



SUMMER 2021

## Think Globally, Do Locally

### COVER STORY

Home away from Home:

6 Foreign Residents on Why They Love Taipei

# TAI<sup>台</sup>PEI<sup>北</sup>

# TAIPEI

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EDITOR'S  
INTRODUCTION

# THINK GLOBALLY, DO LOCALLY



Summer 2021 arrives as much of the world still lies in the grip of the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite the threat, life in Taipei carries on for the locals and for the city's thriving expatriate population, and we here at *TAIPEI* strive to show you their side of this wonderful city in this issue — Taipei in the eyes of the expats.

Why are a growing number of expats choosing to put down roots in Taipei? In our cover story, we head straight for the source and ask six foreign residents what they love most about the city and the lives they've built here.

If you're thinking about upping stakes for Taipei, you won't want to miss "Settling in Taipei," our guide to three city neighborhoods beloved by the expatriate community. Also see our feature articles on Little Philippines and Taipei's Muslim community.

In *TAIPEI*'s new section, "A City for Change," a space for social justice and positive change, we take a look at the Asia Rainbow Ride and see how the event champions being out and proud for Taipei's LGBTQ community.

Taipei is also a place where residents and visitors can experience fusion cuisine that utilizes local ingredients to create widely-renowned flavors. Whether it's "slow food" or chocolate produced by a local chocolatier, come along and discover the tastes that have taken the global food scene by storm.

And finally, we welcome another new addition to our pages, "A Day in the Life," where you can get to know what life in this metropolis is really like, through the eyes of the people who live and work here. In the inaugural article, we follow a Taipei hotel manager, resident here for 30 years, as he takes you through a typically atypical day in his busy, rewarding life.

All this and more, as *TAIPEI* steps into the fun and festive summer season!

## ▲ ANNOUNCEMENT OF COVID-19 MEASURES

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



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

# TAIPEI 台北

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





STORIES FROM THE CAPITAL  
SUMMER 2021

## Think Globally, Do Locally

### COVER STORY

- 04 Home away from Home:  
6 Foreign Residents on Why They Love Taipei

### CITY SCENE

- 14 Settling in Taipei:  
Three Distinctive Neighborhoods Popular with Expats
- 22 A Walk Through "ChungShan" — Exploring Little Philippines  
in Taipei
- 26 In Taipei, Touching Stories Behind Islamic Rituals

### CULTURE & LIFESTYLE

- 30 Whole World Going Crazy for Dragon Boats! Riding Wind  
& Wave with Taipei's BlackTide Dragon Boat Team
- 36 Follow Old-School Taipeiers Through Dalongdong

### A CITY FOR CHANGE

- 40 Behind the Handlebars of Taiwan's "Pride on Bicycles"

### FOOD & DRINKS

- 48 A Summer of Family Fun: Cooking with Your Kids
- 52 Respecting the Aesthetics of Local Ingredients:  
The Spirit of Slow Food Alive and Well in the City
- 57 A Chocolate Full of Love from Taipei

### A DAY IN THE LIFE

- 62 The Philosophy of Hotel Management and Lifestyle

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# Home away from Home: 6 Foreign Residents on Why They Love Taipei

**Author** Adam Hopkins, Francesca Chang

**Photographer** Yenyi Lin, Samil Kuo, Taiwan Scene, Mutsumi Saito, ICRT, Craig Ferguson, Yenping

Taipei, a cosmopolitan, open-minded and multicultural city, is home to thousands of expatriates from all over the world. Being one of the few capital cities on the planet where life has been considered safe over the last year or so, Taipei is a place where many foreign residents, who were perhaps only planning to be here briefly, have decided to stay for a little longer, if not permanently. *TAIPEI* sat down with six of Taipei's most talented foreigners, all from different parts of the world, all here for different lengths of time, to talk about their lives in the city, their work, and what they like so much about calling Taipei home.

**01.** The highly livable city of Taipei has consistently won the top spot for expats in which to live and work in recent years.



01





02

## Tom Rook UK

Originally from Exmouth, a port town in England's southwest, Tom Rook is an artist who's been living in Taipei for the last decade. He got the idea of moving to Taiwan when fellow travelers he met on his trip to India during university vacation introduced the country to him. "Throughout my last year of university, I made plans to move and worked out how to do it," he tells *TAIPEI*. "I found a job through an agency called Reach to Teach, moved, and then never went back."

Nowadays, Rook is an artist specializing in producing large 3D maps and drawings of urban areas. "I've been working full-time as an artist for the last few years," he says. "Usually these [the places he draws] are places in Taiwan. I both draw places as they are now and also use old photos to recreate cities as they were in other times." His work has been displayed in galleries all over Taipei and Taiwan.

Having been in the city for ten years, Rook has had plenty of time to explore Taipei and appreciate different aspects of the city. "Usually, I like walking

**02.** The vintage atmosphere of Bopiliao Historic Block (剝皮寮歷史街區) in Wanhua District is an inspiration for an illustrator like Rook.

**03.** Sisinan Village is a rare military dependents village where you can feel the retro atmosphere of the 1960s in Taipei.



03

around the area around Wanhua Train Station (萬華車站) and parts of Datong north of Taipei Bridge (台北橋). Both areas are yet to see the gentrification the rest of the city has gone through. Many of the few remaining Qing Dynasty (清朝, 1636 A.D. – 1912 A.D.) buildings in the city are in those areas," he says, displaying his passion for older architecture and examples of structures that take you back in time. For Rook, the city's older areas are one of the best parts of Taipei, giving a glimpse into yesteryear, offering a striking juxtaposition between old and new. Other places to experience "old" Taipei include the popular Dadaocheng (大稻埕), while lesser known gems are Qingtian Street (青田街) in Daan District and Sisinan Village (四四南村) in Xinyi District.

### ⚠️ COVID-19 ALERT

A friendly reminder from *TAIPEI* during the COVID-19 restrictions. During the pandemic, please try to stay home if possible. When going out, please wear a mask and follow the epidemic prevention regulations.



## Joe Henley *Canada*

Over the last 15 years, Joe Henley, from Saskatchewan, Canada, has made a name for himself in Taipei as a journalist, an author and a musician. A freelance writer, he's written for the likes of National Geographic Channel, *Taipei Times*, *South China Morning Post*, and Al Jazeera, while his musical endeavors have seen him play gigs all across Taiwan, as well as further afield in cities across Asia and even in Finland.

"Now my band is called Dharma, it's a Buddhist death metal band with a nun in the band doing backup vocals," the Canadian tells us. "Lately we've been getting quite a bit of attention. Because we have a nun in the band and we do metal, there's a curiosity factor. We're doing lots of festivals around Taiwan." The band's most recent Taipei gig came at Taipei Veggie Fest (台北素食生活節) as part of Earth Day celebrations back in April. "We want to tour overseas, but obviously we can't right now."

Having been here for a large chunk of his life, Henley loves so much about Taipei. "It's a safe, ridiculously convenient, and dynamic place to live. It's one of the few places I've been in the world where you can be downtown shopping, and less than a half hour later be up in the mountains, hiking or enjoying a cup of tea."

Aside from these great features, Henley has a particular soft spot for the Ximending (西門町) area, particularly Jack's Studio (杰克音樂), a recording/rehearsal space where his band practices. "It [Ximending] changes a lot: it's always growing and it's quite a progressive space for art. A lot of good record shops like Chia Chia Records (佳佳唱片) are in that area, and there's street performers of all kinds: dancers, rappers, skateboarders. It's a cool dynamic. It's very alive." Another great place to see people dancing and performing is Taipei Cinema Park (台北市電影主題公園) where you can also see awesome examples of graffiti art.

**04.** Henley and his metal band Dharma often perform at music venues or festivals in Taipei. (Photo/Samil Kuo)

**05.** There is a lot of creative graffiti in the neighborhood of Ximending, where Taipei's street culture is vividly showcased.



04



05



06

**06.** Being an office worker both in Japan and Taipei, Saito is still getting used to the differences in the working culture of the latter, his newly adopted home. (Photo/Mutsumi Saito)

**07.** Easy access to mountains and forests is one factor that attracts expats to relocate to Taipei.



07

## Mutsumi Saito *Japan*

Hailing from Japan's Gunma Prefecture, Mutsumi Saito has been in Taipei for two years. Having previously studied abroad at Taipei's Soochow University (東吳大學) for a semester and having worked in Sendai (northeast Japan) promoting Japan as a tourist destination to Taiwanese visitors, he took the plunge and moved to Taipei to start his own business. "I own a small company," he tells *TAIPEI*. "We do two things: promoting travel in Japan to Taiwanese and marketing travel to Taiwan that targets Japanese travelers in particular."

Two years in and Saito has adapted to life in Taipei pretty well, but it wasn't always smooth sailing. "When I first arrived, I didn't speak Chinese too well. I still recall the day I had to sign my tenancy agreement with my landlord, but everything on the paper was all Greek to me. That was scary!" There are also differences in ways people in Taiwan do business compared with in Japan, which still presents him with some troubles from time to time. "We [Japanese] tend to have everything

well-organized ahead of time and follow a plan, but many Taiwanese clients we work with prefer starting first and making changes throughout the duration of the project. That is something I'm having trouble adapting to."

An outdoorsy person, Saito loves living in Taipei. "As a jogger, running around Taipei Arena (台北小巨蛋) or along the riverside park near my place in Dazhi (大直) is something I do very often," he says. For many runners like Saito, the fun of jogging in Taipei is that the routes are never limited to the city streets, but can also be extended to riverside parks to enjoy nice views. "I also love the Yangmingshan (陽明山, Mt. Yangming) area as I'm into hot springs and hiking." Before the COVID alert was raised, a hike in Yangmingshan National Park was a must for Saito when visiting Beitou (北投), a hot spring area at the foot of Yangmingshan. "Beitou is always the top choice to me and most Japanese hot spring lovers," Saito adds.



## Prashantha Lachanna *South Africa*

Prashantha Lachanna, better known as “Chef Prish” in Taipei, is a contemporary raw vegan chef. Hailing from Johannesburg, South Africa, Chef Prish arrived in Taipei in 2006 with the intent to stay on the island for one year teaching English. One year turned into 14 years, as Taipei allowed her to pursue her passion and turn her cooking into a full-time career.

“Taipei has allowed me to do everything I wanted to do, no matter what it was,” the chef tells *TAIPEI*, attributing a big part of this freedom to the “openness, curiosity, and kindness in Taiwanese customers.” After feeling the positive, physical and mental benefits of a vegan diet, she decided to focus on vegan dishes, turning her passion for food and health into a full-time career as a destination restaurant owner and entrepreneurial vegan chef. “There are so many directions you can take with food & beverage here. And the Taiwanese market is open-minded and always eager to learn.”

She is now thriving in Taipei as a well-known private caterer, workshop speaker, and owner of Vegan Yumz, an online business delivering gourmet vegan snacks. “With natural ingredients, you can do so many iterations of dishes from simple comfort food to fine dining. Ultimately, you have the peace of mind knowing that they bring healing to your body.”

One of Chef Prish’s favorite places in Taipei is Fuzhoushan Park (福州山公園), a hiking trail within walking distance from her home and is seen by many as a great alternative to Xiangshan (象山, Elephant Mountain), offering a view of Taipei 101 and the cityscape without the crowds. She is also fond of Whitestone Gallery Taipei (白石畫廊・台北) in Neihu (內湖), citing its cathedral-like, fluid and flowing interior is the most beautiful interior space she’s ever seen.



