



The Unseen Train

A Full English translation is available.

神秘列車

Original Author: Yao-ming Kan **Comic Scriptwriter:** Seal Hsieh **Comic Artist:** Sen

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Adaptation: Original novel

BFT2.0 Translator: Will Buckingham

Grandpa told me a story from when he was young: he rode a train that didn't appear on any schedule. This "unseen train" takes you to the lands of your dreams. Years ago, while deep in the mountains producing camphor, this impossible train stopped at a tiny, forgotten station to bring him home to his gravely ill wife.

But then Grandpa vanished for over twenty years. No one in our family spoke of his journey, and the unseen train never returned. Driven by the mystery, I searched tirelessly at that station, determined to find the train that cannot be found.

The Unseen Train is a graphic novel adaptation of Yao-ming Kan's short story by the same name. Danger, suspense, and a sense of the surreal intertwine in this tale of a man's search for a man's lost youth. Clues reveal themselves layer by layer, as Kan brings us into contact with the tragic shadows of Taiwan's White Terror period.



Original Author **Yao-ming Kan**

Yao-ming Kan is a novelist who was born in Miaoli County, Taiwan in 1972. His novels and collections of short stories include *The Unseen Train*, *The School of Water Sprites*, *Otter that Lost its Mother*, *Killing Ghosts*, *A Funeral Story*, *Pangcah Girl*, and *General Winter's Summer*.



Comic Scriptwriter **Seal Hsieh**

A full-time scriptwriter of comics, Seal Hsieh loves suspenseful thrillers and romcoms. Hsieh's representative works include *Seven Days to Live*, *BLOODY MAN* comic series and *Good Morning, How About Some Positivity?*



Comic Artist **Sen**

Sen has a passion for illustration, design, and theater. Driven by a love of experimentation, Sen explores a variety of storytelling forms and styles, continually pushing the boundaries of comic creation. Her representative works include *No Criminal Facts*, *Playing in a Dream*, *Waking from a Dream*, and *Insomnia Diary*.

The White Terror: An Introduction to Taiwan's Era of Suppression, Fear, and Collective Anxiety

by Jui-Chiang Su

The term “White Terror” is believed to have originated during the French Revolution, referring to violent reprisals carried out by supporters of the conservative Bourbon monarchy—whose emblematic color was white—against the revolutionary Jacobins. In postwar Taiwan, the White Terror referred to the suppression of leftist and communist elements by the right-wing Kuomintang (KMT) authorities. Yet the KMT’s targets extended beyond communists to include Taiwanese independence advocates, pro-democracy activists, and anyone deemed unacceptable by the authorities due to their speech or political stance.

Taiwan’s martial law period began in May 1949, when the KMT declared martial law, and lasted until its lifting in 1987. The laws associated with martial law were formally repealed by the Legislative Yuan in 1991. Only after these changes did the White Terror truly come to an end, and people no longer were prosecuted for speech-related “rebellion” by the authorities.

During the White Terror, numerous injustices and violations occurred,

including unlawful arrests, torture, and illegal confiscation of property. Even after release from detention, individuals could remain under surveillance by intelligence authorities.

The White Terror inflicted direct harm not only on political prisoners but also on their families, who became another form of victim. For the general populace, the constant fear of punishment created collective anxiety. To protect themselves, people often acted out of self-interest and were reluctant to engage in public affairs. This collective mindset inevitably had a long-term negative impact on society’s development.

This afterword has been edited for the purposes of this booklet.

Jui-Chiang Su currently teaches at the Graduate Institute of Taiwan Culture at the National Taipei University of Education. Su’s research focuses on postwar Taiwanese history, with expertise in state violence, democratic movements, and liberal thought.

“He Seemed to Have Become an Outsider In This World”: Reflections from the Artist On The Heartbreak of Creating This Book

