fairly good knowledge about music. For a window-shopping visitor with no particular intention to buy, the clerks can introduce the music and quickly locate the music that the visitor

Album "Quasar": It indicates the light spotted when one looks up in the starry sky, and the light itself is a star already swallowed by a black hole; this is a beautiful afterimage brought in by distance, a homesickness that one cannot look directly into. "Running Hard, Looking Back...The Point of Origin Is Gone" This album is attached with the fiction novel of the same name "Quasar", which leads the audience's views to another solar system, displaying a metaphor of the tragedy between two intelligent species with completely different living patterns and values.

2HRs Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/2HRsTW](https://www.facebook.com/2HRsTW)

may be fond of.

>White Rabbit Records: 1F, No. 1-1, Lane 21, Pucheng Street, Taipei City (10 minutes of walk from the MRT Taipower Building Station)



*Perhaps it is an unknown perplexity, but it is also the presence of the moment-***nowhere**

Text/ Lin Xin-hui

Picture/ Kris Kang, Fang Yanwen

"There is only half an hour left for the group practice room, which part would you like to practice more?" I asked.

"Hey, shall we practice once more on the part of 'Denden'?" the guitarist inquired.

"The ending part of passage C, right?" asked the drummer.

"Yes," the guitarist answered.

Counting the beat in silence and focused on practicing this passage repeatedly till the time is nearly up. The whole group then started to deftly clear up the music instruments and the wires. To a certain degree, the weekly group practice is a bit tedious and boring yet it is the most important ritual for the group. We are willing to rule out other events just for meeting up to play the music. Whether it is about the discussion over the music making and arrangement of some passage, the counting of the beats till reaching an unanimous catch. With whatever mood we

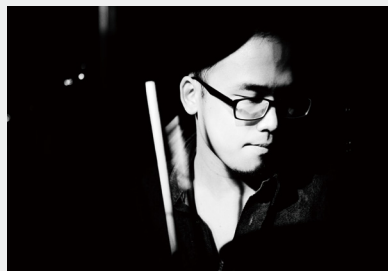
have when we come to the group practice room, we always leave with a relieved mind.

"I need to go back to the office to work over time later." said the guitarist while clearing up the place.

"It's too tough! Do you want to consider quitting the job?" the group kidded.

I have been singing and playing music on my own at school club since student time. I have had lots of performance experience but that couldn't be taken seriously. Until I have formally started to work in the society and become a so-called adult, I realized that it is hard to fond of one thing simply. It is not a problem to perform alone, but I wanted to try something different from before, so I found my school club senior to be the guitarist. After performing for some time, I looked for the bass player and the drummer to form nowhere.

Nearly two years have passed without



my knowing as I spent my life on group practices, performances and work. Music is not just a form of entertainment. It is a reminder to my life. Through music, I inspect myself, and the distance between myself and the world. I keep reflecting. It goes without saying that I need to learn to communicate if I have an urge to express. Whether it is the communication regarding the music arrangement among the group members, the process of the music making or for the interaction with the audience in each performance, I need to find out the aura that belongs to us, and to go further into influencing the audience's emotions by evoking their sympathy with us through the value of music. The power the audience have gained or the time they spent in our company is the most joyful thing to us.

"Remember to wear dark tone clothing for the performance the day after tomorrow. Don't be late for testing at eight." I said.

"Gosh, it's tiring!" stretching himself, the bass player said.

Filing out of the group practice room, I took a deep breath of the night wind while listening to their chatting. Maybe there is a bit of passion there, but the word "dream" sounds impractical. Things are achieved through practices and taking actions. To me,

no matter what kind of life style there are,  
they are all realities and are the kinds of life  
we choose to lead.

### **What is your favorite hangout place after the group practice?**

Honolulu barbecue in Taichung. The price  
there is inexpensive, and a variety of beers  
are served there. That place has become a  
good spot for a relaxing feast in celebration  
for the wrap up of performances. As each  
one has his own musical instrument, each  
of us will surely gather there by riding his  
own motorcycle straight to that place. (Don't  
drink and drive, good kids will do this).  
>Honolulu: No. 251-7, Section 2, Xitun Road,  
Xitun District, Taichung.



"nowhere, perhaps it is an unknown perplexity, but Now Here is also the presence of the moment."

