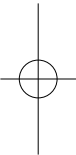
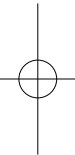
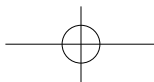
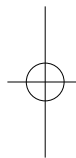
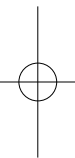
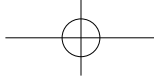
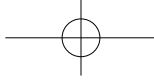


BOOKS FROM TAIWAN







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Telephone | +886-2-8512-6000

Email | books@moc.gov.tw

Managing Director | Gray Tan

Editor-in-Chief | Anna Holmwood

Editors | Pamela Hunt, Canaan Morse

Copyeditor | Itzel Hsu

Production Manager | Jade Fu

Editorial Consultants | Emily Ching-Chun Chuang, Grace Chang, Sean Hsu, Kam-Loon Woo

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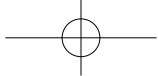
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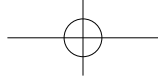


MINISTRY OF CULTURE
REPUBLIC OF CHINA (TAIWAN)



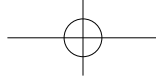
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FROM THE EDITOR

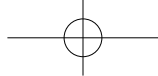
As winter draws in across the northern hemisphere, Taipei still bathes in a balmy heat. I may be thousands of miles away, wrapped up against frost and snow, but as I read through this issue's selection of books from Taiwan, I am right back in shorts and t-shirt, wandering through the city's alleys, Hualien's paddy fields and up into the island's mountain forests.

It is the diversity of titles we have to offer that always pleases me most. Taiwanese literature these days does not only mean 'literature about Taiwan,' but demonstrates an increasing internationalisation of the island's literary scene. In this issue, for example, we have a modern classic of the Chinese language, Sanmao's *Stories of the Sahara*, that is obviously not even set in Taiwan. We have writers from Hong Kong and Taiwan writing sci-fi crime together which is at least in part set in America. We have the trans-Pacific short stories of Belinda Chang, which cross from Taiwan, to China and America and back across the vast ocean again. These books are as Taiwanese as Wu Ming-Yi and Kan Yao-Ming's tales of village life in the 1970s.

The making of Books from Taiwan is a truly international affair, writers, translators, editors and production are scattered across Asia, Europe and Northern America. And the fruits of our hard work will go back out across even more continents, at book fairs and online, to a global readership. This isn't just the power of translation, but evidence that despite the distances, despite all our different local cultures, we are also part of one big literary and storytelling community, that it is through books that people from vastly different backgrounds and life experiences can, and do, connect every day.

Thank you for joining us.

Anna Holmwood
Editor-in-chief



MINISTRY OF CULTURE, REPUBLIC OF CHINA (TAIWAN) TRANSLATION GRANT PROGRAM

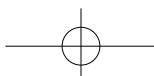
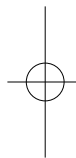
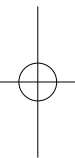
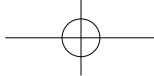
Books From Taiwan supports the translation of Taiwanese literature into foreign languages with the Translation Grant Program, administered by The Ministry of Culture of Taiwan. The grant is to encourage the publication of translations of Taiwan's literature, including fiction, non-fiction, picture books and comics, and help Taiwan's publishing industry to explore non-Chinese international markets.

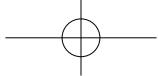
- **Applicant Eligibility:** Foreign publishers (legal persons) legally registered in accordance with the laws and regulations of their respective countries, or foreign natural persons engaged in translation.
- **Conditions:**
 1. Works translated shall be original works (including fiction, non-fiction, picture books and comics) by Taiwanese writers (R.O.C. nationality) in traditional Chinese characters.
 2. Priority is given to works to be translated and published for the first time in a non-Chinese language market.
 3. Applicants are not limited to submitting only one project for funding in each application year; however, the same applicant can only receive funding for up to three projects in any given round of applications.
 4. Projects receiving funding shall have already obtained authorization for translation, and be published within two years starting from the year after application year (published before the end of October).
- **Funding Items and Amount**
 1. The subsidy includes a licensing fee for the rights holder of original work, and a translation fee.
 2. The maximum funding available for any given project is NT\$ 500,000 (including income tax and remittance charges).
- **Application Period:** From September 1 to September 30 every year.
- **Announcement of successful applications:** Before December 15 every year.
- **Application Method:** Please apply via the online application system (http://booksfromtaiwan.tw/grant_en.php) after reading through the Translation Grant Application Guidelines (available online).

For full details of the Translation Grant Program, please visit

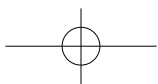
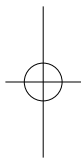
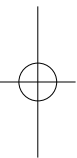
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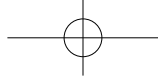
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BOOKS FROM TAIWAN





STORIES OF THE SAHARA

撒哈拉歲月



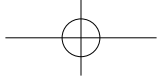
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SANMAO

三毛

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 - Publisher: Crown
 - Date: 2010/12 (first published 1976)
 - Rights contact: Gray Tan (The Grayhawk Agency)
grayhawk@grayhawk-agency.com
 - Pages: 368pp
 - Length: 164,000 characters (approx. 100,000 words in English)
 - Rights sold: Holland (Meridiaan)
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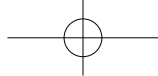
Sanmao's status in both Taiwan and China is almost legendary, she is an icon to her fans. Known for her unique storytelling sensibility, her writing is characterised by an insatiable wanderlust, a sharp eye for detail, and a life marred by tragedy. Her husband José, the love of her life, would die in a fatal diving accident in 1979, and in the end, Sanmao was to take her own life in 1991. Her writings were republished as a collection of eleven titles in 2011 to mark the twentieth anniversary of her death, a tribute to one of the most beloved writers of her generation.



* Over 10 million copies sold in Taiwan and China

First published in 1976, *Stories of the Sahara* was the literary breakthrough that launched the career of one of the most captivating and enigmatic voices in the Chinese language of the twentieth century. The mystique surrounding Sanmao persists in no small part thanks to this book, her first and most well-regarded work. Sanmao was the pen name of Chen Ping, a woman from southwest China who spent her childhood amid the turbulence of World War II and the Chinese Civil War, before her family moved to Taiwan and then she in turn moved to Europe, where she met her Spanish husband José Maria Quero.

Stories of the Sahara is autobiography, yet at the same time, 'Sanmao' becomes not only penname but also a persona extraordinaire, blurring the boundaries between fiction and reality, truth and fantasy. Originally serialised in Taiwan's *United Daily News* as well as other outlets, these are vivid stories painted against the canvas of the Spanish colonial Sahara of the 1970s and the impending political turmoil driving the narrative to its melancholy end. It is her awareness of the unique burdens as well as advantages inherent in her Otherness and her descriptions of the desert landscape that have stuck with readers ever since, turning it into a modern classic of Chinese language literature.



STORIES OF THE SAHARA

By Sanmao. Translated by Canaan Morse.

The Deaf Slave

The first time I was invited to dinner at the house of an extremely wealthy Sahrawi landowner in the village, I was entirely unacquainted with the host.

According to his cousin's wife's brother Ali, the rich man was not the type to extend casual invitations to his table. The only reason we and three other Spanish couples were being given this chance to eat barbecued camel's liver and hump was because we were Ali's friends.

After entering the labyrinthine passages of the rich man's grand, white house, I did not sit down on the sumptuous Persian rug with the other guests to await the feast of delicacies that might turn your stomach.

The rich man came out only briefly to greet his guests before returning to his own room.

He was an old Sahrawi man with a look of sharp, energetic intelligence, who conversed elegantly in French and Spanish as he smoked his hookah. His demeanour evinced a relaxed self-assurance touched with arrogance.

He left the work of attending to his dinner guests to Ali.

After we had admired the beautifully-bound books in the rich man's collection, I asked Ali very politely if I could enter the boudoir and meet his lovely wives.

'Of course, please go in. They want to meet you, too, they're just too embarrassed to come out.'

I went in alone and walked through the many rooms. I found sumptuous bedrooms with floor-length mirrors, beautiful women, Simmons mattresses, and many gold- and silver-laced melfa robes—a rare sight in the desert.

I had really hoped to show the rich man's four young, gorgeous wives to José, but they were too shy, and did not dare go out to meet the guests.

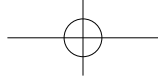
I wrapped myself in a woman's magenta melfa and covered my face before returning to dinner. When I entered the room the men all jumped up in surprise, thinking that I was wife number five.

Feeling that my costume was perfectly in tune with the atmosphere, I decided to keep it on, only tucking the fabric that had covered my face under my chin. Thus we waited for our desert feast.

Not long after, a boy no taller than a barstool came in carrying a charcoal burner. He had a sweet, deferential smile on his face, and he could not have been older than eight or nine.

He carefully placed the burner in one corner of the room and went out. Moments later he returned, swaying under the weight of a massive silver platter, which he placed in front of us on the red, patterned carpet. The platter held a silver teapot and sugar bowl, a bright green pinch of mint leaves, perfume, and a small, delicately-wrought charcoal burner, over which hot tea simmered.

I sighed in amazement. The ornate, spotless



tea set enraptured me.

The boy gently kneeled in front of us, then got up to sprinkle perfume on the head of every guest, an important desert ritual.

I bent my head and allowed him to sprinkle the scented oil over me. He did not stop until my head was nearly completely wet. In an instant, the Arab palace was filled with a fragrance that made it feel even more dignified and compelling.

The intense body odour the Sahrawi people had also disappeared completely.

Later, the boy also brought in a large bowl of raw camel meat and silently fixed a wire rack over the charcoal burner. We, the guests, were all talking loudly, the two Spanish wives vividly describing their experiences of childbirth. I stayed quiet and observed the little boy's every move.

He was systematic in his work, skewering the meat and placing it on the rack to grill, while simultaneously managing the other burner that brewed the tea. When it boiled, he threw in mint leaves and hard lumps of sugar. When he poured the tea he raised the pot over his head, letting the liquid fall in a long, graceful arc into the cups.

After the tea was poured, he kneeled in front of us once more, and offered each cup with both hands. It was a strong, delicious brew.

When the first batch of skewers was cooked through, the boy brought them to us on a plate.

Camel's hump is nothing but cholesterol; the meat and liver are just barely edible. The male guests and I each picked up a skewer and started in. The young boy kept his eyes fixed firmly on me, and I smiled and winked back to indicate the food was good.

When I was on my second skewer, the two boorish Spanish wives started up an appalling squawk: 'Oh, God! This is inedible! I'm going to puke, quick, get me soda water!'

I couldn't help but feel embarrassed by their coarseness.

So much food had been prepared, and I was the only woman eating it. To ask a child to wait on us hand and foot while we did nothing but sit and eat seemed stupid, so I got up and went to sit next to him. I helped him cook the skewers and ate over there. A little more salt was enough to mask the gamey taste of the camel.

The boy continued with his work in silence, with his head down and a faint smile on his lips. He was extremely nimble.

'A piece of meat, then a piece of hump, then a piece of liver... skewer them together and add salt, right?'

In a low voice he replied: 'Hakeh!' (Meaning 'correct,' or 'yes.')

I wanted to show him respect, so I asked him before fanning the fire or flipping the skewers. He was an extremely capable little child. I saw his happy face blush red, and imagined that few people had ever made him feel so important before.

The group sitting by the fire was not so inspiring. Ali was treating us to an authentic desert meal, but the two brainless Spanish women continually made condescending yelps and demands. They did not want tea, they wanted soda water; they would not sit on the floor, they had to have chairs.

All these demands Ali barked out as orders to the boy.

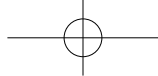
The boy, who was minding the fire, now had to rush out to buy soda water, bring it in, go get chairs for the women, then run back to check on his grilling. Distress was evident in his face.

'Ali! You're not doing anything, and neither are those women. Is it really fair to make the little one do all the work?' I yelled over at Ali.

Ali swallowed a piece of meat, then pointed at the kid with his skewer and said: 'He usually has to do a lot more than this. He's lucky to be here today.'

'Who is he? Why does he do so much?'

José immediately changed the subject. When



their conversation broke, I repeated my question over the fire. 'Who is he, Ali? Tell me!'

'He's not from this family.' Ali looked uncomfortable.

'If he's not from this family, why is he here? Is he one of the neighbours' children?'

'No.' The room fell silent and all conversation ceased. I had only just moved to the desert, and so I had no idea why they all looked so awkward. Even José was silent.

'Well, who is he?' I was getting impatient. Why all this hesitation?

'Sanmao, come here.' José waved me over. I put down the skewers and went to him. 'The boy is a slave,' he said in a whisper, afraid the child would hear. I covered my mouth with one hand and stared at José, then turned to look again at the boy who was working, his head bent down. 'How did you end up with a slave?' I asked Ali coldly.

'They've been slaves for generations. They're born to it.'

'As if the first African ever born had 'SLAVE' tattooed on his face?' I stared at Ali's coffee-coloured face, unwilling to let him avoid my questions.

'Obviously not—they're taken by force. When they found Africans living in the desert, they captured them. Knocked them out and tied them up for a month, so they didn't run away. They were less likely to escape if they took a whole family. Generations pass, and they eventually become personal property to be bought and sold.' Seeing the anger rising in my expression, he quickly added: 'We don't treat the slaves badly at all. Boys like him can go home to their families' tents at night. He lives at the edge of the village, it's very nice, he can go home every day.'

'How many slaves does our host own?'

'Over two hundred. They've all been sent to build roads for the Spanish government. On the first of the month, he goes to collect their salary.

That's how he got rich.'

'What do the slaves eat?'

'The government department that contracts for the construction feeds them.'

'So, the slaves make you money, and you don't even take care of them?' I looked askance at Ali.

'Hey, let's get a couple ourselves,' one of the Spanish wives whispered to her husband. 'Shut your goddam mouth!' I heard him curse back.

As we left the house, I took off the melfa and gave it back to the rich man's lovely wife.

As we left the house, I took off the melfa and gave it back to the rich man's lovely wife. I thanked him, but didn't shake his hand; I had no desire to see such a person again.

Our party had walked the length of the street before I noticed the little African slave had followed us. He was watching us from a corner, his quick eyes soft as a doe's. I left the group and jogged over to him. Reaching into my purse, I pulled out two hundred pesetas and stuffed them into his palm. I told him, 'Thank you,' then turned and left.

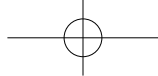
But I felt ashamed of myself. What did money represent—how could it convey the kind of message I wished to give to him? It was the basest form of charity, even though I couldn't think of a better alternative.

The following day I went to the post office to pick up my mail. Thinking back once more of slavery, I stopped in at the courthouse to talk to the old magistrate.

'Aha, Sanmao, it's been a while. Glad you remember me.'

'Your Honour, I must say I'm impressed that the Spanish government openly allows slaves to be kept in its colonies.'

On hearing this, the magistrate heaved a long sigh, and replied, 'Oh, that. Every time the Sahrawis fight the Spanish, we lock up the Spaniards. We barely even have the time to



pacify the ruffians, let alone go messing about in their business. We wouldn't dare.'

'You're not just ignoring it; you're accomplices. Hiring slaves to build roads and paying the owner? It's ridiculous.'

'Is it? And what business is it of yours? The owners are all tribal leaders. The MPs of the Mauritanian parliament are all powerful Sahrawis. What can we do?'

'The grand Catholic empire that doesn't even allow divorce openly sanctions slavery. Truly a marvelous thing. Something worth celebrating. Jesus! My second mother country...'

'Enough, Sanmao, don't be such a nuisance! It's too hot for that—'

'All right! I'm gone. Goodbye!' I strode out of the courthouse.

That evening, I got a knock on my door. It was very polite—three soft raps, then nothing more. I was surprised; who out here would be so civilised?

I opened the door to find an unfamiliar, middle-aged African man standing in my doorway.

He was dressed terribly—almost in rags, and he wore no turban. His white-stranded hair waved in the night wind.

Upon seeing me, he bowed with his hands folded over his breast. His demeanour stood in stark contrast to the habitual impoliteness of the Sahrawi.

'And you are, sir?...' I waited for him to speak.

But he couldn't speak. A gravelly sound came from his throat as he lowered a hand down to a child's height, then pointed to himself.

I didn't take his meaning, and could only reply: 'Sorry? I don't understand. Sorry?'

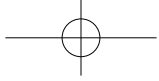
He immediately took out two hundred pesetas, pointed in the direction of the rich man's house, and put his hands at child's height again. I understood: he was the boy's father, and

he was determined to give me back the money. I refused, and gestured with my hands to indicate I had given it to the child because he had cooked for me.

This slave was obviously a smart man, and understood quickly. He was clearly not congenitally mute, since he could make noise with his throat. It was his deafness that prevented him from speaking.

He looked again at the money, obviously with the impression it was a fortune. He thought for a moment, then tried to give it back again. We went back and forth for a while before he made another bow, put his palms together, and finally smiled at me, thanking me over and over again before he left.

That was my first encounter with the deaf slave.



THE GIRL AND THE WOODCUTTER

邦查女孩

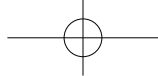


KAN YAO-MING

甘耀明

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yilin.chien@udngroup.com
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(approx. 275,000 words in English)
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Kan Yao-Ming is hailed as Taiwan's foremost 'Neo Nativist' writer, successfully mixing farce, tall tales, folk legend and collective memories to create his own uniquely magic realist world. Like a magician of words, he writes with a highly experimental but always accessible style. Kan's reputation was first built on two collections of short stories, *The Mysterious Train*, and *The School of The Water Spirit*. His short fiction has won numerous awards and is often chosen for 'Best of the Year' anthologies. His first novel *Killing Ghosts* became Taiwan's most talked-about Chinese novel in 2009, selling over 10,000 copies, a huge number for a domestic literary novel. It won both the China Times Open Book Award, the Taipei Book Fair Award, and was chosen as the Chinese Book of the Year by the country's leading online bookstore.



* Winner of the 2015 Taiwan Literary Award

1970s Hualien. The story starts when eighteen-year old waitress A-Hsia decides she is going to elope with the taciturn Pacilo, despite the fact that they barely know each other. Pacilo takes her back up the mountain and only then does she realise he is a woodcutter by trade. She decides to stay in the poor mountain community, and she and Pacilo resurrect a derelict local school. Together they encounter scars left by history, as well as many warm hearts. But only once the school is built are they really tested, and they are forced to reflect on what has brought them up into the mountains in the first place...

The Girl and the Woodcutter represents a new phase in Kan Yao-ming's creative output. His easy and unaffected prose brings to life the harsh realities of Taiwan's mountain communities during a period of rapid development and social change. Itself a break in the history of the country, Kan's writing is a perfect mixture of the realist and fantastical, a journey back that strikes right at our hearts in the present day.



THE GIRL AND THE WOODCUTTER

By Kan Yao-Ming. Translated by David van der Peet.

Pacilo made his way out of Hualien, pulling Ku A-Hsia along with his cold hands. The two of them almost looked like refugees.

After dark, they reached the bridge, where they were planning to spend the night.

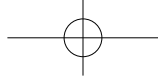
Ku A-Hsia knew that Pacilo wasn't dumb, because he was standing right on a rock in the creek, hands cupped into a funnel over his mouth, screaming at the water's edge at the top of his lungs. The bank was wide, and the air filled with the rushing of water, the howling of wind, and the hooting of night birds. A few minutes went by, and suddenly a six-car train charged across the bridge overhead, the deafening blow of its whistle reverberating between the arches. But soon, all that could be heard again was the sound of the swiftly flowing water. Realising the futility of his effort, Pacilo took a break from his hollering. Ku A-Hsia asked him who he was calling, and whether he wanted her to help him with the shouting. Yet, apart from the faint glimmer of the train flickering over the horizon, the wilderness about them was completely devoid of anything that might arrest one's eyes.

Ku A-Hsia was tired and hungry, and so she decided to forage for some food. Climbing over the embankment, she came to a nearby paddy field. The silvergrass was wilted, but below it hardy weeds were thriving. But to her knowing eye, these weren't just weeds—she quickly discerned edible herbs and vegetables, recognising them like delicious old friends: endive, black nightshade, and fireweed.

As she kept pulling them out in handfuls, she soon discovered even more edible plants: rabbit milk weed, water chickweed, and red tassel flower. Gathering them up with her head bent low, she proceeded until bumping, brow first, into a betel nut palm. 'Ouch! So this is where you've been hiding,' she exclaimed, swiftly picking up a few betel sheaths from the ground under the tree. As she scrambled back up the sloped embankment, she accidentally noticed giant African snails munching star jelly growing among the gravel, and without much ado, she took both back with her.

A chef in the wilderness, she now folded the betel sheaths into a deep, quadrangular dish and placed the herbs and vegetables inside it. The snails were a bit more trouble. Smashing their shells with a small rock, she took out the edible bodies and rubbed off the slime with ash. The innards she tossed into the creek. Immediately, swarms of river prawns and minnows came swimming into the shallows and started nibbling at the entrails. Ku A-Hsia sprinkled some salt into the water, and when the shrimps and fish were paralysed by the salinity, she unceremoniously fished them out.

She put the betel sheath dish in front of Pacilo. With the blazing campfire between them, he busied himself chewing a steamed bun that had gone hard and cold. His jaws were hurting with the effort, and there was a wry smile on his face as he looked at the assorted ingredients in the dish. To him, it looked more like an



aquarium than food, with the fish swimming around between the herbs and the live prawns fighting over the snail meat. Even the Japanese made sure the fish were dead when preparing sashimi!

Seeing his hesitation, Ku A-Hsia started a funny little dialogue in which she played both Pacilo and herself, giving voice to his inner thoughts and then replying as herself.

'Uh-oh! Fancy that... playing house... real girly stuff,' she imitated his way of talking.

Then, in her own voice, 'How right you are! Looks like a proper mess of a meal. But maybe we can wait a bit, and it'll turn into something different.'