by Sen

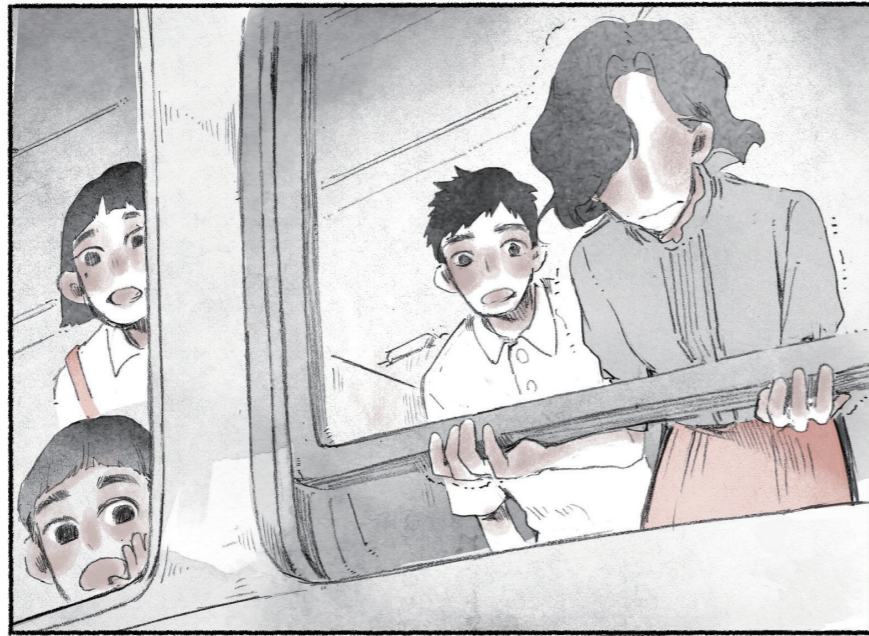
Creating this book has been a remarkable journey that I will not forget. When I first saw the passages about the grandson and grandfather often taking the train together, it reminded me of my own childhood. I spent many weekends in kindergarten riding the train back and forth between Yilan and Taipei with my mother. Along the way, we would look at the sea and tell stories. The landscapes from those memories have quietly found their way into this book.

What moved me most during the drawing process was portraying the grandfather, a political prisoner during the White Terror. When he finally returned home, he discovered that his wife and the friends who had known his life best had already passed away. Watching his children start families of their own, he seemed to have become an

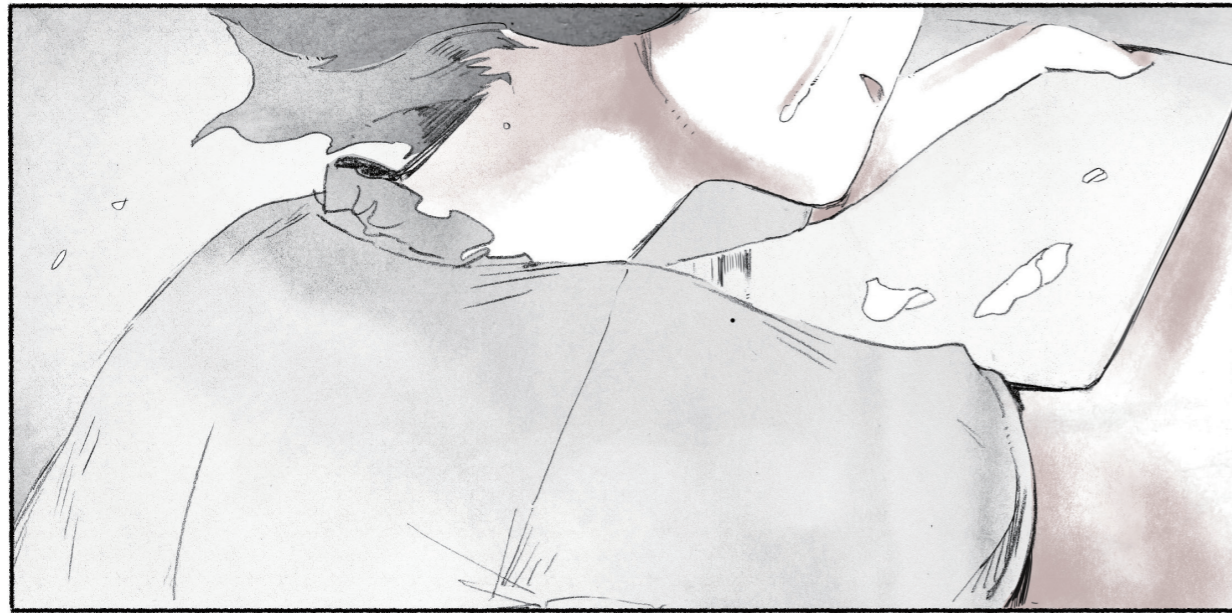
outsider in this world. Everything felt so unfamiliar. I found such a situation deeply heartbreaking.