The clear and bright female voice, acoustic guitar are the features of their music. The sprightly rhythm is formed under the intertwining of rich melodic electric guitar, bass guitar and drum. The first released EP, "The things we center on" is inspired mainly by my self-dialectic and exploration and reflection over some social events. The refreshing yet rebellious spirit and gentle yet strong rock music records the every moment of life. It is hoped that each audience can reflect and further perfect oneself again after listening to our music.

**Nowhere Facebook:**

**[www.facebook.com/nowhere2013](http://www.facebook.com/nowhere2013)**

**Nowhere website:**

**[www.nowhereband2013.com/index.html](http://www.nowhereband2013.com/index.html)**

*Hot stir-fried foods for the celebratory feast after the performances-*

## The Floating Boat

Text & Picture/ The Floating Boat

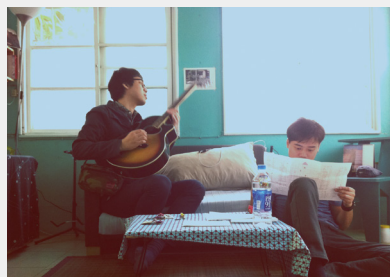
After the performance at the Revolver Bar, we went to the nearby shop that sells hot stir-fried foods for celebratory super. We felt we were in a wonderful state; we brought the house down during the performance today with quite good interaction with the audience. We heard lots of screaming and laughter. There were even some foreigners came nearby the stage to ask about our band's name. Revolver is the live house we usually go after the close down of Underground Society. We used to drink and watched performances there. It was until when we performed there and looked down from the stage that we felt so scared —dozens of eyes were staring at you, the eyes of the audience reflect the light even it was in pitch dark. We feel like we are showing whatever we have in ourselves and wait for the audience to response. Whether it was a scream or laughter, a rocking of your body, we perform like passing the balls with the audience in a live show and that is a real revelry.

Besides working, dating, the remaining time for me is either for group practice or listening to group performances in live house. It seems that I seldom do other things, and I guess I am kind of being domestic, musically. That is, a pure dedication to music. When I first started to build our band, I thought that I can make it if I really want to do it. Maybe I can do quite well, or very well. If I can produce some good works, won't that evidence that I can get famous? Not to mention the multitude

of things I want to tell. We are fortunate that we can express through a band.

Our band often chi-chats about this and that, speaks up and discusses about big or small matters. Sometimes there are feelings that you just want to vent and that can't be fully expressed through saying it only. Music must be used to incite people to put their heart in it to express these kinds of "feelings and emotions." The society, people's life to personal emotions, bunches of things are there in life to trigger people to feel. Some songs make people restless and ecstatic; some make us want to cry. We want to capture those kinds of indescribable yet strongly evocative feelings. What we want to express are stories belong to us all and the instinctive touches we feel. Like what a character in the "Tokyo, the poor universe" inquires of a band player the meaning of rock music." I quite agreed with the given answer: It's a serious flirting. I believe those who have been touched by music would all understand this kind of feeling.

According to the current progress of the group practice, recording of a demo, and schedules for performances. We hope to produce initially one EP as a warm up to producing an album. We also hope to participate in more big-scale music festivals to hone our performing experience, letting more people hear the music of The Floating Boat. We deal with music every day, rather than an empty dream, music is part of our life. Of course, we have anticipation about the



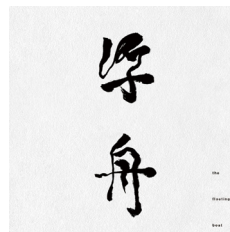


feedback, the likes by people but this is more like the dreamy part. I only hope that The Floating Boat can at least write a song that represents us and touches people's mind, and a piece of song that is iconic of our time.

What is your favorite hangout place after the group practice?

We have group practice nearby MRT Zhongshan Station. After the practice, the favorite place we will go is "Ba Kong Rou". We will enjoy the pork knuckle with rice there. As we are used to doing like this, it has become a routine that we will eat there before and after the group practice. It feels like going to the nearby cafeteria to take our meals after some school club programs. So there is kind of attachment of eating there. We don't go there just for spending money.

>"Ba Kong Rou": Exit No. 2 at MRT Zhongshan Station, head for the alley where the shop NET locates. The "Ba Kong Rou" is at the right hand side as you turn right at the first corner of the alley.



After the group practice on March 23, 2014, guitarist Michii determined to join the band. The Floating Boat has set up since then. Although The Floating Boat is a new band, most of the team members have years of band performing experience or have background of playing as an independent band. The stable bass player, with the unstable drummer, the stunning guitarist, charming leading vocal. Our music has a mixture of indie pop, fantasy and shoegazing. We hope our music is like the floating boat on the sea, showing the ever-changing features like the sea water that sometimes it surges in rough waves, feels calm like the fine weather, and floats towards the boundless end. But I do wish for a beautiful pier that awaits the floating boat to dock.

