



Formosa X

A Full English translation is available.

1624 男人與島

Comic Artist: Li Lung-Chieh **Illustrator:** Li Lung-Chieh **Publisher:** Gaea Books

Date: 11/2021 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

400 pages | 14.8 x 21 cm **Volume:** 1

Awards: 2022 The 13th Golden Comic Awards, Comic of the Year

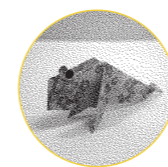
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BFT2.0 Translator: Adina Zemanek

In the 17th century, the Age of Exploration, rival powers are driven by the lure of trade and cross the seas in pursuit of wealth. Amid this struggle for maritime dominance rose Lee Tan, a man known for his ever-present smile. Defying the Ming dynasty's sea bans, he built an armed fleet and gathered formidable figures such as Yen Ssu-ch'i and Cheng Chih-lung, becoming a powerful maritime leader navigating between Eastern and Western forces. Europeans hailed him as "Captain China." His ambition: to create a free-trade haven for sea merchants, beyond the control of any authority.

At the edge of the world, a small island—Taiwan, known at the time as "Formosa"—came into view. The saying, "Whoever controls Formosa controls the world," began to spread. In 1624, Lee Tan, Yen Ssu-ch'i, Cheng Chih-lung, the Japanese adventurer Hamada Yahyōe, Dr. Sonck of the Dutch East India Company, Captain Elie Ripon, and others converged on Taiwan. Cooperation and conflict, ambition and dreams collided, propelling the island into a new chapter and setting the stage for Taiwan's turbulent history.

Whether you are a history enthusiast, a manga fan, or simply seeking a fresh perspective on Taiwan's past, this acclaimed and riveting book offers a journey filled with adventure, artistry, and inspiration.



Author Li Lung-Chieh

A hard-boiled comic artist devoted to traditional techniques, Li Lung-Chieh is known for bold lines and striking black-and-white crowd scenes. His work combines dark humor with raw, passionate energy, using a distinctive visual language to reinterpret Taiwanese history beyond conventional boundaries. His major works include *Ichthyophobia*, *Taiwan Determination: Legend of Beigang*, *Koxinga Z*, and *Formosa X*. *Ichthyophobia* won the Excellence Award at the 9th Japan International Manga Award and the Youth Comic Award at the Golden Comic Awards, while *Koxinga Z* received multiple honors, including Japan International Manga Award Bronze and the 9th Golden Comic Awards' Comic of the Year. *Formosa X* won Comic of the Year at the 13th Golden Comic Awards and was selected for national recommended reading lists.

Formosa X: An Epic, Adrenaline-Fueled Maritime Adventure

by Chi-Hsuan Wu

Just hearing the title *Formosa X* evokes a sense of romance—a romance belonging to the seafaring men of the 17th century. A historical manga rooted in real-world events, this acclaimed comic reads like a version of the Japanese classic *One Piece* dressed in historical garb. For fans of adventurous tales filled with courage, camaraderie, and daring exploits, this is a work not to be missed.

Set during the Age of Exploration in the 17th century, the story unfolds at a time when European powers aggressively expanded overseas. Nations raced to establish trading posts around the world, particularly in East Asia, where spices, silk, and porcelain promised immense profits. The region became a hotspot of international rivalry, intrigue, and conflict. It is within this turbulent moment that the ever-smiling protagonist, Lee Tan, makes his dramatic entrance.

Originally a wealthy merchant in Manila, Lee Tan escapes captivity by a Spanish fleet and reemerges under a new name. Defying the Ming Dynasty's strict maritime trade prohibitions, he bases his operations in Hirado, Japan, and aspires to become a maritime power capable of shaping global affairs. Like any great adventure hero, Lee Tan gathers a diverse and loyal crew along the way, including the shrewd, business-minded Hua-Yü and the brawler-turned-tailor Yen Ssu-chi. Together, they endure trials and triumphs, forging a cross-border maritime trade network spanning much of East Asia.

As Lee Tan's influence grows, regional governments and political powers are compelled to show him deference, honoring him with the title Captain China. Behind the scenes, his authority is reinforced by a covert armed fleet led by Yen Ssu-chi. Serving as the

shadow arm of Lee Tan's enterprise, this force enables him to expand his influence through a combination of diplomacy and naval strength.

Amid this rising tide of political and commercial maneuvering lies Taiwan: a small island situated at the crossroads of China, Japan, and Southeast Asia. Thanks to its prime geographic location for trade, Taiwan catches the eye of all the competing powers. The saying, "Whoever controls Taiwan controls the world," begins to spread. As Lee Tan and his allies arrive, along with Japanese traders and the Dutch East India Company, Taiwan is thrust onto the stage of global history, beginning its role as a cultural and geopolitical melting pot.

