

The Red Rope

紅繩子

Comic Artist: JULAI **Original Author:** Gao Bing-Han **Publisher:** Dyna Books

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BFT2.0 Translator: Jenna Tang and Michelle Kuo

A story of nostalgia about displacement during wartime and the urgency of finding roots in a foreign land.

In 1948, during the Chinese Civil War, in a time of chaos, people were swept along by the tides of war. After crossing the great rivers and seas, there remained the deep yearning and hope for reunion.

Gao Bing-Han, a 13-year-old child in China, carries the love and hopes of his mother and a rope stained with his father's blood. He sets out alone on a journey of escape, struggling to survive.

He's lucky enough to board a ship heading to the other side of the strait. But he does not know the road back home would be endlessly long. In Taiwan, he puts down roots, meeting kind-hearted people. They support each other through hardships. But this young boy still holds on to his memories, waiting for the day he can return home.

This is a story about refugees and the homesickness that seeps into their lives.



JULAI

Julai is a comic and illustration creator who enjoys quirky, slightly melancholic stories. Julai excels at depicting humorous, light-hearted moments while also bringing warmth to harsh narratives. Julai was nominated for the Comic Newcomer Award at the 14th Golden Comic Awards in 2023. Her biography of Gao Bing-Han has been adapted into a cross-domain collaboration involving the original work Shandong Youth Legend, the comic *The Red Rope*, and the drama *Who Says Mother is Like the Moon* with the Qseries 2. She also received a grant from the Ministry of Culture for the Qseries 2 TV drama comic publishing project.



Gao Bing-Han

Gao Bing-Han, born in 1935 in Shandong, China, faced the hardship of walking a thousand miles alone at the age of 13 during the turmoil of war. Later, he became a lawyer in Taiwan. He dedicated his resources to fulfilling the last wishes of hundreds by returning their urns to families in China.

The Reason We Chose This Story

(from the postscript)

by Lu Yi

As I read through the memoirs dramatized in this book, I was deeply moved by this boy's journey. He witnessed his father being forcibly taken from their home and executed by Communist soldiers, attended a temporary school run by the Nationalist government that later dissolved, and, heeding his mother's words—"Follow the Nationalist Army, and if they don't return, you must never come back"—he followed the troops south. The path was perilous, filled with wild animals, death, and danger. He walked over 800 kilometers to Taiwan, despite severely burned legs and blistered feet that bled and healed repeatedly, until his flesh was raw and torn.

Through my work on a screenplay, I had the privilege of meeting Gao Bing-Han on whom this story is based. In his life, Communist soldiers executed his father, but on his journey, it was Communist

soldiers who treated his wounds when his feet became infected with maggots. When he scavenged for food at Taipei Station, a Taiwanese sanitation worker named Uncle Kong shared his meal and took him to see a doctor. When doctors wanted to amputate his legs, one of them, pitying the orphaned child, decided to save his legs, concerned about how he would survive in Taiwan without them.

Each time I meet Gao, I am in awe. How did a child endure such horrors of war, reach Taiwan alone, and live on with gratitude and resilience? If he could go through all that and still maintain a heart full of compassion, always thinking of others, then what excuse do we have not to do the same?

I deeply appreciate how *The Red Rope* captures Gao's life. His story isn't one of hatred. In spite of the atrocities of war, the book shines a light on the kindness

he encountered and the bittersweet regrets of his life—without losing hope. I've been brought to tears countless times reading the manga. Whenever the protagonist remembers his mother or realizes he cannot return to the mainland, it stirs something in me. Gao once joked that we're cruel for making him relive those memories during *i n t e r v i e w s* — especially when we press him on details he's tried to forget.