**The Floating Boat's Facebook:**  
[www.facebook.com/floatingboat2014](http://www.facebook.com/floatingboat2014)  
**The Floating Boat's Streetvoice:**  
<http://tw.streetvoice.com/thefloatingboat/>

# Roaming in the landscape of Taitung's mountains and seas

Text & Picture/ Wu Yuxuan



*Having had a house, a car, and children, the rabbit suddenly recalls the past hobby of climbing the electric pole. Starting from a friend's shoulder, he climbs up and up to the ladder made of rivets, and he can still get higher and higher till he hears the pole sing. The pole singing is a motionless, frightening whisper. It always tempts him to loosen his hands, letting go of the firm rivets grasped in his hands, to feel the space below his back when falling down, to feel it grab his feet and ride on his spine. He listens to the pole singing, like truly hearing people talking - about all the secrets of the grownup world.*

This is an excerpt from the American Writer John Updike's novel "Run, Rabbit", and this is my favorite paragraph. The rabbit, longing to leave behind the anguish of mind, knew that youth was not coming back, but he could rediscover himself. So, he got on his journey of escaping from the reality, to preserve all his secrets that are silently awake.

If the rabbit ever comes to Taitung, I'll show him the field path on the plains of the valley - Chishang Brown Avenue. There, the clear sky reflects the green paddy, no electric pole, not a single one. Back then, the farmers collectively protested setting up electric poles in the paddy fields, and as a result, the electric wires have since been settled underground. This natural beauty with few manmade lines is thus conserved. If the rabbit stands in the Brown Avenue, he won't recall the electric poles he used to climb; instead, it is a vast tract of seasonal landscape dancing ups and downs to the natural life - the green young seedlings, wavy rice paddies, autumn harvest of golden rice spikes, the charred wasteland after reaping...his puzzle will instantly dissipate from his bodily perception. Perhaps, the true freedom is not lying in somewhere, it is where we can set out to recapture the possibility of searching for the unknown future.





At four O'clock in the afternoon, I would invite the rabbit to sit by the paddy fields, waiting for the waterfall of clouds to surge over from the other side of the coastal mountains, firmly sticking to the mountain ridge, covering it like a bright soft white cloth hat. As the wind blows, the white hat will entirely get loose, spin up and fly away. Every bit of the changes of the cloud and mountain landscape is God's coming. It time for us to visit the old lady, and enjoy her handmade steamed bread of rice. She would be playing with the cats and whispering, "The great nature is our mother, giving us everything that is richest

yet simplest. Tasting the original flavor of food is tasting the sunshine, tasting the earth." If the rabbit wants to leave Chishang at the evening dusk, I would take him back and visit the "Gonshengtan" near the train station for rice noodle seasoned with a few pieces of fresh tender beef and carrots. And then, the rabbit could take a slow train, heading for Guanshan. He would notice the checkerboard street arrangement, that is delightedly elegant and tranquil, quietly hiding the dross of time, and extracting the freshness of living sense. Collocated with the lush Central Mountain Range, the new independent western-style houses

are mixed with Japanese-style wooden houses. The roof tiles tilt, and the mosses grow. The yards are planted with flowers and trees, and the twigs and leaves swing in the breaths of the wind, stretching through the rusted flora metal windows, and slightly dipping the elegant calligraphic writing on the red banners sticking to the edge of the doors. The rabbit would be enchanted by the views of the old houses, and hope to be a traveler. The residents immersed in the rhythms of colors and charms are naturally accompanied by the roof tiles and green trees all the year round. He looks out to the far-away places, where the white

clouds surround the mountain tops. Farther beyond, there is another mountain peak inhabited by other people. If, the rabbit would like to fall asleep with the little town of Guanshan, next day he can take the early morning train to head south, take a nap and wake up with the big river valley outside the windows of the train, which meanders all the way to the little Shanli station surrounded by the mountains. He will be deeply touched by the atmosphere of the small village where the remote tranquility and delightfulness permeates. The train station, facing the horizon of a grey misty treacherous

badland steeply sliced, is filled with the drifting fragrance of camellia oil, where a few countrywomen bend over to plant the ginger seedlings. The tribe inhabited by a few dozens of household residents live on the mountain farming. The traditional one-story houses are inlaid beside the road, protected by the vast paddy fields surrounding them. A tiny, quaint white church guards the northern front of the tribe like being forgotten by the world. The little church wears a red cross on the top, and its walls made of piled cobblestones collected from the Beinan River gracefully and holy stands, and is tentatively watched by an old pine tree in the front. In this mysterious mountain town, man and the nature guards each other like the magnificent poetic words: What amazes are not the airplanes flying in the sky, it is the man's feet firmly standing on the ground.