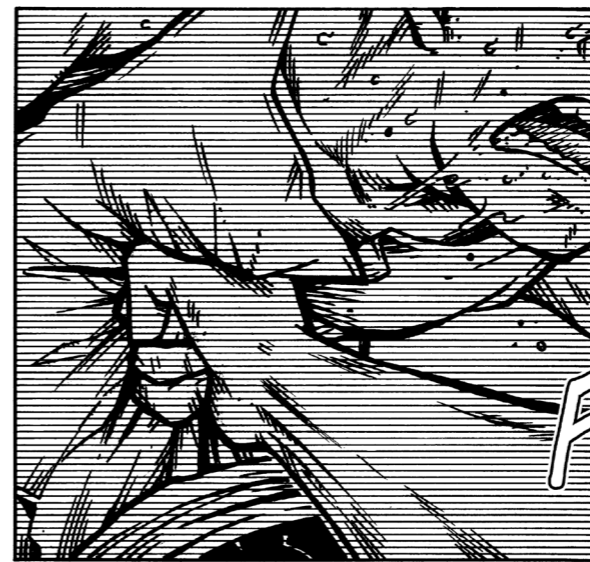
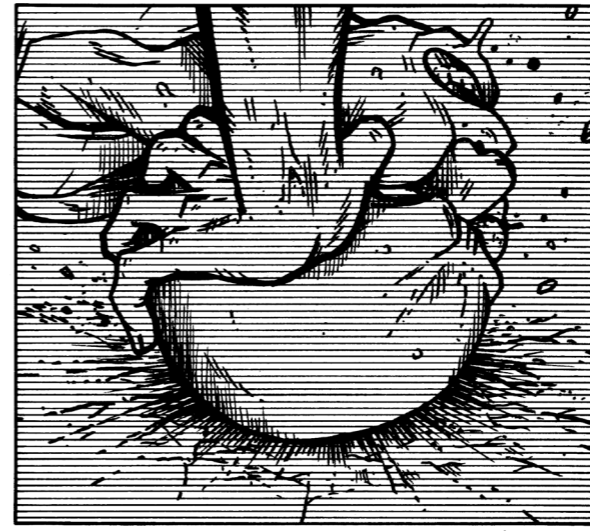
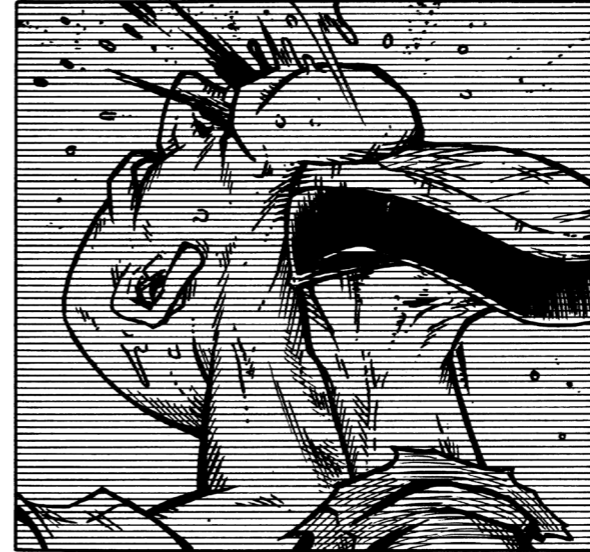
Beyond its compelling narrative, Li Lung-Chieh's artistry shines through. His striking woodcut-style illustrations, rendered entirely in bold black lines, bring energy and drama to every action scene. The characters are equally vivid—each one drawn with exaggerated expressions and unique designs, making them easy to distinguish and memorable even among a large cast. Despite being a historical manga, the story flows with the momentum of a page-turning adventure, managing to be both educational and

entertaining. It strikes a rare balance between art, storytelling, and historical accuracy.