'Different? You mean, the fish and the shrimp are gonna commit suicide and gut themselves, and then get so angry that their temperature rises and rises until they are cooked? Only a damn savage would eat food like this. Oh, I'm sorry, I shouldn't call you a 'damn savage,' you dumb Ami girl!'

'Actually, I'm a Pangcah.'

'What's the difference? Do you really think you'll ever make anyone a good wife?'

'Who knows? But you shouldn't talk like that, it makes me all shy.' At this point, Ku A-Hsia couldn't help laughing out loud. 'You know, 'Pangcah' is our own name for our tribe. My grandmother says it's a very old word for 'Ami people.' How old exactly? Well, back then the trees were still awake and could walk around, and there was a kind of bird we called Pako that would turn into a vegetable fern when coming to rest in the valleys. There was also a snake called Oway that'd get so mad that all its scales would stand up on end. Then it was so touched by the sight of a cloud that it turned into a rotang palm. Oh, and in those days a fish named Lokot crawled onto dry land, where it fell asleep and was transformed into a nest fern. That was also the time when a very weird looking fish called Palingad, secretly fell in love with the cool

breeze, and jumped ashore to dance with it. And Alikakay the Giant shed black tears, and where it hit the ground, saplings sprouted from the earth. How long ago was all this? Granny says it's so far in the ancient past that it's like when you have many different dreams in the same night, and the next morning when you wake up, the only dream you remember is the very last one. No one remembers the first dream. It's completely beyond recall.'

'Wow, that's deep!'

'Of course it is! The earth is alive. Our whole planet is a dream, one of the most wonderful and richest dreams in the universe.'

Removing her gaze from the flames, she saw that Pacilo was looking at her. Her eyes shining even brighter than the fire, she declared, hardly believing that she was saying it out loud, 'I dreamed of you, a long time ago. It might even have been my first ever dream, reaching back to the days when the fish Palingad came onshore and turned into a screw pine.'

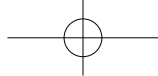
'Oh, really?'

'That's right, because I'm the cool breeze, and you fall in love with me, turning into a tree so you can dance with me.'

'Yeah, like that's gonna happen.'

'I'll show you, then. I'll show you how the water plants dance with each other!'

The firelight was playing on his face, his head sheepishly bent down as he continued to gnaw the rock hard bun. At this point, the most magical scene began to play out before his eyes. Ku A-Hsia picked up the long-handled spatula and used it to poke around in the campfire. As the stirred flames flared up, she extracted several glowing hot pebbles and shoveled them into the betel sheath aquarium. In no time at all, the water began to boil and, voila, the soup was ready. The fish and shrimp were cooked so quickly that they were done before they even knew it. That was the famous Pangcah 'stone hot pot.'



Pacilo lifted the soup dish to his lips and drank a mouthful. And then he drank it all up without setting the dish down even once, even though he paid for it by scalding his mouth. Ku A-Hsia was delighted, leaving them both in good spirits. After partaking of the hot soup, she felt the warmth surging through her body, forming a protective shield against the cold.

Pacilo also felt warm now. He pulled a stick from the pile of firewood and tied a rock to it with a rope. Then he hit the sandy ground several times with this makeshift axe to see whether the stone was properly fastened. Ku A-Hsia had seen pictures in a book showing Stone Age people using this kind of hatchet. Now Pacilo, axe in hand, walked over to a rotten looking piece of driftwood. He struck it a few times, making the weeds growing on its surface sway back and forth. At the same time, a bunch of little critters like moles and cockroaches came running out of their hiding places. It was bishopwood, a kind of hardwood, but this piece was already rotten to the core. He tried another piece of driftwood, but while it was fragrant, Formosan ninoki was too soft for his purposes. A short and fibrous camphor bole had been rendered useless by tossing about in the river for too long. What he needed was something much harder. Moving outside the range of the firelight, Pacilo kept searching with Ku A-Hsia at his heels, carrying a torch for light.

Next he spotted a Taiwan hemlock that was half submerged in the water, and using his stone axe, he hit the fractured surface with full gale force. The hemlock seemed to shiver into life, and the whole ground shuddered along with it: a deep and booming tremor that even drowned out the sound of the rushing waters for a few seconds. Ku A-Hsia felt her whole body go numb with the sensation of it, her head resonating with its power. Pacilo had found a giant mallet with which to pound the earth! She understood. This was how he was going to shake the river into

consciousness, and find the partner he'd been searching for for so long. At that moment, a four-car train thundered across the bridge above, but the rumbling of its wheels was almost entirely obscured by the profound vibration of the earth. In apparent silence, the train, gleaming faintly, glided towards the horizon. The stars in the firmament were oscillating ever so gently, and Ku A-Hsia recalled what her grandmother had told her, 'Back then, during the harvest festival, our forebears would fling the Alipaonay, the fireflies, towards heaven, and they turned into the Milky Way.'

Pacilo struck again, and the river water was splashing furiously as the earth droned again with its bottomless voice. Ku A-Hsia felt her knees go weak with the shock. Unable to stay on her feet, she grabbed Pacilo as she fell forward. It was their first embrace, but it was far from a pleasant surprise: she, screaming, he, pushing her away. In the process, the stone axe briefly ended up in Ku A-Hsia's hand, a veritable trophy of their tussle, before Pacilo snatched it back roughly.

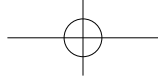
Ku A-Hsia, however, was not to be intimidated. Drawing the spatula she was wearing at her back, she bellowed, 'Put it down!'

Pacilo released the axe. Clenching his fists tightly, he tried to open his mouth and say something.

'Aunt Lan Lan was right, you men are all afraid of this,' Ku A-Hsia was waving the spatula in an intimidating manner. 'And now, if you please, tell me your name.'

At that moment, something came crawling out of the water, with movements as quiet as death. Stealthy and sinister it looked, and its eyes were fierce.

Trying to speak before a stranger required a terrible effort for Pacilo, and a rush of emotions made his throat tighten up. He desperately wanted to stop the thing crawling out of the river from attacking Ku A-Hsia, but he couldn't



make a sound. He wanted to warn her to stop brandishing the spatula, because it would only madden the monster. Yet he simply couldn't utter a word.

Ku A-Hsia thought that something had got stuck in Pacilo's throat, because his face had the appearance of an irritated puffer fish. She took a step forward and patted his back to dislodge the food, but that was a mistake. Interpreting her move as an attack, the sandy-haired bag of wet bones come on like a hurricane, still moving without making even the hint of a sound. It was a yellowish dog with a wolfish streak, feral and ferocious. Answering the call of the earth, it crossed the stream to meet its master. For years it was left alone by the riverside whenever Pacilo made the journey into the city.

But all Ku A-Hsia saw was a yellow rubber band that suddenly came flying towards her, so fast that her scream didn't even have the time to leave her throat before she was pushed into the river, hands and legs flailing wildly. Only then did her voice find release in a loud screech. It was Pacilo who pulled her out of the water. She was terrified, her curly hair sticking to her brow in the most unattractive fashion, looking like she was closer to death than life. Ku A-Hsia was so cold she was shivering violently. She hurriedly took off her wet clothes, and threw on the dry garments Pacilo handed her. At first she could have jumped straight into the fire for some heat, but before long warmth returned to her body, and she saw Pacilo laughing across from her on the other side of the fire. The dog, after having shaken the water off its fur a few times, was eating the cooked fish and shrimps straight from the dish. Ku A-Hsia was angry because Pacilo had seen her naked.

When her anger was just about to boil over, Pacilo beat on some rocks to garner her attention. Each about the size of an egg, he had written five strangely distorted and incomplete characters to spell out 'I am Liu Cheng-Kuang.'

On another four stones, he had inscribed an introduction for the dog, 'He is Lang Pang.' Her chin resting on her knees, hands rubbing her own feet to stay warm, Ku A-Hsia looked at the hard-to-read characters, deciphering them with some difficulty through the wavering hot air of the fire, as if viewing some runes of magic. Liu Cheng-Kuang kept on writing, and every time he had finished carving a character on a stone, he'd chuck it into the campfire.

'Don't provoke the dog,' Pacilo said with another four rocks (one of the characters was actually written phonetically), tossing them into the fire one by one.

Ku A-Hsia also picked up three rocks. She wrote her name on them and showed them to him.

'Kou Ao-Hsia,' he said. The first words he said were her name.

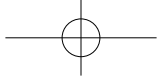
'Ku A-Hsia,' she said.

'Ku Ao-Hsia,' he enunciated carefully, body bent forward.

'Ku A-Hsia,' she repeated

'Ku A-Hsia.' This time he got it right, and he clapped his hands to applaud himself.

That evening, Pacilo fished the hot rocks out of the fire and buried them in the sand. They slept in the warm and sandy spot, sharing a sleeping bag. Bashfully, Ku A-Hsia slept with her back towards Pacilo. She barely heard the last city-bound train go over the bridge before slumber found her. In her sleep, she could still hear the sound of the rocks gradually cooling in the ground, and she dreamed that they were talking to her. The mountains used the rocks to talk to the river, the ocean used the pebbles to talk with the shore, and the ancestors were using their myths to communicate with their descendants. And she was using her dreams to talk with herself. The night was full of the wildest dreams.



THE STOLEN BICYCLE

單車失竊記

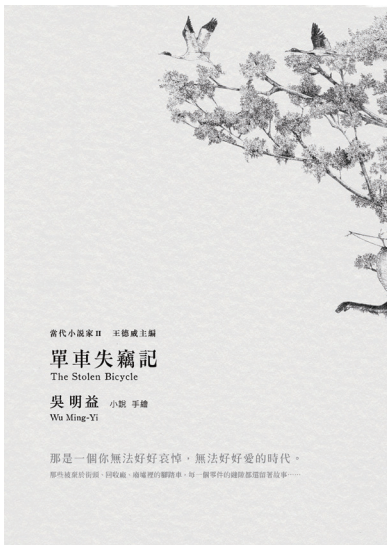
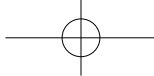


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WU MING-YI
吳明益

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Wu Ming-Yi is a writer, artist, professor, and environmental activist. Widely considered the leading writer of his generation, he has won the China Times Open Book Award five times. He teaches literature at National Dong Hwa University. Wu's works have been translated into English, French, Turkish, Japanese, Korean, Czech and Indonesian.

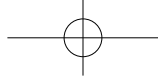


* Winner of the 2015 Taiwan Literary Award

* Over 10,000 copies sold in Taiwan

The long-awaited new novel from Taiwan's leading contemporary writer is a major publishing event of 2015. Cheng, a novelist, once wrote a book about his father's childhood and his disappearance twenty years ago. One day he receives a reader's email asking whether his father's bicycle disappeared as well. Perplexed and amused, Cheng decides to track down the bicycle, which was stolen many years previously. The journey takes him to a scavenger's treasure trove, the mountain home of an aboriginal photographer, deep into the secret world of antique bicycle collectors, and ultimately to his own heart. The result is an intimate portrait of a Taiwanese family, a history of the bicycle industry, and a collage of magical, heart-wrenching stories from various characters in the novel.

Told in the same warm and clear voice that made *The Man with the Compound Eyes* such a literary favourite, Wu Ming-Yi's new novel combines historical fiction and his unique brand of magical realism to create a stunning work of art.



THE STOLEN BICYCLE

By Wu Ming-Yi. Translated by Darryl Sterk.

Prologue

I must describe that morning for you, because every time something is described anew it becomes meaningful anew. I must start by letting the morning light lay out slowly upon the land. I have to take the trees, the buildings in the village, the local elementary, the fields composed of various colours, the little fishing boats swaying in the wind—and place them like chess pieces, one by one, in the landscape.

There is no smoke from the chimneys, and the air is fresh and sweet. The land looks so clean, like every stalk of rice was washed the night before. Stand here and you'll see, way over there, a wistful sight: a simple, lonely-looking farming-fishing village.

Beyond the village is a sandy beach, beyond the beach the sea.

The sound of the sea conveys the solitude of something forsaken. It strides on the breeze past the village to the fields, pressing waves into the rice. Dawn's faint light shines on granulated arcs, ripe ears of rice that from afar appear disconcertingly still and fine.

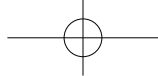
Darkling birds are returning to the roost in scattered formations, while the dawn-risen call now and again. On a distant ridge appears several black dots, which get bigger and closer, until we see a pack of children running. There are four of them, all wearing pants, all with short hair, so that only when they run close enough do we see a boy and three girls.

The boy is swarthy; his features are unremarkable, but he's long-limbed. Two of the girls look so alike they appear to be twins: they have the same colour skin, the same twitch of the cheek when they run, the same rhythm of breathing; but if you look close, one runs single-mindedly as if carrying out some plan, while the other, who is behind, is a bit knock-kneed. Ah, her most striking feature is her dimples, even when she's not smiling. The last girl, bringing up the rear, is the smallest, and seems to be the youngest. She's running hard for fear of getting left behind. Their clothes are a bit old, and bit too big, but reasonably clean.

The children reach a cross-ridge in the field and huddle together for a chat. Then they split up and run to different corners of the field. Soon, like meadowlarks ducking into the grass, they disappear. The rice field will protect them.

'Yay!' the children call to one another, their voices happily shrill.

Crouching in the field, the children are hiding; but soon four scarecrows that have been lying around all night stand up and start to sway. This is their job for today, to scare away the *tshik-tsiáu-á*, the 'grain birds.' It'll be summer solstice in a couple of weeks, and from now until *kuah-tiū-á*, 'rice-scything time,' they have to keep the birds from eating the ears off the rice. But those grain birds are smart enough not to be afraid of stationary scarecrows: they soon see through the ruse and blithely shake their cute little heads as they eat up every last grain, chattering about the



taste of this year's crop.

Now everyone in the village can rest from farm work until the harvest time. The men will go out fishing, the women will stay home to tend their vegetable plots, and the children will sway the scarecrows. It's a division of labour on which every family's livelihood depends.

Still crouching in the field, the children shout back and forth, each call carrying with it a perfume of rice. One will finish shouting and wait for another's reply. But sometimes all they hear for the longest time is the sound of the wind, because kids on scarecrow duty sometimes find themselves dozing off.

The girl with the dimples discovers a little nest just ahead. It's the home of a 'yellow belly,' a prinia, a kind of bird that eats rice. Father usually grabs the nest and crushes the eggs or kills the hatchlings, not out of spite, but in order to protect his crop. The little girl sees a few little birdies inside. At first, they crane their necks and call, assuming the commotion means their mother has returned. When they discover she has not, they quiet down and crouch low in the nest.

'Oh! Four little birdies!' says the girl. She doesn't plan on telling her father about her discovery. At this age her sympathies still incline towards the birds. She looks up at the scarecrow she's holding. Afraid the mother bird daren't approach, she decides to withdraw. The sun gets brighter and brighter; in the distance a queer roaring sound the girl has not yet noticed. She gazes at the water droplets shining in the sunlit paddy. It's so beautiful! And it's... what it is she can't yet say. She'll have to wait until she gets a bit older before she'll hear the Taiwanese word *hi-bi* from her mother's mouth. It's so 'lonesome' here. Maybe the other kids are all asleep, she thinks. So she decides to let herself go to sleep, too.

Time passes, who knows how long. The girl with the dimples wakes up, and smells something unusual on the air. She's never felt this way before. Her head feels heavy. She tries to speak

but can't hear her own voice, which seems to buzz like a bug without ever reaching her ears.

She gets up, trips over the scarecrow, runs onto the ridge, and sees gaps in the green horizon. There are clouds in the sky, as heavy as lead. 'Is it getting on evening now?' the girl with the dimples wonders.

No, that's impossible! She just took a short nap. She looks around and calls the names of her companions, but hears no reply. Nothing. Not even the sound of the grass cicadas. Or the *tshân-kap-á*, the 'field clams'—the local word for frog. It's like something has covered their mouths and taken them away. At first she feels like running around in the field to look for her playmates, but the field has become so unfamiliar, so hostile that she feels she had better not. Her smile has disappeared, leaving only dimples. She runs aimlessly from ridge to ridge, not knowing she is running. Is this the way they came? Is it?

'Go home, quick,' says a voice in her heart. That was what her mother told her: if anything happens, run home and find an adult. She hurries at the thought, but soon trips and falls. She scrambles up and sees a black bicycle, which she must have just tripped over. One time she saw a Japanese policeman chasing someone on a bicycle just like this. He went so fast! If she rides it, she can make it back to the village, quick.

'Go home!' the sunburnt rice stalks say.

'Go home!' the cowback egrets say, flying in a line.

'Go home!' the trickling irrigation ditches say.

The bicycle seems like an iron horse, far too big and heavy for her to lift, but somewhere she finds the strength, so great is her desire to go home. She pushes up the 'dragonhead,' the handlebar. With an 'oomph' she pushes the bicycle forward a few revolutions. The hub, the axle, the chain—the whole bike follows the rhythm of the girl's running, gathering speed. *Click clack, click clack, click clack*. The little girl is too short to mount the seat, and if she sat on it



her feet would not reach the pedals. With animal intuition, and she puts her left foot on the left pedal, and her right foot through the triangle so that she can press the other pedal. It's a way of riding a bicycle the children call *sankaku noru*, triangle-riding.

Hi, ya! Hi, ya! She starts pedaling the bicycle. Hi! Back to the village! Ya! Time to go home! Hi!

A black rain begins to fall. No, look closely: you'll see it's a sooty, almost granular haze that's blocking the sun and wrapping the land in gauze. Something must be burning.

Chapter One: For All the Iron Horses My Family Has Lost

However I tell the story I want to tell, bicycles have to play an important role. Especially stolen bicycles. "Iron horses' have influenced the fate of our entire family,' my mother used to say. I would describe my mother as a New Historicist: to her, there are no Great Men, no heroes, no bombing of Pearl Harbour. All she remembers is seemingly trivial, but to her fateful, matters like bicycles going missing. For her fate is an article of faith: *ūn-miā*, she says in the Taiwanese dialect, not *mìngyùn* in Mandarin, which sounds positive, more like 'luck' or even 'destiny' than 'fate.' To her, life is what happens to you, not what you do.

Ma's belief in the importance of bicycles has rubbed off on me I guess. Sometimes I wonder if I'm a bicycle fanatic. Maybe not. To be honest, there are things about bicycles I can't stand. I hate the sore butt I get on a long ride. I also hate people wearing sunglasses and all the specialised gear, thinking they're cool when they couldn't even cycle up the hill to Chinese Culture University. You know the type: the guy with a gut who parks his expensive bicycle by the side of the road to show it off. Every time I see a guy like that, I hope his chain comes off. Otherwise, I hope he gets a flat or a broken spoke. But gripes

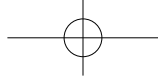
aside, there are lots of things I love about bikes. I love the geometric simplicity, the triangle on which two circles hang. I love the way the chain meshes on the teeth to drive the rear wheel. I love the mobility bicycles bring. Picture it: a guy on a bike hurtling down roads and paths, through forests, by lakes. Could there be anything finer?

The names people have invented for bicycles are pretty interesting, too. Monsieur Pierre Michaux and his son, the guys who invented the machine, called them *vélocipèdes à pédales*. It was Pierre Lallement who invented the term 'bicycle,' meaning two wheels, a bilingual compound, from the Latin *bi* and the Greek *kyklos*. For as long as I can remember I've been asking speakers of different languages how to say bicycle: *fiets*, *velosiped*, *bizikleta*, *bicikl*, *jāzdnā kolo*, *cykel*, รถจักรยาน... I can only speak two languages, Taiwanese and Mandarin, but I can say bicycle in thirty six. When it comes to bicycles I'm a polyglot.

In Taiwan, my home country, the word a person used for 'bicycle' once told you a lot about when they'd grown up or where they were from. 'Auto-turn' (*jiten-sha*) indicated a person had had a Japanese education. 'Iron horse' or 'Kongming cart' (named in honor of the ancient Chinese inventor Zhuge Liang), that they were a native speaker of Taiwanese. 'Solo car' or 'self-propel,' that they were from the south of China. But now some of these terms have spread while others have fallen out of fashion, so that they can no longer serve as historical or geographical identifiers.

If you ask me my own preference, I'd say 'Kongming cart' or 'iron horse,' because my mother tongue is Taiwanese. Especially 'iron horse.'

What a beautiful term! 'Iron horse' includes the natural and the artificial. You can imagine the Lord who made all things leaving iron-rich rocks lying around in seams for people to mine and cast into horse-shaped carbon steel vehicles. What a pity 'iron horse' is on the decline. That's the



way the world is: something may be inherently superior but end up getting replaced anyway. So has it been with the decline of 'iron horse' and the rise of 'solo car.' It's foolish, if you ask me, a kind of cultural regression. But what can you do?

Another thing I find intriguing about bicycles is how each machine belongs to the unique era in which it was built. I believe someone could write an Iron Horse Chronicle according to whatever model was most popular at the time. This was the year the Fuji Hegemon was released. This year endeth the reign of the Fuji Resilience. This year witnessed the ascendance of the Lucky Flier. I guess, like my mother, I'm a New Historicist: I think human history is an ongoing story of how inventions have changed daily life.

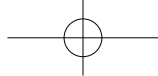
Right, I just mentioned that bicycles play important roles in my family history. To tell you the story of my family, in fact, I have to start with one bicycle in particular, one that was stolen in the thirty-eighth year of the Meiji Era, the tenth year of the Japanese occupation of Taiwan, a.k.a. 1905.

If you're a history buff, then you'll know that in January of that year the Russian troops who had been holed up in Port Arthur for a hundred and fifty-seven days finally surrendered. A month later Russia lost the Russo-Japanese War. Japan's victory at the Battle of Mukden might have marked the moment when its national ambitions started to warp. Soon after, there was an earthquake in India measuring 8.6 on the Richter scale in which nineteen thousand people lost their lives. Sun Yat-Sen founded the Tongmenghui, the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance. At about the same time in Britain, the keel was mounted on the first 'All-Big-Gun' HMS Dreadnought, which would usher in a new era in battleship history. Also in 1905, Fritz Richard Schaudinn discovered *Treponema Pallidum*, the pathogen that causes syphilis.

