



BOOKS FROM TAIWAN



BOOKS FROM TAIWAN

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**ABOUT
TAIWAN
CREATIVE
CONTENT
AGENCY**

Gifted with cultural and natural diversity, Taiwan has created admirable economic and political miracles over time that empowers many fascinating stories. Even though cultural industries in Taiwan have been prosperous and prolific, in response to the knowledge economy and evolving technologies, we stand at a critical point to adapt and innovate.

Founded in 2019, TAICCA is a professional intermediary organization supervised by the Ministry of Culture to facilitate cultural industry development, including but not limited to publishing, audiovisual, music, animation, comics, games, and cultural technology applications. TAICCA drives industrial investments, innovations, and formulates Taiwan's cultural brand that enriches the international cultural landscape through our diverse and rich cultural content.



**GRANT FOR THE
PUBLICATION OF
TAIWANESE WORKS IN
TRANSLATION (GPT)**

**MINISTRY OF CULTURE,
REPUBLIC OF CHINA (TAIWAN)**

GPT is set up by The Ministry of Culture to encourage the publication of Taiwanese works in translation overseas, to raise the international visibility of Taiwanese cultural content, and to help Taiwan's publishing industry expand into non-Chinese international markets..

- Applicant Eligibility: Foreign publishing houses (legal persons) legally registered in accordance with the laws and regulations of their respective countries.
- Conditions:
 1. The so-called Taiwanese works must meet the following requirements:
 - A. Use traditional characters;
 - B. Written by a natural person holding an R.O.C. identity card;
 - C. Has been assigned an ISBN in Taiwan.
i.e., the author is a native of Taiwan, and the first 6 digits of the book's ISBN are 978-957-XXX-XXX-X, 978-986-XXX-XXX-X, or 978-626-XXX-XXX-X.
 2. Applications must include documents certifying that the copyright holder of the Taiwanese works consents to its translation and foreign publication (no restriction on its format).
 3. A translation sample of the Taiwanese work is required (no restriction on its format and length).
 4. The translated work must be published within two years, after the first day of the relevant application period.
- Grant Items:
 5. The maximum grant available for each project is NT\$600,000, which covers:
 - A. Licensing fees (going to the copyright holder of the Taiwanese works);
 - B. Translation fees;
 - C. Marketing and promotion fees (limited to economy class air tickets for the R.O.C. writer to participate in overseas promotional activities related to the project);
 - D. Book production-oriented fees;
 - E. Tax (20% of the total award amount);
 - F. Remittance-related handling fees.
 6. Priority consideration is given to books that have received the Golden Tripod Award, the Golden Comic Award, or the Taiwan Literature Award.
- Application Period: Twice every year. The MOC reserves the right to change the application periods, and will announce said changes separately.
- Announcement of successful applications: Winners will be announced within three months of the end of the application period.
- Application Method: Please visit the Ministry's official website (https://grants.moc.gov.tw/Web_ENG/), and use the online application system.

For full details, please visit: https://grants.moc.gov.tw/Web_ENG/

Or contact: books@moc.gov.tw

COMICS

(FROM RIGHT TO LEFT)



BOOKS FROM TAIWAN

YAN

閻鐵花



- **Publisher:** Dala
- **Date:** 12/2020
- **Rights contact:**
booksfromtaiwan.rights@gmail.com
- **Pages:** 344
- **Volume:** 2 (ongoing)
- **Rights sold:** Film, TV

* Film adaptation in production, projected 2023 release

Thirty years ago, the young Peking Opera performer Yan Tie-hua was wrongly convicted of the murder of her own family and sent to prison. Twenty years later she died while still incarcerated. Yet, today, this same woman has mysteriously returned as a superpowered teen in Peking Opera costume, determined to avenge the massacre of her family.

When not training in the Yan family tradition of Peking Opera performance, Yan Tie-hua leads the life of an ordinary 15 year old girl. Then one day she returns home to find her entire family murdered. Yan Tie-hua becomes the primary suspect in the case, and is quickly tried and sent to prison.

Thirty years later Yan Tie-hua returns, though prison records show she's been dead for a decade. Even more astonishing, she appears to be no older than the day she began her sentence. Her objective: to avenge the massacre of her family starting with a live-streamed killing.