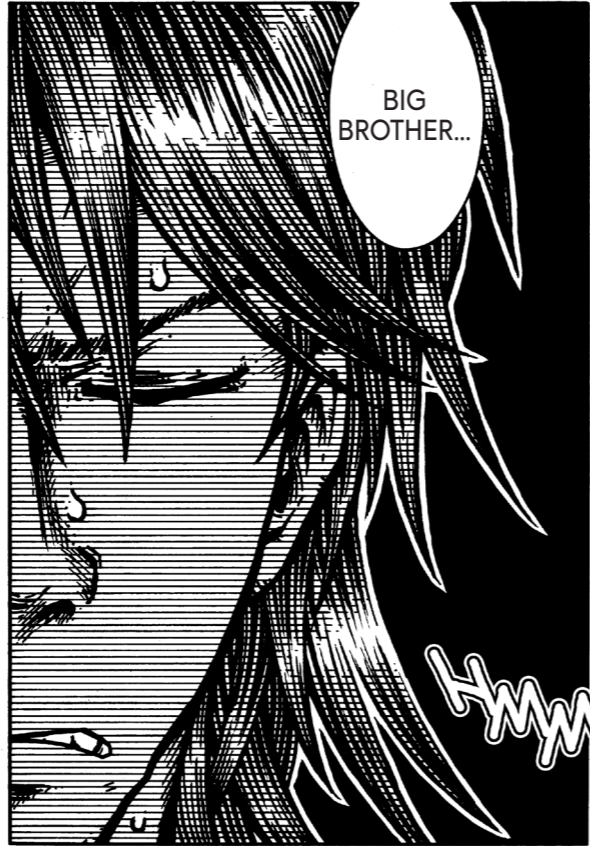
In many ways, this manga fills a gap left by traditional Taiwanese history textbooks. Readers may find themselves wondering: *Why have I never heard of Lee Tan before?* As the story progresses, it cleverly reveals this character's connection to Koxinga, one of Taiwan's most famous historical figures. This leads seamlessly into the author's companion work, *Koxinga Z*, which portrays the clash between the Dutch and Koxinga from the Dutch perspective.

Whether you're a history enthusiast, a manga fan, or someone seeking a fresh perspective on Taiwan's past, *Formosa X* offers a rich and rewarding experience full of adventure, insight, and inspiration.

Chi-Hsuan Wu hails from Taiwan, an island at the intersection of the Kuroshio Current and the Tropic of Cancer. A graduate of National Tsing Hua University, she has worked as an editor for online courses and audiobooks. She now seeks to remain in conversation with the world—through words, sounds, or whatever medium feels right.



BIG BROTHER YEN!



BIG BROTHER...

Hum



Fwoop
Fwoon
Fwoosh

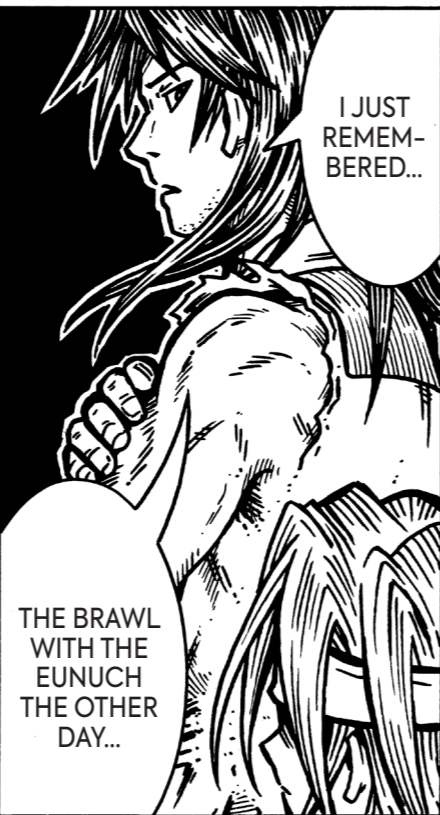
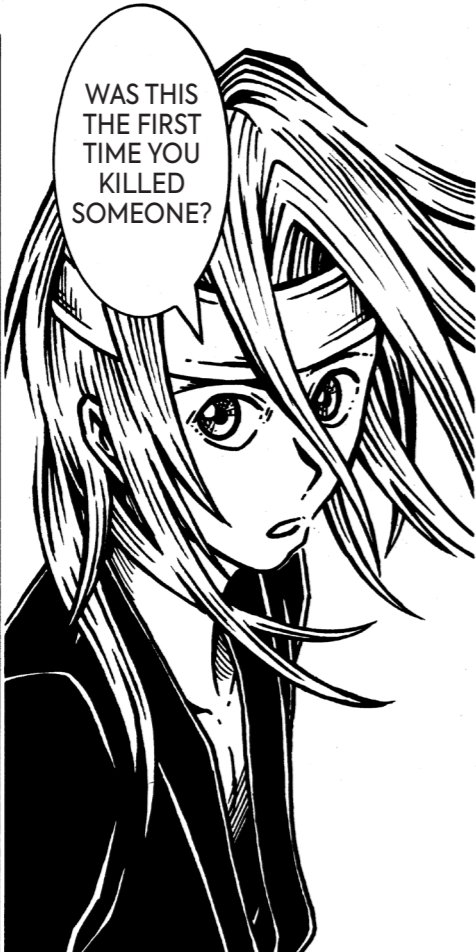


NOTHING.