There is no other village ahead and no store back there, but life self-sufficiently settles down, deeply rooted and stretched, for the entire life cycle. If the rabbit wants to stay, I would say, come set out again, the blue seas are right ahead.. The rabbit shall pass through Taitung and Cihpen, marching

toward the seas, till reaching Jinlun. Visiting this wild coastal tribe by foot, there is no neat architecture or formulated aesthetics - austere traces of handmade repairs can be seen everywhere. There is no deliberate covering of the unorganized and scattered life, or deliberate filling up the crannies and dilapidation of the roads and walls. This is the unique scenes of the Taitung coastal tribes, which refuse to be fused, integrated and tamed. The aborigines live in this beautiful landscape of nature, in possession of the entire sky and the vast Pacific Ocean,



and they don't need to keep a distance from the landscape to appreciate the skies and lands, because they have co-existed with the beautifulness, without the need to externally look for it. They live with the nature in harmony like ordinary breathing. The rabbit may want to stay put in a corner, to take a very nice look at the seas. He will come to a elevated platform surrounded by red rails, and below is the South-Link Highway stretching along the brightly blue Pacific Ocean. This is Duoliang, a place praised as the "most beautiful train station

of Taiwan." The rabbit is hungry, and so he orders a stone barbecue. He finds himself in front of a vastness, where his thoughts and worries are swept away, letting the sunshine, ocean breath and the tidal sound slowly roll in, to feed himself. So, traveling is for the sake of getting a deeper sense of belonging, a better way to harmoniously live with oneself. When the rabbit knows how far he can go, the world is as vast, and he has found his way home.

**>suggesting route : Chishang → Guanshan → Shanli → Taitung → Zhiben → Jinlun**

# Marching to "Haipai" Taichung, for breakfast

Text & Picture/ Zheng Yuting



Before settling down in Taichung, I didn't know what "Haipai" was.

Here it does not mean the school of art or opera, such as the Shanghai genre; it is about "how to eat" food, in a way that is heroically joyful like the wide open sea.

In Taichung, you don't need to worry about not enough drinks, because all you can get is either large cups or super large cups; you don't need to worry about being not full in your stomach or making low cost-performance orders, because the food stores always offer large packs like worrying that the value offered to you is not good enough for the money you pay. Eating all the way down the Gonyi Road, a famous food street, you'll notice that the restaurants are all super spacious and luxuriously decorated, coupled with affordable dishes that come in hot pot, western style, steaks, Dan zai noodles, Spanish flavors...

In Taichung, even the traditional breakfast sticks to the "Haipai" relish.

A feast of the traditional breakfast? First, you need to learn to walk into the market. The Taichung Second Market is the gourmet paradise, which takes care of your breakfast, lunch, dessert, and dinner. If you are not in a rush, take walk from

the train station, and it will only take you 15 minutes to get there. If you are determined to have a tour of feast, walking from the train station will make your hungry stomach wide open, and all day long you can well pamper your stomach and spoil your taste buds in this market for a one-stop enjoyment.

Coming to the Second Market, I'm used to order the "Three Combo" dish for breakfast. The "Wang Radish Rice Sausage", a "feast" breakfast shop over 40 years in the business, offers a very primitive menu, which you really don't need. Just say it out loud, "Three Combo!" and make a gesture to the owner, your order is done. Served on the table is a solid rice sausage that is so juicy that when you give it a bite, the juice spills out. It is served with homemade radish cake and fried egg. Every time when I bring my friends here to feast on the "Three Combo", they would always be

stunned - large hamburger for breakfast is nothing; this super size "Three Combo" is really something, a style called "Haipai". It is highly recommended to order a homemade soup mix, which comes in a variety of ingredients and, amazingly, it actually tastes fresh and delicious, very good for removing the greasy aftertaste of the "Three Combo".

The dinning environment is also one of a kind - the eatery sits on the "Arcade Street" leading to the central gate of the market, with a row of stainless tables neatly arranged to seat the gourmands. If you are thirsty, you certainly wouldn't want to miss the sweet-into-the-heart "LaoLai Black Tea" right on the opposite side. What a worthy taste!