The officer who originally handled Yan Tie-hua's case is called back to active duty to deal with her reappearance, but the deeper he digs, the more he finds that nothing is as it seems. Complicating matters is a teenage chess prodigy with the ability to see five minutes into the future who joins Yan Tie-hua's crusade. What is the truth at the heart of the Yan family massacre? And what is the mysterious power that enabled Yan Tie-hua's return from the dead?

Yan, the latest work from sci-fi comic book artist Chang Sheng, blends sci-fi concepts and traditional opera to create a uniquely Taiwanese superhero story. Its gripping can't-put-it-down plotline and refined graphic style will be savored in repeated readings by fans of sci-fi, mystery, and action comics.



Chang Sheng 常勝

Chang Sheng worked in advertising for 15 years. He started his own studio when he was in his thirties and since 2004 he has released work on a regular basis. Having read comics from a young age, Chang Sheng has always preferred science fiction stories best. He admits to having been deeply influenced by the work of Hoshino Yukinobu, and his training in drawing and oil painting while studying at the Fu-Hsin Trade and Arts School are likewise reflected in his exquisitely detailed and extremely realistic video game-like style. Chang Sheng has won several prizes overseas. *Oldman* was a finalist in the 2013 International Manga Award in Japan, and *The Hidden Level* won the Grand Prize of 2017 Kyoto International Manga Awards (Taiwan Section). His works have been published in various languages, including English, French, Japanese, and Korean.

FROM PEKING OPERA ACTRESS TO SUPERHERO

Written by Chang Sheng

Translated by Joshua Dyer

I've heard that my grandfather was quite the dandy when he was young. His favorite pastime was acting in amateur Peking Opera performances.

According to my admittedly fuzzy memory, when I was a toddler, my grandfather and I often went to watch Peking Opera performances at Pao Fu Kung, a temple in Taipei's Yonghe District. I didn't know a thing about opera, but the female characters in particular left a deep impression. They cut such striking figures on the stage, sometimes delicate and graceful, sometimes sharp and forceful. Those impressions have stayed with me, and often linger in my thoughts. It might be a snatch of reserved and elegant song, or the thrust of a sword or spear in a martial dance. To me, all of these performances are beautiful.

About five or six years ago, a thought occurred to me. Iron Man, Batman, Kamen Rider... so many superheroes wear masks to conceal their identity. But if a superhero were to paint their face like they do in Peking Opera, they wouldn't need a mask.

I've always believed good stories usually arise out of a core concept that is powerful, yet ridiculously simple. But combining science fiction and traditional opera seemed far too ambitious. I hesitated, wondering if I could pull it off. However, one concept was just too compelling. It captivated me and became a vehicle for all those beautiful impressions of Peking Opera from my childhood. I simply had to draw it.

That concept was *Yan*, the story of a Peking Opera actress turned superhero.

About the Title Calligraphy

It is a great honor, and my good fortune, that the calligraphy of octogenarian manga master Hirata Hiroshi appears as the title characters of this graphic novel. Mr. Hirata is famous throughout Japan for his samurai-themed manga. His vigorous calligraphy also appears on the original posters for world-renowned anime classic *Akira*.