08

**08.** Located in Liuzhangli (六張犁), Fuzhoushan Park provides a great point to look out over Taipei City. (Photo/Yenping)

**09.** Chef Prish has been promoting vegetarian diets in Taipei for years, using natural ingredients to make healthy and delicious dishes. (Photo/Craig Ferguson)



09



## Trevor Tortomasi *USA*

Growing up in California, International Community Radio Taipei (ICRT) news anchor Trevor Tortomasi's relationship with Taipei stems back to before he was even born. His parents, both American, got married here, having moved over when his mother got a job in Taipei teaching. “我是西班牙文老師!” (I’m a Spanish teacher) he laughs, mocking his mother’s limited Chinese that she introduced to him as a child. As far from fluent as it was, it left an impression on him as he picked up the odd useful words like 大 (*da*, big) and 小 (*xiao*, small), which inspired him to take Chinese classes during high school and then study abroad at National Taiwan University (國立台灣大學). All of these ultimately resulted in him having spent the last ten years calling Taipei home.

Tortomasi joined ICRT last year and wasted no time in throwing himself into the role. “I edit the news and read some of it on the air, but a bigger part of my job is handling the podcasts that the radio station produces,”

he says. He works meticulously to edit and put together quality audio and visual content that is broadcast across Taiwan and online, and is proud to work at an iconic Taipei institution that has brought joy to many a listener over the years.

Not always wanting to be cooped up in the studio, Tortomasi is a particular fan of Taipei’s riverside parks. “I used to live in Guting (古亭), about a ten-minute walk from the river. Sometimes I’d take my bike, sometimes I’d take my unicycle. I’d go for runs; I would have hangout days with friends. I love the feeling of knowing I could just follow this park all the way to the ocean and then back to Taipei. It’s a nice feeling.” Though the pandemic temporarily keeps people from going out at the moment, being able to access nature and the great outdoors is still one of the reasons for Tortomasi to fall in love with Taipei. A mix of urban and natural, the city is perfect for those who want to live their life in the hustle and bustle of a metropolis while still having the option to get away from it all at a moment’s notice.



11

**10.** Both residents from other countries, Tortomasi and most of his audience share their lives in Taipei through his radio show. (Photo/ICRT)

**11.** Riverside parks in Taipei are cyclist-friendly, which is why Tortomasi loves them so much.



12



13

## Priya Lee Lalwani *India*

If you were to hear her speak Chinese before hearing her story, you'd be forgiven for considering Priya Lee Lalwani a Taipei native. Born in India and growing up in Germany and Nigeria, she moved here in 1987 when her father got a teaching job at Taipei's Tatung University (大同大學), where she later earned a degree and made many good memories of starting a life here. "I've been here longer than a lot of people I work with and meet," Lalwani laughs. "I've really seen Taipei change over the years. I've been here since when there was no MRT. I was here when paper tickets were still used on buses."

**12-13.** Lalwani, who came to Taipei's Tatung University to study in the 1980s, sometimes goes back to her alma mater for a walk. (Photo/Yenyi Lin)




Lalwani runs her own translation and consulting business. She's taken on a variety of fascinating jobs in Taipei, including interpreting for the Taipei mayor and MC'ing the annual Indian Cultural Festival (印度文化節). "There are so many similarities between Taiwan and India, so I've been active in promoting Indian culture in Taiwan."

Spending more than half of her life in Taipei, Lalwani is proud to call the city home. "I like everything about it," she smiles. "The people are so nice; it's a convenient place, for transportation now, [which] is great. It's a great place for foreigners to live. It's got a bit of everything."

Many foreign residents are quick to praise Taipei for its convenience, whether it be public transportation, the

abundance of convenience stores, or English-language infrastructure at places like the immigration office.

Both of Lalwani's children were born in Taipei and she enjoys exploring the city with them. "In fifth grade, my daughter did a project to write a tourism and travel booklet about Zhongshan and the areas nearby. She talked about the Taipei Fine Arts Museum (台北市立美術館). "We went and explored the area together. It was such a nice feeling, mother and daughter going around Taipei Story House (台北故事館) and also to Confucius Temple (台北市孔廟)."

As Lalwani attests, Taipei is also a great place to raise a family. It is safe, clean and there are many museums and sites of interest where children can learn and explore. 

**14.** Taipei Fine Arts Museum is a place with good family memories for Lalwani.



14





Visitors and expats in Taipei can enjoy the relaxing atmosphere in cozy and calming coffee shops and tea houses in the city.



© Kris Kang



# Settling in Taipei: Three Distinctive Neighborhoods Popular with Expats

**Author** Rick Charette

**Photographer** Yen-yi Lin, Taiwan Scene, Liu Jiawen

How times — and cityscapes — change. Just four decades ago, Taipei chafed under the description “the ugly duckling of Asia.” Since then, sentiment in terms of secured national wealth and local pride have led to concerted efforts to race up the globe’s “Liveable Cities” indexes. Proof of success in this quest can be seen in the annual Global Liveability Index produced by the prestigious Economist Intelligence Unit.

A quick primer for those of you not so familiar with this little corner of Mother Earth. Taipei does not have a single densely packed enclave of expatriates gathered together for a psychological/physical wall of security. In fact, foreigners are spread out all over this friendly metropolis, one of the safest big cities you’ll ever find yourself in. Whether male or female, when taking a walk at midnight or later, you can safely remain buried in your own thoughts.

Nevertheless, there are a few neighborhood enclaves which foreigners may find particularly attractive as residential choices. We now take you to three, explaining what sets them apart in terms of both cultural character and convenience.

**01.** Connecting directly to downtown Taipei City, the beautiful Dazhi Bridge (大直橋) allows residents of Dazhi to reach the city center quickly. (Photo/Yen-yi Lin)

**02.** There are many well-planned residential areas and tranquil neighborhoods in Dazhi.

## COVID-19 ALERT

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02



01







## Zhongshan District: Dazhi & the MRT Zhongshan Station/ Linsen North Road Area

The Dazhi area is located on the north side of the Keelung River (基隆河), directly across the water from Taipei Songshan Airport (台北松山機場) and Dajia Riverside Park (大佳河濱公園). Since many military sites are located there, residential development restrictions had been placed on this land for a long time. Much of this enclave, therefore, has been built up over just the past couple of decades, with many new sleek, modern-style residential high-rises, large-scale malls, and high-end hotels. The above-ground MRT Wenzhu Line (捷運文湖線) runs through Dazhi's heart, after crossing under the river from Taipei Songshan Airport.

The lovely neighborhood environment and various options for entertainment and shopping are both reasons why Dazhi is favored by expat residents. On any Dazhi walkabout, what you immediately notice is how much space is afforded compared to other Taipei areas, except perhaps the Xinyi District. In this new area, all streets have wide sidewalks and buildings are set back a bit, allowing for calm and breathability. The most-visited attraction in the young district is Miramar Entertainment Park (美麗華百樂園), a massive new-age shopping and entertainment complex built to provide visitors with rich consumption and entertainment

options to keep them on-site a full day. In addition, big-box shopping centers, such as Costco and Carrefour, located in the nearby Neihu area, provide numerous choices of western ingredients, which have made many expats' lives in Taipei easier when the craving for a taste of home kicks in.

On Dazhi's west side are two long-time popular landmark attractions, the expansive National Revolutionary Martyrs' Shrine (國民革命忠烈祠) complex and The Grand Hotel (圓山大飯店). For long-term residents, however, its value is more than tourist attractions. A trail system is accessed behind the hotel that takes you up onto the mountain spur overlooking Dazhi. Moreover, on Dazhi's south side, Taipei's

wonderful world of interconnected riverside parks and bike-path system opens up to you at the Keelung River.

Elsewhere in Zhongshan District, many expatriate Japanese choose to live in the city's downtown area around MRT Zhongshan Station (捷運中山站) and the nearby Linsen North Road (林森北路) area. A key reason for this is the appeal of what you'll see referred to in English as either "Japantown" or "Little Tokyo," formally known as the Tiaotong Commercial District (條通商圈). In the grids of cozy lanes and alleys off Zhongshan North (中山北路)/Linsen North Roads north and south of Nanjing East Road (南京東路), you'll find a jungle of *izakayas*, karaoke bars, ramen shops, and other Japan-focused establishments. During

03





Taiwan's Japanese colonial era (1895-1945), this was a high-end residential area for expatriate Japanese, morphing into a Japanese food and entertainment area in the decades after.

Nowadays, the small alleys and lanes near MRT Zhongshan Station are also a hub of hipster cafés, selected clothing shops and cool designer-owned stores. Chifeng Street (赤峰街), formerly known as the "Blacksmith Street," is where Taipei's old street scenes meet its modern spirit. With vivid graffiti decorating the old apartment buildings and cultural and creative markets frequently held on the weekends in Xinzhongshan Linear Park (心中山線形公園), it is also a great choice to settle down for those who are into aesthetics.



04

**03.** The greenery in Xinzhongshan Linear Park brings a leisurely and comfortable vibe to life in Zhongshan.

**04.** Many old apartments on Chifeng Street are partially renovated, making Chifeng Street one of a few places where old meets new.

**05.** The little alleys near MRT Zhongshan Station are full of cool hipster cafés and clothing shops.



05



06

## Shilin District: Tianmu

Tianmu (天母) is in the city's north area, tucked up against the base of the Yangmingshan massif. This neighborhood is the favorite choice for expatriates who come with kids of elementary and high school age in tow, as it is home to Taipei American School, Taipei Japanese School, and the Taipei European School is just beyond its western perimeter. It has perhaps Taipei's highest density of international residents, and you'll see folks of more races and ethnicities here than elsewhere in the city (save perhaps for the Taipei World Trade Center area during big international trade shows), because the embassies and representative offices of many lands, as well as the residences of many diplomatic personnel, are found here in what is called the Diplomatic Quarter.

From the mid-1950s to 1979, Tianmu was a residential enclave for mid/lower-ranking US military personnel and their families. Higher officers lived up on Yangmingshan. Housing facilities were also created for USAID workers and other foreign civilians. Look down

on Tianmu using Google's satellite view, and you'll notice the Western-style community road layout. Today few of the original Western-style residential buildings remain, replaced by multi-story apartment blocks. Both the American and Japanese schools are on former US military sites.

Convenient public transportation is also one of the reasons that make Tianmu livable. The Taipei Metro's Tamsui-Xinyi Line (淡水信義線) runs along Tianmu's western side, and there is efficient bus service to the various stations and right into the city center, with a ride taking about 25 minutes outside of high-traffic times. Nature lovers enjoy quick access to Yangmingshan and Yangmingshan National Park's myriad delights, and consider the massif their backyard playground. The popular, verdant Tianmu Old Trail (天母古道), also home of many wild Formosan rock macaques, starts right at its north edge, just off Zhongshan North Road's Section 7. Besides, the large Tianmu Sports Park (天母運動公園) provides a wide array of high-quality, well-maintained public facilities, including tennis and basketball



courts, children's playgrounds, jogging track, inline skating rink, open-air theater, and multi-purpose lawn, making it easy for expats in Tianmu to enjoy sports and outdoor social events.

Neighborhood retailers collectively stock a noticeably greater variety of imported goods than found in other Taipei zones. There are a number of hypermarkets and large department stores — Carrefour, SOGO, Shin Kong Mitsukoshi (新光三越), and Dayeh Takashimaya (大葉高島屋) — many specialty stores catering to the international community, and a wide selection of eateries serving Western, Japanese, and the cuisines of other lands. You'll also find that you come across comparatively more personnel at neighborhood stores and eateries able to converse in English.