1905 was also the year in which my grandfather—my mother's father—was born.

His birth was not an historical event, so there was no notice in the newspaper or anything like that. But my mother always associated her father's birth with a newspaper, and a bicycle. Ma used to say that Grandpa had made a vow as a young man to buy a bicycle of his very own to transport produce or property. He even imagined himself giving his pregnant wife a ride into town, so that she could give birth in a clinic. This was a vow he never forgot, throughout his life. And the idea for his vow, however insignificant it may seem today, came, if you can believe it, from an old newspaper, the *Taiwan Nichi Nichi Shimpō*—Taiwan's first daily newspaper—of September 27, in the thirty-eighth year of the Meiji era.

I'm told my illiterate great-grandfather had picked up a newspaper while selling fish in town that day, and brought it home to memorialise the birth of his newborn son. To him that newspaper was a symbol of social mobility: he hoped his child would get an education. My great-grandfather folded the newspaper into the size of a handkerchief, packed it in a two-ply hempen sack, and put it in a kind of iron box that at the time was still quite rare. He even went to town to ask a clerk to read him the news. So it was that my grandfather came to know what had happened on the day he was born like the back of his hand. According to my mother, the first time she saw the 'crinkly, yellowed' newspaper, my grandfather pointed to the bottom right-hand corner, to a news story he considered particularly significant. The headline read: Jiten-sha Vanishes. It was about how a doctor from Tainan City, Yen Chen-Sheng by name, who was famous for making house calls by bicycle, had lost his metal steed. One day he leaned his bike against the wall and rushed inside, expecting someone in the household to take care of it for him. By the time someone went out to park it, it was gone. 'Like the yellow crane, it had flown who knows whither,' as the journalist poetically put it.



THE UNSPEAKABLE

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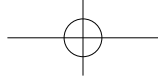


BELINDA CHANG 章緣

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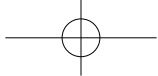
Belinda Chang was born in Taiwan in 1963. She started publishing stories while living in New York City and won several literary awards in Taiwan. She has since published six collections of short stories, two novels, and one collection of essays. Chang's works have been included in various literary anthologies, taught in colleges, and translated into English.

After some fifteen years of living in America, in 2005, she and her family moved to Shanghai, China. The experience of living in various countries and cultures has given Chang's work its characteristic complexity and depth.



What constitutes a ‘proper’ or ‘acceptable’ relationship has long been an important moral question in East Asian society; it is in the genetic code of the culture. In their efforts to maintain appropriate relationships, people, especially women, suffer from the pain caused by repressed lust and hidden desires. In these eight stories, single career women looking for love to married middle-age women tempted by lust must conceal their feelings and desires, the things they cannot disclose openly, and that make them ashamed. They find themselves transgressing social norms simply by making honest choices, whether they are in Taiwan, China or America. Their struggles are as much internal as external, a reflection of the contradiction between an individual’s choices and the outside world’s expectations, which are often internalised. The result is a collection of stories that surprises as well as resonates in their inner conflicts.

Having spent many years living abroad, Belinda Chang’s writing displays a sharpness of observation and a different perspective from most of her peers in Taiwan. Her characters are rooted in their different settings and yet speak across borders with a universally shared humanity.



THE UNSPEAKABLE

By Belinda Chang. Translated by Eleanor Goodman.

Illicit Affairs

Here's how it is: there are certain experiences you just can't understand unless they happen to you.

At the time, she was living in a small New Jersey town near the Washington Bridge. It only took ten minutes to drive over to New York City, so she was one of many commuters who lived there. She worked in a lawyer's office as a high-level assistant, mostly helping Chinese apply for American citizenship, and although she was just an assistant, the applicants trusted her, since most of them spoke no English.

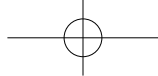
The dearest wish of those anxious applicants—who worked for next to nothing in restaurants or in the homes of rich Chinese—was to become citizens as quickly as possible so as to enjoy American wealth and find more respectable work. 'Sophia,' each would say to her with a toadying smile, 'do me a favour and find out how the application is going?' But the application invariably turned out to have problems. Sometimes it was that they hadn't fulfilled the immigration office's requirements. Sometimes the lawyer found an excuse to raise his fees. And sometimes the applicant was just unlucky.

Sophia and Hsiao had had a much easier time of it. By the time she arrived in America from Taiwan, her parents had long since immigrated to San Jose. They helped her get a green card, which she received on her first visit to the country. When she went back to Taiwan, she married her college sweetheart, and they moved to New York

together to go to graduate school and then take jobs. That was why Hsiao could get citizenship much faster than their other friends. Citizenship based on marriage. She had dealt with many such applications, mostly older American men marrying Chinese women twenty years their junior. The women received temporary green cards, and then could apply for permanent status after two years.

Since there was a lot of fraud in such situations, these applications underwent close examination. She'd seen applications rejected because the man was so old he couldn't answer the questions properly. When the woman heard the result, she would invariably come into the office and sob until she lost her breath and her face turned bright red.

The case that had left the deepest impression on her was that of Huang Chuan, a rather attractive forty-three-year-old woman from Suzhou with a high school education. Given her lithe figure, the immigration officer guessed she was no more than thirty, but she was planning to marry Mr Chiu, a seventy-year old Taiwanese man. As they filled out the paperwork, she had told Huang Chuan that she couldn't guarantee the application's success. Applying with the help of a lawyer was an expensive and risky strategy for anyone, but with the huge disparity in age and appearance, their case would be even harder than usual. Mr Chiu had once had a skin disease, and his face and neck were covered with coffee-colored spots that couldn't be hidden behind



clothing. In contrast, Huang Chuan had fine porcelain skin that stretched smoothly across her small heart-shaped face. She had delicate eyebrows and fine lips below a small beauty mark. She still displayed a youthful elegance. It seemed strange that she would end up destitute in New York, marrying some frog of an old man.

Huang Chuan's application was rejected, and the lawyer helped them apply again, telling her they must refine their answers further. They would be interviewed separately and asked things like the other's brand of toothpaste and favorite foods and clothing size. She gave a pile of practice questions to Huang Chuan and told her to go home and practice. Huang Chuan sighed and said, 'I'm afraid Chiu can't remember stuff like that.' In the first interview, the immigration officer had asked Mr Chiu whether his wife had any surgical scars and he had said no. But Huang Chuan's stomach had a noticeable scar from a caesarian section she'd undergone during her previous marriage.

What did your wife eat last night? When did you last have sex? What's her favourite coffee? Setting aside loveless marriages, even couples like her and Hsiao wouldn't have been able to answer some of the questions. They had long since stopped paying attention to such things. Over time, the important details of their lives had become blurred, like brightly coloured clothing that had faded in the wash. One's tastes and hobbies and bodies also changed until there were no real answers for such questions. Did one really have to know every little thing about one's partner, the details stored in a constantly updating database, before one could have a legitimate marriage?

Huang Chuan furrowed her brow. 'Isn't it unfair? I've spent the last two years with him, every single day from morning till night.' Her voice lowered to a whisper, 'An old man like him...'

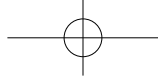
By 'an old man like him,' she didn't just mean the man she'd married, but the category of old men in general. An impotent old abstinent man.

There were also a few cases where young men married older women, but it was less common. Those cases very rarely got through, since both Chinese and Americans expected the man to be the older of the pair.

Who was worse off: men who married older women, or women who married older men?

She was two years younger than Hsiao, and they had gotten together in college. A similar age, appearance, education—that was the most normal pairing. Although it was 'normal,' that didn't mean they hadn't undergone some trials. They had no children. Hsiao had two older brothers and a younger sister, so his family didn't care much if their third child overseas had children or not. At holiday get-togethers, someone might say something about it, but their gossip would recede into the background when she and Hsiao returned to America. When a woman reached forty, if she didn't already have children, she probably never would, and time further muffled the gossip. The Chinese character for 'happiness' was pasted on a piece of red silk, and they draped the silk over themselves to prevent prying comments about passing down the family name, unnecessary sympathy, and the eyes of busybodies. She and Hsiao held onto each other as though they were the only two people in the world, and that was the way they would grow old together in America. They'd buy a farm in Florida, or move to sunny San Jose to take care of her aging mother, and live off of their retirement savings and social security. They would spend their last happy years enjoying their favourite hobbies. (For Hsiao, that was chess and golf, while for her it was gardening and swimming.)

Never having had children left her with the misconception that she was still in her prime. Approaching forty, she still made herself up like a thirty year-old, and her figure was svelte. She would always be a girl, and would never make the leap (or take the fall) into motherhood. When she stood on that opposite shore and looked back at the world, she wouldn't be curious about that



other life. 'A mother is like the moon,' went the lullaby, but moonlight is cold. And so old age waited next door, just around the next corner. Today was youth, tomorrow was old age, with none of those interim ten years in between of raising children. There was no younger generation to bring up, the cacophony and responsibilities one both loved and hated, that sense that one's life would be continued. She was just one person floating through the ether. Women who become mothers grow old feeling justified in their own lives (having used their flesh and blood and youth to nourish their children), while she had to sleep in the bed she'd made and grow old alone.

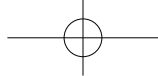
She always fell asleep with a suspicion that she might wake up the next day already old. It was most obvious after she turned thirty-five, when each week passed as though in a blink and the weekends she used to fervently anticipate came in quick succession like free gifts with a purchase. If Hsiao wasn't playing golf, they would take a drive out of the city, or go to one of the neighbouring states to have lunch in a small town diner. Sometimes they would pass by a little vacation cabin by a lake encircled by mountains, with a wooden dock leading out to the water where children in floaties jumped into the swimming area yelling and splashing happily. Why not grow old in a place like that! She liked water, even though she wouldn't have any grandchildren to bob around in it in swan-shaped floaties, and she would never swim with a small, light body on her back as her father had with her. But Hsiao liked big stretches of grass and he wanted to grow old in a retirement community beside a golf course. So they argued in the car on the weekends, until one of them got too tired to come up with another retort.

Where and with whom had Hsiao recently been golfing? Why hadn't they had children? What would they do when they eventually retired? She and Hsiao always came up with different answers.

On the phone her mother told her that she

had found a housemate. She'd been encouraging her mother to do so for some time. Her father had died three years previously, and she knew that her mother was nervous about living alone. Her mother had always been afraid of the dark, and a few times she had complained about strange noises in her room, especially when the night outside was particularly black. Her neighbours were all white. The only Chinese in the neighbourhood had lived a few blocks away, and they used to invite her mother over for barbecues in the summer, but then they moved away. Now her mother's activities were all centred on the senior centre. She would drive herself there, or to the nearby library. Her mother had aged gracefully, with the soft voice of a girl and a dainty figure. With her Japanese education, she insisted on not leaving the house until she had made herself up, saying that it was only proper to wear makeup. She recalled her mother always wearing makeup. When she went to work for a foreign company and then when they moved to America, she was always well put together whenever she left the house. At first, she wondered why her sixty-something mother still paid so much attention to her appearance. She couldn't really even apply eye shadow on her wrinkled eyelids. It wasn't until she visited the senior centre that she realised her mother was comparatively young and good-looking.

Monday through Friday her mother had lunch at the centre as one of her social security benefits. The lunch was cheap, and had meat, vegetables, milk, and fruit. It saved her the inconvenience of shopping and cooking for herself. Her mother always sat at the same table by the door. There were two other regulars at the table: John, an older gentleman who wore a checker-patterned hat in all seasons, and Jake, a jokester who liked to read detective stories. They were both widowers and they sat on either side of her mother as though they were her escorts. 'Jake doesn't like fruit, so he always gives me his... John took a fall and hasn't been to the centre for more than a month...' Her



mother recalled on the phone. She said she'd met a man named Adam at the library. He was dignified and seemed to be over sixty. Adam was always trying to guess her mother's age. 'Fifty-five, fifty-six, fifty-seven? Not older than that.' Her mother would giggle coyly. She talked about Adam for three weeks, and then stopped mentioning him. When Sophia brought him up, her mother avoided the question and only when pressed did she lower her voice as though someone were listening on the line and said, 'He called me one night and said, *Lucy...*' (Lucy was her mother's English name), '*Lucy, I'm naked right now.*'

Her mother laughed so hard she could hardly speak, and then repeated over and over again, 'Don't ever tell anyone.' And what did naked Adam want? Her mother didn't explain, and of course she couldn't tell anyone else because she feared damaging her mother's reputation. Her mother had always been modest and virtuous, and she never talked out of turn. It was that place, it was those depraved American men, or was it that her mother had reached an age at which she didn't care anymore? Secretly, she blamed her mother, though really it wasn't her fault.

Would there come a day when her mother would actually become involved with such men? Would she find autumnal love? Then she would have a stepfather. Of course, in America, she wouldn't have to call him 'Dad.' Adam, or John... Her lonely mother needed a friend to live with her. That way she wouldn't have to go to the senior centre every day!

At first her mother had refused. 'I'm used to living alone. Having someone else in the house would feel strange. What if he turned out to be bad?'

'Find a woman, a Chinese. That way you can collect rent, but you'll also have someone around. If you only charge a reasonable amount, you'll find someone easily.'

When her mother told her that she'd found a Chinese housemate, she was happy. Jackie was

from the mainland and worked in a pet store owned by a fellow Chinese, where her mother had recently bought a golden retriever.

It seemed like her mother's life was undergoing a lot of changes, unlike her own. She'd wanted to have a dog. Americans often drove their retrievers around in the passenger seat with its head hanging out the window and its long tongue sticking out like a curious child. But every year, she and Hsiao left the country to go on vacation. They had to go to Taiwan and San Jose to visit their parents, so raising a dog wasn't really possible. They didn't even have children; why would they get a dog? Their lives were already all planned out.

One day, she called her mother and a young man answered. She couldn't have dialed wrong, since the number was saved in her phone.

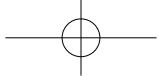
'Um, is Lucy there?'

'Just a moment.' The man's English carried a Chinese accent. Her mother answered the phone cheerfully.

'Why is there a man in your house?'

'I told you. That was Jacky.'

'Oh, Jacky.'



DEAR CHILD

親愛的小孩



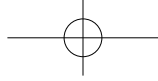
©Luke Huang

ESSAY LIU

劉梓潔

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dale@crown.com.tw
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(approx. 50,000 words in English)
-

Essay Liu knew from a young age that she wanted to be a writer. Her publishing career started after winning the 2003 Unitas Newcomer Fiction Prize for her story 'Blinded,' but she only decided to pursue it full time after she won the Lin Rung-San Literary Award for her essay 'Seven Days of Mourning,' a deeply personal reflection on the pain of losing her father which was later adapted for the big screen. Her first collection of essays of the same title was a huge hit in Taiwan, selling over 70,000 copies. The movie *7 Days in Heaven*, adapted from her essay 'Seven Days of Mourning,' hit \$1.5 million at the box office, winning Liu the 2010 Golden Horse Award for Best Adapted Screenplay. Her writing is heavily influenced by Lawrence Block, with its taut elegance tinged with cynicism. She is currently working on a novel based on her own family history, while continuing to write screenplays.

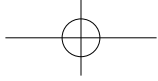


- * Film rights to *Dear Child* have been sold, currently in development.
- * Her story 'Lightning Bolt' was adapted for screen by the Golden Horse Film Academy, with Hou Hsiao-Hsien as executive producer.

Dear Child is Essay Liu's first short story collection, containing stories written in the decade between 2003 and 2013. Many readers had been expecting a book of essays, and were surprised to see Liu take this new direction in her work.

The ten stories contained within focus on the dramas of everyday life. In 'Dear Child,' for example, we follow one woman's longing for, as well as her struggles and doubts about, having children. The collection contains grieving women and the men who have hurt them deeply, the hopelessness as well as the promise of love. Liu's prose is as humorous as it is bleak, reflecting a true range of human emotion and contradiction.

Liu is a confident writer taking on one of our biggest questions: what is love?



DEAR CHILD

By Essay Liu. Translated by Jeremy Tiang.

Gift

1.

Li Chun-Chuan stared for some time at the penis keychain in the post office parcel, uncertain what to do. Finally, she sighed and slammed the lid back on, then flung it into a drawer she seldom opened, full of corporate souvenirs and the like. She shook her head and thought, ‘This is difficult, far too difficult. Training someone from scratch is far too difficult.’

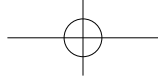
This was Ah-Chao’s gift to her from his graduation holiday. He said it had to come in the mail, in order to be a surprise. If his starting point had been entirely erotic, if this had been a way of teasing or flirting with her, she might have got a little excited. But she knew that wasn’t the case, he actually did think this was a good present. The wood carving was artistic, and the penis was creative, so this key ring was an object of innovation and craft, and wasn’t that what literary folk like her were always on about? Her heart softened at this evidence of thoughtfulness, but then her head clouded at his vulgar taste. Did anyone still buy those ‘Forever-Well’ train tickets as lucky charms? She thought about texting that to Ah-Chao, but put her phone down. She didn’t want to be annoying—that line would just confuse his innocent, overgrown boy-mind. Instead she sent him a sticker full of love-hearts.

Far too difficult. All the good things available for purchase on Bali Island—what about a tub

of coconut oil or exfoliating cream, something the two of them could get good and greasy with, massaging each other? Or coffee? Although actually maybe not, Ah-Chao would probably buy that sickly-sweet ‘man-strengthening’ three-in-one instant stuff. So hey, maybe she was the problem. It was her fault for being so hard to please.

A short while before she finished university, her parents managed to leave the country for the first time, joining a package tour to Shanghai—six days and five nights. By the time they returned, they’d bought enough stuff to need a whole new suitcase. The next time the family got together, her mother summoned all the girls to come get their gifts. From a huge black plastic bag, she pulled out item after item, counterfeit goods from Xiangyang Market, leather wallets, little purses, evening bags. Her female cousins were surprised and delighted, excitedly tearing open their packages and comparing presents. When it came to her turn, there was a flat little envelope that, when she opened it, contained only a couple of standard postcard sets. Nothing special about them. She looked in shock at her mother, who seemed to be searching for the appropriate words, a little shame-faced. ‘Uh... I thought these would be more suitable for you.’ Her wavering tone told her the meaning beneath her mother’s words: You’re always looking down on the things we like, you think they’re vulgar.

She remembered this so clearly, because that was around the time she’d started going out with Hundred Best.



'My Ma really doesn't understand me, you know. Of course I like those girly things too!' the twenty-two year Li Chun-Chuan said as she lay next to Hundred Best on the enormous bed at Hot Springs Hotel. She spread the overly-photoshopped scenes over his body, old Shanghai alleyways, the soon-to-be-completed Pearl Tower, a nine-turn bridge at Yuyuan Gardens, one landmark for each erogenous zone and then some. Just for fun, she knelt at his feet and, puffing out her cheeks, blew hard, so the postcards tumbled onto the bed and made Hundred Best's abundant body hair quiver. She chuckled at that. Hundred Best clamped his legs around her, pulling her close. 'Why bother with fakes, I'll buy the real thing for you.'

Li Chun-Chuan was too rational to ever allow herself to become a gold-digger, but it was hard to avoid being overwhelmed by this good fortune, like a sparrow flying up a tree. In order to make sense of her feelings for Hundred Best, she went to the bookshop and leafed through a bunch of relationship manuals. Sure enough, one of them dealt with exactly this situation.

Q: How do you know if you love him or his money?

A: When you love someone, you want them to be happy.

Undoubtedly, Li Chun-Chuan would do anything to make Hundred Best happy. And she knew all she had to do to achieve this was to make the most of her natural youthful allure.

'Tell me a secret.' Hundred Best nodded. She gently stroked his luxuriantly hairy leg. 'When your body aches all over, do you cover it in Salonpas pain patches?'

Clever, nimble, humorous, cheerful, elegant, respectable, caring, biddable. Two weeks later, Hundred Best brought Li Chun-Chuan to Hong Kong. As she showered, he wrote on the hotel

notepad and forgot to put it away. She looked at the paper and smiled smugly to herself, secretly pleased. 'Is this about me?' Hundred Best nodded. 'Any flaws?' the young woman pouted at him. 'I haven't discovered those yet.'

'What does 'biddable' mean?' 'You'll find out.'

They were only together for a month, most of which they spent in bed. During that time, Li Chun-Chuan believed everything Hundred Best told her.

Q: Are you married?

A: Divorced five years ago.

Q: Why aren't we using contraception?

A: I've had a vasectomy.

Q: Why?

A: My ex-wife didn't like condoms, and we didn't plan to have kids.

Q: Why don't we ever go to your house?

A: I live with my parents.

Q: When will you bring me to meet your parents?

A: After a while.

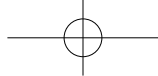
Q: My parents are rural public servants. Are we good enough for you?

A: What are you worried about? You're fine.

Twenty years later, Li Chun-Chuan still wasn't sure whether some demon had blinded her, or if she'd been dizzy from all the orgasms. (She wasn't a virgin, she'd already been with boys her age, but it had never been this good. Addendum: it would never be this good again.) Perhaps it was more accurate to say, everything ended before she'd had time to get it straight. This was one of her biggest fears in life.

She was forty-two now, the age Hundred Best had been back then.

Now and then she'd pouted at Ah-Chao, 'Ah, if only we'd met two years earlier, we could have said you were in your twenties and me in my thirties, and that wouldn't have sounded



like such a big gap.' Ah-Chao once replied, you don't look your age. He was twenty-seven, and it would be a whole three years before she could tell people she was in her forties but dating a thirtysomething.