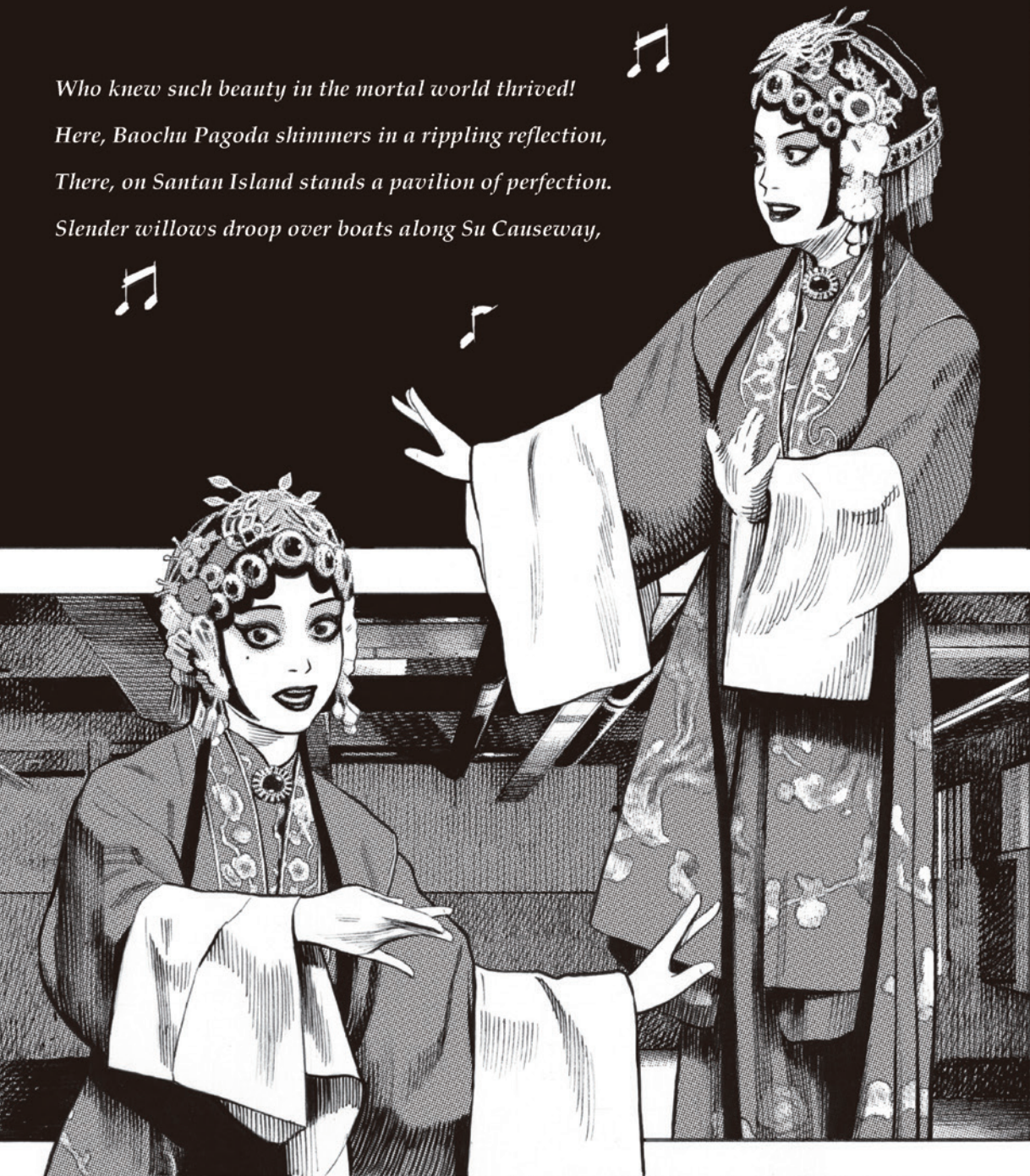
When I received the original of this monumental calligraphic work, I felt it as a blessing for the project. Of course, I also felt immense pressure. I had to produce the best graphic novel I could, no matter what the cost. My deepest gratitude to Mr. Hirata Hiroshi and to Mr. Wu, who surreptitiously arranged everything and made the trip to Japan to collect the artwork and deliver it to me.