**06.** Tianmu Old Trail was once a path where mountain spring water was drawn from Yangmingshan. Today, the long water pipe that delivered the water remains. (Photo/Yenyi Lin)

**07.** To many residents in Tianmu, the spacious jogging track at Tianmu Sports Park is a big bonus to living in the area. (Photo/Yenyi Lin)

For new arrivals, Tianmu is also a great place to kickstart a vibrant social life in Taipei. Two iconic places to meet new friends and enjoy great food are Wendel's German Bakery & Bistro (溫德德式烘焙餐館) and Dreamers Coffee Roasters. Wendel's is a German master baker, serving up perhaps Taipei's best German fare. The bistro's appealing outdoor beer garden also makes it especially popular. Dreamers offers first-rate drip and cold brew coffees, as well as popular coffee cocktails, and has comfy outdoor street-side seating which allows you to enjoy a cozy afternoon when the COVID alarm is lifted.

Also key to the Tianmu's heart is the Tianmu Flea Market (天母生活市集), an outdoor Western-style flea market at the intersection of Zhongshan North Road and Tianmu East Road (天母東路). A splendid international cultural mix is found at the 200-some stalls, which display both handmade creative products and second-hand goods. Much fun live entertainment is also on tap, including street performers and indie musicians. The event usually runs each Friday to Sunday, yet it is temporarily closed during the pandemic.

07



## Daan District: Kang Qing Long

Located near National Taiwan Normal University (台灣師範大學) and National Taiwan University, the Kang Qing Long community (康青龍街區) is known for its artistic vibe and air of nostalgia. Its name is an abbreviation using words taken from three key streets that run north-south through it — Yongkang (永康街), Qingtian (青田街), and Longquan Streets (龍泉街).

During the Japanese colonial period, this district grew as a residential community for Japanese government officials, senior civil servants, and academics, and a cluster of Japanese-style wooden houses were constructed at that time. Accordingly, you'll still come across numerous old Japanese wood-built residences on a walkabout nowadays, with a number now renovated and housing eateries and other ventures. Qingtian 76 (青田七六), just off Qingtian Street, is a Japanese restaurant in a heritage Japanese-style

residence, with clear Western influences incorporated, built by a Japanese academic in 1931. Lunch and dinner feature traditional Japanese fare; its afternoon tea features both Japanese and Western treats.

Beyond the main arteries named above, plus Heping East Road (和平東路) which cuts the area into north and south blocks, the dense lane/alley grids are soothingly quiet. This combination of tranquility and the social-life excitement provided by the legion of characterful designer boutiques, cafés, teahouses, local and international eateries, antique shops, and other types of ventures has made this a popular residential choice with younger expatriates. The island's back-alley culture is justly considered a national treasure by locals, and there's perhaps no better way to get a grasp of the Taipei soul than meandering serendipitously through Kang Qing Long.

Adding to this neighborhood's attractiveness are its convenient transportation links and easy access to park areas. The MRT Tamsui-Xinyi Line runs along its north

08





edge, the Songshan-Xindian Line (捷運松山新店線) along its south. Sprawling Daan Park (大安森林公園), known as the “lungs of Taipei,” filled with recreation facilities, faces the north block across Xinsheng South Road (新生南路), and across Xinsheng off the south block’s southeast corner is the beautifully landscaped National Taiwan University campus, filled with majestic trees and architecture dating to the Japanese period. Awaiting just a short distance south of the southern block is the Xindian River (新店溪) entry into the city’s riverside park and bike path network.

Over the past two decades, Yongkang Street and its side alleys have emerged as one of Taipei’s must-see tourist attractions. It is thick with small businesses run by creative independent entrepreneurs, notably designer boutiques and purveyors of myriad food and beverage adventures, attracting a steady stream of expatriate clientele. From Taiwanese street snacks to Japanese, Korean, and other international fare, and to hipster cafés and teahouses hidden down along the side alleys, all palates are guaranteed satisfaction. One

of Yongkang’s iconic-brand anchors is the original outlet of the internationally renowned Din Tai Fung (鼎泰豐) restaurant chain — itself an international group-tour destination.

All budget categories are found in Kang Qing Long. You’ll find many career professionals live here, but because of the presence of a cluster of post-secondary educational institutions, so do many students. Thus, from higher-end places like Din Tai Fung, you can segue right over to spots like the Shida-Longquan Shopping District (師大龍泉商圈), a local street food hub centered on Longquan Street and specially targets the student crowd. This area is also home to the Blue Note Taipei (台北藍調), Taiwan’s oldest jazz club, which opened in 1974 and, despite its compact size, consistently brings in premier names from overseas.

This is a community of tranquility that nevertheless constantly percolates with cultured hipster activity. When the COVID alert is lifted, come see for yourself just how this harmonious brew is achieved. 📍

**08.** The tranquil lanes near Qingtian street are covered by big trees and plenty of shade, which is one of the reasons why many people consider the Kang Qing Long neighborhood the best residential area in Taipei.

**09.** With all kinds of shops, green parks and convenient transportation, Yongkang Street and its surroundings are one of the most functional areas to live in Taipei. (Photo/Liu Jiawen)

### **i COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTER TAIPEI**

This is your one-stop shop if looking to settle in Taipei. Located in Tianmu, it’s run by expat residents, with a specific mission to help expats settle into the city. (communitycenter.org.tw)

09



# A Walk Through “ChungShan” – Exploring Little Philippines in Taipei

**Author** Catherine Shih

**Photographer** Yen-yi Lin, Taiwan Scene, Wow Litson Manok

## A Little Bit of Manila in Taipei

Take a few steps toward the intersection of Section 3, Zhongshan North Road and Dehui Street (德惠街), and you will feel as if you’ve left the island of Formosa entirely. In a small kilometer-wide area squared off by St. Christopher’s Church (聖多福天主堂), King Wan Wan Shop Mall (金萬萬名店城), Shuangcheng Park (雙城公園), EEC Elite Express, and other neighboring facilities, the merchants and shoppers even speak a different language altogether here: Tagalog, the language of the Philippines. Otherwise known as “Little Philippines” in Taipei, it is a bustling center of activity for some of Taiwan’s most hardworking migrant workers, which they call “ChungShan.”

One in particular is Gilda Banugan, a domestic worker from Mindanao, the Philippines, who has called Taiwan her home for the past seven years. She visits Little Philippines on her day off every Sunday. “This is where we come every week to gather and meet with friends or discuss social issues,” she tells us with pride. But what exactly is this area about? Follow along as *TAIPEI* explores some iconic landmarks of Little Philippines.



01

**01.** In Taipei’s Little Philippines, there are many shops providing products from Southeast Asia, making it an exotic area in the city.

**02.** St. Christopher’s Church offers all kinds of support to Southeast Asian migrant workers in Taiwan.  
(Photo/Taiwan Scene)





## St. Christopher's Church

Constructed and designed in 1957 by an American architect, you could say that St. Christopher's Church lies at the heart of Little Philippines. Originally built to serve the Catholic community of American military advisors residing in the neighborhood, it drew many Americans due to the availability of English Mass at the time. However, with the end of the Vietnam War and the subsequent change in diplomatic ties between Taiwan and the US, the neighborhood's American community grew smaller and smaller over the years. Additionally, since the passing of immigration laws in the 1990s, Southeast Asian blue-collar workers have been allowed to work and reside in Taiwan, and the church eventually became the heart and soul of the Filipino religious community.

With services offered in Tagalog, English, and now even in Vietnamese, it's easy to see why Southeast Asian migrant workers gather here. "Especially with the pandemic going on right now," Gilda tells us, "the church offers free masks, hygiene classes, and even counseling since many of us can't fly back home at the moment." Unfortunately, several international travel restrictions have been applied due to the pandemic, so many migrant workers have chosen to stay in Taiwan for the duration of their contract for economic reasons. "Many of us are feeling especially anxious since COVID-19 is out of control right now back home, and we cannot get on a plane to visit our families. So, St. Christopher's Church has really provided an immense level of comfort and support for us here."



02

## King Wan Wan Shop Mall

Just a stone's throw from St. Christopher's Church lies King Wan Wan Shop Mall. Upon walking in, the first thing you notice is a large wall display of shop signs in the two-story building. Here everything from cell phone shops, food stalls, hair salons, clothing stores, and electronics repair kiosks can be found. Shops display their products outside at the narrow corridor of the indoor shopping complex, with people talking to each other in Tagalog, walking through one shop after another. "In the past, before we had smartphones and other communication apps, we'd have to come here to send supports back home to the Philippines," Gilda recalls. "Nowadays, it's much easier because we can do everything online!" When asked about her own needs, Gilda shares, "I mostly come here to get a haircut or when I'm craving some local food from back home."

Upon our visit, Gilda takes us to a small food stall selling everything from fried bananas, smoked fish, sticky rice, and Filipino ube mooncakes to "Halo-halo" desserts — a type of Filipino shaved ice dessert topped with mixed fruits, ice cream, and corn. She even stops to say hello to a friend at the neighboring shop, referring to him as "*kuya*" or "brother" in Tagalog. We can't help but notice everything in the shops is fairly priced, making their hard-earned money spread just a bit further here.



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**03-04.** All kinds of authentic Filipino snacks and food staples as well as hair salon services can be found at King Wan Wan Shop Mall.



04

## Neighboring Facilities

Adjacent to St. Christopher's Church and King Wan Wan is a popular Filipino grocery store called EEC Elite Express. Inside the store, shelf after shelf is stacked to the brim with Filipino snacks, instant noodles, makeup, and even beauty products from back home. In order to save money, many of the products and household goods are sold in bulk, similar to what you would normally expect to find at wholesale stores like Costco. Interestingly, a counter right next to the cashier also allows customers inside to process cargo or boxed shipping, as well as other economic activities.



**05.** The authentic Filipino grilled chicken at Wow Litson Manok helps relieve feelings of homesickness for migrant workers.  
(Photo/Wow Litson Manok)

**06.** With its open design and plenty of shade, Shuangcheng Park offers a chill spot for people coming to the area to rest and hang out.


Not far from EEC is a Filipino restaurant, Wow Litson Manok (葛瑞絲香草烤雞). “Filipino food mostly consists of salty and sour flavors,” Gilda explains. “We really love our barbecue and fried foods, too. Here the most popular dish would be the grilled chicken.” An added bonus of enjoying a sit-down meal here is that the restaurant offers unlimited rice with any meal choice, helping migrant workers to get just a bit more bang for their buck.

At the end of our short guided tour, Gilda takes us to another local favorite gathering place, Shuangcheng Park. “This is where we meet outdoors to talk about social issues or just to hang out and relax,” she tells us. Many of Taiwan’s Southeast Asian migrant workers are fighting to secure equal rights in Taiwan, so the park sometimes also serves as a meeting ground for them, as it is open and free. “Sometimes we’ll bring our food and have a picnic on the grassy lawn or benches,” she adds. “We really love the sunshine here!” she smiles.

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“Since many of us have left our families and friends behind in the Philippines, this corner of Taipei really gives us a sense of connection and belonging. It really is our home away from home,” Gilda shares.

Taiwan’s Southeast Asian migrant workers really are the backbone of society, doing many of the vital jobs others are unable to do. The increasing diversity and inclusiveness of Taiwan has made the city a more friendly place for people from across the world to call home. 