Her first date with Ah-Chao was in Tainan. After she got home, she soaked in the bathtub for a long time, as if trying to sort out the contents of her head. Finally, the water grew cold and her skin wrinkly (this won't do, quick, apply some firming cream), so she wrapped herself in a bathrobe and went to check on little Thomas, who was sleeping soundly. She signed the teachers' book already placed on the desk (as usual, adding lots of hearts and smiley faces, writing thanks to the teacher; she'd always been a careful, thoughtful parent, the sort who gave the teacher a voucher for afternoon tea at a high-class hotel on Teachers' Day), and closed it. Then she grabbed one of little Thomas's *One Piece* post-it notes and went to the living room sofa, where she thought back over the entire evening, and wrote: innocent, thoughtful, long eyelashes, clean and neat fingernails... Then she stopped, creasing the paper into accordion folds, the sticky side leaving a lingering sensation on her palm. Oh my god, she thought, I've turned into Hundred Best.

2.

How can we most quickly deal with the first half of Li Chun-Chuan's life? Maybe we should take that consultation she had with the gynaecologist, nine years ago.

She walked into the room and sat down. The female doctor held a stick with two purple lines on it. 'Miss Li, the test shows that you're pregnant. I'll have to ask you a few questions that might sound intrusive, please answer them as best you can, all right?' Li Chun-Chuan nodded.

'Are you married?'

'No.'

'Was this a planned pregnancy?'

'No.'

'Have you been pregnant, given birth or had a miscarriage before?'

'Given birth, once.'

'When was that?'

'Um... ten years ago.'

Next, the doctor started advising her: She was already thirty-three. She wasn't getting any younger, she might not have a chance again after this. Would she consider keeping it? The doctor even got out a rotating chart like a zodiac to help her work out the due date. But she was adamant, she couldn't keep it.

'Fine, then let's do an ultrasound, and we can discuss what comes next.'

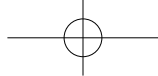
When she had arranged herself on the bed, the doctor came in and started waving a wand over her belly. 'This is your womb. We're looking for a little black speck.' She rubbed this way and that, then called, 'Found it!' Li Chun-Chuan couldn't see clearly, but was very comfortable lying there.

The doctor tapped the mouse and measured the diameter of the speck. '0.8 centimetres. That's about three weeks.'

She pulled her trousers back on and went back into the consulting room. The doctor scribbled in her chart as she said, 'So small. You have the choice between either surgery or a chemically-induced miscarriage.'

Should she say this clinic was too specialised, or that the doctors had too much empathy? Perhaps the best word was an English one, *considerate*. Yes, they were too *considerate*. Only now did Li Chun-Chuan realise what that thing was that made her feel so odd, yet so comfortable.

The doctor's description contained no subject nouns or pronouns at all, such as baby, child, kid or little one. She didn't say 'the little one is 0.8 cm now,' 'the baby is about three weeks old,' 'the child is still very small.' Knowing she'd already made



up her mind to get rid of the little black speck, the doctor was helpfully omitting any words that might cause feelings of tenderness. Presumably she wasn't like this with the joyous couples who arrived hand-in-hand? She was grateful for how *considerate* the doctor was being, yet she also found it faintly off-putting.

The doctor went through the plus and minus points of each method of abortion. 'Which would you prefer?'

As if deciding whether she wanted Set Meal A or B, she placed a finger on her lips, murmuring, 'It's so small...' She'd unconsciously added a subject to the sentence.

The doctor repeated, 'Yes, it's very small.'

Suddenly, those four words flipped a switch, and her tears streamed as if a dam had burst. She clamped her mouth shut, unable to say another word. With professional speed, the nurse grabbed a good handful of tissues and handed them over, and the doctor said, 'Miss Li, please don't worry, you can go home and think about it, you don't have to decide today, because it's still very small...'

Li Chun-Chuan decided to let herself cry properly. The attractive thirty-three-year-old fund manager with a PhD in business sat weeping like a little girl on the small round stool reserved for patients, repeating in a broken voice, 'I'm sorry... I'm sorry...' Her sobs grew louder with each utterance, with no sign of stopping. She had utterly lost control.

The doctor said, 'It's all right, Miss Li. You will be rather fragile and sensitive during the early stages of pregnancy. If you like, we can have the nurse take you to a room where you can rest...' Now Li Chun-Chuan switched to rapidly shaking her head, first like a child throwing a tantrum, refusing everything, then slowing down. Her tears ceased.

She took a few deep breaths, accepted the tissue paper proffered by the nurse, dried her eyes, wiped her nose, and said in a steady voice, 'Thanks.' She was back. Dragging herself ashore

from the brink of weakness and collapse had only taken a couple of minutes, and she hadn't even delayed the next patient. Squeezing out a smile, she told the doctor, 'Thank you. I'll go back and think about it.'

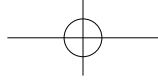
There was no need to think, because by that point she already knew the answer—that she would keep the little black speck, and share her life with him. (For the whole of the pregnancy, she referred to him as the little black speck, and it was only when he was born, and ah! white and plump as a Goddess of Mercy, that she switched to calling him little Thomas.)

And so she obediently submitted herself to the usual tests. At a different hospital, obviously.

3.

Those heart-rending cries of 'sorry' weren't an apology for the doctor or nurse, but rather were directed at her child with Hundred Best, the one she'd never met. She recalled only resounding howls at the time, and being startled to realise they sounded exactly the same as the canned sound effects in the movies. All associations and imaginings were immediately cut off, however. Even lying there half-dead as she was, she summoned the strength to bark like a drill sergeant, a cry from deep within her ripped-apart belly, 'Take it away! Quickly!'

It wasn't that she couldn't bear to look, afraid that even one glance would haunt her for the rest of her days or anything like that, not at all. She simply didn't want to see. For a whole nine months before that, she hadn't looked at the ultrasounds, just pulled up her trousers and hurried off. In any case, Hundred Best's subordinate, or more accurately Li Chun-Chuan's housekeeper and nanny at the time, Julie, would go see the doctor and hear a complete report, then send it together with the scans to Hundred Best and his wife across the ocean.



THE SHADOW

暗影

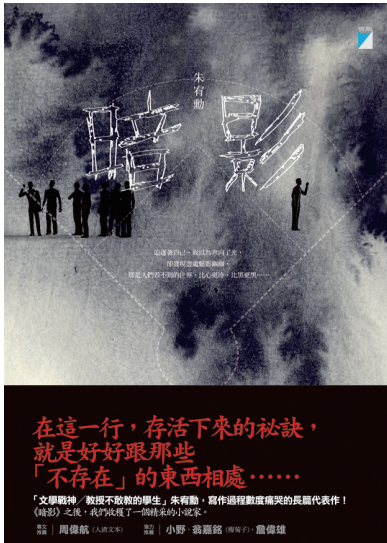
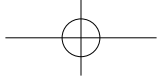


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CHU YU-HSUN 朱宥勳

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Laetitia Chien (Aquarius)
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-

Chu Yu-Hsun is considered one of the most promising active young writers in Taiwan. He fell in love with literature at a young age, but studied sociology at university. He went on to pursue graduate studies in Taiwanese literature, but has kept a concern for social issues at the heart of his writing. As well as writing novels, he is also a magazine editor and regularly contributes articles on current affairs online and in print.



The Shadow intertwines the stories of baseball player Shi-Chen and super fan Fido. Just as he is about to retire, Fido invites Shi-Chen to join a secret group to help unveil the bookies and players who throw games for money. Despite his misgivings, he agrees, but before long, his decision to betray the sport he has made his life begins to haunt him and the whole plan begins to unravel...

Inspired by a real match-fixing scandal that rocked Taiwanese baseball in 2009, Chu spent four years writing this novel in part due to his own rage and disappointment that the sport he loved so much had been so thoroughly compromised. His writing had previously been characterised by a tendency to rather obscure symbolism, but *The Shadow* marks a new phase in his artistic development, using knowledge of baseball and a more straightforward prose style. The effect is a moving exploration of the passions and disappointments inherent in playing or following sport.



THE SHADOW

By Chu Yu-Hsun. Translated by Jeremy Tiang.

Every moment I've spent on the baseball field, I've been profoundly aware that there's such a thing as 'non-existence.'

I'm a thirty-five-year-old Taiwanese professional baseball player. I don't know what this age means to most people, but in the world of Taiwanese baseball, it's decrepit. If you flipped through the league yearbooks for the last thirty-odd years, you'd realise most professional players have short-lived careers, perhaps even shorter than trapeze artistes or stuntpersons, sword-swallowers and the like. The averagely-talented player joins his first team at twenty-two or three, but more than half of these leave the sport within two years, because of insufficient stamina, untrustworthy coaches, accidental injury, mindsets too advanced for the Taiwanese baseball scene, or simply a lack of a suitable position on the squad. The official term is 'released'—just like when water boils, it bubbles up from the pot, no longer able to remain with the rest of the liquid.

If you're accomplished or lucky enough, you become the lead player of a team, and for three to five years get to enjoy the screams and cheers of the fans. Too much cheering. Because you wind up on the field too often, your strong arms or back turned into raw fuel. You're up today, you're up tomorrow—you momentarily forget you were up yesterday too. This is something those unlucky bastards who leave within two years never experience. Around the fifth year, your still-sturdy arm develops an obstruction in

a place no one can see, a bone or joint, or else a ligament. All of a sudden, those muscles aren't any good to you at all, your pitches move even slower than when you were seventeen. In the end, you leave by the same exit door as all the other unlucky bastards, just a little later than them.

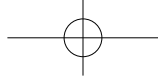
You really ought to believe a member of that rare species: a thirty-five-year-old baseball player still in the starting line-up.

Let me tell you the secret of my longevity: you have to make your peace with that thing known as 'non-existence.'

The things that don't exist are always more important. Take your muscles and joints—an inflamed rotator cuff will heal, your obliques can be improved through training, but there are areas where no amount of effort can help, not even with dumbbells.

I started playing in the league aged twenty-three, and although I've changed teams a few times, I've never left the sport. Thirteen years is a long time, you know. A famous batter who started a few years before me (he's retired now, but you've certainly heard his name) once said, 'I'm learning to co-exist with my injuries.' That's right, that's the most important thing—it's not enough to understand the existence of 'non-existence,' you also have to co-exist with it.

I'm thirty-five now, which in baseball terms means I'm on my deathbed. It could be next year or this, but someday I'll receive the simple text message: 'Because of changes to the needs



of the team, we're terminating your contract. Thank you for your many years of service, with best wishes for your future life.' And if I attempt to respond, my phone will tell me 'reply not possible,' because the message will come from some system-generated code rather than anyone's actual number. But at least this hasn't happened yet.

You could say my greatest skill in this lifetime has been delaying the arrival of that text. But I know it'll come sooner or later—no one can avoid it.

There's only one possible exception.

After so many years, I may never have been able to live up to that famous batter, but I've been selected for the national team, won the grand championship, and been named the king of the home runs. In the annals of my career, there's not much left to aim for. Only one thing remains: I'd like it to all end on the field, not with a text message.

A match that crowns my name, one where my every move and gesture matters more than which side wins or loses.

'Hsieh Shi-Chen's farewell match.' A moment to be remembered forever by my passionate fans. There'd be a ceremony beforehand, and floral bouquets during the match. The commentary I couldn't hear from the field would recount dozens of times that evening my records and accomplishments. Then afterwards, in my anticipated last time at bat, I'd knock the ball out of the park—and no matter what the outcome, every paper would report my 'glorious retirement.' I believe I deserve this. On every front—including the 'non-existent' ones—I surely counted as a first-rate player.

But at the end of the day, in the thirty-odd year history of a sport which doesn't have much truck with honouring players, over thousands of games, there've only been seventeen such farewell matches. So it would seem this isn't, in fact, the treatment I deserve. Because after

all, I'm just an average player in the Taiwanese professional league.

I've always been able to see you. There's no need to be so shocked—I think I've already said enough about 'non-existence.' The first time I saw you was in senior high. At that point, I felt I'd already been playing ball for long enough, almost an entire lifetime. Ever since I started playing the junior league in elementary school, I've spent on average four or five hours a day training, long enough to ensure my collected knowledge comes to nothing apart from baseball. But on the field, it felt like precisely the opposite was true—as if nothing new could happen here to arouse my attention. Of course, I was wrong.

I had no idea then that I would become one of the most senior players in the Taiwanese professional league; I couldn't even predict what would happen a few minutes in the future. It was just a regular day of training on the school field, with players going up in turn for a 'free batting' session. From behind an L-shaped practice net, the coach lobbed balls into the strike zone, while the batters stood next to the home plate and attempted to hit them, ten tries each.

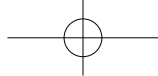
Only the catcher looked different. Wearing a helmet, visor and other protective gear, he squatted behind the home plate. If any of our bats missed their targets, he'd catch the ball and pass it back.

Behind the plate that day was Hsu Jen-Yu, the lead catcher of our side.

Hsu Jen-Yu was also my best friend on the team—we'd been close ever since elementary school.

But you already know all this. It was in the instant of the batting accident that I saw you for the first time.

I've heard that the highest recorded speed of a Taiwanese batter's swing is two hundred



and fifty-one kilometres per hour. Which is to say, the tip of my bat would set out from my left shoulder at this velocity, describing an arc across my front, ending up behind my back to the right. So when that tip struck the side of the catcher's helmet, I didn't even have time to wonder: can a traditional baseball helmet withstand a thirty-five ounce bat moving at two hundred and fifty-one kilometres per hour?

I have no idea. Perhaps I'd been swinging even faster than that?

Baseball is often like that—training and the actual game are completely different.

Perhaps they'd never thought such a thing could happen, and only carried out tests with a ball. Who on earth would hit the right side of a catcher's helmet with a bat? In the normal course of things, the only object likely to hit a catcher was a ball that could be caught in one hand, with a maximum speed of no more than a hundred and sixty kilometres per hour...

Those in charge of testing such impacts would surely be absolute baseball fanatics, and therefore likely to presume they'd seen it all.

It's as if you were born from that swinging bat.

The bat started moving, slicing downwards a little, speeding up as it moved in a horizontal arc across the front, and at the end the tip swung upwards behind my body. Because this was a strike (although, strictly speaking, I did hit *something...*), I stopped moving with my body turned completely to face first base. That's when I saw a tiny, tiny you squatting next to first. In the midst of all the confusion, I didn't stop to wonder why someone looking like an elementary school student would have appeared on a senior high baseball field, particularly during training, when outsiders were prohibited.

I was still a little confused—what did that cacophony have to do with the strange sensation now reaching my hands?

Everyone was crowding Hsu Jen-Yu, so I

turned and entered the scrum. He was lying down, his protective gear scattered. There was a crack in the round earflap of his helmet. I don't know how many times I said I'm sorry or are you all right, because with him in that state, it didn't matter what I said, it wouldn't do any good...

It's as if you were Jen-Yu's replacement. After the incident, whenever I stepped onto the field, I saw you—amongst the spectators, on a broken chair in a corner of the locker room. During batting practice, you appeared to squat in the same position I first saw you in, hugging your knees and staring straight at me. I've always been terrified of ghosts and the dark, and even in a dorm room with a dozen other players, I never dared go to bed later than Jen-Yu, afraid of the murky shadows that rose as I stared at the bunks. But from that moment, I no longer had any fear.

It was like I suddenly understood that there were certain things only I could see, that I had to co-exist with.

After so many years, you still appear at every baseball game I play, still looking like an elementary school child. At times, I think you look like Jen-Yu as a kid, and wonder if you've come for those ghost story sorts of reasons, 'destiny' or 'a grudge?' This thought doesn't scare me, but rather gives a kind of hope, as if I were about to go somewhere warm. But you've never said anything, nor done anything in particular, just stared at me.

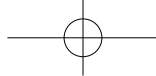
What on earth do you want?

You keep looking at me, and so we've co-existed like this for many years, in silence. And now I've reached the age at which I can start planning my 'farewell match.'

Today's the first time I'm seeing you off the field.

As you won't say anything, let me start.

There are many things Jen-Yu couldn't have known. And even you, constantly watching me, couldn't know. Listen to what a thirty-five-year-old player has to say. I'll be honest with you—



won't try to conceal anything. This isn't a chance that comes along often. All sorts of people make their living from baseball, but the naturally frank aren't amongst them.

There are some things only those who've stood near the home plate can understand. For instance, the strike zone.

The umpire, catcher, home plate and pitcher are arranged in a straight line, with a point to one side. This point is the batter, the position I'm most familiar with.

From the perspective of the pitcher, I'd have been on the left side of home plate, in the batter's box used by left-handed batters. But in fact, when a southpaw is actually up at bat, his left arm would be to his rear, and it'd be his right shoulder facing the pitcher. All the baseball manuals—although in Taiwan, coaches and players believe more in instinct, I secretly read a few, such as Ted Williams' book—will tell you that the ideal batter leads with his shoulder, his body pulling the bat into motion, the bat leading his eye, watching as the ball shoots off into the field. If you're strong enough, like me, you might see the ball enter the field and then leave it, landing amidst the turbulent crowd behind outfield.

But all of this will already have been decided long before the swinging of the bat.

Because of the strike zone.

This question will test your understanding of baseball: What shape is the strike zone?

Yes, that's right, the width of the home plate, the height of your knees to your armpits. Sure, that's a perfectly accurate definition, but I wasn't asking for a definition. I asked: What shape is the strike zone?

A rectangle, right?

Have you actually seen a rectangle on the field?

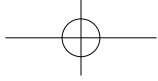
Just as most people can't see you, no one has ever seen this rectangle. This was actually a trick question, because the answer is: It has no fixed shape. Every player's height is different, meaning the length varies. But that's not the most important thing, the main point is that every game has a different umpire, and even within a single game, the same umpire has a different relationship with every player and the team they belong to.

And so, everything changes.

You don't see this? Of course not, no baseball fan ever does. As always, your eyes are focused on the wrong place.

Every player practices on the field long before appearing on television, whereas every fan watches the game on TV before they know to come see it on the field.

It's this sequence of events that's pulled the wool over everyone's eyes.



S.T.E.P.



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Mr Pets, pen name of Wang Chien-Min, works as a software engineer. Now a member of the Mystery Writers of Taiwan, he continues to write criticism, as well as produce his own works of fiction, bringing in elements from fantasy, science fiction and horror to reinvigorate the genre. He is the winner of the first Soji Shimada Mystery Award.

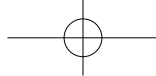
MR PETS 寵物先生 CHAN HO-KEI 陳浩基

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 - Publisher: Crown
 - Date: 2015/3
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dale@crown.com.tw
 - Pages: 336pp
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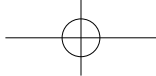
Chan Ho-Kei was born and raised in Hong Kong. He has worked as software engineer, scriptwriter, game designer and editor of comic magazines. His first mystery novel, *The Man Who Sold the World*, won the Soji Shimada Mystery Award in 2011. His next mystery, an epic Hong Kong crime novel, *The Borrowed*, is being developed as a major film by renowned director Wong Kar-Wai and will be published in five foreign languages.



Set in the near future, governments are using big data to better manage day-to-day bureaucratic problems. Enter a criminal's data into the SABOTAGE system for example, and it will tell you their likelihood of reoffending. But is that all the government is using big data for? With this as their theme, the four linked crime stories in this collection take the genre to the future and with a new twist.

A Japanese gang leader leaves prison and much to the surprise of the authorities, he gets pulled right back into criminal activity. Has something gone wrong with their SABOTAGE system? A lower level officer of the Ministry of Justice and a detective famed for being able to crack any case within five days are investigating. But as they start to get closer to the truth, a body is discovered...

Mixing science fiction and the gritty realism of the best of the crime genre, these stories are like four speeding bullets fired by two of the Chinese-speaking world's most original mystery writers.



S.T.E.P.

By Mr Pets and Chan Ho-Kei. Translated by Chenxin Jiang.

Episode 1: s

sabotage /'sæbə,tʌʒ, ,sæbə'tʌʒ/

verb: to destroy or damage (something) deliberately

noun: the act of destroying or damaging something deliberately

File number: cas05-n-0002741-17829

Date: June 19, 2028

Prisoner name: Matthew Fredd (Age: 38)

Prior conviction: Y/N

Convictions served:

2008 – Criminal intimidation

2012 – Criminal damage

2019 – Assault (domestic violence)

Charges: Arson, aggravated assault, first-degree murder

Sentence: ---

That goddamn Ching Chong was anyway going to burn himself to death one day.

Now if you think I'm a racist, you're wrong. I may be white, but I'm no member of the Ku Klux Klan or the Neo-Nazis, I've never even voted Republican. Back in jail I had lots of black brothers. A racist wouldn't call a black man his brother, right? Of course, I wouldn't either, if I'd had a choice, but you've got to play your cards right in jail, or you won't survive.

And now that I'm out of there, of course, I can do whatever I like, right?

There you go again, thinking I'm racist against coloured people. I really don't mind immigrants, whether they're from Indonesia,

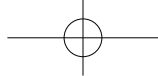
Kenya, or Bolivia, as long as they don't mess with me, I don't pay them any attention.

But the annoying Chinese man next door kept doing all kinds of weird things. That son of a bitch.

I'd lost my home before being locked up, thanks to that crazy bitch Irene, so after being released I had to move into a grubby little studio apartment downtown. Since I was broke, the state reemployment centre found me a job as a janitor at a public school, which just about covered food and rent. The apartment was in a three-storey building with two rooms on each floor. I lived in 101 on the first floor, and the Chinaman lived in 102.

He was an old geezer in his sixties, and like most Asian men, he wasn't tall. He had a wrinkly old face, a slightly hunched back, and sparse grey hair combed over a half-bald head. He always wore cheap-looking grey or deep brown Mao suits, and he had a terrible accent. Every time he addressed me, he seemed to be mocking me by pronouncing Mr Fredd as Mr Fag. Did he think going to jail means you've automatically been fucked in the ass?

I'm not a mean guy, so it's not as if I was out to pick a fight with him, but that man just wasn't normal. If he'd been alive two hundred years ago, I bet he'd have been burnt or hanged for witchcraft. I mean, I could just about handle his having his wife's ashes in an urn in his apartment; the first time I met him, he kindly invited me into his apartment, and pointing at a



Chinese urn on the shelf, said: 'That's my wife.' But I couldn't stand the stink of the food he cooked. Every day when I got home, there would be a sour stink emanating from his apartment. Come on, what's wrong with just eating something normal like a pizza or hot dog?