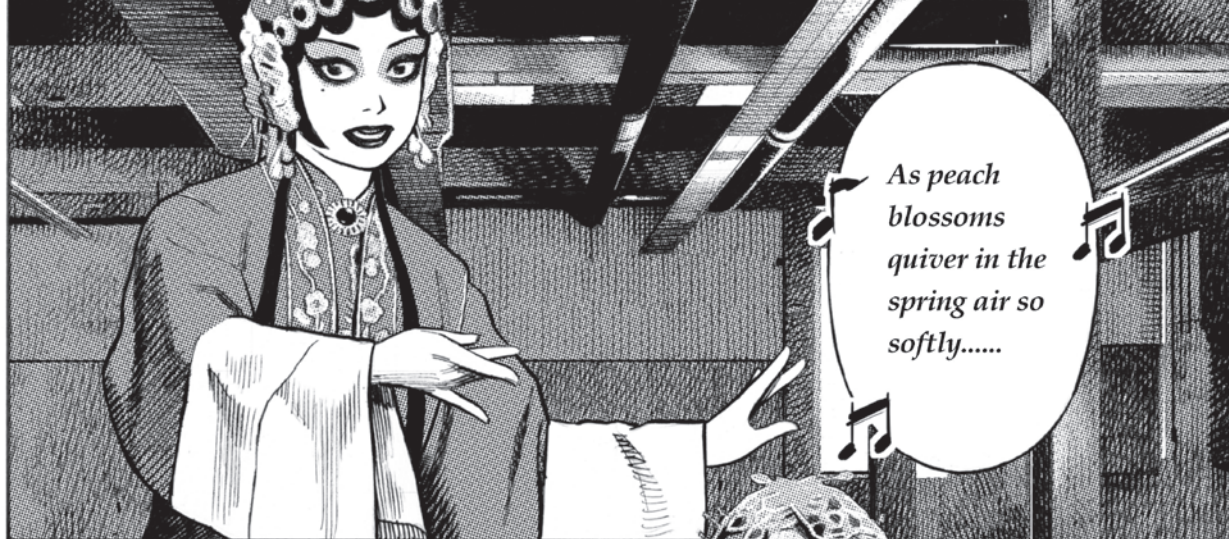


*From Mount
Emei we left,
in Jiangnan we
arrived...*



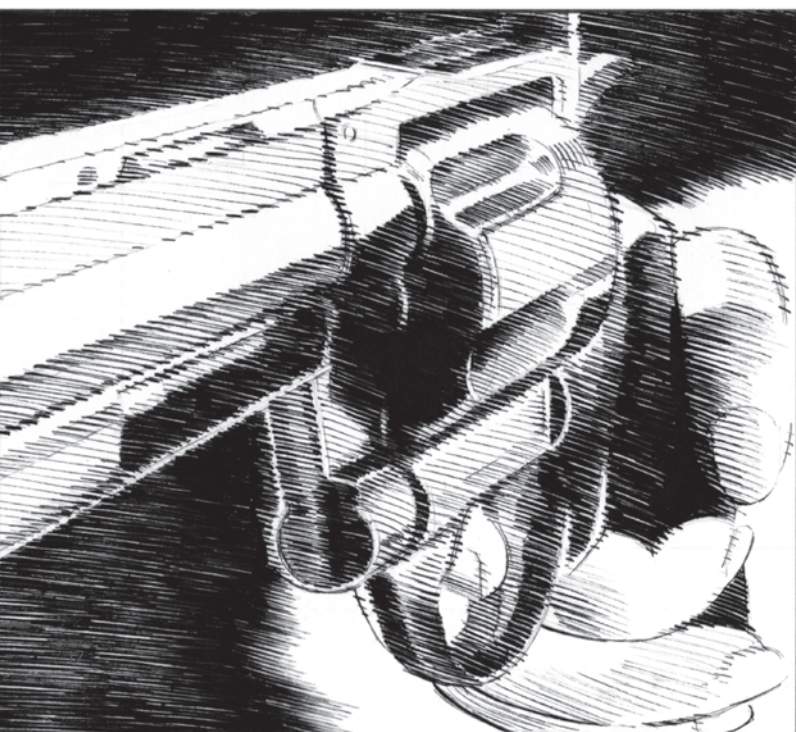
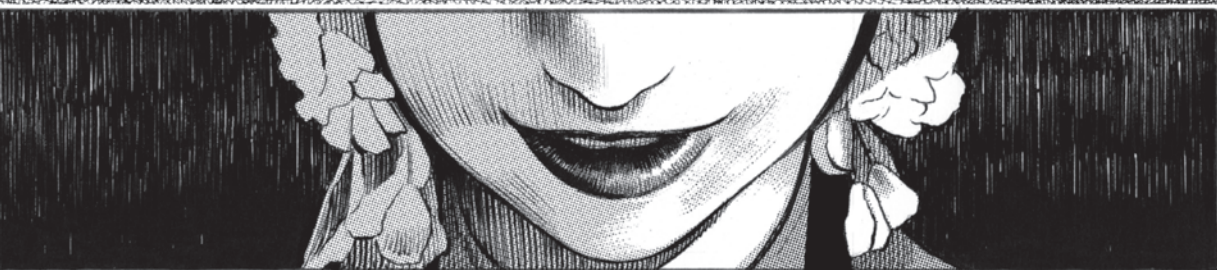
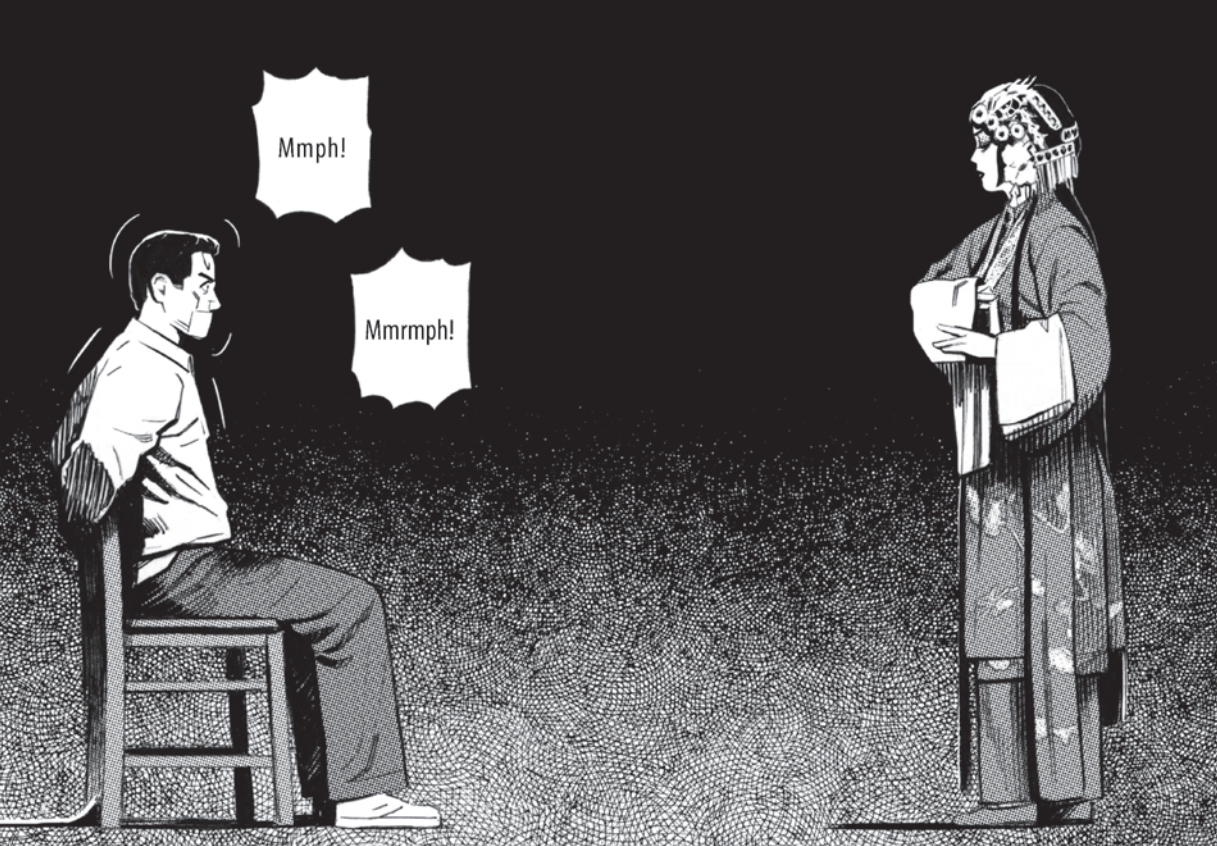
*Who knew such beauty in the mortal world thrived!
Here, Baochu Pagoda shimmers in a rippling reflection,
There, on Santan Island stands a pavilion of perfection.
Slender willows droop over boats along Su Causeway,*





*As peach
blossoms
quiver in the
spring air so
softly.....*









THE HUMAN BUN

人肉包子



- **Publisher:** Locus
- **Date:** 9/2020
- **Rights contact:**
booksfromtaiwan.rights@gmail.com
- **Pages:** 204
- **Volume:** 1 (END)

* The first Taiwanese comic book creator to sell rights to Casterman

While escaping from local hoodlums, a young boy, A-Chi, and the elderly owner of a curio shop find themselves transported to ancient times, where they take refuge with a woman who sells steamed buns. Little do they know that the woman will soon stand accused of selling steamed buns stuffed with human flesh!