06



# In Taipei, Touching Stories Behind Islamic Rituals

**Author** Lin Jiahui

**Photographer** Chen Zhichen, Dubai Palace, Yenyi Lin

**Editor** Joe Henley

With the large number of migrant workers from Southeast Asia coming to Taiwan in recent years, the Muslim community has become another highlight of the cultural landscape. From feeling unfamiliar and slowly developing curiosity about foreign cultures to gradually understanding the Islamic way of life, Tony Thamsir (譚雲福) believes that Taiwan's pluralistic and tolerant nature not only makes Muslim friends who come to live or work here feel comfortable and welcome, but also enriches their own cultural breadth.

As a Chinese Indonesian who grew up in Indonesia, Tony has accumulated a profound and keen understanding of the situation of migrant workers from Indonesia. However, he initially did not fully empathize with this community at the beginning. As a person of both Indonesian and ethnic Chinese descent, his family was among those affected during anti-Chinese movements in Indonesia. Although such events are due to complex historical and political factors beyond individual control, communities were inevitably divided. It was not until he was hired as a foreign labor counselor at the Taipei City Labor Bureau that he was able to gradually open his heart in the process of helping those who sought help.

**01.** Taipei Grand Mosque, with a history of more than 60 years, is a religious center for Muslims in Taiwan.  
(Photo/Yenyi Lin)



01





**02.** It is extremely important for Muslims in Taipei to hold to their beliefs and customs, especially when most of them are immigrants or migrant workers.

02

"I had to protect my fellow Indonesian countrymen at work, and I became a solid bedrock for them in a foreign country, so I decided to put aside my prejudices and care for them instead," recalls Tony. In addition to assisting in mediating labor disputes or protecting migrant workers from violent treatment by unscrupulous employers, he most often had to deal with issues arising from religious and cultural differences. For example, some local employers cannot accept migrant workers wearing white headscarves at home for prayer rituals, and sometimes require their Muslim employees to eat pork. He yearned that the local people could have a better understanding of the norms of Islam. "The time to perform religious rituals is a time for individuals to communicate with God," he says, "just in different ways for each faith. If we can appreciate the ritual beauty of the Dajia Mazu

Pilgrimage (大甲媽祖遶境) and Christmas festivals, then we can also try to see the moving stories behind the Islamic rituals that are also filled with devout devotion."

Today, there is more or less a basic understanding of the Muslim way of life, with prayer rooms in public places and more halal-certified restaurants and hotels. Tony credits the Taipei City Government and its promotional policies for helping with this improvement. "It's not easy to change one group's mindset about another group, and Taiwan has been able to do so relatively quickly over the past two decades." He encourages everyone to appreciate and understand foreign cultures through friendly exchanges, and to understand, respect, and tolerate the differences between them.



#### **Tony Thamsir**

He is currently the Indonesian language news anchor of Public Television Service (公共電視), and the Indonesian language program host of Radio Taiwan International (中央廣播電台). Since first coming to Taiwan from Indonesia to study in 1994, he has been living here ever since. As a former foreign labor counselor at the Department of Labor, Taipei City Government, he has become very active in the migrant worker community over the years and has become an important communication bridge between locals and Muslim migrant workers.

## ☾ We Are Actually All Muslims

With more and more Muslim friends living in Taiwan, the local culture has taken on a different outlook. With Tony leading the way, there are several places where we learned about Muslim culture. When we open our hearts to proactively understand it, we will find that identity has long since bridged the gap, and that you and I are the same, just people who are trying to live and prosper on this land.

## The Spiritual Home of the Faithful: Taipei Grand Mosque

Taipei Grand Mosque (台北清真寺), completed in 1960, has long been an important religious site for Muslims in Taipei, and has the architectural characteristics of a mosque, including not only the common dome design of Islamic architecture, but also the brickwork that incorporates native brickwork, and the distinctive Romanesque corridor, which is worth a closer look and appreciation.



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**03.** With its 15-meter-high roof, Taipei Grand Mosque offers a solemn atmosphere as people enter.  
(Photo/Yenyl Lin)

**04.** At CLC Mart, you can find a wide variety of Halal food products.



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## Halal-Certified Foodie Paradise: CLC Mart

Located at Exit Y4 of Taipei City Mall (台北地下街), CLC Mart (東南亞食品百貨) sells a wide assortment of products from cosmetics to body lotions, condiments, snacks and deli food. The reason Muslims like to shop here is that they can find the brands they are accustomed to using in their hometowns, and most importantly, all the food sold here is Halal certified, so they can buy with peace of mind.

“Taiwan also has chili sauce, so why do they import their own sauce? In addition to the difference in taste, from the pots and pans, to the kitchen, to the production process, all food must be Halal certified. Utensils that have come into contact with non-halal meat should not be used to prepare halal food. The Koran should also be recited before the animal is slaughtered,” explains Tony. In the Islamic precepts, halal has many stringent rules, not just that pork must not be consumed. For non-Muslims, CLC’s Southeast Asian ingredients and freshly cooked food will help them understand the culture of different ethnic groups and appreciate the exotic ambience.



## Wearing the Muslim Attitude of Life: Butik Ria Taipei

Because of the norms of the faith, clothing has become one of the distinctive cultural features of Muslims. According to Tony, in order to cover the hair, which is considered a symbol of lust and desire in the faith, Muslim women mostly have to wear the hijab, and the degree of covering the hijab provides varies from time to time or region to region. In addition to the pure white clothing worn by Muslim women during prayer rituals, the prints and colors of their clothing on other occasions are quite variable, ranging from plain fabrics to colorful woven fabrics, and the popular colors vary from period to period. "Butik Ria Taipei" is a Muslim clothing store run by Salon Ria, which showcases a wide variety of styles that allows people to explore the beauty of Muslim clothing.



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**05.** Muslim women also have their own fashions in clothing, and the choices are quite diverse.

**06.** The distinctive patterns of Muslim culture bring an exotic allure to a living space. (Photo/Dubai Palace)



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## Geometric Style Adorned with Flowers and Plants: Dubai Palace

Because of the prohibition of idolatry in Islam, most of the objects in life are decorated with flowers, plants or abstract geometric patterns. Dubai Palace (杜拜皇宮) is a store that sells goods imported from Turkey, Dubai and the United Arab Emirates, where you can find beautifully decorated placemats, tea sets, incense burners and carpets. Different ripple patterns, semicircles and various patterns are stacked on top of each other, and the regular arrangement and colorful combination make for a stunning visual spectacle. Why not pick up a few items to beautify your home with the beauty of Muslim culture and craftsmanship? 

## Whole World Going Crazy for Dragon Boats! Riding Wind & Wave with Taipei's Black Tide Dragon Boat Team

**Author** Rick Charette

**Photographer** Samil Kuo, Department of Sports, Taipei City Government, BlackTide

*The annual Dragon Boat Festival (端午節), which traditionally marks the end of spring, is one of the three most important festivals of the year in traditional Chinese culture, along with Chinese New Year and the Mid-Autumn Festival (中秋節). The most exciting element of the celebrations are the thrilling and color-splashed dragon boat races, with competitions today held in cities across the globe. Despite the dragon boat race this year being postponed to the end of the year due to the COVID-19 outbreak, people still take to dragon boating as an excellent form of team-building, a way to build camaraderie, and a great chance to get to know the age-old tradition.*



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Among all the dragon boat teams in Taipei, there is one standing out from the others. The BlackTide Dragon Boat Team (黑潮龍舟隊) is a foreign/local hybrid, founded by foreigners who have settled down in Taiwan for a time, with half its current 50 members from lands abroad such as the US, France, and Russia. The founders, who initially participated solely in the annual Taipei championships, relished dragon boating

so much that they formed BlackTide so they could head out on the water year-round, for love of the sport. Co-founder Gael Lim, from France, recently talked with TAIPEI about dragon boating, BlackTide, and what's required to be a dragon boater.

But first, a little history.



# The Origins of Dragon Boat Festival

Staged for over two thousand years, dragon boat races have since their beginning been valued for their cultivation of a spirit of cooperation and mutual advancement, over time growing into serious competitions. It's believed that the long, sleek dragon boats have their origins in ancient ritual ceremonies held to supplicate water gods to ward off flooding and other natural disasters. In one of many legend variants, the boats and races evolved from the practice of sending icons of the gods of pestilence out to sea on boats, in the hope that disease and other nefarious influences would be carried off with them.

It's said the festival got its start during China's Warring States Period (戰國時期 c. 475–221 B.C.). A loyal and upright minister of the State of Chu (楚國) named Qu Yuan (屈原), beloved by its citizens, drowned himself when distraught at the kingdom's ruin and his inability to help his country. Locals hastily launched their fastest boats, beating drums and banging gongs to

drive away fish and shrimp and also throwing rice-stuffed bamboo tubes into the water to feed them so that they would ignore Qu Yuan's remains. In some stories, it's said a dragon was seen flying down the river during the search.

As time has gone by, the original rice-filled tubes have been replaced with the custom of eating *zongzi* (粽子), a leaf-wrapped pyramid of glutinous rice; the racing of boats, beating of drums, and striking of gongs have been transformed into today's dragon boat races, held in commemoration of an esteemed model for unselfish service.

The Taipei City government puts on the annual Taipei International Dragon Boat Championships, the largest and most popular dragon boat race in Taiwan. The event, however, has been postponed this year owing to the pandemic. It is usually comprised of, beyond the race itself, a series of activities, including a Dragon Boat Eye Dotting and River Blessing Ceremony, during which a Taoist priest brings boats to life by dotting the dragon eyes on their prows, and a Dragon Boat Experience Camp, a rowing try-out open to the public.

**01.** Being a tradition with hundreds of years of history, dragon boat racing is still a popular sport in Taiwan. (Photo/BlackTide)

**02.** The Dragon Boat Eye Dotting Ceremony is a symbolic event for blessing the safety of participants in the race. (Profile Photo/Department of Sports, Taipei City Government)



02



03



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## Behind the Scenes of Dragon Boat Racing

According to Gael Lim, Dragon boating is quite different from kayaking or canoeing. “First, there are more people involved. Paddler numbers vary depending on race rules and boat size. For example, the annual Taipei City and New Taipei City races that BlackTide signed up for require 18 and 16 paddlers respectively. The most common race distance is 500 meters, requiring about two minutes for top teams. The first boat to snatch its designated flag at the finish line wins. It’s that simple.”

The beauty of dragon boating, Lim adds, is that each team member plays an important role. Teams cannot rely on a few strong individuals — everyone must play their part to win. “For instance, the steerer ensures the boat moves forward efficiently in a straight line. Straying from a lane might mean disqualification. The drummer sets the right rhythm to set the proper pace and help harmonize paddling. The two front paddlers — the ‘leads’ — must also synchronize with the drummer to set the right pace. Going too fast or too slow at the wrong point in time may be counterproductive and prevent victory.” As for the flag catcher, Lim thinks this is a high-pressure role because the only thing he/she does is snatch the flag to end the race. “Miss it, or fall overboard, and the race may be lost even if crossing the finish line first,” he adds.



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**03-04.** Flag-catching at the end of the competition requires the whole team to stabilize the speed of the boat so that the flag catcher can aim in a short amount of time. (Photo/BlackTide)

**05.** BlackTide is often the winner of many major dragon boat races in Taiwan. (Photo/BlackTide)

**06.** During the practice, each member plays an important role in balancing the boat while speeding up. (Photo/Samil Kuo)

### **📌 JOINING BLACKTIDE**

Those interested in dragon boating can contact BlackTide:

**E-MAIL** [blacktide2016@gmail.com](mailto:blacktide2016@gmail.com) (Lisa)

**WEBSITE** <https://zh-cn.facebook.com/blacktidedragonboat/>





## Ups and Downs on the Tides

Lim and three friends created the BlackTide Dragon Boat Team in 2015. They'd previously been part of the Chinese Language Center's team, made up of foreign language students. "The Center's boating was a once-a-year activity, but we wanted to do the sport we love year-round, paddling with our Taiwanese friends and foreign friends staying more permanently. We're a diverse, co-ed team, with both students and working professionals. No professional athletes. We simply all enjoy working out and doing outdoor activities."