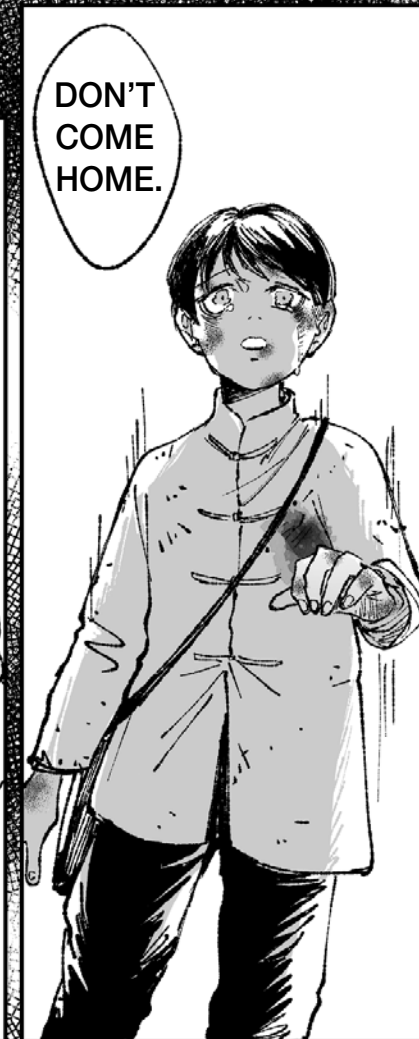
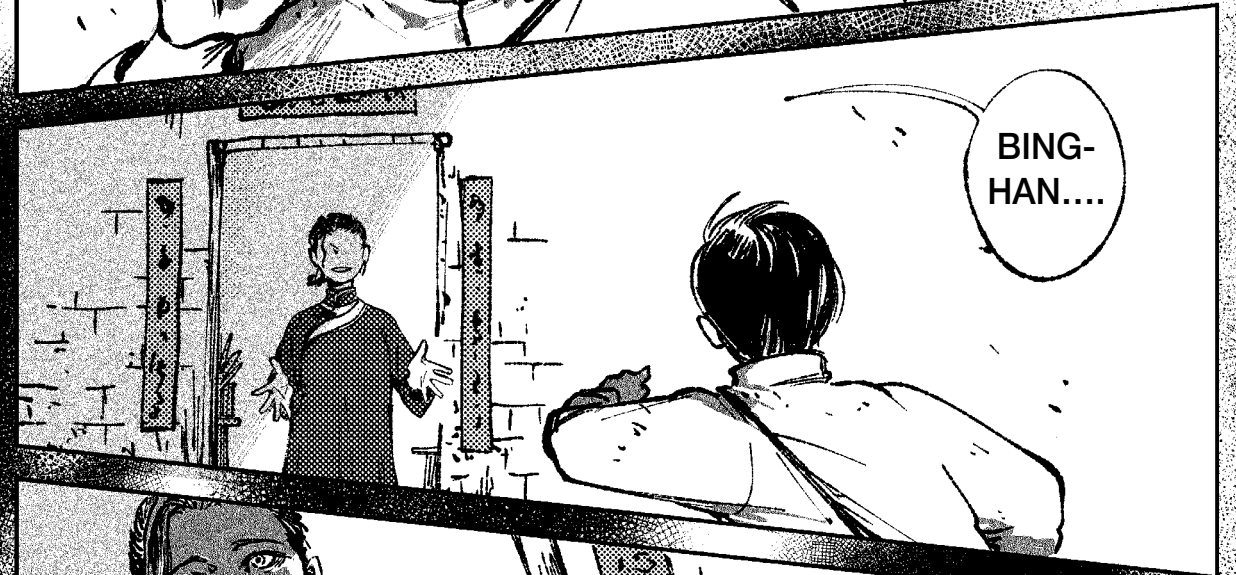
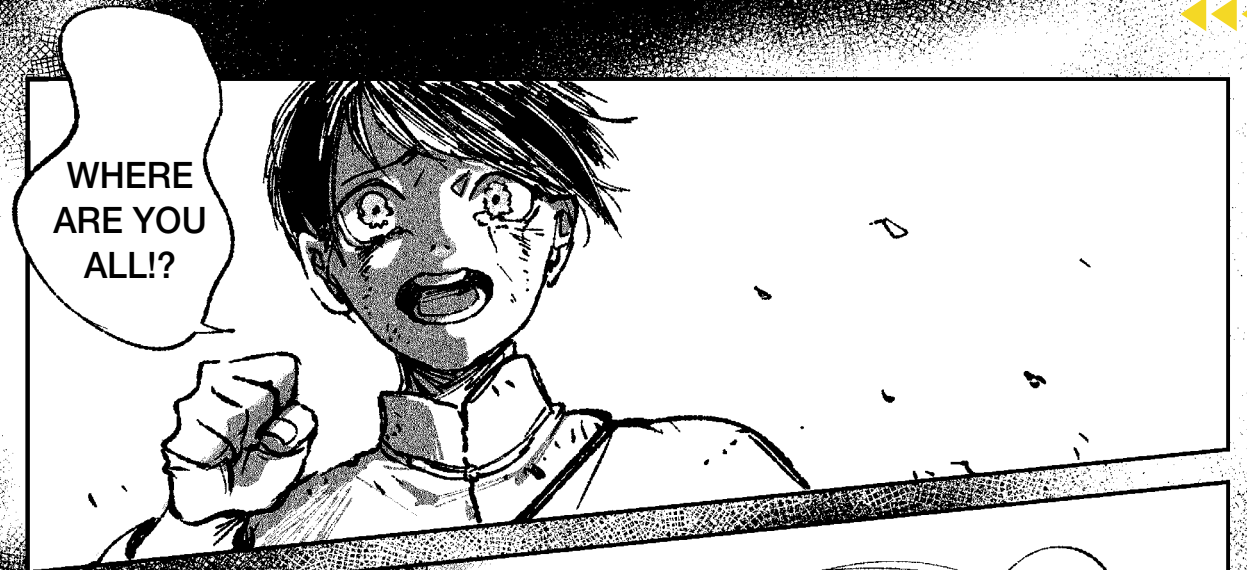