While researching, I often found it unbearable to look directly at the old photographs and the records of inhumane punishments. It truly caused me pain. Yet it is precisely because of this work that we can document, in story form, the fragments of life experienced by political prisoners during the White Terror. As descendants, we must learn to listen to and record these stories—not to dwell on the cruelty and hatred of the past, but to remain vigilant, face mistakes, let go of the hurt, and confront the future.

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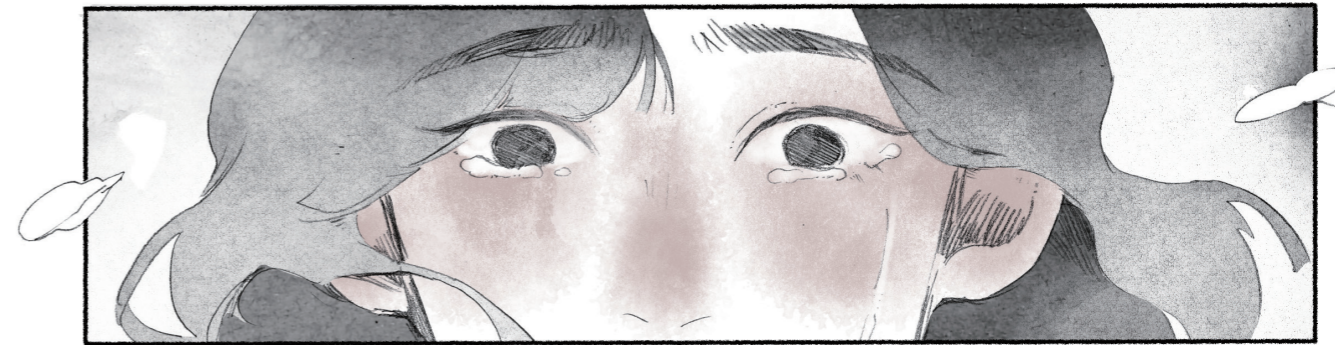
The image has stayed with me.



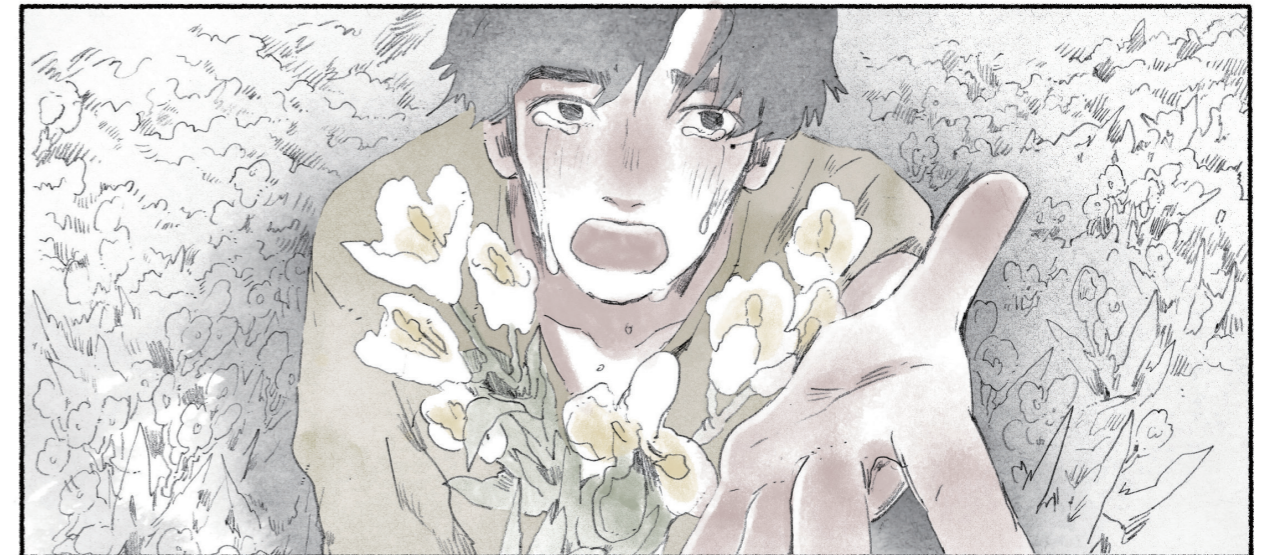
Back then, your Grandma's hairstyle was short and stylish. With all her strength, she pulled open the window.



And the wind wrapped her...



...In a flurry of ginger lily blossom.







When Dad left, I was still small, so I didn't really remember him.



Only after that did I understand...



This was the only way that Dad, hiding out in the mountains distilling camphor, could get to see his family.