"We generally have two recruitment rounds annually," Lim goes on. "Candidates must pass a fitness test and attend fitness and paddling training sessions. This lets people try the sport out and get to know the team, and both sides can better understand if they are a good team fit. We look for people who are physically active and, crucially, possess team spirit."

"Training frequency varies," he continues. "Professional teams train hard, but others just participate for fun. BlackTide has three sessions weekly, one on a weekday evening, improving stamina and strengthening muscle groups required for good paddling, and two others, on a weekday evening and Sunday morning (very early) — paddling techniques in one, stamina and synchronization by paddling longer distances in another."

Asked about the most challenging component of training, Lim says that "Learning the paddling technique, or stroke, is definitely not easy. However, I'd say the hardest part is getting 16 or 18 individuals to paddle in perfect unison. Everyone's paddle needs to enter, pull, and exit the water at the exact same time. This is key to becoming a good team, and requires much training with the full group."



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Your rewards for the sacrifices — lack of sleep, early mornings, training rain or shine, missing time with friends and family — are unforgettable memories and the forging of strong friendships. "I'd say some of the best memories are when you end up winning a race by a fraction as little as 0.1 second. Racing neck and neck with other teams for two minutes or more and pushing over your limit, yet not knowing if you've won or lost upon crossing the finish line. The sense of commitment and such shared experiences creates a very special bond amongst us, as the feelings experienced during these moments could be inexplicable to others." 





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**07.** BlackTide Dragon Boat Team gathers members from all over the world who are all passionate about dragon boating. (Photo/Samil Kuo)

**08.** Through numerous training sessions and competitions, the teammates at BlackTide have built bonds and strong friendships. (Photo/Samil Kuo)

**09.** Dragon boating is a sport that utilizes the muscles of the whole body to paddle, which is why the warm-up and the cool down before and after training are extremely important to the athletes. (Photo/Samil Kuo)

# Follow Old-School Taipeiers Through Dalongdong

**Author** Yining Chen

**Photographer** Yenyi Lin, Taiwan Scene

**Editor** Joe Henley

Located at the junction of the Tamsui (淡水河) and Keelung Rivers, Dalongdong (大龍峒) was first settled by the Basay tribe (巴賽族) of the Plains Aborigines in northern Taiwan, and was once recorded as "Pourompon" during the period of Taiwan under Dutch rule. Even today, the Taiwanese pronunciation "Dalangpang (大浪泵)" still retains its ancient tones from centuries ago.

In the early Qing Dynasty, a large number of Han Chinese of Quanzhou Tongan (泉州同安) ancestry moved in, so it was called "Dalong Tong (大隆同)," which when literally translated means "Prosperous Tongan." Later, because of the large number of successful candidates in imperial examinations, locals believed that this place was a dragon cave that bestowed remarkable land and produced outstanding people, so it was called "Dalongdong" (Dragon Cave).

01





**01.** Baoan Temple is the religious center for many locals in Taipei.

**02.** Formally named Forty-Four Kan Street, the origins of well-organized Hami Street can be traced back to the Qing Dynasty.

02



## Deep Faith in “Blessing of Tongan” Drives Local Cultural Heritage

Like other settlements along the Tamsui River, such as Monga (艋舺) and Dadaocheng, Dalongdong was one of the first areas to develop in Taipei. During the Qing Dynasty, residents from Tongan in Quanzhou who moved to the area brought with them the belief in the Emperor Baosheng (保生大帝), the god of medicine, and built Baoan Temple (大龍峒保安宮) during the Qianlong reign (乾隆, 1735 A.D - 1796 A.D.) of the Qing Dynasty, so as to "Bless Tongan." More than two centuries have since passed, and yet the majestic and solemn Baoan Temple is still very much thriving, and has become an important center of faith that gives locals peace of mind.

The history and culture of Dalongdong has also developed along with Baoan Temple. The former site of Forty-Four Kan (四十四坎舊址) next to the temple was once the earliest planned road in Taipei. Local merchant families made full use of the leftover building materials from the construction of Baoan Temple to build two rows of wooden tiled shopping streets. Each store is of the same size, length and width, and this form of

construction is known as “kan (坎).” Therefore, this road was aptly named Forty-Four Kan Street (四十四坎街) due to 22 shops sitting on either side.

Although the buildings on Forty-Four Kan Street were later demolished due to the widening of the road, there are still many old and simple signs left behind, including the one at the corner of the street, Zheng Yi Guo Yao Chinese Medicine Store (正一堂國藥號). When you get to the junction of Hami Street (哈密街) and Chongqing North Road (重慶北路), you will see the marker of the former “Dalongtong” gate on the ground, recording the former prosperity of the once thriving shopping street.

Strong beliefs and culture surround Baoan Temple. The temple is also home to the only Golden Lion Troupe in Taiwan which has an “earless golden lion.” With a history almost as old as the temple itself, the Golden Lion Dance Group Ta-Long-Tong (大龍峒金獅團) started out as a lion dance troupe for civil defense needs, but later changed from a martial arts group into a lion dance troupe. The lion with missing ears symbolizes that it is not disturbed by gossip, but only focuses on its immediate skills and goals. This spirit has been with the lion dance culture for generations, and has taken root in Dalongdong.



**03.** Wooden inscribed boards marking the honor of the Chen family are still hanging inside the Chen Yueji Residence.

**04.** Built during the 1920s and 1930s, Taipei Confucius Temple carries the legacy of Han Chinese culture that is rooted in old Taipeiers.  
(Photo/Taiwan Scene)

03

## Walk Through Taipei's Earliest "Hipster" Paradise

The Chen family, which prospered along with the Forty-Four Kan Street, further established a deep cultural heritage in Dalongdong by building the Shuren Academy (樹人書院) during the Qing Dynasty and the Confucius Temple during the period of Japanese rule (1895-1945). The family's ancestral home, the Chen Yueji Residence (陳悅記祖宅), is a well-known monument in Dalongdong.

Located in Section 4 of Yanping North Road (延平北路四段), the ancestral house of Chen Yueji, a Minnan-style courtyard home, was built in 1807 by Chen Xunyan (陳遜言), the first generation of the Chen family to prosper through business, on the banks of the Tamsui River. You can still see a pair of stone flagpoles outside the house, which are the only pair left in Taiwan today, honoring the achievements of the students who took and passed the imperial examinations.

The Chen family produced three *juren* (舉人, people who passed the provincial examination) in the Qing Dynasty, including Chen Weiying (陳維英), who became a government official and taught in many academies.

Because of the numerous talents he nurtured, he was known as an outstanding teacher in the area, so the Chen Yueji Residence was also called the "Teacher's Residence" (*Laoshi Fu*, 老師府). The Residence is currently still partially used by the Chen family's descendants, but from a distance, the partially renovated exterior of the house provides a glimpse of the many memories of the old Minnan-style mansion.

Chen Weiying, a scholar who was concerned with education, established the Shuren Academy in Baoan Temple to impart knowledge to local youths, promote local culture, and enhance the literary atmosphere of Dalongdong. Later, Shuren Academy moved out of the Baoan Temple during Japanese rule and was relocated to the newly built Shuren Academy Wenchang Temple (樹人書院文昌祠), and even awarded scholarships to encourage students to cultivate talents. Nowadays, it has become a favorite temple among students to pray for good grades. Every year before major exams, you can see tables full of offerings, representing the sincerity of the students' prayers for good luck.

The Chen Yueji Residence and Shuren Academy still bear witness to the educational and cultural depth of Dalongdong, which was also the earliest gathering place for literary and artistic youth in Taipei.




## A Literary Family Promotes Confucian Temple and Confucianism in Taipei

The Chen family in Dalongdong was also a key driver in the creation of the Confucian Temple and imparting Confucianism in Taipei today. The earliest Confucius Temple in Taipei was built during the Qing Dynasty in the southern gate of the ancient Taipei City, but it was later demolished during Japanese rule and then rebuilt as the Taihoku Prefectural Taihoku First Girls' High School on the same site (today's Taipei First Girls High School and National Taipei University of Education).

During the midpoint of Japanese rule, the local gentry felt that the lack of a Confucian temple made it difficult to continue the Confucian tradition, and met to discuss

the construction of another Confucian temple. At that time, the poet Chen Peigen (陳培根), a member of the Chen family, offered to donate his family's land if the temple could be built in Dalongdong. The construction of the temple began in 1927, and in 1939 the entire complex was completed and became the Taipei Confucius Temple we see today.

The Taipei Confucius Temple is a further continuation of the Dalongdong area's heritage regarding the transmission of Chinese culture, and it also allows us to explore the changes and development of the city of Taipei in the present day.

Although not as glamorous as Dadaocheng, which inherits the commercial atmosphere of old Taipei, we can still feel the warm atmosphere of art and culture in the quiet alleyways and serene temples of Dalongdong. 

04



# Behind the Handlebars of Taiwan's "Pride on Bicycles"

**Author** Seb Morgan

**Photographer** Samil Kuo, Asia Rainbow Ride, GinGin Store, Taiwan Scene

Before social gathering was halted due to the recent COVID-19 outbreak, *TAIPEI* made it out to join a quick cycling trip with Asia Rainbow Ride (亞洲彩虹騎行). In this last ride before national restrictions were imposed under the Level 3 epidemic alert, we were able to catch the late afternoon sun casting long shadows across the riverside park in Taipei as a string of YouBikes cruised along the river, with a Pride ribbon fluttering from each tangerine bicycle. It was a gentle 20-kilometer ride up the river that ended in Ximending, Taipei's animated central gayborhood.

"I think there's definitely more experiences that open up when people feel able to carry themselves outside of their safe space, you know like riding with pride flags along the river," says Olivia Wu, co-founder of Asia Rainbow Ride.

It's been just over a year since Olivia started Asia Rainbow Ride together with her partner Eve and fellow queer activists Lisa and Jennifer Dazols. This October, the group will hold what they call "a pride parade on bicycles," a spectacular three-day, two-night bike tour across Taiwan's rugged northeast coast, in support of Taiwan's LGBTQIA+ charities.



01

Since its founding, the Rainbow Ride crew has been holding social rides around Taipei — "a healthy, positive activity where people are celebrated for who they are." They usually select certain routes in advance and gather at a MRT station where U-Bike rentals are available. The rides are as much a chance for members and allies of the community to mix and make friends as they are a platform for queer people who are still finding their self-confidence. Recent activities, unfortunately, have been cancelled as the pandemic goes on.

"At one of our recent meets, we had a young gay Taiwanese man who was thinking about coming out to his parents. After the ride, we got to have a nice six-person conversation about trying to give this guy some support, because it's a really difficult dilemma to be in," says Lisa.





02

**01.** The openness and safety of Taiwan make the four founders of Asia Rainbow Ride believe that they can develop more possibilities here.

**02.** Asia Rainbow Ride gathers together locals and visitors in Taipei through cycling. (Photo/Asia Rainbow Ride)

#### ▲ COVID-19 ALERT

A friendly reminder from *TAIPEI* during the COVID-19 restrictions. During the pandemic, please try to stay home if possible. When going out, please wear a mask and follow the epidemic prevention regulations.