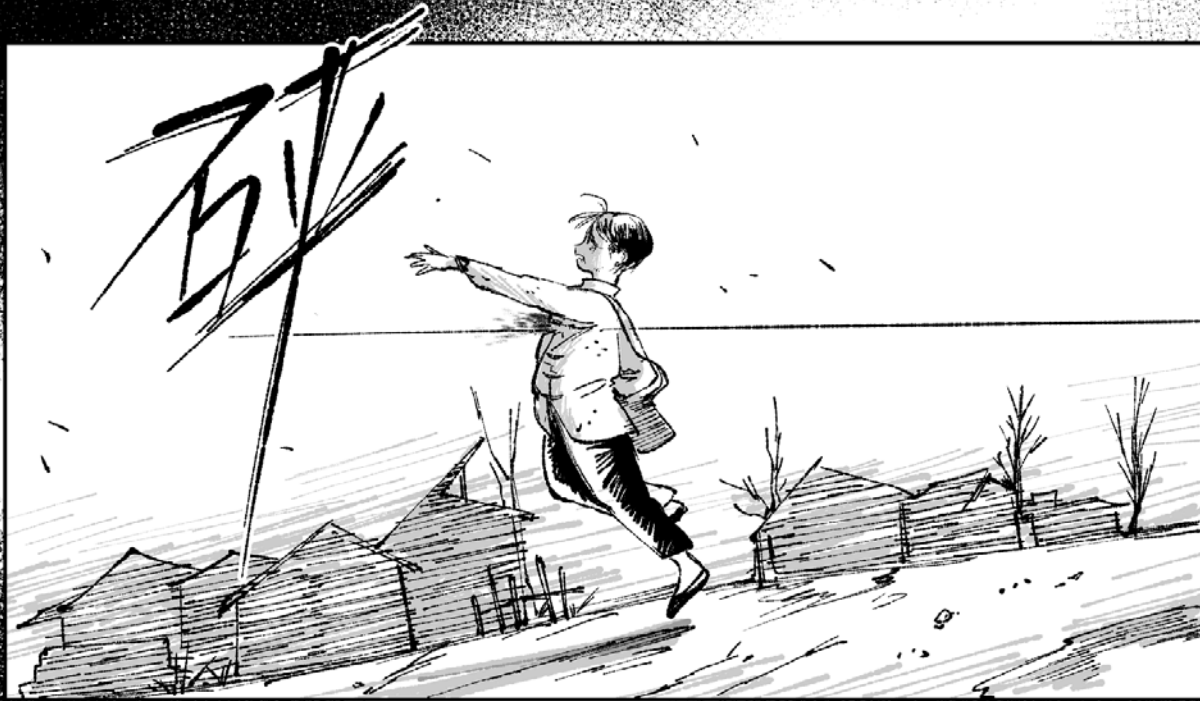
It's impossible not to question why wars happen, and what absurdity leads people to perpetuate such conflicts.

