



Nuozha

A Full English translation is available.

太子爺

Author: Yi-Pin Zhuo **Illustrator:** Yi-Pin Zhuo **Publisher:** Initial Publish (SMALL SMALL IDEA CO., LTD.)

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784 pages | 21 x 29.7 cm (tentative)

BFT 2.0 Translator: William Serrano

Nuozha is widely regarded as one of the defining works of the golden age of Taiwanese comics. Distinguished by its dark visual style and fantasy-driven narrative, the story follows Thih-Hui Li, a youth who bears the gilded body of Nuozha, a deity in Taiwanese folk belief. After accidentally awakening the spiritual power, Thih-Hui becomes entangled in bonds with past lives that stretch across the courts of the underworld.

One of renowned artist Yi-Pin Zhuo's representative works, *Nuozha* began serialization in 1998 in *Dragon Boy*, published by Tong Li Publishing, and was later released in collected volumes. The series later gained renewed attention through a digital release on the Creative Comic Collection platform. This revised edition has since been licensed for republication by Initial Publish. The narrative continually expands its setting, moving into the underworld and introducing a steadily enlarging cast that enriches its mythology.



Author **Yi-Pin Zhuo**

Yi-Pin Zhuo is known for a highly versatile body of work and a sustained creative presence in the comics field. His practice spans genres from magical realism and shōnen science fiction to adult comics and sports manga. A frequent participant in international comics festivals, Yi-Pin Zhuo has continually expanded and refined his visual language through experimentation and innovation, establishing himself as one of the most significant creators in contemporary Taiwanese comics.

On Depicting Mystical Power: Expanding the World of Taiwanese Comics Through Faith, Belief, and Everyday Life

by Tzu Ning Huang

The first edition of the serial comic *Nuozha* was released in 1998, at the turn of the millennium—a period when original Taiwanese comics in Taiwan were just beginning to emerge and search for their own direction. Its arrival brought a surge of rawness and wild energy to the market. Its characters come from complex, gritty backgrounds shaped by late-twentieth-century Taiwan—electronic flower trucks and strip shows, the spread of illegal drugs and outbreaks of violence sparked by land development disputes. None of these developments is pretty or heartwarming; instead, it is charged with the ferocity and vitality of Taiwanese society at the time. The story does not shy away from violence, sex, or taboo subjects, as these elements are drawn from realities that

truly existed.

Nuozha is one of the most active and widely worshipped deities in Taiwanese folk belief. Youthful, valiant, and possessed of formidable martial prowess, he offers rich narrative potential—qualities that find ample room to unfold within the story. Meanwhile, traditional Taiwanese temple faith is among the cultural sources most deeply embedded in everyday life on the island. Its influence permeates history, food culture, and local daily practices. Oracle culture can be understood as the belief that a deity temporarily enters a human body in order to communicate with people. For devotees, this embodied form of mediation is one of the most direct ways faith becomes tangible in everyday

life.

At first glance, the narrative framework appears relatively simple: the male protagonist is chosen by a deity and becomes an oracle, serving as *Nuozha*'s human representative in the mortal world and wielding divine power to subdue demons and vanquish evil. As the serialization progresses, however, the story gradually reveals why the protagonist was favored by the gods, while hinting that each character carries unspoken histories and hidden motives. The worldbuilding continues to expand, extending the stage of the story into the underworld and introducing an ever-growing cast of characters. These developments enrich both the narrative and its thematic layers, allowing the plot to evolve from simplicity into complexity and drawing readers deeper into its world.

The scenes of demon subjugation are particularly striking. With bold, unrestrained linework, the artist renders combat sequences with visceral energy and momentum. At the same time, his

depictions of static settings—such as temples or the underworld—are rich in detail, shaped by the needs of the narrative and capable of evoking both grandeur and a sense of awe.

From its choice of subject matter to the structure of its storytelling, *Nuozha* demonstrates how cultural “closeness”—to the land, to belief, and to everyday life—can become both a source of creative inspiration and a point of pride. There is a saying in Taiwan: “The more local it is, the more international it becomes.” Through this comic, readers around the world are invited, step by step, to encounter Taiwan's traditions and to discover their depth, mystery, and enduring appeal.

Tzu Ning Huang is an editor at Books from Taiwan. She loves to listen and tell stories, enjoys conversations and encounters with others, and appreciates time alone. She also loves to use photography and writing to explore the world.



OH! OH!



ARE YOU HAPPY, CROWN PRINCE? IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY TODAY!



I WONDER HOW IT'S GOING IN THE TEMPLE PLAZA.