After finishing the breakfast, you may want to cross the street and walk along the Sanmin Road (Wedding Dress Street) in the direction to the Taichung Park, and the "Taichung Big Noodle Soup" is located at



the intersection of the Gonyuan Road and Sanmin Road. The diner's doors are wide open, waiting for gourmands to come for a feast. Well, there is catch here. Compared with the "Three Combo" that is suitable for everyone - boys and girls, old and young - the Big Noodle Soup is the most "unique" Taichung flavor, which is extremely favored by some, while others may not get in to it. The reason it is so named will be well explained when you see the noodle dish. Base powder is added and churned to make the noodle thicker for durable brewing, and the longer it is brewed, the chewier it becomes. Although it looks a little bit yellow, seemingly not a good seller, but when you sip it with the soup to your mouth, the crispy shallot and delicious tastes mixed with the relish of leek stay on your taste buds for quite a unforgettable moment. It is recommended to also order roasted pork and gomi-octopus, and the former is absolutely a great mate for the noodle soup. But, eat the gomi-octopus first, so you can experience the relish going from light to thick sensation of tastes.

Dinning in the market and beside the road is really full of the daily living flavor. Quite often, you'll see all kinds of Taichung people coming to the market for breakfast.



Those with families are visitors, those in suit pants are local frequenters, and those in vests and shorts are uncles and aunties from the neighborhood. Sometimes, there are limousines stopping by for the men in perfect suits to get off and make orders. Of course, there are eaters like me, who are pleased simply by watching other eaters. I always think that food is the incarnation of an "illusive" object. Our brains reflect the food we see through our senses, and the written description of the food becomes a "metaphor", like our eating delicacies, in search for our own sensory experience. Welcome to visits us, and experience the "Haipai" Taichung.

**> The Taichung Second Market : No.87, Sec. 2, Sanmin Rd., Central Dist., Taichung City 40042, Taiwan (R.O.C.)**

**>bookstoreforbeginners : No.129, Xiangshang N. Rd., West Dist., Taichung City 40351, Taiwan (R.O.C.)**

**>DELI771 : No.16, Ln. 771, Sec. 1, Meicun Rd., South Dist., Taichung City 402, Taiwan (R.O.C.)**

# Feng City Cantonese Barbecue

Text & Picture/ Kathy



There's a saying on the Internet, "If you are a National Taiwan University student and haven't tasted the FengCity's barbecue, you'd be literally wasting your four years of college life." This Hong Kong style barbecue diner with more than 40 years in the business is located in the neighborhood of Gonguan and the university campus. The barbecue is not only very "Hong Kong", but also distinguished by its one-of-a-kind seasoning sauces, which can even be mixed in rice to bring out a unparalleled relish. In fact, if you search the Internet for the traces of "FengCity", you'll definitely spot a whole bunch of praises about this barbecue diner. It is an authentic Hong Kong style restaurant frequented by bloggers in false names, and a place for "hometown memories" by Hong Kong people who have settled down in Taiwan.



## Inception in Hong Kong and setting out to Taiwan in the 70s

According to Han Haoliang, the 2nd-generation owner of the "FengCity Barbecue", the restaurant, located at Section 3, Sinsheng South Road, was established in 1973, and has since been running in the same location. The students and faculties from the National Taiwan University account for 1/3 of the guests. Many students after graduation come back from time to time to order the barbecue. Another 1/3 of the guests are immigrants and students from Hong Kong, who recognize the taste as authentic Hong Kong flavor, except for the sauces which they think are sweeter and thicker, and therefore they would ask for "less sauces" when making orders.

Han Haoliang recalls, "The FengCity brand was inceptioned in Hong Kong in 1956. In 1973 my father took the family to immigrate to Taiwan to restart the business. I was only 11 years old. And then I began my schooling, growth, taking over the business, get married and raise our daughters. When I was a little girl, I would help out at the restaurant after school, and together with my siblings watch my father doing the barbecue, and learn. Time flies, now that I've been in this age."



### **The family barbecue heritage, non-disclosure to outsiders**

He continues, "At age 24, I took over the FengCity business. Today, we've had 5 stores in Taipei (National Taiwan University, Ximen, Kunming, Taipower, and Tianmu), which are respectively run by us, the five siblings. In principle, the family barbecue heritage is non-disclosure to outsiders. As a result, the short-handedness situation has prevented us from adding more stores. We are focused on the existing stores to make sure they are running smoothly. And this will be the fulfillment of my father's wishes.