In his life, Communist soldiers executed his father, but on his journey, it was Communist soldiers who treated his wounds when his feet became infected with maggots. When he scavenged for food at Taipei Station, a Taiwanese sanitation worker shared a meal and took him to see a doctor.

Perhaps I'm too pessimistic, fearing that most will forget this past. But I'm happy to be wrong. Seeing Gao's story

adapted into manga and television, and watching the dedication of Gaea Books and Qseries 2, I know that great care was taken in preserving this history. I hope that everyone who experiences this story finds warmth and strength within it.

This edited essay appeared in the book's postscript.



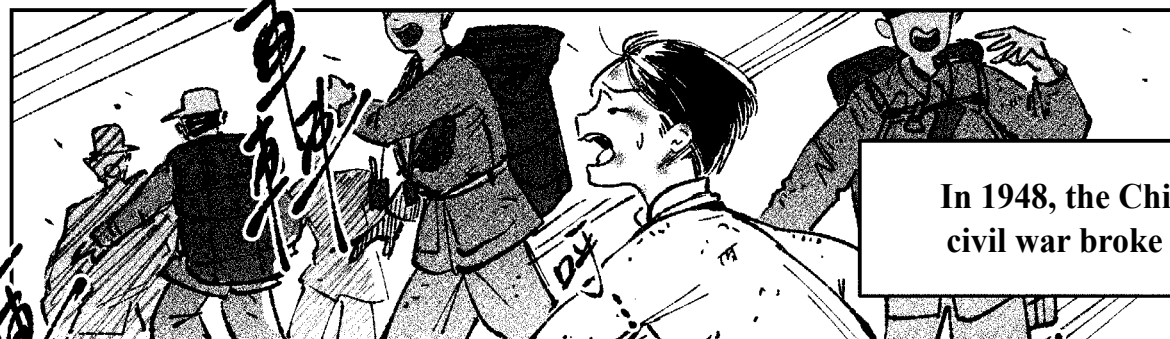


At least a division!

How many soldiers are there?