There's nothing A-Chi loves better than listening to Mr. Chien tell stories. Every day after school he heads straight to the Mr. Chien's curio shop in hopes of hearing more. One day, the elderly shop owner comes into conflict with a local gang collecting protection money. A terrified A-Chi flees into the depths of the shop to hide, only to discover the winding corridors have no end, forever twisting and turning and leading to an infinite number of worlds.

Exhausted from his flight, A-Chi follows an enticing scent to a restaurant that sells steamed buns. When he regains his senses, he realizes that he, Mr. Chien, and the hoodlums have all been transported back to antiquity, and the gateway back to the curio shop has disappeared!

A-Chi and Mr. Chien become lodgers with Sun Erniang, proprietress of the steamed bun shop, while the gangsters, after giving an impromptu rock concert, are mistaken for a trio of gods and become guests of a local dignitary, Lord Xiao. Outwardly known for his generosity, Lord Xiao is in fact a great schemer. When he spreads a rumor that Sun Erniang sells steamed buns stuffed with human flesh, he ignites a conflict that pits Lord Xiao and the three hoodlums against A-Chi, Mr. Chien, and Sun Erniang.

Recently re-issued in a thirtieth anniversary edition, the story of *The Human Bun* remains as fresh and original as ever. This fast-paced, tight-knit tale from artist Ren Zheng-hua sprinkles in references to contemporary film and art and irreverently questions the nature of truth and reality. Modern readers are sure to appreciate this multi-layered masterpiece of comic humor.



Ren Zheng-hua 任正華

Born in Taipei in 1963, Ren Zheng-hua began her comics career with the immensely popular *Sea of Devil*, serialized in *Sunday Comics* magazine, and later sold as a three volume graphic novel. Incisively witty with a touch of black humor, Ren masterfully weaves tales that run the gamut from ancient to modern, from mythic/fantastic to everyday reality, often satirizing the human capacity for both good and evil. Ren is also the founder of publisher BoHai Culture Co. and comics magazine *Lotto*. In 2007, her work was published in French under the title *Le Fils*, making Ren the first Taiwanese comic book creator to be published by Casterman, the renowned French comic book publisher.