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Whoop Whoop

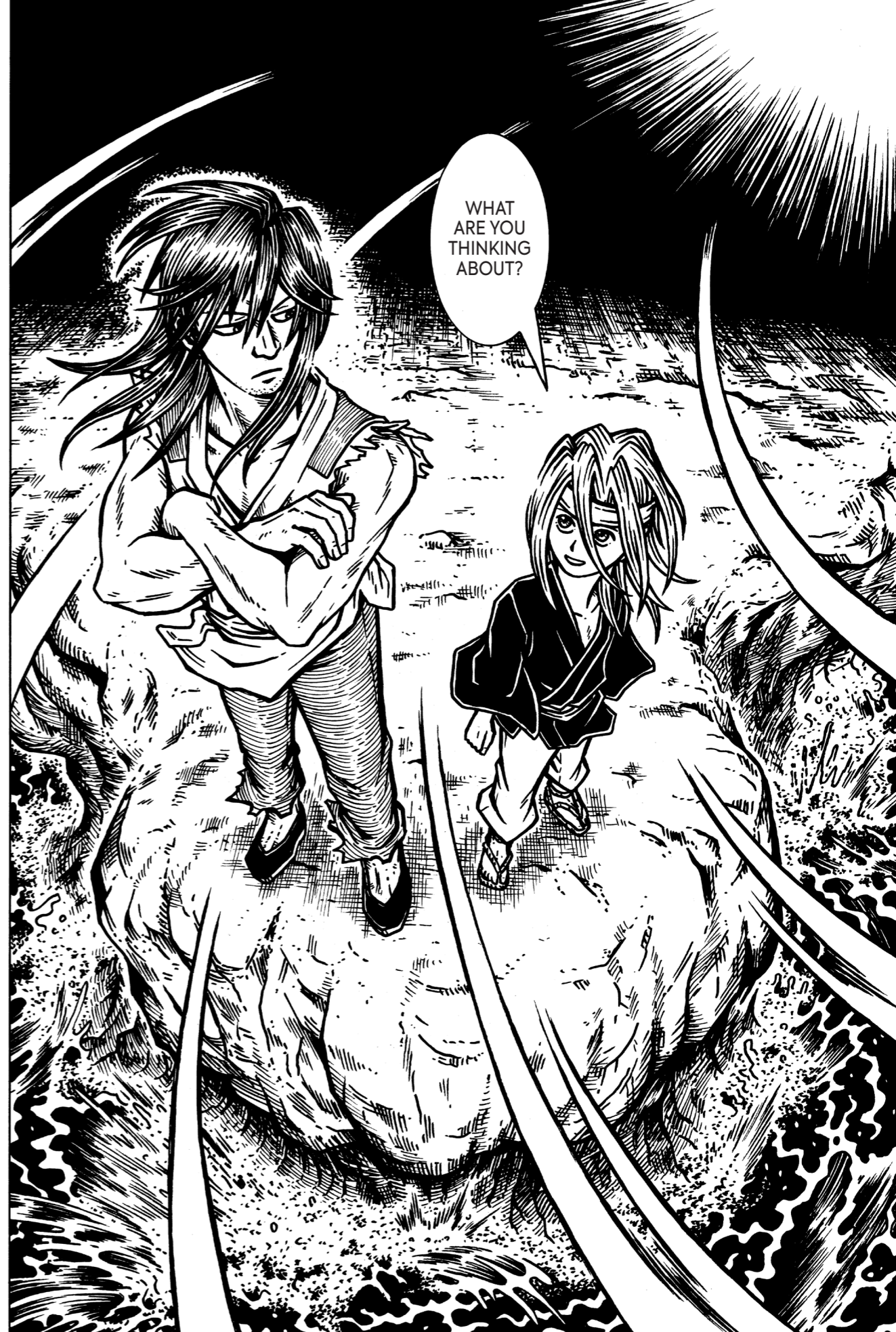


WAS THIS
THE FIRST
TIME YOU
KILLED
SOMEONE?



I JUST
REMEM-
BERED...

THE BRAWL
WITH THE
EUNUCH
THE OTHER
DAY...



WHAT
ARE YOU
THINKING
ABOUT?