Having been working at FengCity since childhood, and now 50 plus years old, Han Haoliang goes to the store 3 or 4 times a week to supervise the business, and chat with frequent guests. The everyday operations have been handed over to the store manager Zhang Weinong. Han laughs and says, "He's my successor, and if you have questions, ask him!" Well, Zhang does know a little bit of Cantonese.



### **The sauces are adapted to meet Taiwanese tastes**

When the talk continued, I learned that the 24-year-old Zhang Weinong is a relative of the owner's wife, who also grew up in the barbecue store, and became interested in the restaurant business since early days. Zhang Weinong says, "My boss has two very young daughters. Since doing this business requires hardworking, he doesn't want his daughters to take over the business, and therefore asked me to come back to run the business."

Managing the FengCity business requires profound knowledge of guests' preference. Zhang says, "Back then, the boss's father hired some barbecue chefs from Hong Kong to work in Taiwan, and asked them to train Taiwanese chefs. And this is why today people can enjoy the barbecue of genuine Hong Kong flavor." However, the sauces are indeed different from Hong Kong's. Hong Kong people prefer watery and saltier taste while Taiwanese tend to enjoy sweeter sauces, and are used to mix them in rice or noodle for extra flavor. So, we've adapted the sauces a little bit for the local preference.

**The FengCity Restaurant (National Taiwan University Store)**

**Address:** No. 58-3 Section 3, Sinsheng South Road, Taipei City

**Telephone:** (02)2363-3772 / (02)2366-0939

# Star-grade Cantonese chef, seclusion in Taoyuan for two years!

Text/Kathy;

Picture/ Momo



Li Yanlong immigrated from Hong Kong to Taiwan in 1978, then settled down and got married. It's been 30 plus years since then. He is a well-known Cantonese chef, who has worked for many five-star restaurants in Hong Kong, Singapore, Shanghai, Beijing, and Taipei. On the Double Tenth Day two years ago, he came up with an idea, "Why not let ordinary people enjoy high-class yet affordable Cantonese cuisine?" So, he pioneered his new restaurant business in a small town of Taoyuan.

Having served as a Chinese master chef at Silks Palace at National Palace Museum, Taichung Howard Hotel, Taoyuan Monarch Plaza Hotel and Taipei Asian Monarch Hotel, Li says, "30 years ago, it was a trend for Hong Kong people to come



to Taiwan to create their business ventures, among which catering, hair salon and goldsmith were the most popular ones. Back then, a friend of mine invited me to Taiwan for a business venture. So, I gave it a shot. Afterwards, although I worked for different hotel restaurants here and there, I finally settled down in Taiwan.

## The greatest wish is to offer customers eating fun

With more than 30 years of experience in Cantonese cuisine, last year Li decided to leave the handsome pays of high-class hotel restaurants and decided to run his own restaurant "Hong Kong Dragon Diner" in a small town of Taoyuan. He personally makes the Hong Kong dishes, including steamed rice with duck, stir fry soups, as well as rice porridge and rice noodle. "I'll be 60 years old in a few years. The reason for a new business venture in this age is simple: Offering high-class hotel-grade Hong Kong cuisine affordable by ordinary people has been my wishes for long, and if only customers are happy with my dishes, I'll be pleasantly content."

When talking about Taiwanese favorite Hong Kong-style side dishes, without saying a word, Li went straight to his private kitchen, used the kitchen knife to prepare the materials, put some homemade ingredients on the top, and then poured the raw materials into a wok to fry with large fire. Less than half an hour later, a hot, spicy Hong Kong-style side dish with thick food fragrance is ready to serve.

### **Taiwanese favorite Hong Kong-style side dishes**

According to Li, the basic dishes of Taiwanese favorites include sweet sour pork, tofu skin rolls stuffed with shrimps, dry fry rice noodles with beef, Yangchow fried rice, radish cake, as well as the "low-fire brewed soup" that is increasingly rare in Hong Kong nowadays. Li continues, "The Hong Kong side dishes accentuate the wok heat, and it is essential to well control the brewing fire; also, it is very important to preserve the food texture, such as the tofu skin rolls which have to be crispy in the bites, and that is really a test for the chef."

Venturing one's own business requires personal participation in all the details. Today, Li Yanlong drives to the market at 7 every morning to buy fresh food materials, and then come back to prepare for the lunch and dinner services. He will work till 10 in the evening before calling it a day. He has no complaints at all.