And his witchcraft was even worse than his cooking. On my fifth day in the apartment, I noticed a completely different smell.

It was the smell of burning wood.

I was just taking a nap, and when I woke up, grey smoke was wafting into my apartment through the gap under the window. I thought the house was on fire, so I dashed out into the street without even putting my clothes on. A strange sight awaited me there. In the alley right next to our house, the old man was burning what looked like bits of paper in a red iron bucket. There were lit incense sticks stuck in some sorta flowerpot right next to the bucket. I know Chinese people burn incense and all, but these sticks were ridiculous. They must have been an inch thick and about twenty inches long, and there must have been at least five or six in the flowerpot. The incense gave off a choking smell. There were a few big white Chinese buns on a plate on the other side of the bucket. At least they probably were white, but had since been flecked grey with the ashes. Did he plan on eating them?

'Mr A, what the hell are you doing?'

'Ah, Mr Fag, hello!' The old man smiled, revealing his stained yellow teeth. 'I worship, I hope I don't disturb you?'

'Is this a Chinese thing or what?' I asked, brushing the ashes away from my face.

'Yes, every first and fifteenth day of the month, we worship earth god, so we have a peaceful home.' I had no idea what he meant by earth gods and peaceful homes, but it must have been some sorta Chinese superstition.

'But it's not the first or fifteenth today,' I said.

'Not western calendar, moon calendar,' he explained.

Right, the Chinese and their lunar calendar. But wait... 'Does that mean you're going to be doing this twice a month?'

'Yes,' the old man said, tossing more paper into the iron bucket. 'About twice a month, but on Ching Ming and Ghost Festival, Ghost Month when the hell gate opens, a few more times...'

'Your smoke is getting in my apartment,' I objected bluntly. I had no idea what he was talking about, but if this was going to go on 'at least' twice a month, how the hell was I going to survive living here? The old man looked up at the window, turned to me, and smiled again.

'Mr Fag, so sorry! No one lived in your apartment, next time I move away from the house, very sorry, Mr Fag!' There it was, mocking me with that fag, fag, fag.

'Even if you move your bucket further away, you could still burn the house down. These old houses are generally made of wood. They burn very easily.' I pointed to his red bucket. A few pieces of paper were picked up by the breeze, and floated out where they landed next to his bucket.

'No worries, Mr Fag, I do this many years, nothing happened.' The old man kept smiling as though he didn't care. 'You're so nervous, you hurt yourself playing with fire when you were a child? I heard, childhood memories can shape a person...'

The old man kept yammering on, talking about all kinds of things, psychoanalysing me for objecting to his incense burning. I kept quiet, let him keep talking, and went back to my room. His tone reminded me of something I preferred not to think about. In prison, they forced me to see one of those psychiatrist types every week. They had me do all kinds of bullshit exercises, like saying what I saw in an inkblot. It's a damn inkblot, for crying out loud! What was I supposed to say: uh, I see Satan in this inkblot?

I'm not a man who gets mad easily, so even though I was mad at the old man, just as I got



mad at the psychiatrists, I wouldn't lift a finger against either of them. Only an idiot would do something impulsive like kicking the old man's bucket over and punching him in the face. That just gets you thrown back in jail. The only time I ever did something like that was when I beat Irene up. I regretted it afterwards. Not that I regretted teaching that whore a lesson—but I should have done it in a way that didn't bring me such trouble.

Two weeks later, the old man was burning bits of paper in the alley again. I closed all the windows, but somehow the ashes kept getting in. It's not as though the apartment was otherwise comfortable; there were termites, roaches and fleas everywhere, the tap water was yellow with rust, and the whole house shook when the trains rumbled past. So the old man's insane paper-burning was just the last straw. In years of drifting in and out of prison, I'd never lived anywhere like this. The state penitentiary was a five-star hotel in comparison to this shithole.

It took me a month, but finally I found a new apartment. It was also downtown in an equally dodgy neighbourhood, but I made sure there were no stupid Chinese people in the building. I would rather hob nob with drug dealers than another Mr A. It cost a little more than I could afford, but I figured it was worth it.

I'd already paid three months' rent in advance, so I couldn't move right away. I tried explaining to the landlord, but even though he had no problem with my moving out, he insisted that there was no way he'd return the prepaid rent.

'It's a contract, you know what that means? Like, C-O-N-T-R-A-C-T. You signed it, now you got to live by it. I'll give you back the deposit within 14 days, like the law requires, but if you move out before three months are up, you're not seeing a penny of that rent.'

There were plenty of empty rooms in the new apartment block I found, so I wasn't worried

about being stuck without a place in two months' time, and the rent didn't look as though it would go up. All I had to do was survive another forty-odd days of Mr A: forty days of stinky cooking, smoke, and Mr A's ugly face.

I thought I'd be able to stick it out by spending most of my nights and weekends at the bar, but then something happened Mr A had warned me about.

It was one of those crazy Chinese holidays that call for extra rituals.

Now Mr A started burning incense every day, and also did his ridiculous paper-burning ceremony every three or four. One day, when I glanced out of the window, I saw the ash-flecked buns next to his red bucket had been joined by some bottles of wine, a plate heaped with oranges, and a whole roast chicken. The old man was placidly feeding pieces of paper into the iron bucket one at a time, while he mumbled something under his breath. He reminded me of a Haitian voodoo priest. I hoped the chicken wasn't going to come alive.

The smoke made me cough out loud. Just as I was about to wash my face in the bathroom, a couple of roaches emerged from the pipe and scuttled across my basin. Furious, I reached for the showerhead to spray them with water, but they made a nimble exit, mocking me just as Mr A had.

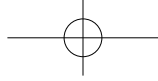
I'd had enough.

The following day after work, I stopped by a hardware store in the city. 'I need pesticide,' I said to the man behind the counter in the household products section.

'What kind of insects?' he said.

'Fleas, roaches, termites, you know.'

He turned and took a bottle of insecticide off the shelf. It was a little taller than a beer bottle. 'No, not this kind, I want the kind that comes in gallon tubs with a spray nozzle.' The man looked surprised, but didn't say anything and instead walked into the room behind the counter before returning with two plastic buckets with a hose



and spray nozzle.

'Are these the only two kinds you have?' I asked. The man frowned, as if annoyed that I was being so picky, but he went and got two more. I read and compared the labels carefully, and found the symbol I was looking for on one of the buckets.

'I'll take this one,' I said, taking out my wallet.

'This one's only good for roaches, sir. If you're dealing with termites and fleas as well, I suggest the blue bucket,' the man said. 'And it's cheaper too.'

'No, this is the one I want.' I stared hard at the man, daring him to disagree with me. He seemed to have given up on arguing with me. He took the cash, gave me a receipt and change, and handed me a square plastic bucket full of pesticide.

Another thought occurred to me. 'Do you guys have superglue?' I asked, figuring a hardware store would stock glue.

I passed by the alley on my way home from the store. It looked as though the old man had done another ceremony while I was at work. The ground was covered with ash and half-burnt pieces of paper. I picked up a few of them. In the dim glow of the streetlight, I could just about make out some red design and Chinese words on the yellowing paper. I asked someone about the paper, and they said it was paper money that the Chinese traditionally burn for their gods and ancestors, so those words must have been either words of blessing or the value of the money.

Just as I reached for my key to open the door to my apartment, I heard the old man humming a tune. He was always listening to Chinese music really loud. Chinese noise I liked to call it. It was all clanging drums and cymbals that barely deserved to be called music. Every time the old man went downstairs to burn incense in the alley, he left his door unlocked. On a couple of occasions, I'd been tempted to just walk in and destroy the stereo system, but of course I didn't.

Like I said, I'm not an impulsive man.

Back in my apartment, I tossed the pesticide aside and took a ready meal out of the freezer. I put it in the microwave, opened a can of beer, and took my phone out. I connected it to the TV and turned the TV on, putting my earphones in so I could blast out the old man's noise. Just to de-stress.

For days after that, I did nothing after work but think about the best and most effective way of using the pesticide. The roaches were still mocking me just as Mr A always did, smirking in their dark corners. 'Smirk away, your days are numbered,' I told them.

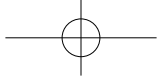
On Saturday around noon, I read the instructions, put on my mask and began spraying the pesticide all over my apartment. I had enough spray to do every corner several times, if anyone had seen me right then, they would have thought I'd gone mad. I sprayed a full two gallons of pesticide around my apartment, on the walls, the ceiling, under the bed... I didn't leave a single nook or cranny out. The instructions said that the bucket contained enough pesticide for a three-storey building, but I knew two gallons was barely enough for my purposes. While I was spraying, I could see the roaches scurrying away in fright. I couldn't help smiling under my gas mask, despite the smell.

I closed the door and left the building. I ran into the old man burning incense in the alley. 'Mr Fag! Where are you going?' Mr A smiled at me, but his eyes were unsmiling.

'Off to the bar for a drink,' I said without stopping as I walked by.

'Oh really, so early?'

'I just sprayed pesticide in my room and can't stay in it,' I said, waving my hand at the old man. I got into my battered old truck, drove to the bar, and ordered a beer. But all I could think about was, had it worked?



KORA

轉山

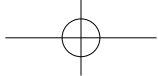


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HSIEH
WANG-LING
謝旺霖

- Category: Non-fiction
 - Publisher: Yuan-Liou
 - Date: 2008/8
 - Rights contact:
Jennifer Wang (Yuan-Liou)
jenny@ylib.com
 - Pages: 304pp
 - Length: 114,000 characters
(approx. 74,000 words in
English)
-

Hsieh Wang-Ling had taken his family's advice and enrolled in politics and law at university when he received a grant to allow him to ride through Yunnan and Tibet. Having faced such a perilous journey and survived, he decided upon his return to pursue his dream and become a writer, while studying for his PhD at the Institute of Taiwanese Literature at National Chengchi University.

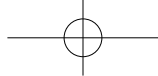


- * Over 100,000 copies sold in Taiwan!
- * Nominated for the 2009 Taipei Book Fair Award
- * One of Kingstone Bookstore's Most Influential Books of the Year 2008
- * Second in Eslite Bookstore's Chinese Literature of the Year 2008

The first time Hsieh Wang-Ling went travelling was the summer after his third year of university. Having gone through a recent break up, he was in search of a place 'empty of memories,' and so started on a journey through China, from Urumqi to Tibet and back down the Yangtze River through Three Gorges. But instead of erasing the memories, he found that travelling was a means to forgetting oneself. This was the beginning of what would become his Kora, the ritual of circling sacred mountains made by Tibetans in order to renounce their desires and sins, a pilgrimage of prayer to others.

Upon graduation, Hsieh saw an announcement for a travel grant set up by writer and internationally renowned choreographer Lin Hwai-Min, founder of Cloud Gate Theater. He made a quick application for money to cycle from Yunnan to Lhasa, never imagining that he would be successful. Now he had only one month to train before he was to set out on a two month journey that would leave his nearest and dearest worried for his safety. In fact, the two-thousand kilometre route was notorious for its difficulties, and every expert he consulted advised him to abandon the plan. Dog attacks, altitude sickness, snow storms, he experienced them all, and even got lost along the way for a while. But with some of the most breathtaking, and challenging, roads anywhere in the world, this is one of the finest coming-of-age stories to have come out of Taiwan in recent years.

Adapted for the big screen in 2011 as *One Mile Above* by director Du Jiyi, it won Best Artistic Contribution at the Tokyo International Film Festival that year.



KORA

By Hsieh Wang-Ling. Translated by Nadia Chung.

Sky Burial at Drigung Thil

If you go upstream for about sixty kilometres northeast through the Shorongchu valley in Medro Gongkar county, you will see Drigung Thil Monastery nestled on a ridge steep in the hills. It is said that there is a sky burial charnel ground, or *durtro*, here that compares in fame to the Sitavana grounds in India.

When you ask locals from Menba village down in the foothills about ascending the mountain, curious people crowd around you and stick their heads out, but no one actually pays you any mind unless you hire someone to lead you there. You have no choice but to go and find your own way. There seems to be a hidden path behind the village.

You try climbing for a while, then look back nervously and spy a woman with a bamboo basket on her back who happens to be walking below. Noticing your hesitation, she raises her hand and points up with a finger. You nod in acknowledgement, and overcome your uncertainty.

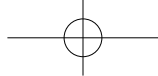
The sunbeams are held tightly behind the thick cloud cover, with only a flash of faint light managing to escape dejectedly here and there. The surrounding mountains are blanketed with pure white snow; only the lone hill on which the Drigung Thil Monastery is situated is free of white specks.

Taking your steps with full concentration, you pull yourself up with your hands against

bare rock, and are winded halfway up the hill. When you look up, Drigung Thil Monastery seems only a foot away, yet you just can't reach it, no matter how hard you try. It is as though this is a passage to the heavens, over which the *Mamsa Dakini* has set up myriad barriers allowing only people who have received the *dharma* to arrive at their destination.

Suddenly, someone clothed in maroon robes comes swiftly down the winding path, and before you know it a corpulent lama is standing on a huge rock above you, bending down to extend you a brawny arm. You let him pull you up and you end up standing next to him, pallid and out of breath. He holds your ice-cold hands quietly (gushing forth warmth), pats you on the back of your neck and flicks your forehead with his fingers. You don't pull back or feel any displeasure; instead, a strange delirium spreads across your brain. By the time you return to your senses and prepare to thank the portly lama, he is already one step ahead of you, near the bottom of the hill. Gusts of wind weave sharply in and out overhead. A river of sweat flows relentlessly down from your forehead toward your ears. You hear what might be the repeated swishing of the monk's wide sleeves, but you can't be sure from which direction it comes.

Finally stepping into the monastery, your nostrils are assaulted by the pungent odor of feces and urine, burying all the solemnity accrued in your imagination along the way deep in the latrine pits. The entrance is located



directly opposite the steps that lead up to the monastery. The main temple of the monastery is just metres to the side of the stairs. You decide to take a break and sit down on the steps in front of the temple, then nibble on some hard biscuits you brought with you. A few hunchbacked Tibetans spinning *mani* prayer wheels walk by, as do some red-robed lamas, and a stray dog paces back and forth in front of you a couple times, treating you as if you were air. All is so detached and desolate. An indifferent atmosphere prevails at Drigung Thil, but this is the place Tibetans long for as the final refuge of their soul.

When you register for your overnight stay, horns and conches begin to sound in the Tashi Gomang Hall, and the lamas outside don tall crescent-shaped fringed hats. I hear that they are preparing to hold the death recommendation ceremony, called *powwa*, in the chanting hall. This ceremony must be presided over by a senior monk who recites a prayer to help the deceased cross over to the other side. Then ha, ha, ha... Seven breaths are blown on the head of the deceased, to help the soul escape the body through the crown of the head and direct it to the states of heaven, humanity and *asura* (the three good or upward directions or states of existence). The body, having now attained the dharma through this ceremony, will be taken to the *durtro* the next morning.

*

The temperature early in the morning is still ten degrees below zero Celsius, and the frigid, dry air cuts like a razorblade. Darkness and mist enshroud everything around you. Wearing a dim helmet lamp, you trail quite a distance behind a team of Tibetans who now turn onto an inconspicuous trail on the right hand side of Tashi Gomang Hall. The leader is holding incense, followed by someone carrying a heavy coiled bag. That, most likely, is what will be

playing the lead role in the ceremony soon to take place.

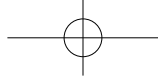
As you walk, you suddenly feel as though your lips are being torn open, which shakes you from your drowsiness. You extend your neck and try to take in air in spite of the bloody stench it contains. There are triangular *mani* prayer stone piles along the way, as if to calm the passersby, or offer them spiritual guidance.

With the increase in torn pieces of cloth, hair and paper money scattered in the thorny shrubs, faint shadows of gods start to appear among the rocks on the steep hill—Sakyamuni, Padmasambhava, White Tara, Green Tara, Vairocana—but it seems as though none of them is able to protect you. You keep tripping over the scraggly thorns, many times falling behind the funeral procession which is about to vanish into the black veil of night. You are almost tempted to cry out, opening and closing your eyes over and over again, wishing that this were only a dream you had after awaking from another dream.

But it is all so vivid—the heartbeat, the breathing, and the teeth chattering uncontrollably in the cold. ‘Don’t disturb the deceased from his rest.’ You walk to the railing of the *durtro* and do not dare go any further, remembering the warnings of the locals: unless you have the explicit consent of the *rogyapa* or family of the deceased, you are best advised to stay away from the *durtro*. The family sometimes throw rocks at bystanders to chase them away.

As soon as the corpse bearer sets down the bag on his shoulder, he catches sight of you standing on the other side of a metal guardrail. Suddenly every person in the *durtro* shifts their gaze in your direction, staring at you blankly. You stand, stoically, not daring to look up for a long time, until they all finally begin to busy themselves with their duties in the ceremony.

Will flocks of vultures really descend upon the grounds of the sky burial site? Perhaps it’s a coincidence, or maybe it’s the product of some



mysterious cosmic arrangement. You scan the hills around carefully for movement, and it doesn't seem likely that vultures will appear. You only spy a few crows circling in the dark sky. You wonder whether the Tibetans have confused crows for vultures.

You hear people chanting mantras. When the crossover prayers are finished, the head *rogyapa* immediately tosses three meat and three vegetarian dishes into the pile of juniper incense, mixes in some *tsampa*, or roasted barley flour, and lights the pile. A translucent lazy snake of white smoke billows up, then gradually dissipates and mixes into the air you are breathing. The ceremony unfolding before you feels like nothing more than a strongly-scented sleep.

All of earth and heaven still seem to be waiting for something to happen. Streamers in five colours flutter in the wind. Suddenly, there is a violent uproar above. Vultures with wingspans of six or seven feet emerge from every corner of the hills as though in ambush, soaring into the indigo sky and circling overhead, causing the once silent crows to shriek.

The vultures alight one after another, lining up behind the *rogyapa*, their brownish-gray feathers tilting down slowly like falling snow. Your eyelids quiver to the beat of the strong-bodied vultures' wing flapping. The Tibetans there only display subtle expressions of satisfaction.

The red-robed *rogyapa* holds a hook in his left hand and a silver blade in his right. Light suddenly flashes up from near his feet, causing the dew on the moist grass tips to reflect back an exuberant yellow. It is as though he and he alone stands on the boundary between life and death. He is God's chosen one.

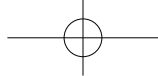
Hundreds of vultures, separated from the site by only a thin string, flap their wings impatiently. Two assistants standing near the *rogyapa* advance and open the shroud. You can't even tell if the face is warm and friendly or a serious one. Then the body, curled up like a fetus, is suddenly plopped

onto the stone *durtro*. According to Tibetan beliefs, this curled-up position, which resembles the baby in its mother's womb, symbolises a return to the beginning of life. The two fists are meekly clenched under the cheeks to express the will to be born again as a human in the next life.

When the corpse is properly positioned, with its back to the sky, the shrieking of the vultures begins to reverberate through the mountains, awakening the entire Shorongchu valley. The blade makes its first incision on the back of the neck, and the hook is stuck into the dry, withered flesh of the corpse. The blade then glides down the arm and slips along the midline of the thighs, slitting them open, one cut at a time. These incisions are in fact believed to bring the deceased back to life. The cut into the abdomen is especially deep; the viscera spilling helplessly onto the ground as the blade is pulled out. The entire burden of an intact human body is relinquished in an instant, regardless of gender, age, rank or worldly wealth, through the adept hands of the *rogyapa*.

The sky master steps back in a bent-over position. When the string falls from the grip of those holding it, the *rogyapa* calls out: 'Yi-ah, yi-ah!' Vultures stride across the boundary, then bite, tear, and devour every inch of the white corpse's opaque flesh. This ravaging of the corpse, beakful by beakful, is in fact believed to bring the deceased back to life. The birds clutch the hair attached to the body and skin, the pieces of bloody flesh, and the creaking skeleton, clawing at the body, pecking and gnawing. They flicker wildly against the dawning sky like black flames trying to set alight the corpse, a body that longs to fly but can't.

Waves of a bloody stench waft further afield by the flapping of the fervent vultures, and you try to endure the acid churning in your stomach. When you raise your head up again, the corpse has been transformed into a pile of blood-stained white bones.



The *rogyapa* walks to the centre of the *durtro* like a raging red fire, driving away the vultures that are not yet sated. His two assistants deftly lay the skeleton, still covered with a thin layer of flesh, onto the stone *durtro* and smash it to bits with a stone mallet, using all their might. 'Add some roasted barley flour and stir it up.' With a single blow the skull is crushed, with pieces flying in all directions. Eyeballs bounce out. The pounding and grinding of the mallet clanks over and over again. This pounding and grinding is in fact meant to bring the deceased back to life. After the bones are turned into powder, they are mixed with some roasted barley flour and swept into a heap together with the puddle of blood on the ground, in hopes that the vultures will finish it all off in one go.

This thorough elimination of the dead body not only represents the purity (purity in life, purity in death) of the body; the reputation of the sky burial *durtro* is also at stake—if the vultures, who serve as envoys for heaven and the human world consume all of the remains, the deceased will have nothing to hold him back, and nothing to stay attached to. But if these celestial vultures don't finish off the corpse, the *rogyapa* must, in order to avoid the perception of a bad omen, burn more offerings and pray harder for the birds to continue their feast.

The vultures know that this is not their prey, nor a sacrifice, but an ancient promise of the Tibetans to return to God and to nature their due. Finally, only a small pool of blood and some hairs remain on the clearing. The gorged vultures drag their claws and sway from side to side in the centre of the grounds, while other vultures circle above with their wings spread, coveting more. The taste of blood permeates the air, infiltrates and lingers in your memory, seeping into every single one of your pores.