BIRTH CELEBRATION OF CROWN PRINCE NUOZHA

太子壽誕千秋

DHARMA DISCIPLE

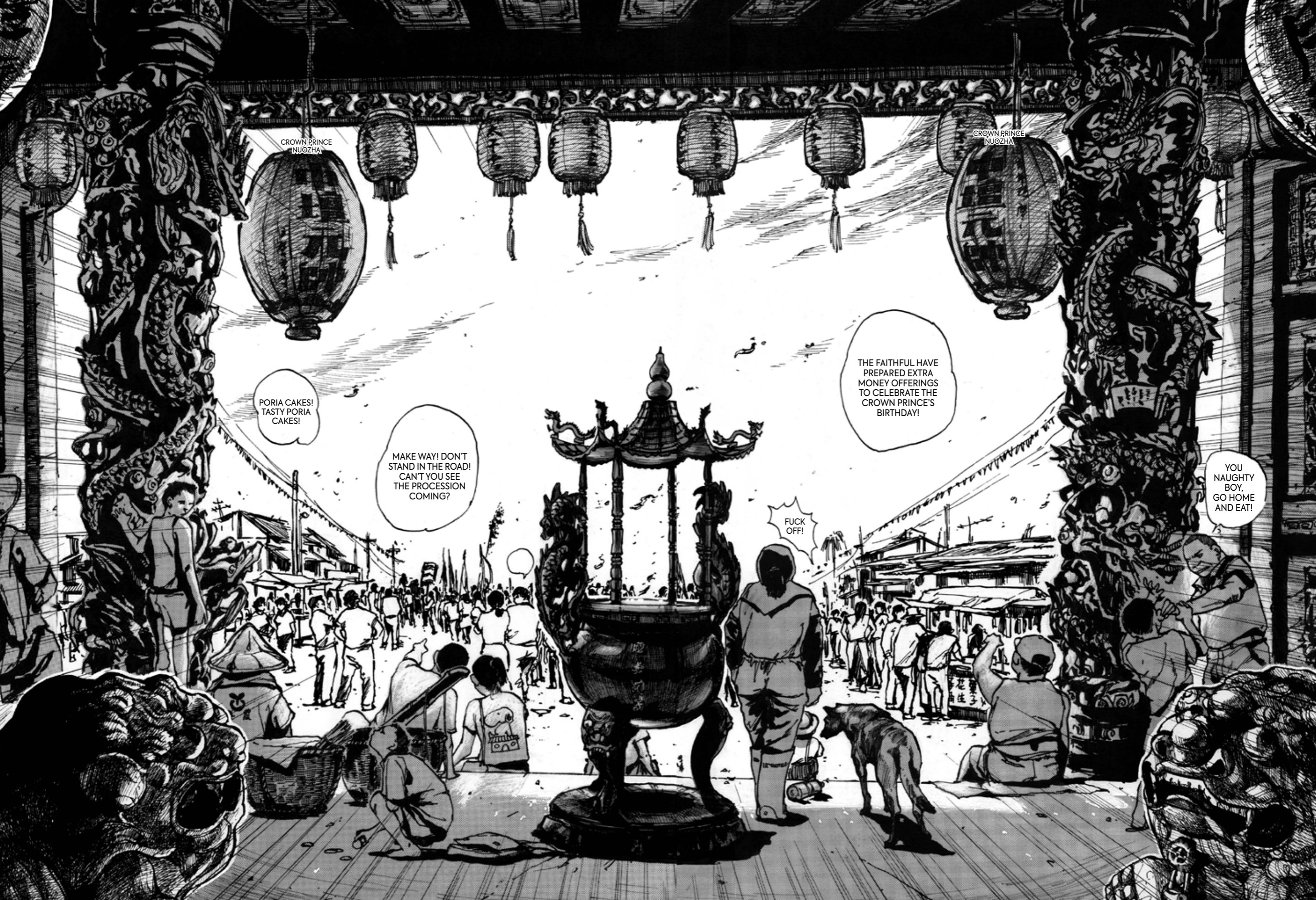
CROWN PRINCE NUOZHA DESCENDS

HONOR THE CENTRAL ALTAR MARSHAL

MAY PEACE REIGN IN THE LAND



*Translator note: Nuozha is commonly referred to as the "Crown Prince." In the way that a king might be referred to as King Charles, the full title Nuozha might read "Crown Prince Nuozha."



CROWN PRINCE
NUOZHA

CROWN PRINCE
NUOZHA

PORIA CAKES!
TASTY PORIA
CAKES!

MAKE WAY! DON'T
STAND IN THE ROAD!
CAN'T YOU SEE
THE PROCESSION
COMING?

THE FAITHFUL HAVE
PREPARED EXTRA
MONEY OFFERINGS
TO CELEBRATE THE
CROWN PRINCE'S
BIRTHDAY!

FUCK
OFF!

YOU
NAUGHTY
BOY,
GO HOME
AND EAT!



CAN YOU SEE THE STRIPPERS?

HEAR MY PRAYER!
MAY I ENJOY
FOOD, CLOTHES,
AND PLEASURE
WITHOUT
SPENDING
A PENNY!



THE SPIRITS ARE
DESCENDING!

WHOOSH!

LOOK OVER
THERE!

WOW!



THWACK!

SMACK!



WHY IS HE
STANDING AT THE
FRONT WITHOUT
MOVING?

EXCUSE ME,
COMING
THROUGH.

THE ONE WITH
FIVE RODS
ON HIS BACK,
ISN'T THAT THE
CROWN PRINCE?



DONG!

DONG!



THUMP!

MAY I INTEREST
YOU IN A
FORTUNE
BANNER,
MISS?

WHACK!

LOOK BEHIND
THE PALANQUIN!
THE ORACLES
ARE HERE!

WHACK!



SWISH!

WHOOSH!

WHACK!