### **Taking a business for an interest makes nothing to complain**

"I watched my mom cooking in the kitchen when I was little, so I've since developed an interest in



cooking. I don't feel hard doing the job because I enjoy it, and it is really a pleasant thing to make authentic Hong Kong cuisine to feast Taiwanese and make my customers enjoy the food," says Li.

Having been settled down in Taiwan for many years, Li is married with a Taiwanese wife and his son will soon graduate from a college. Li continues, "I go back to Hong Kong for a visit every year. I can feel that life in Taiwan is much easier going than in Hong Kong, and Taiwan has very good retirement and health care systems. In fact, I'm supposed to retire in two years. After that, I'd like to write a book about my 30 years in the catering business."

**Hong Kong Dragon Diner**

**Address: No. 22 Xiamen Street, Taoyuan Dist., Taoyuan City**

**Telephone: (03)-3382088**

# Unparalleled Fruit War

Text & Picture/ Momo

"What are the best places to enjoy the delicious Taiwan fruits?" asked a friend from Hong Kong.

To the Taiwanese who love to battle a gourmet war, fruits are rarely raised up as an argument target, because they are way too cheap, too delicious, to get involved in the battle, and they are available all year round. In spring, there are carambolas, pineapples, strawberries,



baiyous, and oranges; summertime is best for lychees, pears, plums and watermelons; autumn is the season for pomelos, apples, gapes and tomatoes; even in the winter we have flourishing citrus like tangerines, lemons. You can enjoy the fruits separately or mix them up in one dish, or dry them up, sweeten them, or make them into jams or pineapple cakes, or cut them into large chunks and put ice on them to make the unparalleled ocean-view ice fruit. Each of the fruit recipes, in a variety of shapes, has its own one-of-a-kind style and relish, and it's like they were the daughters-in-law as beautiful as Lin Chi-ling,



as nice as Ashin, peacefully living together without any quarrel.

Well, if you come to Taiwan for the fruits, you've got to visit the ice fruit stores. In the stores, you'll be able to eat all kinds of fruit sundaes in one stop, and the stores were a kind like fashionable restaurants or coffee shops in the early days of Taiwan - venues for dating and matchmaking. There was a food daren who spent several years to eat all over Taiwan and then wrote a book "The Far-away Ice Fruit Store". Although there are as many as 22 ice fruit stores listed in the book, there are still many others whose owners were afraid that disclosing their stores would solicit too many customers thus hamper their attentive services for old customers, so they refused to be collected in the list. This is kind like the saying: people don't want to get famous and pigs don't want to get fat. Those simple-minded owners have maintained their own cultures of the ice fruit stores, making them places

for treasures keeping, where you don't easily fall in contradictions.

Every Taiwanese has a fantasy ice fruit store in his or her heart.

"The Kaohsiung Siziwan Ocean Ice is the top gun of the fruit world. Its overlord ice fruit with 20 times the size of usual ones is served in a bowl bigger than a washbasin. If you can choose only one ice fruit store, this will be it."

"That kind of stuff is for college students. If you really want to have something special, go to the factory-like Fengchun Ice Fruit Store near the Hualien Shoufeng bus stop, where you can order the sugarcane or fruit ice creams of original flavors. After the tastes, you'll never want to try anything else."

"Speaking of Hualien, the JiaShin Ice Fruit Store in Shincheng offers you the supreme lemon juice extracted from lemon meat and skin. If you order a take-out, the containing bottle will be filled up till the juice spills



out. Well, this is how the customers are well treated by the owner..."

"Tainan Taicheng Ice Fruit Store has a ice cream dish of dreams - ice cantaloupe. The melon is cut into halves as containers for the ice fruit, on top of which are lots of strawberries, grapes or ice creams piled up like a little mountain. You'll cry out, "Wow! What on earth is that weirdo? That is just too much!" If it is your first time of visit, don't get too overreacted.

"As a Tainan local, I've got to say something. What place do you put Lily?" I finally got to my limit and burst out.

People suddenly became quite.

"None of you has ever tried Lily. Tell me, what's special over there?"

"Well...I haven't tried it either."