## Finding Their Peddles

Raised in a conservative Asian American household, Jennifer understands the importance of being able to have these types of conversations. “When I came out in my early 20s, I didn’t know any gay people, so you know I had no idea how to be,” she says.

In 2007, Jennifer took part in the AIDS Lifecycle, an annual bike ride from San Francisco to Los Angeles held in support of local LGBTQIA+ and HIV centers. “Suddenly, I was surrounded by two to three thousand people, and all these things that society normally looks down upon — being gay, being HIV positive, being handicapped, being a terrible cyclist — they weren’t just accepted, they were applauded.”

She shoots a smile at Lisa. “Also I met my wife!”

Lisa, an unswervable cycling enthusiast, was an HIV social worker working mostly with gay immigrants in San Francisco then. The couple later embarked on a journey across Asia, Africa, and South America to record queer experiences around the world for their 2015 documentary *Out & Around*.

**03.** Through cycling and other activities, Asia Rainbow Ride hopes to offer a platform for LGBTQIA+ communities in Taipei to communicate in relaxing ways. (Photo/Asia Rainbow Ride)

**04.** GinGin Store is an important landmark for the LGBTQIA+ community in Taipei. (Photo/GinGin Store)

03







04

## Embracing Diversity in Taiwan

Visiting Taipei together as part of their *Out & Around* itinerary, Jennifer and Lisa said they were impressed by the city's active scene, particularly its diversity of spaces that cater to queer women. "We found lifestyle and media stores like Love Boat Shop (愛之船啦啦時尚概念館) — where we met Olivia — and GinGin Store (晶晶書庫), a LGBT theme bookshop," says Jennifer. "We were really surprised to find these spaces that even in the West aren't super common."

GinGin Store is the first composite store in Taipei highlighting feminism and gender issues by offering a wide range of products and services such as books, audio/video, arts, and exhibitions. It was also one of the driving forces behind Taipei's earliest LGBTQ-friendly policies.

Eve says that Taipei's inclusive queer scene helped her connect with her identity when she first came out. "When I first visited Taiwan, I was new as an LGBTQIA+ person and was looking for a way to learn about the

community. So, the first thing I did was to go to Love Boat and get myself a rainbow flag — so I could acknowledge to myself that yes, *this is who I am.*"

In Singapore, where Eve is from, conservative attitudes prevent many in the queer community from publicly expressing their identity. "For me to see young queer people, older queer people, just walking hand-in-hand on the street in Taiwan — that was quite a change," she says. "So with Taiwan LGBT Pride, seeing people coming together and marching for something. I think that is huge."

Lisa agrees that Taiwan has the potential to lift up LGBTQIA+ communities across Asia, a region that has traditionally dismissed queer identities as something that only exist in the West.

"That's why the idea with Asia Rainbow Ride is that it becomes this exchange of ideas, this time when people can come over from Japan, from Singapore. They can relax, they can let their guard down, they can form friendships."

"They can imagine a different way of life," Jennifer adds.



**05.** Everyone can enjoy cycling in Taipei despite their nationality, ethnicity or sexual orientation.

**06.** People often tie rainbow ribbons on their bikes to show their alliance with the LGBTQIA+ community as they ride along with Asia Rainbow Ride.

**07.** Being a LGBTQ-friendly city, Taipei's Pride Parade couldn't be more welcoming for anyone who cares about gender equality. (Photo/Taiwan Scene)

**i** **SIGNING UP FOR  
AISA RAINBOW RIDE!**

**WEBSITE** <https://www.asiarainbowride.com/en/>

05

## Riding with Community in Mind

In addition to offering three days of gorgeous granite-hewn coastal scenery, Asia Rainbow Ride is an opportunity for riders to get to know one another and familiarize themselves with Taiwan's queer community. Movie screenings, drag shows, and yoga on the beach were all features of last year's event, with comfy oceanside hotels for accommodation.

Participants don't have to be seasoned cyclists either. "The majority of last year's riders were beginner to intermediate cyclists," explains Lisa. Groups are split up by speed, e-bikes are available, and there's a sag wagon in case riders get tired.

The whole point for you is to enjoy yourself, says Olivia. Everything has been planned with safety and support in mind.

Riders will get a bit of an education too. The non-profits that the event supports will also be invited along to talk about what is going on in Taiwan and Asia. "We want this ride to be a fundraising mechanism for these to amplify their services," says Lisa.



## Amplifying Miracles


Asia Rainbow Ride donates 100% of its profits to three Taiwan-based NGOs, namely Taiwan Tongzhi (LGBTQ+) Hotline Association (台灣同志諮詢熱線協會), Taiwan AIDS Foundation (台灣紅絲帶基金會), and Taiwan Equality Campaign (彩虹平權大平台), which successfully lobbied for the Supreme Court's landmark 2017 ruling in favor of same-sex marriage.

Taiwan is the first country in Asia to legalize same-sex marriage, marking a step toward equality for the queer community. But members of Asia Rainbow Ride see a bigger picture that includes the full diversity of the LGBTQIA+ community.

"When talking about LGBTQIA+, we tend to just think about people in our representation, but you know there is a whole spectrum of experiences. There are LGBTQIA+ people who are elders, who are parents, who want to adopt a child," Olivia says of their choice of beneficiaries. "The thing about these NGOs is they're doing miracles on a shoestring budget, so it's important that we amplify their services," explains Lisa.

Despite marked progress over the past two decades, numerous challenges continue to dog the more marginalized members of Taiwan's LGBTQIA+

community. HIV discrimination is one such ongoing issue. A 2017 study conducted by Taiwan Centers for Disease Control (衛生福利部疾病管制署) found that around one in five respondents living with HIV experienced discrimination from family members, while others had been refused service from hospitals.

"We need to be open about all of these issues. We need to get through to those people out there who are trying to avoid these subjects," explains Olivia. "We need to get them to realize that we're not going to go away." 



06



07



The hot summer months are the best time to find a cool, quiet, solitary place to relax in Taipei.





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01

# A Summer of Family Fun: Cooking with Your Kids

**Author** Tien Yuchi  
**Photographer** Lin Guanliang, Huang Yingjia, Josh Bean  
**Editor** Joe Henley

*Parents all over the world understand the important role adequate nutrition plays in a child's growth. Taipei is a city famous for its gourmet food, and naturally, many healthy eating options exist. Li Wan-Pin (李婉萍), a pediatric dietitian in Taipei, states that ingredients with vitamin D, calcium, iron, and  $\beta$ -carotene are essential elements of a child's diet. The dark green and reddish-orange colors of fruits and vegetables serve as indicators of their nutritional value. With the warm summer days approaching, cooking with your children creates wonderful family memories during your child's vacation, as well as aids in their muscle development and hand-eye coordination.*

## Supplement the Nutrition from Daily Diet

Li has observed that family restaurants focus by and large on providing a space for parents to relax and take a time-out when they come to dine with their children, but from the perspective of a dietitian, some of the meals offered may not be so suitable for kids. "Many restaurants still provide fast and convenient foods like fried chicken nuggets and French fries, and family restaurants also provide a play space with toys for children. The problem is that if children are used to linking fun to fried food, whenever they face stress in the future, they will gravitate towards eating such foods in a bid to relieve stress."

When it comes to the nutrients needed by pre-school children, Li mentions they can actually be consumed as part of a normal diet. For example, calcium helps with bone development, and common dairy products such as milk, yogurt or cheese are good sources of calcium. Salmon, saury, mackerel, and egg yolk provide vitamin D. According to Li, salmon fried rice and creamy seafood risotto are good examples of dishes rich in nutrients.



## Keep Root and Frozen Vegetables Handy for a Quick Serve

Additionally, Li would like to remind parents that children are generally inadequate in their intake of folic acid. Parents should inspect their child's diet and ensure that they consume at least one dark green vegetable every two days to get enough of this water-soluble B vitamin. Bitter gourd, Chinese kale, and nanohana are examples of good vegetable choices for children.

Li also believes that increasing the diversity of ingredients will help avoid children's picky eating habits. "Children tend to have what we call 'food neophobia.' They will immediately reject foods that they have never eaten before. Therefore, it is recommended that parents change the dishes around. In addition to increasing the variety of ingredients, children will also be less likely to reject vegetables that they do not often eat, such as bitter gourd or eggplant, resulting in excessive leftovers."

However, many parents are busy working during the day and they have very little time to cook. Li suggests that root vegetable ingredients such as pumpkins and carrots can be kept at home, as they are able to be stored for a long time, and are relatively easy to cook. Frozen edamame and broccoli are also ingredients that can be kept in the refrigerator. Whether it is thawing the broccoli and heating it up, or making edamame with rice, steamed edamame with ground meat, or even fried edamame tofu, these dishes can be served very quickly. If time permits, Li believes it is beneficial to have children help with cooking, as it also helps strengthen the parent-child bond.

**01.** Use everyday ingredients to make simple and nutritious dishes suitable for children. (Photo/Huang Yingjia)

**02.** Li points out that salmon and dark green vegetables are rich in nutritional value and are suitable for everyday dishes. (Photo/Josh Bean)




02

## Creative Family Cooking Time

In this issue, Li would like to introduce two family recipes that are suitable for parents and children to cook together. The first dish is "Pumpkin Gnocchi," which can be used as a staple dish. Li remarks, "Children can help to knead the dough into gnocchi, or you can have them use cookie molds to make gnocchi of different shapes. While it may seem like a game to them, the kneading process actually develops children's hand muscles and hand-eye coordination." Li says that as long as the children's gnocchi is not too thick, they should be allowed to fully exercise their creativity. Complimenting and encouraging children during the process is also a good way to increase their confidence.

The second dish is "Carrots and Scrambled Eggs," a dish that can be served quickly. Li confirms that this dish contains  $\beta$ -carotene from the carrots, as well as lecithin and vitamin D from the eggs. She advises parents to add a little more cooking oil to reduce the earthy smell of carrots. In addition, rather than shredding using a grater, it is recommended to use a knife for shredding, as grated carrots are uniform in shape and tend to

become mushy after frying. Knife-cut carrots are more diverse in shape, providing for a rich variety of textures. As for beating the eggs, you might want to let your child have a go at it. "But before you start, you have to first explain the possible dangers to your child. And don't talk about it while doing it!" Finally, Li would like to remind everyone that knives and fire sources are dangerous things in the kitchen. You have to warn your child in advance in order to ensure a safe family cooking experience. 



03



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**03.** There is no fixed shape for gnocchi, and the preparation process also trains children's hand-eye coordination. (Photo/Huang Yingjia)

**04.** Li Wan-Pin highly recommends dishes that can be served quickly and have a high nutritional value.





## Family Handmade Recipes

### Pumpkin Gnocchi

Pumpkin Gnocchi is a great recipe for preparing ingredients with children. The dough kneading process also helps develop children's hand muscles.



#### Ingredients:

60 grams of pumpkin, 40 grams of carrots, 40 grams of black fungus, 80 grams of ground meat, 100 grams of all-purpose flour, 50 grams of cornstarch, 1/4 teaspoon of salt, appropriate amount of green onions, a few dried shrimps, and 1,000c.c of broth.



#### Steps:

1. Wash the carrots and black fungus and shred them. Soak the dried shrimps in water for 20 minutes and drain the water, and put them aside for later use.
2. Peel the pumpkin, cut it into equal-sized pieces, and steam the pieces until soft.
3. Mix the pumpkin pieces with all-purpose flour, cornstarch, and salt, knead them into a non-sticky or shapeable dough and let the dough sit for 3 to 5 minutes. Put the gnocchi into boiling water and wait for it to float.
4. Put the green onions and dried shrimps into another oil pan and sauté. Add ground meat and stir fry, then add the broth, carrots, and black fungus. Bring it to a boil, add the gnocchi and serve.