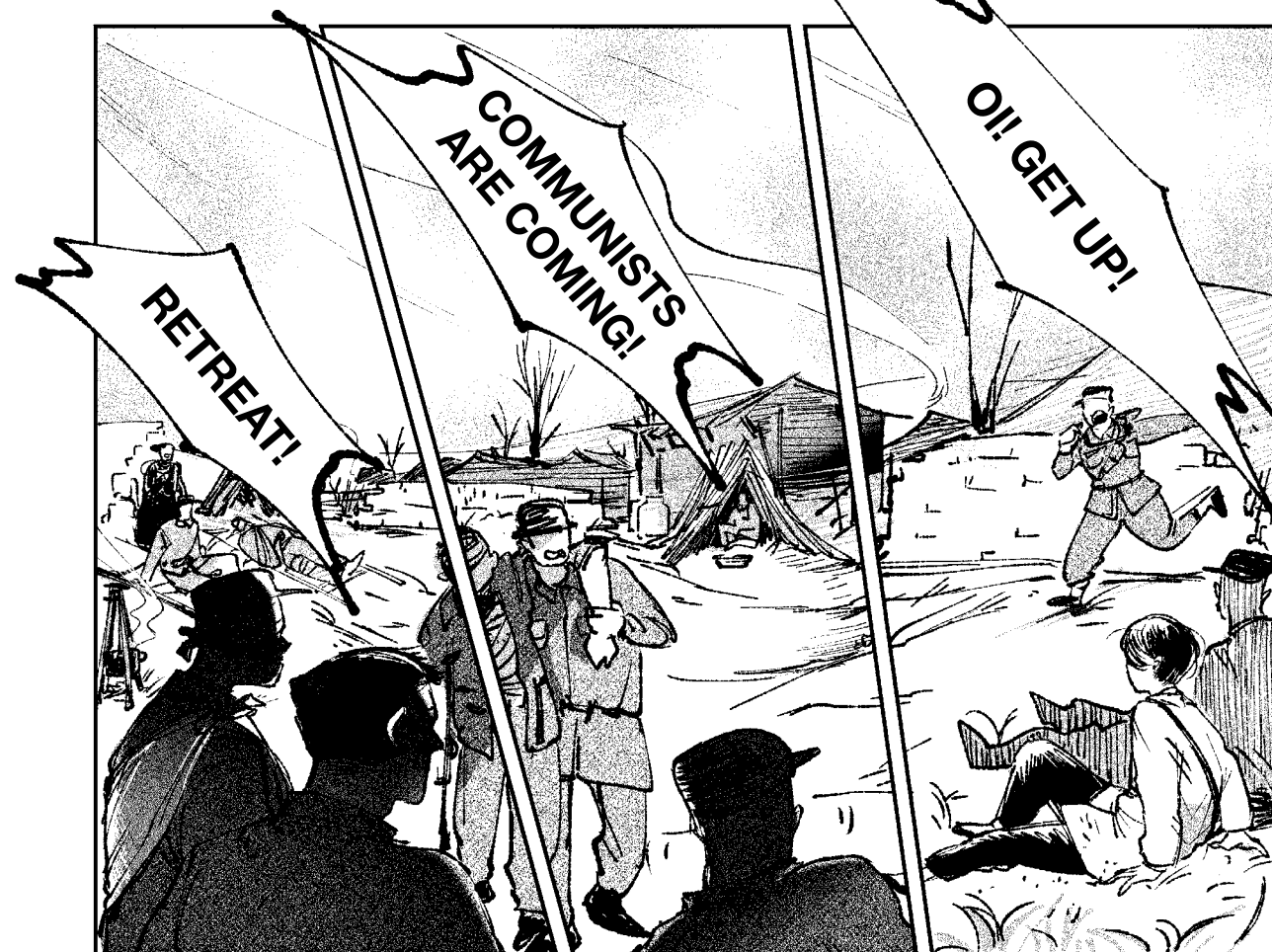
WAAAHH....!



In 1948, the Chinese civil war broke out.



A young man from Shandong, Gao Bing-Han was studying at a school in Nanjing that was created for children in exile. He didn't know his school would close due to the civil war, and since then he was forced to live a life of uncertainty.



COMMUNISTS ARE COMING!

O!! GET UP!

RETREAT!

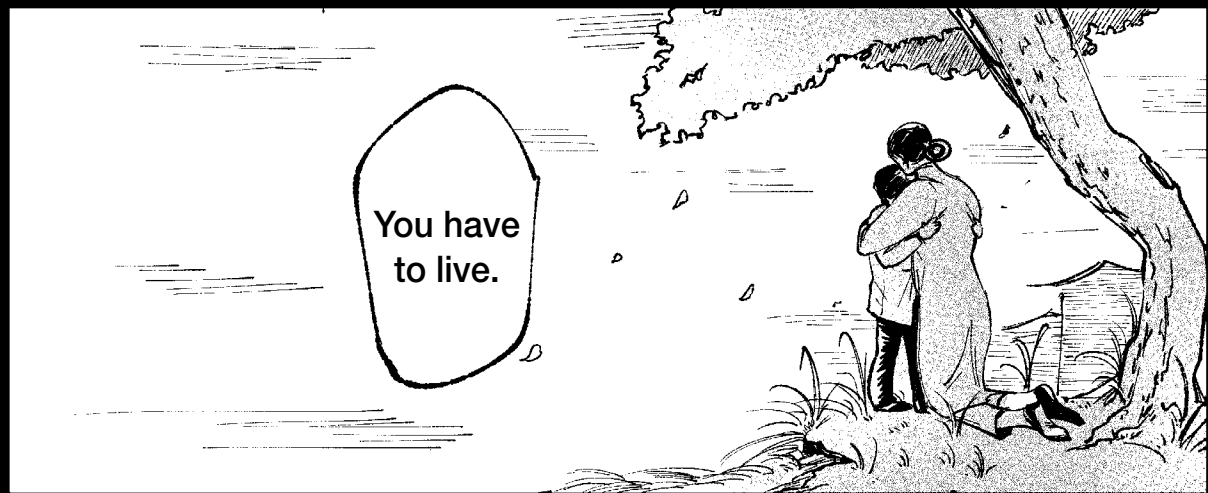


Bing-Han....