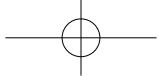
A life came into being and now returns to nothingness. The thought stings the flesh. Is this all real? Is it an illusion, or is it real pain that you

feel after witnessing what happens here? But the dead certainly don't feel any pain—it's just your imagination. You still cling to your physical body and to life. But something inside is quietly melting, and you feel a gush of warmth, a gush that death has given you. They run on grasslands, serve yak butter tea in tents, kowtow in front of temples, then return here—to die.

The omnipresent Buddhists have a saying: 'May the speech of the common man not hinder the flight of holy blessings. With full compassion for the keeping of the *dharma*, may the gaze of all readers receptive to the *dharma* maintain due solemnity. Your lips are warm. Do not let the sounds you blurt out disturb the silence of the transient *samsara*.'

Om mani padme hum, the transient *samsara*. Isn't anyone supposed to feel sad when this ceremony concludes? How should we mourn the lingering soul? Perhaps to Tibetans, death does not mark the end of life, so much as the beginning of a new one, and that is why they can let go of the body after death with such detachment and reenter the cycle of nature, a thorough implementation of the spirit of giving up your body as alms.

Ashes to ashes, and dust to dust. People who receive a sky burial return to the sky, where they may soar. Everything is interconnected—from visible to invisible, from life to death, from broken to whole.



PRINCESS SNIVELS

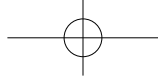
愛哭公主



LAI MA 賴馬

- Category: Picture Book
 - Publisher: Commonwealth Education
 - Date: 2014/7
 - Rights contact:
Liao Pei-Ying
(CommonWealth Education)
peiyingl@cw.com.tw
 - Pages: 44pp
 - Size: 25x26cm
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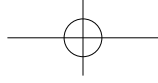
Lai Ma published his first book, *I've Turned into a Dragon!* at the age of twenty-seven to much critical acclaim. He has devoted himself since to his writing and illustrations. He has won almost every major prize for children's literature in Taiwan, and has had three books take the top spot on the Eslite yearly bestseller list for picture books. He and his wife run a picture book gallery in Taitung, putting on regular events to excite the imaginations of children from all over the island.



* Over 40,000 copies sold in Taiwan!

Princess Amy is a good kid. The only problem is, she's always crying. The smallest thing will set her off. This is why everyone calls her Princess Snivels. And when she cries, boy does she cry. She can cry the roof off! The King and Queen decide to organise a Pink Party for her birthday. The finest chefs have prepared the food, all pink naturally. The decorations are up and everyone has arrived. All is going well. That is, until Princess Snivels spots a yellow balloon that shouldn't be there... Princess Snivels must learn to control her crying. But how?

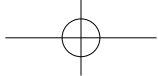
Princess Snivels originally started out as a bedtime story author Lai Ma and his wife used to tell their children in order to get them to settle for the night. Known for their storytelling games, this family creation has been brought to life with Lai Ma's colourful and lively illustrations.



Yeah, I once ate from her basket of fruit by mistake. Boy, did she cry.



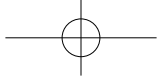
Yeah, last time I went to the park, we were wearing the same outfit. Boy, did she cry.



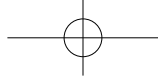
Yesterday, when I was riding my bike, I rode through a puddle and splashed her clothes. Boy, did she cry.



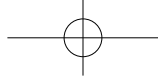
I know her too! I said she was a cry baby, and boy, did she cry.



Princess Amy is a really nice girl. But the problem is, she cries at the smallest things. That's why people call her Princess Snivels. Today, she cried all the way home.



'Baby, don't cry,' the Queen says, holding her tight as usual. 'It's your birthday in a few days,' she adds, 'and we'll invite all your friends to your Pink Party.'
'Okay,' Princess Snivels says, wiping her tears.



GRANNY'S FAVOURITE TOY

喀噠喀噠喀噠

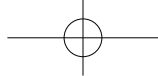


BEI LYNN

林小杯

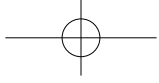
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- Category: Picture Book
 - Publisher: Artco Kids
 - Date: 2014/8
 - Rights contact:
Evelyn Ma (Artco Kids)
evelyn@artouch.com
 - Pages: 36pp
 - Size: 21 x 26 cm
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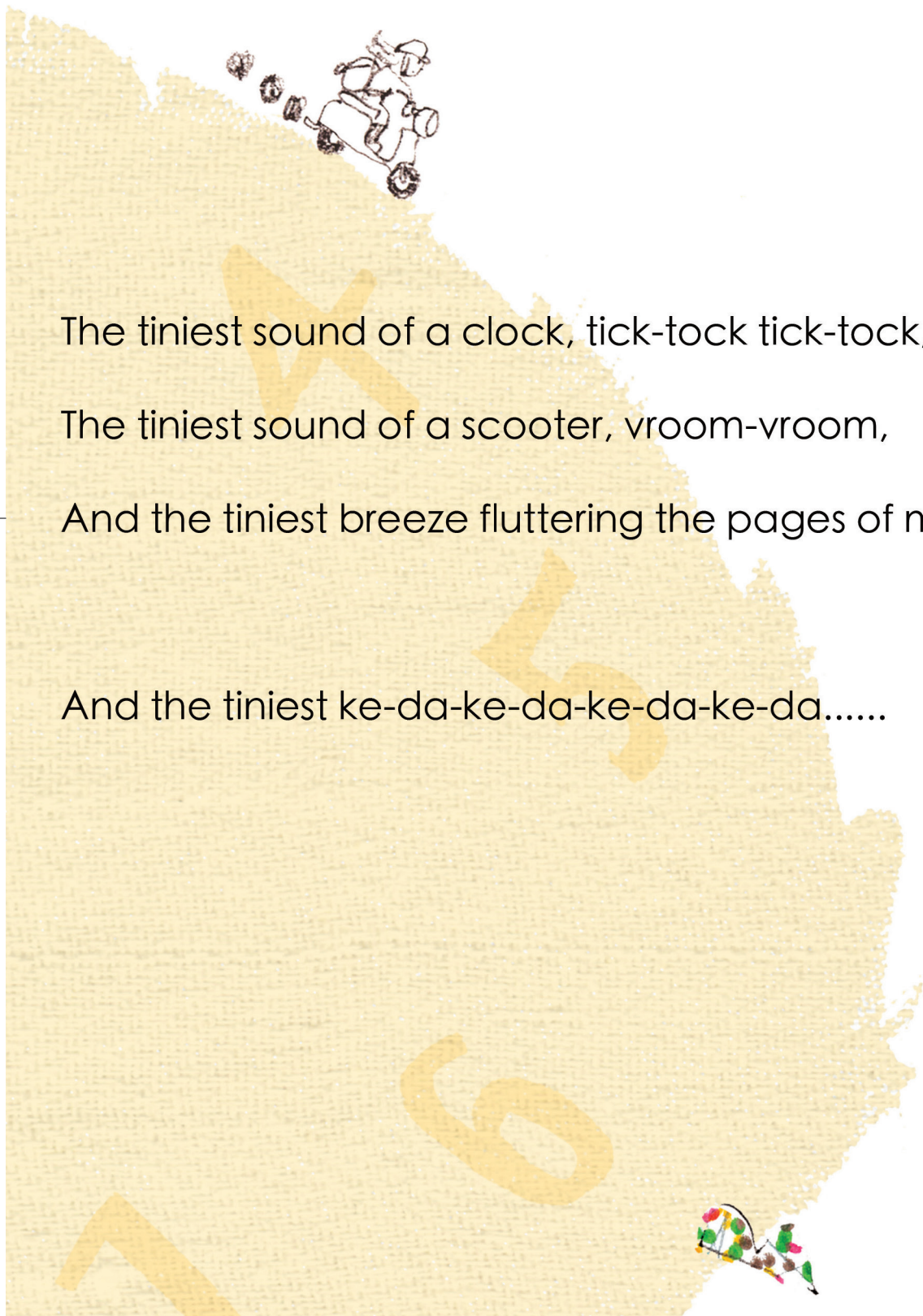
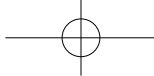
Bei Lynn published her first picture book, *To Be a Fish* in 1999, and has continued to write and draw picture books ever since, including *Gus the Dinosaur Bus*, *Granny's Favourite Toy*, *Moonlight Skating Rink*, *Everyone Slept a Hundred Years*, *I Guess I'll Put It Off until Tomorrow* and the most recent *Fei Fei and Her Notebooks* etc, winning her many prizes and a special recommendation at the Taiwan Pavilion at the Bologna Book Fair. Her illustrations use watercolour and pencil, with a mixture of hand drawn collage and computer techniques. Her books have been translated into English, French and Korean.



Where did she get her favourite blouse and bag? She didn't buy them, Granny made them. Granny takes all kinds of requests. Even a giant dinosaur bag. All because Granny has a wonderful, magical toy. A toy that makes a ke-da ke-da ke-da sound. But then one day, as Granny is helping her make a costume for a school performance, the machine breaks! How will Granny be able to complete such an important undertaking without her special toy? Will she make it onto the stage in time? And what strange things are about to happen to Granny's broken toy?

Written from the perspective of a young girl, *Granny's Favourite Toy* isn't just a story about a sewing machine, but a love across the generations and the everyday tenderness that exists between grandmother and granddaughter. Bei Lynn's drawings are fresh and yet somehow also nostalgic, offering both a child's eye view and an adult reminisce on days gone past.





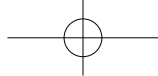
The tiniest sound of a clock, tick-tock tick-tock,

The tiniest sound of a scooter, vroom-vroom,

And the tiniest breeze fluttering the pages of my book.

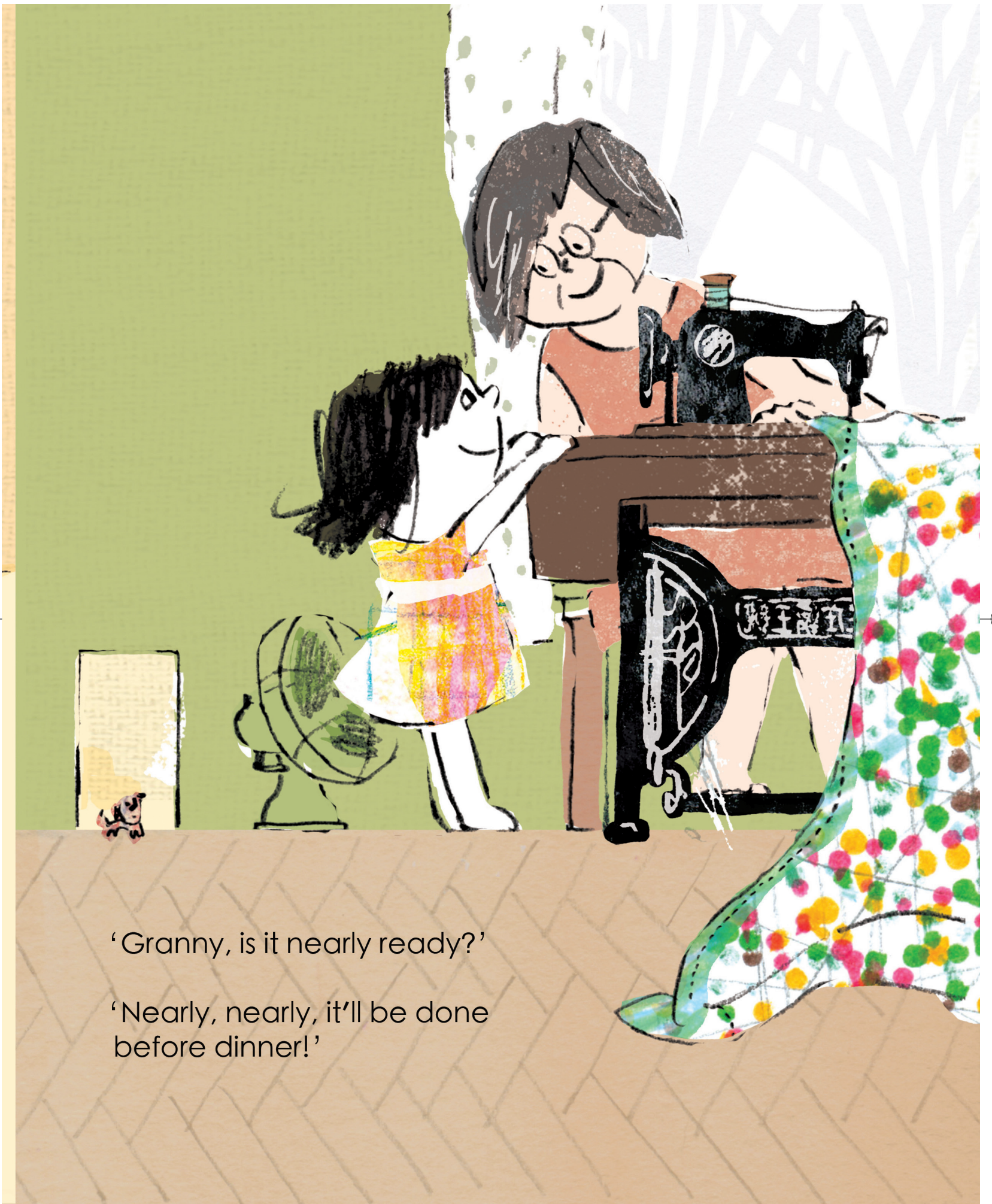
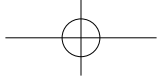
And the tiniest ke-da-ke-da-ke-da-ke-da.....





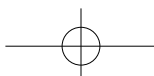
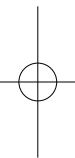
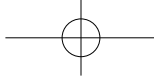
The sound of granny's favourite toy!

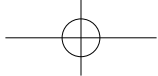




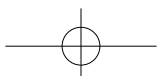
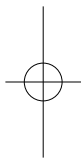
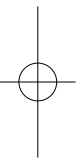
‘Granny, is it nearly ready?’

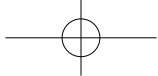
‘Nearly, nearly, it’ll be done
before dinner!’





BOOKS FROM TAIWAN
Backlist Highlights





DAUGHTERS OF HAMASEN

濱線女兒



WANG TSUNG-WEI

王聰威

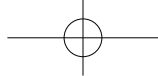
Wang Tsung-Wei graduated from National Taiwan University's Graduate Institute in Art History and now works as editor-in-chief for *Unitas* magazine. He has previously worked as editor on magazines such as *Marie Claire* and *FHM*. Awards include China Times Open Book Award, special selections at the Frankfurt and Taipei international book fairs, and nominations for the Taiwan Literary Award and the Golden Tripod for best editor. Previous publications include *Like an Editor*, *The Life of a Writer*, *Love Once Flew Past*.



Hamasen: a strip of land wrested from the ocean, the setting for this touching story of a young girl, as well as home to a way of life that is rapidly disappearing.

Together we follow the story of A-Giok, and a host of other interwoven characters, as the region's former glory had long since faded, leaving little for her but a tough childhood hard work. Against the backdrop of a changing Taiwan, yet where the past is never truly gone but always lingering in the present, we become witness to the young A-Giok's dreams and fears, her frailty and her strength. And yet hers is just one story among many, her fate mirrored in the experiences of all the other 'daughters of Hamasen.'

- Category: Literary Fiction
- Publisher: Unitas
- Date: 2008/4
- Rights contact: Victor Huang (Unitas), victor.huang@udngroup.com
- Pages: 304pp
- Length: 160,000 characters (approx. 104,000 words in English)



DAUGHTERS OF HAMASEN

By Wang Tsung-Wei. Translated by David van der Peet.

Clang, clang, clang! Ding, ding, ding! Through the window, A-Giok heard a metallic noise. Instantly, she was wide awake and her eyes wide open, as round as two little brass bells. The sound reverberated deep inside her skull like the crisp, hard beats of a gong. Even the puffs of air that wafted in through the cracks of the wooden window frame made her head hum with a continuous drone. The noise was close, too. It came from the little alley next right outside her window, so it only had to travel a short distance to reach her ears. And now, again, she seemed to hear—no, unlike the last few nights, this time she was *certain* she could hear—something else, above the clanking sound of metal and the whistling of the wind. She heard the voice of a person calling.

She didn't know what time it was, but it must be the middle of the night. So how could someone still be outside, calling out loud? Maybe it was a bunch of sailors just come ashore, now indulging in some drunken brawl. But no—the din, which sounded as if it was sucked in from afar through a straw, was too steady and methodical for that. With the clanking and the clattering came a solitary voice, calling out, '*Xiu dang, xiu tih, xiu in-a...* Old copper! Old iron! Ki-i-i-ds...'

The last syllable was drawn out long and slow.

Coming to her as if sucked through a straw, the sound of the voice wasn't too clear, but that's what she heard: 'Old copper! Old iron! Ki-i-i-ds...'

The voice kept dragging out that last syllable.

Then again, since the sounds were indistinct, the voice might have been shouting, '*Xiu dang, xiu tih, xiu siah...* Old copper! Old iron! Ti-i--i-in!'

Maybe it was precisely because the last syllable was drawn out so long, or maybe it was because the crier had a thick and clumsy

mainlander accent, but 'tin' and 'kids' sounded strangely alike.

'Collecting old copper! Old iron! Kids!'

'Sis...' the sound of her little brother's breathing, rapid yet weak, worked its way into her ears, drawing her attention away from all the noise outside.

He was always sleeping under the thickest quilt they had, but he got too hot in the night, and so he was forever kicking it away. In the winter all it took was one draft of cold air to make his asthma flare up.

Now, with half his body exposed to the night air, his face had turned a pallid blue so that in the moonlight he looked like the stereotypical pale-faced scholar from a traditional puppet show. How long had he been lying there, panting and gasping for air? She'd completely failed to notice, leaving him to his lonely struggle.

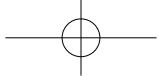
What on earth was wrong with her today? It was as if her whole heart and mind had been snatched away by that voice outside the window. She knew she should have paid better attention to her little brother. Normally, if he as much as turned over in his sleep, she'd be instantly aware of it, no matter how soundly she might be sleeping herself.

A-Giok got off the bed in a hurry and went to fetch Mother.

Rushing into the room, Mother picked up Little Brother and held him close.

He continued to call, 'Sis, Sis.'

'It's OK,' Mother was rubbing Kimsi Ointment on his chest. 'Be a good boy now, take slow breaths, slow breaths.'



SNAPSHOTS OF A SMALL TOWN

小鎮生活指南

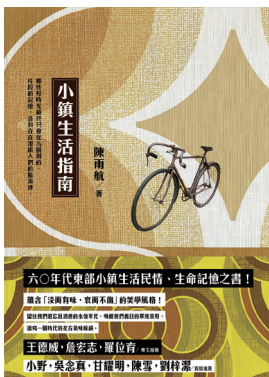


©Pei Yuan Chen

CHEN YU-HANG

陳雨航

Chen Yu-Hang lives in Kaohsiung. He was born in Hualian in 1949 and earned a bachelor's degree in history from National Taiwan Normal University and a master's degree from the Graduate Institute of Arts at Chinese Culture University. He is an experienced editor for newspapers, magazines and publishers. Chen began writing in the 1970s, and has published two collections of short stories, *Run Away* and *The Invincible Constable*. *Snapshots of a Small Town* is his first novel.

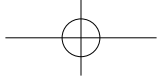


High school teacher Yu Mao-Hsiung is making his return back to the town where he grew up, having spent the last few years in Taipei. But this is not your average Taiwanese small town. No, it's populated by migrant farmers, demoted officials, failed businessmen, deployed army men. No one is local, everyone is looking for a new chance.

High school students facing their futures, a bullied middle schooler, an exhausted teacher retreating from the city, a pair of hardworking, intelligent sisters, a photographer in search of meaning, a sergeant facing the twilight of his years, a doctor, a shepherd, a journalist... They all appear to be getting on with their quiet lives, but underneath the surface, they each carry the scars of thwarted expectation.

As if flipping through a photo album, their stories flow on from each other, creating a rich and moving picture of small town life. These are not people with big and dramatic things to tell, but collectively, they remind us of the beauty in the everyday.

- Category: Literary Fiction
- Publisher: Rye Field
- Date: 2012/7
- Rights contact: Candy Lin (Rye Field), candy_lin@cph.com.tw
- Pages: 384pp
- Length: 160,000 characters (approx. 100,000 words in English)



SNAPSHOTS OF A SMALL TOWN

By Chen Yu-Hang. Translated by Riccardo Moratto.

Two Beauties

Sun Yi-Hui had been recruited by Peng Ching-Ping from the Credit Cooperative Bank. Actually, 'recruited' wasn't the right word. Chenggang Photo Studio had had an account with the bank for many years, where Peng Ching-Ping would often go to make deposits and withdrawals. By the time Sun Yi-Hui graduated from business school and started working there, she had made a very good impression on him. Making deposits was supposed to be his wife's work, but it was his idea to approach Sun Yi-Hui when some of his friends, interested in photography, were searching someone resembling a model.

Peng Ching-Ping wasn't the only person who noticed Sun Yi-Hui, almost every single client going in and out of the bank saw her beauty. Only the people who didn't know her would inquire as to where the pretty girl was from; the others didn't need to ask.

At first the beautiful girl kept herself to her relatives and friends, an innocent and artless child; thanks to her mother's meticulous care she would always be appropriately dressed. But once she was slightly older, during her school years, she became determined to be noticed by her peers, especially the boys. As the boys moved up through school, her reputation followed, blossoming like a splodge of watercolour on a piece of paper.

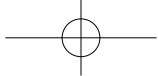
This would give her a long life. How long? That didn't matter. She would live until the boys grew into men and shifted their attentions towards the burdensome, the complicated aspects of their existence, or until their youth had gone. Memories of her faded. Except for in

the minds of a few, who clung to the thoughts of her until their dying breath.