### Carrots and Scrambled Eggs

Carrots and Scrambled Eggs is a dish that can be served quickly and is not only rich in nutrients, but also flavorful, and is very popular with children.



#### Ingredients:

Half a carrot and 4 eggs



#### Steps:

1. Wash the carrots, peel them and shred them.
2. Fry the shredded carrots in a frying pan until they become mushy.
3. Add the beaten eggs in and fry them until they are 80% or fully cooked.
4. Add seasonings as necessary and serve.

# *Respecting the Aesthetics of Local Ingredients:* The Spirit of Slow Food Alive and Well in the City

**Author** Tian Yuji  
**Photographer** Chang Jinrui  
**Editor** Joe Henley



DRINK RESPONSIBLY

**01.** For Daisy Chou, smallholder wines that promote organic farming are one of the items that she believes fit the concept of slow food.

01





In recent years, the concept of “slow food” has become popular internationally, emphasizing the spirit of “return” and leading consumers to reacquaint themselves with the culinary culture of the past. This spirit of slow food has also gained popularity in Taipei. Slow food expert Daisy Chou (周郁華), who studied at the University of Gastronomic Sciences (UNISG) in Italy, is not only one of less than ten Certified Cicerone® beer sommeliers in Taiwan, but also promotes the spirit of slow food with local ingredients through food and wine for an in-depth, slow method to savor tasteful and finely cooked culinary delights in Taipei.

## Three Aspects of Slow Food: Good, Clean, Fair

“Slow food actually has nothing to do with the pace of eating, but is a concept relative to the prevalent fast food concept,” Daisy notes with a smile, as she goes on to share the common misconceptions of slow food by the public. She further explains that slow food is an anti-fast food culture, and that it is based on the spirit of “return,” advocating going back to the eating habits that existed before the advent of fast food culture.

With the development of slow food culture, the three concepts of “Good, Clean and Fair” are gradually taking shape. The word “Good” not only refers to the quality and deliciousness of the food, but also to the professionalism of the chef, who must understand the ingredients and know how to handle them in order to cook quality food. “Clean” refers to the concept of environmental friendliness and sustainability in the production process of ingredients. As for “Fair,” it is concerned with whether the producers are duly rewarded and treated fairly.

“It is difficult to make a clear distinction between these three aspects, which often affect each other,” Daisy points out. She takes “Natural Wine” as an example. In the past, chemical fertilizers were used to grow grapes, which were harmful to farmers’ health and caused environmental pollution. Genuine “natural wine” is made from grapes grown with organic farming methods, which not only produces better quality wine, but also takes care of the environment and improves farmers’ labor conditions. It is the comprehensive embodiment of the three aspects of slow food.

In Taipei, where food and beverage consumption is booming, Daisy believes that a slow food concept is relatively beneficial in terms of promotion and implementation. Because there are many restaurants with diverse styles in Taipei, and a huge variety of dishes are based on the concept of slow food, many consumers here are willing to try and accept it from the get-go.





02

## “Returning” to Taiwan’s Local Ingredients

“The spirit of slow food practiced in Taiwan is to return to using local ingredients,” Daisy shares. Ever since chef André Chiang (江振誠) of the famed restaurant RAW advocated the use of local ingredients, the discussion on what is “Taiwanese taste” and “local cuisine” has become more and more heated in Taiwan’s culinary circles, and bringing Taiwan’s authentic local flavors food back to the table directly corresponds to the “return” spirit of the slow food movement.

In recent years, one after another, restaurants advocating fine dining have opened shops in Taipei. Daisy observes that although fine dining often incurs higher bills, the chefs of these restaurants are willing to turn the added revenue toward using local

ingredients. For example, at Embers, located in the alleyway off Renai Road (仁愛路), Chef Wes has designed a menu that is inspired by the indigenous food culture. For instance, the “Sea Ears” dish focuses on the shellfish that the Amis people used to collect from the sea and consume. The “Gathering Eight Beans” is a tribute to the Bunun tradition of seed preservation based on dried beans, bean sticks, edamame and bean crisps, among other ingredients made with soybeans. Chef Xavier, of Muzeo in the East District, also replaces asparagus with cabbage, a common local vegetable in Taiwan, which is air-dried and roasted as a side dish for Western-style meals.

Other top restaurants, such as Nihonryori RyuGin (祥雲龍吟), also emphasize the use of local ingredients on their menus. “In the past, there was a perception that high-end restaurants had to use imported ingredients,



**02.** Embers' "Gathering Eight Beans" is based on a variety of soybean products and plays with the diversity of Bunun cuisine.

**03-04.** Chef Wes of Embers uses shellfish, which is often picked up and consumed by the Amis, as the main centerpiece of the meal, and paired with malty-flavored beer to create a collage of local flavors.

03



such as French blue lobster and Hokkaido scallops, but as the new generation of chefs began to promote local ingredients, consumers are willing to spend more money on them," Daisy points out. With the refinement of local ingredients, more people will be willing to acknowledge their value and return to the appreciation of local ingredients, which is also the embodiment of the slow food concept of "Good."

On the other hand, the growing number of smallholding farmers' markets in Taipei also reflects the connection between urban life and slow food culture. In the pursuit of Good and Clean food, consumers are now more willing to buy organic ingredients from local farmers. One of the implications of this is that consumers skip the exploitation of middlemen and buy products directly from farmers, which coincides with the concept of Fair.

04





05



06

**05.** Bar NOMAD, initiated by Daisy, collaborates with major restaurants, hoping to promote the spirit of slow food through the opportunity to incorporate various local ingredients.

**06.** Daisy Chou utilized a variety of food spices to create six beer cocktails that infuse local ingredients into surprising flavors.

## Supporting Slow Food in Your Own Way

As for Daisy herself, she has also found her own way of practicing the Slow Food spirit. As she is a beer expert, in the past, Daisy's selection of alcoholic drinks for events has been based on natural wine, wine produced by smallholding farms, local breweries, or products brewed with local indigenous varieties. At the end of last year, Daisy launched a collaborative project called "Bar NOMAD (游牧酒吧)," bringing selected wines to partner restaurants for a limited period of time to share local ingredient and wine pairings with customers, with the first stop being Embers in Taipei.

Reflecting on the first Bar NOMAD experience, Daisy mentions that in order to correspond to Chef Wes's longstanding imagination of "local" and "Taiwanese flavors," she used the theme of "mix your own tastes" this time, resonating with the common concept of "de-icing, less sugar and spicy" in Taiwanese food habits. Therefore, Daisy introduced five types of beer bases: bitter, malty, sour, fruity, and spicy, allowing customers to mix and match the flavors they want.

During the days when Bar NOMAD was in operation, Daisy's ingenuity in drinks selection often amazed consumers. "Like when I brought out the Christmas flavor made with earthy cinnamon, Fremont citrus peel, and endemic aromatic litsea. They didn't know that the taste of Taiwan's native cinnamon was different from the common cinnamon, and some of my friends had their first taste of aromatic litsea," Daisy recalls.

"Taipei is a very free-thinking city," she adds. Because of that freedom, we can try a wide range of things. Many restaurant chefs have already incorporated the slow food concept or local ingredients into their dishes with their own culinary expertise. As consumers, in addition to fine dining, stepping into the corner cafe and ordering a latte made with fresh milk from small farmers and fair trade coffee beans is a very good way to support the slow food movement. 



# A Chocolate Full of Love from Taipei

**Author** Lin Jiahui

**Photographer** Yan Hanzhong, Rodrigo Flores

**Editor** Joe Henley

Valentine's Day in February is a time for many people to express their love. In Taiwan, the seventh day of the seventh month of the lunar calendar, also known as *Qixi Festival* (七夕), is yet another occasion for lovers to meet. These celebrations involving heartfelt confessions tend to be associated with rich and treacly chocolate. Taipei has seen its chocolate dessert offerings continuously evolving, and through this conversation with Q Sweet patissier Queenie Wu (吳葵妮) and travel and food writer Eric Hsu (徐銘志), let *TAIPEI* provide an introduction to developing chocolate trends in Taiwan as well as the creation of a larger space for the exploration of delectable tastes.



01

**01.** Queenie Wu and Eric Hsu share the trend of chocolate in Taipei.



02

## Sweet Blissful Magic

Chocolate is often one of the first types of dessert that people come into contact with, and Wu has had the opportunity to sample chocolates from different countries since her childhood, as her father's work brought him around the world. As such, she was able to develop an appreciation of chocolate far beyond that of most people. A graduate of the Belgium Chocolate Academy, she believes that among all dessert options, chocolate is the one that is most able to keep people coming back, perhaps due to its taste or its post-consumption effect on the body and mind. She says, "Eating chocolate triggers your brain to secrete dopamine, producing a feeling of happiness. This is what cements its irreplaceable position in the world of desserts."

Unlike Wu, Hsu's initiation into the world of chocolate came a little later in life. When he was in school, his knowledge of chocolate, like most people, was limited to the common products he saw on the supermarket or convenience store shelves. It was not until he became a lifestyle features reporter that he discovered the profundity of the world of chocolate. "In the past 20 years, people started discussing the concept of terroir. So I learned crops like cocoa produce different flavors depending on the climate. It was only when people started discussing the concept of terroir that I learned crops like cocoa produce different flavors depending on the climate and environment of the area it is grown in. Chocolate turns out to be somewhat similar to red wine, with each part having subtle differences in taste. This is poles apart from the mass-produced type, which is simply a combination of cocoa and sweetness. My interest in chocolate stemmed from this discovery."

**02.** The handmade chocolate products are infused with the complete devotion of the craftpersons.

**03.** In recent years, Taiwan has imported many chocolate products that emphasize the local flavor of cocoa beans, providing chocolate connoisseurs with a richer and more varied experience for their taste buds.



03



## Local Ingredients Bring out Its Taste

Knowing how expansive the world of chocolate is and the magical taste that can be created, Wu, who became the director of a dessert chain at the age of 24, resolved to build her own international brand when starting her own business. She says, "Walking along the Bund in Shanghai, I saw how the intense competition in the fashion industry had become the norm, and I feel this is also the case for desserts. The era of patissiers running a tiny shop in an alley has come to an end. This is an era of international competition. I feel that to carve a niche for yourself, it is important not to blindly chase after what is popular, but rather, to pick what you love and channel your enthusiasm and zeal into it so that you can truly compete with others. So, chocolate, being my favorite, became the main theme of my creations, and with it, I strived to offer the very best cakes, desserts, and drinks at my store."

Holding fast to this belief, she won the award for "White chocolate bars with inclusions or pieces,"

clinching the first ever win for Taiwan in this category at the 2019 International Chocolate Awards (ICA) with her "Szechuan Pepper and Raspberry Chocolate Bars." Additionally, in the 2020 Asia Pacific competition, she brought home the gold medal in the "Unflavored dark chocolate ganaches or truffles" category.

The differences in planting conditions imbue cocoa with different flavor characteristics. Hsu found that quite a number of countries have started to develop their own unique chocolate products based on this. With this trend gaining traction, the patissiers in Taipei are also paying closer attention to the research and development of chocolate products. For example, Le Ruban Pâtisserie (法朋烘焙甜點坊) has introduced a "Six Flavors of Taiwan" chocolate containing rose, soy sauce, longan, ginger, sesame, and coriander, while Yu Chocolatier (畚室) has "Black Sesame Oil and Salt Flower" chocolate. Both deeply impressed Hsu. "By combining familiar ingredients or flavors with chocolate, consumers in Taipei and Taiwan on the whole might feel a deeper sense of connection to their culture when sampling the chocolate."