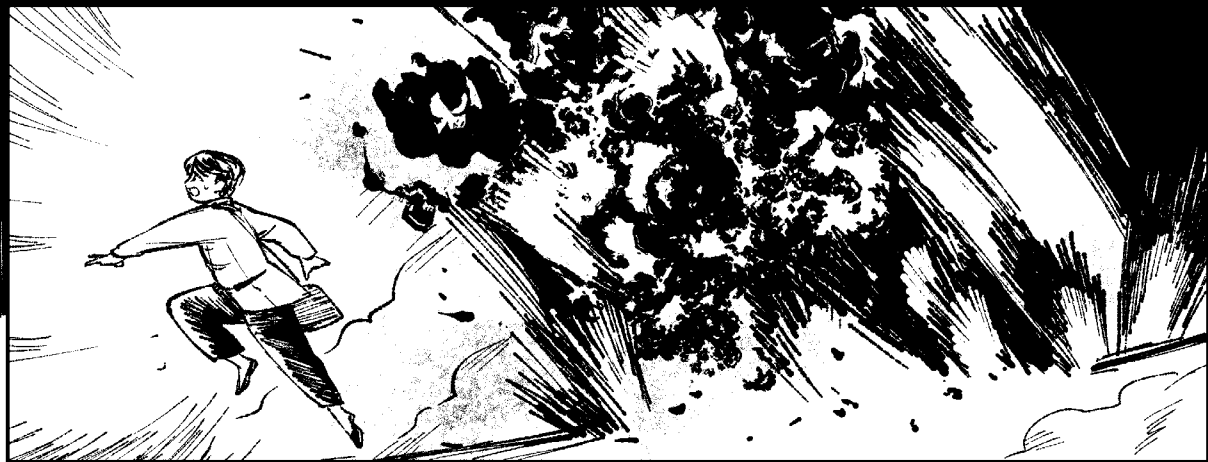
I won't ever come back....



I.... I understand, mother....

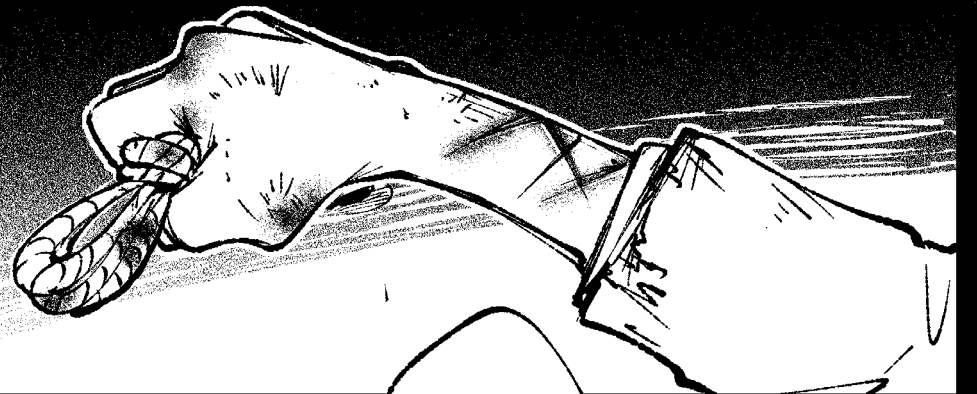


You have to live.



WHAT HE HAD TO FACE WAS A BATTLEFIELD FULL OF SMOKE AND FUMES.

EVERY TIME YOU SEE THESE WOUNDS,



....WHAT I'VE TOLD YOU.



REMEMBER ...