When Sun Yi-Hui was still a little girl, she had already attracted the eyes of the neighbouring boys, as well as those in her class. Those childhood crushes gave her lots of little gifts: an eraser, a small bag of sugar-coated yeast balls, a piece of cinnamon bark wrapped in red paper, a section of a licorice root, a home-cultivated lemon and so forth. Or sometimes it was an offer to do her classroom cleaning duties... Often, these good intentions were expressed in a covert fashion, at other times, for fear of being derided by those around them, they would appear in the form of a prank, thus violating the original intention.

By the time she graduated from elementary school, Sun Yi-Hui's striking looks were already apparent. In middle school, love letters would often pop up in the letter box at home, or were directly placed in her hands. She would open them and read them, fold them and insert them back in their light blue Western envelopes. Sometimes, they carried a trace of scent. Sometimes she nodded in approbation, sharing them with her sister Yi-Rong, sometimes she found herself laughing at the preposterousness. But she had to admit, the boys had taken great care in writing those letters. In them, they had poured all their energy.

After stealing a glance at the last few letters, Sun Yi-Hui concealed them in the depths of her school desk, never to reply. By the time she reached high school there had been one or two boys that had not displeased her, she had even read their letters with a feeling of pleasure. Maybe because she was afraid to miss out on the fantasy she had created in her mind.



MY GIRLS: TO ALL THE ONES I HURT ALONG THE WAY

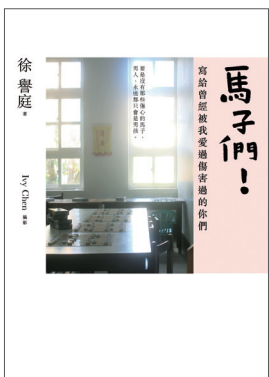
馬子們



MAG HSU

徐譽庭

Mag Hsu has previously directed plays and managed a theatre company, but now she prefers to write screenplays and novels instead. She won the 2012 Golden Bell Award for best screenplay, and set up the Dear Studio production company the same year. *My Girls: To All the Ones I Hurt Along the Way* was adapted into a comic and serialised by a Japanese magazine. Her most famous screenplays include the TV dramas *Story in Time*, *Apple in Your Eye* and *In Time with You*.

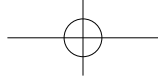


This book is a confession, a letter written by the twenty-nine-year-old Chang Chia-He to all the women he has loved or who loved him in the past.

Miss Hermès was a warm and gentle embrace. Ugly Betty had a beautiful inner soul, but still, he turned her down, cruelly. Tsukushi was the one who got away, the one who would sear herself on his heart forever, but she had so many responsibilities at home and he felt neglected. Sam-Soon, now she taught him how to be a man. A good man...

To all these girls, Chia-He wants to say: Thank you. Thank you for making me the man I am today.

- Category: Commercial Fiction
- Publisher: Titan
- Date: 2011/12
- Rights contact: Elaine Chuang (Titan), elaine@morningstar.com.tw
- Pages: 208pp
- Length: 82,000 characters (approx. 55,000 words in English)
- Comic rights sold: Japan (Kodansha); USA (Kodansha USA Publishing)



MY GIRLS: TO ALL THE ONES I HURT ALONG THE WAY

By Mag Hsu. Translated by Riccardo Moratto.

My First Crush: Miss Hermès

My first girl appeared on the stage of my life when I was in my fourth grade. Her name was Hermès.

Her hair was long to her waist, undulating like the sea. No matter how hot it was, she always left her hair loose, falling like surging waves down her back. She wore a blouse and a knee-length skirt. They were coloured blouses, with pointed collars, round necks, or decorated with frills... She never wore the same thing twice. She also wore pleated skirts which matched her shirts. Sometimes the pleats were thin, at other times they were wide, or neither one nor the other; all the same, I never saw a single crease out of place. Around her slender neck she would wear a glittering necklace with a shiny diamond or a flying butterfly or a flower; or she would wear a knotted silk scarf, which at times she also wore as a headscarf. But what really made people want to be on intimate terms with her was her superbly elegant scent, a feminine and sweet perfume. My classmate Zheng Da-Ching, who sat right behind me, called her 'The Scented Princess.' The girls in the class mocked him for being so whimsical, but soon they started to wear silk headscarves as well.

Hermès was the daughter of our dean, and one day she happened to become our substitute teacher because our own teacher, 'Stinky Witch,' was on maternity leave since she had just given birth to 'Stinky Duck's Egg.'

In the beginning I didn't like Hermès at all, because she would always call me 'Little Cutie.'

Was it because I was short? Or because my skin was so white, never tanning in the slightest? Or because in class I was always so nervous that I could never utter a single word? I don't know, because I never got to ask her. For a boy to be called 'Little Cutie' was like a slap in the face, but still Hermès would say to me, 'Little Cutie, come to my office after class okey-dokey?', 'What's wrong, Little Cutie?', 'Hey, Little Cutie, you got a problem?' Those little nicknames uttered in an alluring tone of voice were utterly confusing to me, and so charming. They overrode my intelligence and self-respect, and most of all, earned my love.

I tried to resist it with all my strength, and with the not-so strong intellect of a fourth-grader. It seemed as if Miss Hermès was completely aware of it. So one day when I deliberately spilled the milk that Miss Hermès had given me, I was summoned again to her:

'Do you like me, Little Cutie?'

Resolute, I stayed silent.

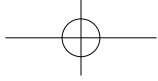
'Well, maybe you hate me, Little Cutie?'

Still I kept quiet.

'So, that's it, you really don't like me at all, Little Cutie...'

I didn't utter a syllable, and Miss Hermès didn't say anything else. Standing next to her I looked into her sad face. Something as glittering as the diamond hung on her neck started to sparkle in her eyes. All of a sudden I blurted out two words.

'Yeah, right...'



LAST_YEAR@ALU.BAR

去年在阿魯吧



©Chien-Chung Chen

HO CHING-PIN

賀景濱

In Taiwanese literary circles, the name Ho Ching-Pin is synonymous with deep erudition and strange genius. He broke onto the literary scene in 1990, when he won the China Times Literary Award for ‘Story of Speed.’ Though not especially prolific, his stories never fail to explode like a bomb in the imagination. Self-styled as a ‘literary hacker,’ he is continuously attacking the image of the novel, breaking down and rewriting the programming that defines our understanding of literature. His unrestrained, often indulgent prose is a pleasure to read, and entertains just as it asks serious questions.



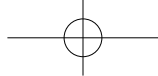
A bleak prophecy for the younger generation!

Our ‘real lives’ may be no more than computer constructs. No more authentic than science fiction, more fantasy than reality!

I must be drunk. I can see her silhouette glowing in the air bubbles rising from the bottom of my glass of Belgian beer. I went to prison for her, kidnapped a prostitute for her and even lent her my own ‘body.’ In return, all she’s given me is a memory chip, ironically called ‘love.’

A young man sits in a bar, drinking, chatting and flirting. Except that the bar exists only in virtual reality. This is a story of love and separation that will leave you smiling, even as it opens a hole in your heart for the cold wind to blow through.

- Category: Literary Fiction
- Publisher: Aquarius
- Date: 2011/9
- Rights contact: Laetitia Chien (Aquarius), yilin.chien@udngroup.com
- Pages: 304pp
- Length: 120,000 characters (approx. 80,000 words in English)



LAST_YEAR@ALU.BAR

By Ho Ching-Pin. Translated by Riccardo Moratto.

1. Where Should You Put Your Johnson?

When I entered, Headless was already sitting in a corner.

No. I should say: he had put his head in his left hand and was filling it with beer with his right.

'Hi,' I waved to him. I had to admit, the windbreaker he had on with the stand-up collar looked good, but the empty section at the neck still made him look weird.

'Hi.' He put the head on the bar and turned to me. He must have been using the 3.7 version of the VR digital toolkit, since he could separate his limbs and trunk...

I am a virtual citizen of the virtual city of Babylon. My user ID is AK47#%753\$@-TU, and my English handle is Leave Me Alone (LMA). My password is the same as everyone else's: * * * * * . Ever since I was born into my virtual life, I've come here every night to kill time.

Happy Hour at Alu Bar is eight to ten p.m. Buy one get one free!

But why is the happy hour at every bar so lonely?

It must still be early, I thought. Behind the bar, Jack the Bartender (JTB) spread his hands and asked me what I wanted. I spread my own hands, as if to say anything would do. A Belgian beer, St Feuillien, suddenly appeared before my eyes in the manufacturer's original flip-top stein. No one ever complains about the first drink JTB gives them. One look at your sobriety value when you walk into the bar is enough for him to know what you want.

I glanced down at the nametag on Headless' sleeve and discovered that his actual username was Out of Head (OOH).

'If your dick weren't where it usually is, would it be a good or a bad thing?' I sniffed my glass of beer and caught the scent of flowers.

'If it were on your hand, say, you could suck yourself off, but you could burn it when frying fish.'

'And what if it were under your armpit?'

'Then your balls would complain all the time.'

'How about on your back?'

'Then you couldn't jerk off. Sucks for you.'

'I guess there's no better place for it than where it is.' I drained the first glass of beer of the evening. So good.

OOH meditated on this for a while. 'If your dick had a will, would it be happy to stay in a place with no light?'

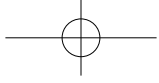
I took a moment to think. 'If your dick could put itself in front, it would probably evolve towards increasing size, and you wouldn't be able to find any cute little dicks anymore.'

'Why?'

I rapped on OOH's head. You moron. If your dick were visible to all, who would go after small ones to procreate with. 'Unless...'

'Unless the guy were wealthy. That would be the only way to ensure he could procreate,' added JTB, who had just come over to us.

'Exactly.'



WELCOME TO THE DOLLHOUSE

海邊的房間



SABRINA HUANG

黃麗群

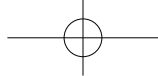
Sabrina Huang was born in Taipei in 1979, and holds a degree in Philosophy from National Chengchi University. Huang has received many literary awards for her short stories, including jury prizes from both *China Times* and *Unitas* and the top prize from Lin Rung-San Literary Award. Her works have also been selected in two *Chiu Ko* short story yearly anthologies. Among her publications are a short story collection, *Welcome to the Dollhouse*, and two works of prose. In 2012, she was named by *Unitas* as one of the 20 best Sinophone writers under 40.



Welcome to the Dollhouse draws together thirteen stories written between 2002 and 2012. Some of them have already won prizes. Reading them is like returning home to a familiar old lane, somewhere deep in the heart of the city. Huang's eyes are focused on the detail, the people who populate her fictional world, the doctor who makes his step-daughter sick and moves her to the sea so that she won't leave him; the fortune teller and the young child with cancer; and the person who waits by the traffic lights to see if the green man will fall down...

Huang's prose is clean, cold almost, with a sharp satirical edge. Her work often addresses the theme of alienation and focuses on those in the lower classes of society. She may not be a prolific writer, but her output never fails to impress, earning her a much-devoted fan base.

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- Category: Literary Fiction, Short Stories
 - Publisher: Unitas
 - Date: 2012/1
 - Rights contact: Victor Huang (Unitas), victor.huang@udngroup.com
 - Pages: 264pp
 - Length: 69,000 characters (approx. 45,000 words in English)



WELCOME TO THE DOLLHOUSE

By Sabrina Huang. Translated by Jeremy Tiang.

Cat Sickness

Her cat was sick? No, she knew that couldn't be. Her cat, her May Mee, had always been considerate, never given her any trouble, never required a trip to the vet. Of course, she'd noticed the nearby animal hospital she walked past every day, its illuminated sign decorated with cartoon animals, its glass doors and full-length windows revealing a spotless, gleaming space. One time, she watched as a young couple passed her on their motorbike. Only when they stopped did she realise the girl, riding pillion, was hugging a plastic carrier. The pair, all aiyah-don't-be-like-that-did-you-lock-it-hahaha pushed open the vet's door and jostled in. 'Animal Hospital.' The addition of that first word made it much less frightening. She'd often reminded herself to take down the phone number, just in case—but getting home she'd climb into bed, turn on the television, and forget about it.

But her May Mee was so sensible. She wasn't ill, just growing up. These few weeks, she'd watched the cat twitching her tail and groaning. Even when on heat she was never any trouble, never howling or calling out, only emitting little angry grunts, the tip of her tail flicking across her face and the backs of her ears, everything it touched seeming to bloom. She was a little worried—the stingy landlord had used wooden boards to divide up the rooms so this flat could be rented to six people, leaving just enough space for a bathroom, a balcony, and a cooking area (it wasn't even big enough to qualify as a kitchen). The other tenants were impossible to avoid, and as pets were forbidden, she was anxious it was only a matter of time before May Mee's presence was detected.

But in any case, she needed to seek out a vet. 'May Mee, May Mee,' she called softly, and the animal came over obediently, walking so sweetly, so heartbreakingly, to be by her side.

With one hand, he lifted May Mee's chin to examine her eyes, the other soothing her tail, telling her not to be afraid, he just wanted to look. May Mee lay down, her posture amicable, looking suddenly flirtatious. Her eyes never left his hands.

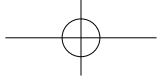
'Your—' he took the form she'd just filled in. 'My Mee—'

'May Mee,' she corrected him.

'May Mee. How old is she now?'

She still couldn't stop looking at his hands. The skin peeping out around the edges of his latex gloves was pale, just the colour you'd imagine a doctor's skin would be. 'I don't know. She was a foundling.'

(Oh, let me tell you, it was raining heavily that day, really heavily. I saw her creeping along the driveway, by the concrete wall, completely sodden and pitiful, water dripping from her fur into her eyes until she couldn't even open them. I can't leave my cashier's desk during business hours because customers might turn up wanting to park or drive away at any moment, so I tapped my pen against the aluminium door frame, calling her—'Mee Mee, come here, Mee Mee, come here, you'll be hit by a car if you stay over there.' And she understood! I'm not bluffing, she really understood. And just like that, she walked over to me.)



THE ILLUSIONIST ON THE SKYWALK

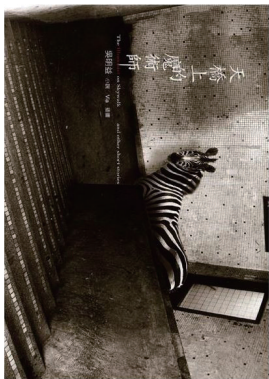
天橋上的魔術師



WU MING-YI

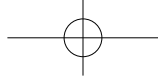
吳明益

Wu Ming-Yi is a writer, artist, professor, and environmental activist. Widely considered the leading writer of his generation, he has won the China Times Open Book Award five times and his works have been translated into nine languages. He teaches literature at National Dong Hwa University.



The Illusionist on the Skywalk is a collection of ten short stories that take place in the seventies at the famous Chunghua shopping centre in Taipei. The shopping centre consisted of eight buildings in a row. The illusionist and the skywalks connecting the buildings are prominent in these stories, with childhood memories of the shopping centre as a central theme. The protagonists, narrators and perspectives are all different in each of the stories, but personae that appear in one story sometimes appear in another as passers-by. Besides this, memories also create a continuity that makes it seem that the narrators have overlapping memories despite their different pasts. Spinning memories into stories becomes magic, and the narrator skilfully demonstrates his tricks in a marvellous illusion of disappearances, reappearances and invisibility. The last story sheds new light on the stories, making the reader want to re-read them again and again.

- Category: Literary Fiction, Short Stories
- Publisher: Summer Festival Press
- Date: 2011/11
- Rights contact: Gray Tan (The Grayhawk Agency)
grayhawk@grayhawk-agency.com
- Pages: 224pp
- Length: 85,000 characters (approx. 55,000 words in English)
- Rights sold: Japan (Hakusuisha)



THE ILLUSIONIST ON THE SKYWALK

By Wu Ming-Yi. Translated by Dave Haysom.

‘Business savvy just doesn’t run in the blood,’ my mum often says—a statement which contains a veiled criticism of me, and a hint of regret. But no such regret existed until after I turned ten years old, because up until then I was known to be quite the businessman.

My family ran a shoe shop. It would hardly have come across as very authentic, or persuasive, to have some kid addressing the customers with lines like ‘You look great in this pair,’ ‘That’s real leather,’ ‘I’ll make it a bit cheaper, just for you,’ ‘Gosh, I really can’t go any lower than that.’ But one year, my mum came up with an idea. You can go to the Skywalk, she said, and sell laces and insoles. People are bound to buy them if they see a kid like you. The innocent face of a child is one of life’s ways of tricking us into having the courage to carry on living—but this was something I only came to understand much later.

The market had eight buildings in all, named ‘Loyalty,’ ‘Filiality,’ ‘Benevolence,’ ‘Love,’ ‘Trust,’ ‘Justice,’ ‘Harmony,’ and ‘Peace.’ We lived between Love and Trust. There was a Skywalk between them, and another to Benevolence. I preferred the Skywalk between Love and Trust, because it was longer. The far end was in Ximending, and on the bridge itself there were peddlers selling everything: ice cream, children’s clothing, baked seed cakes, Wacoal brand underwear, goldfish, turtles—I even saw someone selling a kind of blue crab that we called water monks. The police sometimes came to harass the peddlers, but there were just too many routes down from the Skywalk—the peddlers often bundled up their stuff and nipped off to the toilet before returning. Never mind the fact that the police usually approached at a dawdle, as though they thought the peddlers were all suffering from gout and incapable of running away.

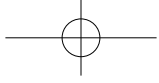
Early that morning my aunt took me up onto

the Skywalk, gave me a rice ball, and left. I tied the laces in pairs on the Skywalk railings, and as soon as the wind picked up they fluttered to and fro. I sat on the little stool my aunt had brought with her, and started lining up the insoles in pair of lefts and rights. I put the insoles that we called ‘noisy skins’ at the very front, because they were the most expensive—thirty bucks a pair. My mum said they were made from pigskin. They had a pungent kind of aroma, and if you layered several of them together, they produced this shuai-shuai-shuai noise when you walked around—hence the name. Wow—the skin of a dead pig could still make a noise!

Ha, I sure did love selling insoles on the Skywalk.

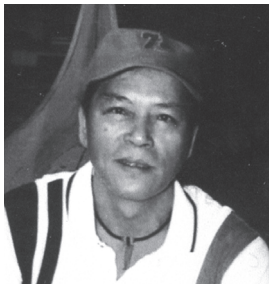
Opposite me was the stall of a man with greasy hair, a jacket with the collar turned up, grey trousers, and paratrooper boots that were neither zipped nor laced up. Paratrooper boots are the tall ones with lots of lace holes—doing up all the laces on boots so tall was the fiddliest thing in the world. Eventually someone had invented a zip that could replace the laces. I heard this was a dream come true for all the soldiers in Taiwan—from then on, every squaddie could get out of bed in the morning much more quickly. Back then we had at least ten squaddies coming in every day to buy zips for paratrooper boots. Maybe, I thought, I could get my mum to give me some paratrooper boot zips to sell tomorrow—business would definitely be good.

This man had drawn an arc on the ground in chalk, spread out a black cloth, and laid out his wares according to their type. At first I couldn’t tell what he was selling: there were playing cards, linked rings, strange notebooks... My aunt said he sold magic tricks. Wow—my stall was opposite a guy selling magic tricks!



BLACK WINGS

黑色的翅膀



©Pan Hsiao-Hsia

SYAMAN RAPONGAN

夏曼·藍波安

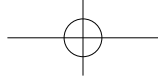
Born in 1957, Syaman Rapongan is a writer from the indigenous Tao tribe of Taiwan's Orchid Island, one of the country's remotest locations. After spending over ten years studying and working in Taipei, he returned in 1989 to his home and the sea he loved so much to rediscover his identity. The 1980s in Taiwan marked the start of public discussions on socioeconomic and political concerns, including aboriginal rights, and his mother challenged him to prove himself a man in the Tao sense by going diving and spear-fishing. Thus reconnected to his roots, he turned to writing about the world he had grown up in, expressing himself in a natural and simple style suggestive of his native Tao tongue. His books draw on materials from legends narrated by the tribal elders of his parents' generation. Syaman Rapongan's published works include *Black Wings*, *Memory of the Ocean Waves*, *The Face of a Sea Voyager*, and *Old Ama Divers*.

* Winner of the 1999 Wu Zhuoliu Literary Prize



Black Wings is a story about an island and the sea, and about the dreams and friendship of four Tao youths. As kids, they eagerly anticipate the adults' return from fishing, longing to begin their own voyage someday. Now the time has come. *Black Wings* is also a story about a clash of cultures between the Tao and the Han Chinese, about what to do with our childhood dreams when we really grow up, and most essentially, about how much knowledge the ocean can offer.

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- Category: Literary Fiction
 - Publisher: Linking
 - Date: 2009/8
 - Rights contact: Lee Shang-Yuan (Linking), linkingrights@udngroup.com
 - Pages: 280pp
 - Length: 70,000 characters (approx. 46,000 words in English)



BLACK WINGS

By Syaman Rapongan. Translated by Pamela Hunt.

The flying fish come, one school after another, densely packed, dying the surface of the ocean an inky black. The schools—each holding hundreds of fish, each reaching fifty, sixty metres in length—stretch across a nautical mile. Like a mighty regiment entering into battle, they swim the ancient shipping routes that follow the Kuroshio current, gradually advancing on Philippine waters.

But such a vast number of flying fish will also attract its predators. Now come the swordfish, marlins, barracudas, mahi mahi, giant kingfish, and little tunny... They follow close behind the schools, rolling their eyes, awaiting the perfect moment to begin their massacre. The flying fish tremble in anticipation. Drawing closer together, they are too nervous to look at their enemies at their tails.

The flying fish with the black wings are the largest navigators in the shoal. Sensing an imminent disaster, they begin to nimbly herd the small schools into one larger mass. Soon enough the smaller fish, once scattered in countless groups, have now joined into five large shoals.

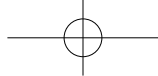
The sun will soon sink below the horizon. The black-winged flying fish are ever more troubled, and some begin to swim outside of the school perimeter, fearing that the smaller fish—such as the *Lok Lok* or the *Kalawaw*—will fall behind and become their predators' evening meal. Looking down on this scene from above, the flying fish look like thick plates of coral reef, floating on the surface of the sea.