To visit the Lily Fruit Store, which nearly pronounces for all ice fruit stores, I finally took a rare vacation to meet this super famous ice fruit store, where the endless wait line was really a killer. Despite the pretty chicks serving the dishes, I was still a bit like complaining. I finally managed to get a spot to seat myself. And then, there was another 50 minutes of idling wait, in the arcade space filled with fruit fragrance. At last, here came two fruit ice dishes served on clean, white ceramic plates. The spoons were traditional metal ones. The grapes might be used for decoration, but were all exuberant. Get a bite, "Wow!"



The Lily ice fruit dish in front me was nothing special compared with the ones of other stores with all the versatility stunts, but distinguished for its freshness and bargain price. It is like all the well-known Taiwan snacks that we are so familiar that we don't get too surprised by their delicacies. Now that the bowl of fruit ice suddenly comes to me, I miss it so much.

That was a little grocery store without a name in Kaohsiung Meinong. It sells only one ice dish - the pure ice banana, with large size of peanuts sprinkled on the top. There was a time when the peanuts ran out, the 50-year old owner went over to the neighboring grocery store to buy peanuts, although he charged only 30 dollars for this one big bowl of ice banana. That was



a must-eat cool-to-the-bottom ice fruit in my younger days on the way back to hometown for new year holiday. I haven't come back here often in recent years since my adulthood, and have nearly forgotten the taste. Is that store still there?

As I was recalling the childhood delicacies, coming to my eyes was the vintage ice shop "Jian Sui Store" still running in the old market with crowded guests. When I was getting to the wait line to battle for the ice dish, I suddenly heard a faint voice from a big-eye ponytail girl, who called me and gave me a glass of golden drink. Wow, isn't this the pineapple juice we used to drink after school when we were teenagers? The shop owner came to me with a big smile on his face and told me that it was the

Guanmiao pineapple brewed for a whole day. To my great, pleasant surprise, I ran into the long forgotten childhood delicacy in such a coincidence. The greedy worms in my stomach are now pacified and content. After all, they are the spices remembering old stuff. Now, it's time to go home.

"The most delicious fruits need the most important ingredients - the memory. Do you get it?"

"My pineapple girl, I got it. So, it is unparalleled, and it is all about wording."

"I guess this is a line of script from the Japanese comic Vagabond! What a plagiarism!"



### >The dream stores appearances list

Ferry Dock Gourmet Ice Dessert Specialty

Address: No. 76 Haibin 1st Road, Gushan Dist., Kaohsiung City

Telephone: 07-551-3773

Lily Ice Fruit Store

Address: No. 199 Section 1, Fuqian Rd., West Dist., Tainan City 700

Telephone: 06-213-7522

Fengchun Ice Fruit Store

Address: No. 79 Section 1, Shoufong 1st Road, Shoufong Township, Hualien County 974

Telephone: 03 865 1530

Jiashin Ice Fruit Store

Address: No. 22 Bo'ai Road, Sincheng Township, Hualien County 971

Telephone: 03 861 1888

Taicheng Ice Fruit Store

Address: No. 80 Jhengsing St., Central West Dist., Tainan City 700

Telephone: 06-2281794

Jiansui Store

Address: No. 13 Lane 16, Section 3, Guohua St., Central West Dist., Tainan City 700

Telephone: 06 225 8494

Phoenix Pineapple Soup

Address: No. 12 Lane 16, Section 3, Guohua St., Central West Dist., Tainan City

Telephone: 06-2232498

### >Unlisted Stores

Jiayi Zhuzijiao- Granma's handmade shaved ice

Address: Intersection of Jhongsing Road and Wujhu Street, Shueishang Township, Jiayi

County

Telephone: N/A

Janguo Fruit Ice Store

Address: Booth No. 113, Tourist Night Market, Huasi St., Taipei City

Telephone: 02-23089390

たまたま Slow Eatery

Address: Minfu 3rd St.m, Taoyuan Dist., Taoyuan City 330

Telephone: 0987-535236

Extended reading: "Far-away Ice Fruit Store" by Hally Chen, issued by Pedestrian Publishing.



### What's up on edition No.15?

In recent years, besides the Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival, Taipei Film Festival, Kaohsiung Film Festival, the Taipei Golden Horse Fantastic Film Festival, Taiwan International Documentary Festival, Women Make Waves Film Festival all demonstrate an international standard and have become an important must-visit occasions for film fans from all walks of life. The next edition of Taiwan Step, we shall interview some heavy weight film critics, invite them to relay the stories of Taiwan film festivals while introducing the upcoming film festival in the fourth quarter of the year. Welcome you all to take an flight in time to Taiwan and snatch for your choice seats!



# Taiwan Step

Free of charge