Queenie Wu graduated from the Belgium Chocolate Academy, established Q Sweet because of her love and belief in the flavor of cocoa. She won an award for "White chocolate bars with inclusions or pieces" at the International Chocolate Awards in 2019, and was the patissier who won the most awards in the 2020 Asia Pacific competition, which had 14 countries taking part.



Eric Hsu is a freelance writer whose works have been featured in publications such as *GQ*, *Business Weekly*, and *Economy Daily News*. In recent years, he has been focusing on writing lifestyle articles and often submits chocolate-related reports to newspapers and magazines.



## Both Dark and White Chocolate Can Be Modified to Create Amazing Flavors

Hsu mentions that most people who like chocolate tend to start with dark chocolate. In recent years, the “Bean to Bar” concept, which emphasizes the original terroir-influenced flavor of the beans, and control over the entire manufacturing process, from the selection of beans, to the baking to the finished product, has increased in popularity. As a result, many manufacturers no longer use the model of processing ready-made half-finished chocolate into commercial products. Rather, they are now getting involved from the bean-picking stage in order to ensure that every stage in the process meets the highest standards of quality. Some examples of these are Marou from Vietnam and Amedei from Italy, where both are premium chocolate brands and favorites of Hsu. When Taiwan starts to import products that emphasize terroir characteristics, it will slowly but surely influence how food is viewed by the public.

Dark chocolate’s varying degrees of sweetness allows you to search for one that is perfect for your taste buds. Hsu states, “I like mature, slightly bitter chocolate with a taste of adulthood. This kind of bitterness can be sweetened, and this sweetness is not a one-dimensional sweetness, as different tastes will emerge at different points in time.” However, he also emphasizes that although consumers now know how to choose dark chocolate by the percentage of cocoa, this is by no means the only indicator available. “That only represents the total amount of cocoa paste and cocoa butter, but the exact ratio between the two is up to each company to decide. This will affect the taste, but ultimately, it is decided based on the flavor.”

Although dark chocolate has traditionally enjoyed greater standing, Wu has found that in recent years, white chocolate has also begun to take off. She tells us, “Dark chocolate naturally has a thicker flavor, which overshadows the taste of many other ingredients. White chocolate, on the other hand, has less structure to it, serving as a blank canvas for patissiers to try out creative ideas. As such, many people have participated

in competitions using white chocolate in recent years.” Indeed, the “Szechuan Pepper Cocoa Bean Healing Chocolate Bar” and “Strawberry Raspberry Healing Chocolate Bar” that she developed have also won over many customers who used to only eat dark chocolate. The way Wu sees it, customers nowadays have a better understanding of the differences between machine-made and hand-made products. Chefs also have a large creative space for their original experiments.

There is much more information about chocolate today than in the past. In the many alleys of Taipei are craftsmen and women who ply their trade silently, continuously introducing exquisite and innovative products. Both interviewees encourage customers to sample more, compare more, and let their taste buds take them on an exploratory journey that may lead them to their one true flavor. **T**

04







05



**04.** Cocoa beans are the major ingredient of chocolate, and their origin has become the focus of many chocolate makers in Taiwan. (Photo/Rodrigo Flores)

**05.** Q Sweet conquered the taste buds of world-class judges with creative ingredients featuring in their chocolate creations.



01



02

**01.** Having arrived in Taipei 30 years ago, Hake is dedicated to the local hotel industry and insists on providing the highest quality service.

**02.** With years of experience running a hotel, Hake has hosted many celebrities, including Jackie Chan himself.

**03.** Under Hake's management, Sherwood Taipei is known for its comfortable and clean rooms.

**04.** Sherwood Taipei has created all kinds of luxury lunch boxes for take-out during the pandemic, as the city is applying the no dine-in policy.  
(Photo/Sherwood Taipei)

## The Philosophy of Hotel Management and Lifestyle

**Author** Alan Hunt  
**Photographer** Samil Kuo, Sherwood Taipei

There are many interesting people living and working in Taipei, all with different and challenging daily routines. In this issue, *TAIPEI* gets an insight into the daily life of Achim V. Hake, General Manager of The Sherwood Taipei (台北西華飯店).

Starting his career as a hotelier in Germany in the late 1980s, Hake worked in Atlanta and Hong Kong before relocating to Taipei in 1992. After nearly 20 years in Taiwan's hotel industry, he took over the General Manager position at The Sherwood in 2011 and has been at the helm of the hotel's operations ever since.

## From the World to Taipei

Asked about his experience of working in the hotel industry in many different countries, Hake thinks Taipei's hotels have evolved over the years. "When I first arrived, Sherwood was the first five-star hotel in Taipei. Unlike other developed countries, we had to build everything from zero," he says. Nowadays, more high-end options are available for guests to choose from, but what makes hotels in Taipei different from their counterparts? "I believe in the concepts of quality first and personalized services," he answers, "rather than quantity or just thinking about being the pioneer."

Over the years, Hake's hotel has won the trust of many high-profile guests, including Jackie Chan, former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and even former President George Bush and his wife Barbara. "Treating guests well is a huge part of getting them to return. If they have a positive experience of the hotel and the city, they are much more likely to come back to Taipei," he adds.



## Daily Routine... But not Routine

Hake's duties range from sales meetings to overseeing room renovations and greeting guests in the lobby. He is not a fan of routine and setting out plans to follow, and no two work days for Hake are exactly the same. "Routine will destroy you," he says. "I try my best to be here around eight o'clock to see the guests in the breakfast room," he adds before stressing he doesn't watch the clock. "People tell you stories and in the morning, they talk from the heart, nothing is sugarcoated."

This kind of hands-on service is the biggest feature of this classic Taipei hotel. "At home, if you have guests, what do you do? Stay in bed and wait for them to leave and close the door behind them? No, you show them out properly, and that's what we do here."

As the pandemic has hit the travel industry hard, Hake's hotel has had to seek new ways to keep the business going. Instead of registering as a quarantine hotel, Hake's policy now is focusing on developing take-out lunch boxes that feature high-end ingredients such as lobster, steak and grouper, as guests are not allowed to dine in, an innovative solution that has garnered a lot of attention from the marketplace.

04




03

## Stretching Hotel Managing Philosophies to Daily Life

Hake believes social interaction is a key factor to grow the potential of a business. "I believe in networking," he says. This is the reason why Hake's job is effectively Monday to Sunday. Attending banquets or hosting meetings before the pandemic and talking with people from different backgrounds always give Hake the chance to learn from others, which can be applied to managing the hotel. Even the small things like eating out with friends can be meaningful to him. "I'm a big fan of Din Tai Fung," he says. "To me, it's more than eating *xiaolongbao* (小籠包). Their service quality is world-famous, and it's something we can learn from."

As a foreigner having resided in Taipei for nearly three decades, Hake's life has been closely intertwined with people in the city. Apart from his busy work schedule, he often shares his management philosophies with Taipei locals. "I have appointments on and off with student groups, with business groups, many of whom also welcome clients and want to learn about hospitality."

From all aspects of his day-to-day life in this dynamic city, Hake gleans something he can turn into an insight at the Sherwood, a testament to the inspiration the city of Taipei can provide on a daily basis. 

# TRAVEL INFO



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

## METRO TICKETS



**ONE-WAY TRIP TICKET**  
NT\$20 - NT\$65



**DAY PASS**  
NT\$150



**24HR PASS**  
NT\$180



**48HR PASS**  
NT\$280



**72HR PASS**  
NT\$380

## IC CARDS

EasyCard (left) and iPASS (right) are available at MRT stations and convenience stores. Just add value before entering the system; the fare for each journey will be deducted appropriately. These cards also have an e-purse function for use at convenience stores and other authorized businesses, and for YouBike rentals.



## TAIPEI CITY BUS

### TICKET PRICE

**Adult:** NT\$15, regardless of using cash or an easycard.  
**Student:** NT\$15 when paying cash; NT\$12 when using an easycard. (Student ID required)  
**Child under 115cm or under six years old:** Free (ID required)

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Taipei eBus**  
<https://ebus.gov.taipei/>

## YOUBIKE

YouBike is Taipei's public rental bike system. To rent a bike, you can use an easycard or a credit card. The charge per hour is listed below.



To register, please check <https://taipei.youbike.com.tw/home>

## TAIPEI FUN PASS

There are three types of Taipei Fun Pass available: the Unlimited version (attraction + transportation), Exploring version (attractions + EasyCard) and Transportation version (transportation only). You can visit Taipei City, New Taipei City and Keelung City within the validity of the pass.



**Unlimited**  
1 Day Pass/2 Day Pass/  
3 Day Pass  
NT\$1,200/1,600/1,900



**Exploring**  
2 Day Pass/3 Day Pass/  
4 Day Pass  
NT\$650/850/1,050



**Transportation**  
1 Day Pass/2 Day Pass/  
3 Day Pass/5 Day Pass/  
Maokong Gondola  
1 Day Pass  
NT\$180/310/440/700/350

## TRAVEL INFORMATION SERVICES

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

**Information for Foreigners in Taiwan:** 0800-024-111

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

**Taipei Travel Net:** [www.travel.taipei/en](http://www.travel.taipei/en); presents travel information on Taipei City in Chinese, English, Japanese, Korean, Thai, Indonesian, Vietnamese, and Spanish

### COVID-19 ALERT

Please double check the operating hours of each transportation service run by the Taipei City Government before using them.



# How to Beat Drug Addiction

0800-770-885

- ✓ Drug Consulting
- ✓ Legal Consulting
- ✓ Medical Help
- ✓ Addiction Treatment
- ✓ Private Addiction Treatment Institutions
- ✓ Vocational Training and Employment Assistance
- ✓ Psychological Counseling
- ✓ Educational Counseling
- ✓ Social Assistance
- ✓ Harm Reduction Project

Taipei Drug Abuse Prevention Center  
<https://nodrug.gov.taipei>  
24-Hour Free Consulting  
Hotline **0800-770-885**



# What You Can Do to Help Fight COVID-19

## Wash Your Hands Often



- ▶ Use soap or hand sanitizer
- ▶ When should you wash your hands?
  - After using the toilet
  - After blowing your nose
  - Before eating
  - Before and after seeing a doctor
  - After touching elevator buttons, doorknobs, and more



## Pay Attention to Hygiene and Coughing Etiquette



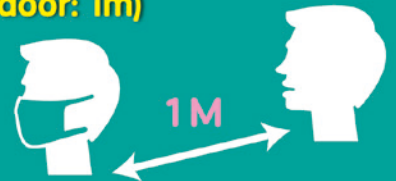
- ▶ Wear a mask when going out
- ▶ Sneeze into tissues, handkerchiefs or your bent elbow to cover your mouth and nose
- ▶ Avoid talking in confined spaces such as elevators
- ▶ Wear a mask and keep a distance between yourself and others. (Indoor: 1.5m; Outdoor: 1m)



## Rest at Home When Catching a Cold



- ▶ Seek medical help when having flu-like symptoms (such as fever, coughing, etc.). Otherwise stay at home and avoid participating in community activities
- ▶ Those who are in quarantine shall not go out or go abroad, nor take public transportation
- ▶ When having a fever or respiratory symptoms, wear a mask and contact the local health bureau, or dial 1922 to arrange medical treatment



When seeking medical attention, please provide your travel history, profession, and contact history with others