The flying fish swim three nautical miles, then four, until they reach the northeast waters of the Batanes Islands. Their hunters cannot much longer bear to swim against the current; they have travelled on empty stomachs for too

long, and besides, night is beginning to fall. A disturbance occurs on the school perimeter. The swimmers begin to twist and turn; now slow, now fast, they sink towards the ocean floor or flash up to the surface, tails flicking, fins spreading. Soon the largest predators reach the shoal's outer edges. They are two metres away, now one. For the flying fish, this is a bad omen, one that spells out an impending catastrophe. They draw closer together, fin to fin, but this will not be enough to overcome a universal rule: the strong prey on the weak.

The impetuous mahi mahi are the first to break through the perimeter from behind, pupils dilated, bodies steeled in preparation, eyes fixed on their prey. In a flash, these the vanguard swoops in and swallows a handful of fish whole; seeing the chaos, the rest of the predators also join in the frenzied massacre. The hunting season has begun.

Suddenly, flying fish burst through the ocean surface. The glow of the setting sun illuminates their escape, and they glide across the sea like low flying iridescent clouds drifting over a mountain range, painting the waters a dazzling silver. They glide sixty or seventy metres and then disappear into the sea; but an instant later they spread their fins and fly again, rising and falling with the waves. Their translucent wings reveal a determined will to survive.



TO MY SISTER

妹至帖



YEN YUN-NUNG

嚴云農

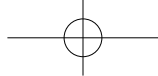
Yen Yun-Nung graduated from National Chengchi University. *To My Sister* is his first novel, although he previously published a novelised version of the 2011 blockbuster *Seediq Bale*, Taiwan's most expensive film production. As well as writing novels, Yen works as a music producer and has written lyrics to over three hundred popular songs. The theme song to the 2008 hit film *Cape No. 7*, for which he wrote the words, won the Forty-fifth Golden Horse for best original song.



Just as the Sino-Japanese War was drawing to a close and the Japanese were retreating, civil war took hold of China. Li Chi-Nian was in charge of transporting the national treasures from the Forbidden City south to the Kuomintang controlled capital in the south, Nanjing. But as he travelled across the great expanse of China's inland, he lost the thing most precious in all the world, his family.

Sixty years later, two brothers separated in war, a sister lost in the Kuomintang's retreat from the mainland, a daughter who cannot connect with her father, a young man who escaped death, a lawyer haunted by his childhood memories and a mysterious figure, a shadow that has followed the passage of time... This is the family, long lost. But one thing still connects them, one of ancient China's most exquisite and mysterious pieces of calligraphy, *To My Sister* by Wang Xizhi. But how exactly? How can seventeen beautifully written Chinese characters, faded by the hands of time, bring together these people after so many decades apart?

- Category: Literary Fiction
- Publisher: Unitas
- Date: 2013/5
- Rights contact: Victor Huang (Unitas), victor.huang@udngroup.com
- Pages: 448pp
- Length: 240,000 characters (approx. 15,600 words in English)



TO MY SISTER

By Yen Yun-Nung. Translated by Katherine Blacka Rose.

Chapter 2: Inescapable Memories

The humid afternoon wind could not blow rain from the dark clouds above.

The trill of cicadas singing their hearts out in the tree in the back alley drifted in through the windows and made listeners drowsy. A man who fixes window screens drove past, advertising his services with a recorded message on a bullhorn poking out of the front window of his truck. The repeated slogan was loud full of static. It was hard to imagine he would get much attention at this hour. Even if there were people with torn screens, they would wait until after siesta to deal with them.

15-year-old Li Chiao was looking out the window. The apartment building across from her blocked most of the overcast sky from view. Skies that couldn't decide whether to rain or not aggravated her.

'Ugh. It's so muggy I can't concentrate.'

She put her fan down and reached for her cup of black tea, finishing half the glass in one gulp before using her sleeve to wipe the condensed water off the table. 'Might as well give up.' She flipped her half-read textbook closed. The ice cubes in her glass made a beautiful sound as they bumped together, but it did nothing to lighten her mood. She pulled the electric fan over to her and angled it up, so it blew under her. She watched her shirt inflate. The cool breeze against her sweat-drenched skin felt unbelievably refreshing.

'Grandpa won't buy me an air conditioner, even though I'm studying for my exams. He's so cheap!' Li Chiao touched her sticky arm, and

made a face.

'Why wasn't I born into a family with money?' She complained to herself.

'Then I could have air conditioning every day for as long as I wanted.'

'And I would have a maid to make me smoothies.'

'And I could have all the clothes I'd ever need.'

'And I could have a horse.'

'And best of all, I wouldn't need to take these stupid entry exams.' Why should people with money not need to take entry exams? It didn't make any sense, but she didn't dwell on it. She thought only of the hot wind blowing over her body. There was a certain degree of pleasure in feeling the sweat evaporate off her tiny breasts.

'I wonder what Mom bought my brother to eat?'

She yawned. Her mood was more suffocating than the weather.

It was Saturday afternoon and Mom had taken her brother out for the weekend. Li Chiao would normally have gone with them, but she was instead stuck at home studying for the high school entrance exam.

'So you can't come out then?'

Before he set off, Li Chiao's brother had called to gloat. It made her angry just thinking about it. 'Ha ha, sucks for you. Mom said she's going to take me to buy new sneakers after lunch.'

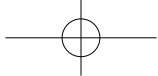
'Didn't you just get a pair?'

'But the new Jordan fives just came out!'

'You're disgusting. Why is Mom being so nice to you?'

'Grandpa gives you spending money. Don't think I don't know.'

'Only if I pass the exam, all right?'



CITY OF MOTELS

摩鐵路之城



CHANG CHING-HUNG

張經宏

Chang Ching-Hung graduated from National Taiwan University with a bachelor's degree in philosophy and a master's in Chinese literature. He has been awarded many prizes, including China Times Literary Award and the Ni Kuang Science Fiction Award.

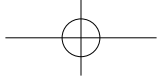
* Winner of the Chiu Ko Fiction Prize



Chang Ching-Hung's *City of Motels* is a ballsy anti-Bildungsroman. The protagonist, Wu Chi-Lun, has a bad case of angst. He quits school and starts working in a motel. There he meets the more unsavoury side of the city. But somehow he dreams one day of buying his own and turning it into a school of conversation, a kind of contemporary salon.

City of Motels is a dissection of the darker side of the city of Taichung seen through the eyes of a seventeen-year-old. Chang Ching-Hung's novel is both straight-to-the-point and unruly. Its subject matter, the urban experience, is plain. This is a book of youthful rebelliousness, a cry against the routinisation and institutionalisation of crime and porn, a defiant posture that reminds us that the world was not always thus.

- Category: Literary Fiction
- Publisher: Chiu Ko
- Date: 2011/5
- Rights contact: Lucienne Chuang (Chiu Ko), light@chiuko.com.tw
- Pages: 372pp
- Length: 130,000 characters (approx. 85,000 words in English)



CITY OF MOTELS

By Chang Ching-Hung. Translated by Hsieh Meng-Tsung.

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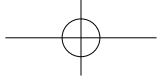
The rain eased off after half an hour, and the sound of it falling was quickly covered up by the noise of competing car horns. Gradually, these vehicles discovered their respective destinies, some driving slowly and awkwardly away like rugby players out of the scrum, others squatting where they were, their drivers sticking their heads out of the rolled-down windows.

Raindrops thinned into needles that punctured the ground, making it release sour, repellent odours of urine and phlegm that mixed with each other in the air. Though invisible, they were an unavoidable presence before me. It made me sneeze. A fluorescent light hummed weakly under the eaves, as if it held a hundred hungry cicadas inside. Maybe all this traffic was a result of the concert in the stadium a few kilometres away. I heard it was yet another world-famous singer.

For the past few hours, every road in the city had been crammed with thousands of maniacs from everywhere. Riding my motorcycle to work, I couldn't drive in a straight line but had zigzagged back and forth like a bee, giving each car a share of my exhaust as they crawled toward an unfinished stadium to attend a performance of goodness knows what music. No wonder the heavens rained angrily upon us. Imagine millions of tons of rainwater converging on the metal chairs set up for the occasion and the crowds of people waiting at the entrance. They walked to the numbered seats, wiped away the rainwater, and squeezed into them. They sat duly, peering right and left at the other people wedged in their own seats and holding programs. The cold, wet chairs stuck tightly to their behinds; powerful

floodlights on all sides swept over their heads. Naturally, the concert didn't start right away. Ten thousand bladders began feeling pressure. Their owners worried about whether the concert would last for more than three hours, but only half were willing to stand up, look around, find the long lines outside the portable toilets, hurry past thousands of similarly cold, wet behinds, become the last in a long line, stare at the backs of those in front, wait for their turn, lock the door, and, stepping on urine, finish the job in a dark space. Now they could sit more comfortably until the fat man on stage started to gesture and contort his lips as his voice came thundering out of his abdomen into the sour air. The audience closed their eyes and allowed the amplified voice, now raising goose bumps, now drawing tears, to seep into their wet-assed bodies. Three hours later, as if a collective mission had been accomplished, they bustled towards the few open doors and once again paralysed the roads.

It had been like this in recent years: hundreds and hundreds of performances, and woe betide you if you didn't recognize each singer's name. Tens of thousands of people bought tickets and squeezed in the stadium, while thousands more who couldn't get in cursed and watched the show from outside. Some of the concerts even ended with fireworks, the lights at the back of the stage flashing and the amplifiers crackling as the fireworks shot up Heaven's ass and exploded brilliantly, and the audience screamed like they were insane. The noise didn't die down until midnight, and then—oh, I forgot to mention that I worked in a motel not too far away from the stadium—with coiffured hair and in my sharp uniform, I bowed and smiled at the windows of the approaching cars.



SU BENG: AN ORAL HISTORY

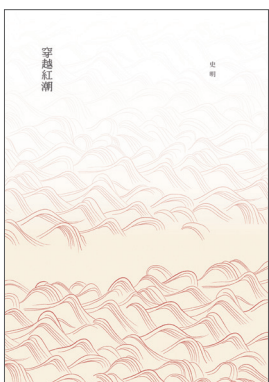
史明口述史



SU BENG ORAL HISTORY GROUP

史明口述史訪談小組

Su Beng: An Oral History is the outcome of a series of interviews conducted by a group of students centred on the Taiwanese Literature Research Society at National Taiwan University. This group has also been involved in reissuing *Taiwan's 400 Year History*, as well as writing introductions and essays reflecting on the book's significance.



* Nominated for the 2014 Taipei Book Fair Award

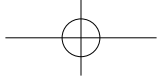
* Winner of the 2014 Golden Tripod Award

This is a book telling the story of one of Taiwan's most important independence activists and revolutionaries, known as the 'Che Guevara of Taiwan.' Born in Taipei in 1918, Su Beng's pen name means 'to know history clearly,' a statement of intent that sums up a remarkable life.

While studying politics and economics at Waseda University in Tokyo, Japan, Su Beng became a Marxist. Upon graduation in 1942, he went to Shanghai to work as an undercover agent with the Chinese Communists. He quickly became disillusioned, however, and made his escape to Taiwan in 1949. Once home, Su and others began devising a plan to topple the Chiang Kai-Shek dictatorship that had taken power on the island after the Kuomintang's defeat on the mainland. When Su's plot to assassinate Chiang was discovered in 1952, he was forced to flee to Japan. There he continued to support Taiwan's underground independence movement and wrote the first version of *Taiwan's 400 Year History*.

Su Beng returned to Taiwan in 1993. He has been a frequent fixture at independence rallies and continues to be an enduring symbol of the fight for the rights of the Taiwanese people.

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- Category: Non-fiction (Three Volumes)
 - Publisher: Flâneur
 - Date: 2013/1
 - Rights contact: Kate Chen (Flâneur), katechen@flaneur.tw
 - Pages: 558pp
 - Length: 243,000 characters (approx. 157,000 words in English)



SU BENG: AN ORAL HISTORY

By the Su Beng Oral History Group. Translated by Chang Hsintao & Tang Cijyun.

Preface by Su Beng

I was first encouraged to write an autobiography by Taiwanese expatriates in the United States when I visited in August, 1981. The idea did not immediately take hold because at the time I could not see a successful conclusion to the movement for Taiwanese independence. However, when I returned to Taiwan in 1993 in my seventies, I began to think about leaving a record of my life in earnest, and made plans to write my autobiography.

The background of my education means that I always think in Japanese before translating the words into Chinese, and although I could consult Huang Min-Hung and Li Cheng-Chung in matters of vocabulary, I never felt entirely confident with the language. At the same time, I was wary of the oral history approach, in spite of people's continued willingness to interview me, as I worried that they could not truly understand my innermost thoughts and feelings.

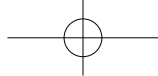
My description of the past is shaped by the personal experience of having lived through two distinctly different political regimes, under Japanese and Kuomintang (KMT) rule, and may be difficult for others to comprehend. Still, there cannot be many around today, who know Marxism, have been to China, and had direct involvement with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). I decided, therefore, to do these interviews as I wrote *Taiwan's 400 Year History*, and talk about my life in a systematic manner.

Japan's occupation of Taiwan began in 1895, but for someone born in 1918, traditional feudalistic thinking and colonial rule were inevitable sources of oppression in my early life. It was through learning and growing up alongside

Japanese classmates from the age of eight, first at Jian Cheng Elementary School and later at Taipei First High School, that my life became semi-liberal, with modernised Japanese education and enlightened thought exerting an influence in tandem with the traditional values at home. The most formative period of my life was the six years of study at Waseda University. While Japan remained an essentially feudal society even after the Meiji Restoration, universities like Waseda and Keio were veritable temples of freedom.

In contrast to the official discipline-specific universities aimed at training bureaucrats, Waseda University was fertile ground for nurturing ideas about liberty and democracy. All the socialist, Marxist and anarchist thought in free circulation on Japanese campuses since the Taisho period further opened up the mind of a colonial subject. Upon graduation, seeing the single-mindedness with which my fellow students enlisted to serve their country, I made a decision to go to China and participate in the resistance against Japanese incursion, as a way of joining in Taiwan's struggle against imperialist colonisation.

Arriving in Northern China after the War, I realised that Mao Zedong had become a dictator, and the CCP were practicing not Marxism but dehumanised Fascism. The mass butchering of the Chinese people and the hostility towards the Taiwanese were in direct opposition to my belief in human rights, and I was driven to escape back to Taiwan at all costs in 1949. Yet, KMT's rule on the island was in reality no less authoritarian. My comrades and I felt compelled to act, and formed the Revolutionary Corps for Taiwanese Independence. Unfortunately, our plans were thwarted and I had to flee once more to Japan on a banana freighter.



FROM TAIWAN TO THE WORLD AND BACK: A MEMOIR BY LO FU-CHEN

榮町少年走天下



LO FU-CHEN 羅福全

Lo Fu-Chen was Taiwan's top representative in Japan from 2000 to 2004. Born in Sakae-machi, Chiayi, in 1935, Lo graduated with a bachelor's in economics from National Taiwan University, a master's in economics from Waseda University, and a Ph.D. in regional science from the University of Pennsylvania. Among his many outstanding contributions to the field of economic research, Lo has worked in the United Nations Centre for Regional Development as Chief of Comparative Studies and in the United Nations University as Senior Academic Officer.



CHEN JOU-CHIN 陳柔縉

Chen Jou-Chin is a columnist and historian whose previous works include *The President's Relatives*, *Taiwan's First Taste of Western Civilisation, No. 90*, *Miyamaecho*, *Everyone is an Era unto Himself*, *Tales of Taiwanese Happiness and Olden Times*.



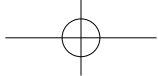
- Category: Non-fiction
- Publisher: Global Views – Commonwealth Publishing Group
- Date: 2013/8
- Rights contact: Frances Yang
francesyang@cwgv.com.tw
- Pages: 328pp
- Length: 94,000 characters (approx. 65,000 words in English)

A Taiwanese in the United Nations—where Taiwan could not enter, he found a way in. As an economic expert, he has travelled around the world, providing his expertise.

During the 1960s, when Lo Fu-Chen was working on his doctorate degree at University of Pennsylvania, he joined a pro Taiwan independence march and was thus blacklisted by the Kuomintang government—not only was he forbidden to return to Taiwan, but he also became a man without nationality. In the 1970s, he was recruited by the UN to work at Nagoya's UN Centre for Regional Development where he helped developing countries to establish their economies. For twenty-seven years, with a UN passport in hand, he flew around the world working for the well-being of everyday people.

Just as he was preparing to enjoy his retirement, the government in Taiwan changed hands. The new government wanted to use his connections as well as his economic expertise, and appointed him to the position of Taiwan's top representative to Japan.

Through his eyes, we are able to experience his world of the past half century.



FROM TAIWAN TO THE WORLD AND BACK: A MEMOIR BY LO FU-CHEN

Narrated by Lo Fu-Chen. Text by Chen Jou-Chin.

Translated by Yew Leong Lee.

A Three-Year Old Gives Away the Bride

One day, when I was just three years old, I was dressed up like a miniature grownup. I became what people back in 1938 called ‘a little prince,’ decked out in my Western jacket and pants, with a gold-buttoned, double-breasted vest to boot. Attached to one of these buttons was the gold chain of a pocket watch tucked elegantly into a vest pocket.

It was my cousin Hsu Hsiu-Luan’s wedding day. She was the daughter of my fourth aunt on my father’s side. According to tradition, her splendid wedding procession should have begun at the Hsu household, but my aunt’s husband, a doctor, had died early, leaving her widowed at the tender age of twenty. She had been closest to my father, and it had been decided that she and her dependents would move in with us. Since Hsiu-Luan had more or less been brought up under our roof, she naturally wanted to be ‘married out’ of the Lo household.

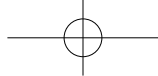
In the 30s, the Taiwanese still cared deeply about arranging marriages within class boundaries. My cousin Hsiu-Luan, who studied medicine at a university in Tokyo, should naturally be matched with someone of exceptional background. The bridegroom was Lai Hsun-Chang, a gifted law student at Chuo University, also in Tokyo. His father, Lai Yu-Jo, was the first lawyer ever to have come out of Chiayi City, and was even better-known here than we were.

Lai Yu-Jo had been born into a wealthy family; his father, Lai Shih-Kuan, had even

passed the Imperial Exams. When Taiwan came under Japanese rule in 1895, Lai Yu-Jo was already seventeen or eighteen years old. Normally, someone who had an education in literature and the Confucian classics would have idled at home after his studies, living off rental income. Yet Lai Yu-Jo decided to pursue a different fate altogether.

When he was about the age of a contemporary college freshman, Lai Yu-Jo enrolled into the National Language Institute of Learning, which had been founded by the Japanese, to study their language. He picked it up quickly, and after graduation became a court interpreter.

Most people who got stable government jobs relaxed the pace of their self-improvement, or stopped learning altogether, but Yu-Jo had more ambition than that. When the exams to enter the highest echelons of government became open to Taiwanese people for the first time in 1905, he took them and passed. He was appointed to a position as Court Secretary, yet that wasn’t enough for him. He wanted to defend his fellow countrymen on the floor of the court as a lawyer. So he left Taiwan and studied law for three years at a Japanese university. Twice, he sat for the bar exams and failed; in 1923, he tried for a third time and succeeded. Of the forty-two new lawyers in Japan that year, three were of Taiwanese origin. Lai Yu-Jo was one, as was Cai Shi-Gu, another eventual pillar of the Taiwanese state.



PICKLE DISHES IN THIRTY MINUTES

30 分鐘，動手做醃漬料理



AMANDA

Amanda is a full-time housewife and food blogger. She started her food blog in 2006, and has received over three and a half million hits to date. Amanda loves to create her own recipes, which she shares alongside posts about her life.



Pickles are known for their health benefits, especially when prepared at home rather than shop-bought. Not only that, but they are ready to serve in no time. Start now and upgrade the flavours of fresh vegetables, fruits, seafood and meat. Amanda knows just how to make use of these delicious pickles in homemade dishes, and in these pages, serves us the readers platefuls of healthy and yummy cuisine in this book.

Pickle • Vegetables—

Cucumber, carrot, Chinese flowering cabbage...

Pickle • Seafood & Meat—

Pork, clam, whitebait, cuttlefish...

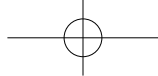
Pickle • Mushrooms—

Enoki mushroom, Shiitake mushroom, knotted kelp, agar...

Pickle • Fruits—

Guava, crispy plum, watermelon rind, green mango, tomato...

- Category: Non-fiction, Cookbook
- Publisher: Morning Star
- Date: 2013/2
- Rights contact: Fenny Wu (Morning Star), fenny@morningstar.com.tw
- Pages: 176pp
- Length: 30,000 characters (approx. 20,000 words in English)



Part 1 Pickle • Vegetables



Ingredients: 1 pumpkin, 2 tablespoons of salt, 120 cc of plum vinegar, 1 lemon, 2 tablespoons of white sugar

※ If the vinegar you use already contains sugar in it, then there is no need for white sugar.

Steps:

1. Peel the pumpkin by using a knife. Scoop out the seeds with a spoon. Cut the pumpkin into four equal portions, and then in thin slices. **A**
2. Add salt to the pumpkin and wait for 1 hour. After that, wash the slices in distilled water and drain the slices. **B**
3. Wash the lemon clean. Use 3/4 to squeeze juice, and cut the rest in thin slices. **C**
4. Plum vinegar, lemon juice, lemon slices, and white sugar are added to the pumpkin slices. Mix them properly. **D**
5. Put it in the refrigerator and let the pumpkin be marinated in the mixture. It will be ready to serve in half day.



A

Tips

Do not slice them too thick. Thin slices have better texture.



B

Tips

Make sure the pickling time is long enough, so that the dish won't taste bitter.



C



D