EASY ON THE EYES: COMIC BOOK MAESTRO REN ZHENG-HUA ON MASTERING THE ART OF VISUAL STORYTELLING

Written by Ren Zheng-hua

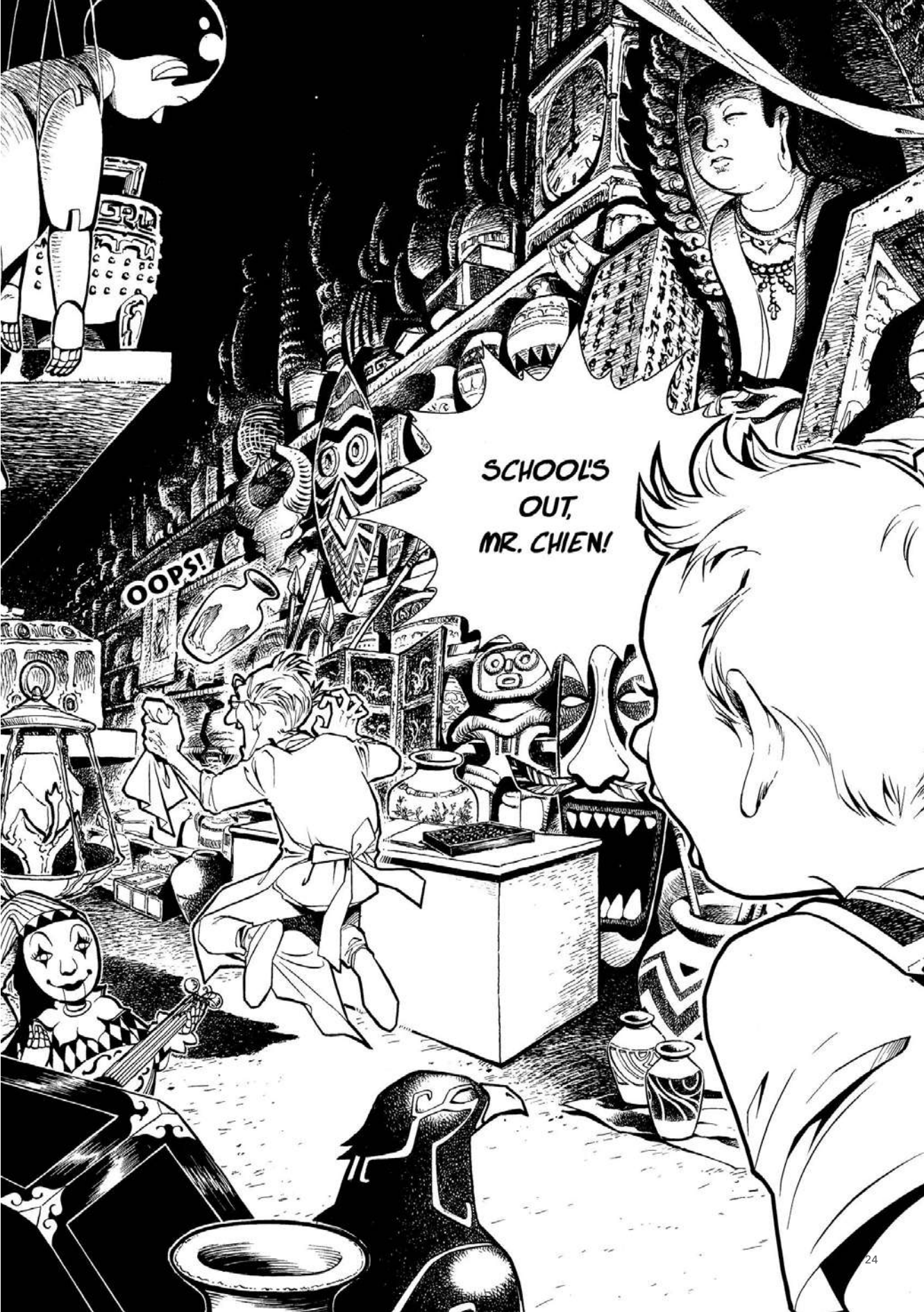
Translated by Joshua Dyer

This humorous comic is a light read. For the most part I avoided using screentones, kept the linework simple and clean, and eschewed distorted perspective and composition, the goal being to make it easy on the reader's eyes. My hope is that it can easily be read while seated, or lying down, or lying flat on one's stomachs, or on the toilet... or maybe even while stuck in traffic, or while the colors of sunset melt into the sea, or while taking a break from playing mahjong, or at anytime it might help you thoroughly relax and regulate your emotions. For this reason, while drawing it, I tried out lots of different light and reading angles, and only after being sure something wouldn't strain the eyes did I dare set it in ink. After all, unveiling a work of comic book art means assuming a responsibility to the public. Think about all the parents who scold their children, screeching, "Those comic books are ruining your eyes!" The creators of comic books, never being in the position to make a rebuttal, can only accept this calumny as one accepts an oncoming natural disaster.

The Human Bun was first serialized in *China Times Weekly* starting in February of 1992. An extended version was printed in *New Youth Express* starting in February of 1993. I want to give special thanks to these two periodicals for giving me the opportunity to test my abilities and hone my craft. Prior to *The Human Bun* I went through a period of struggling and eventually reinventing my style. Much of the credit goes to the "drills" I went through at *China Times Weekly*. It was at *New Youth Express* that I first began working on composition and panel layout with the goal of making everything "easy on the eyes". I had to cut up my original art, add new material, and re-edit everything back together. It was a lot more tiring than simply re-drawing from scratch, but it forced me to understand the relationship between the eyes and the pacing of the story. I treasure these experiences for the lessons learned, and hope to continue to improve in whatever works I produce in the future.

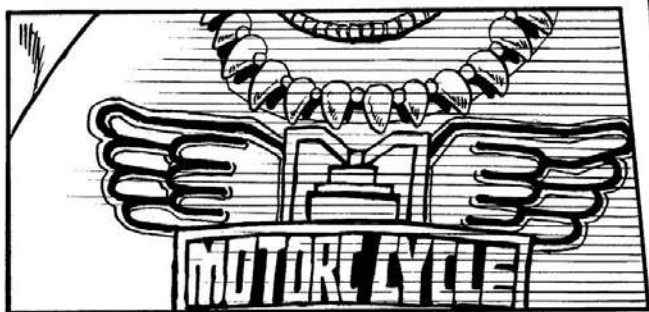
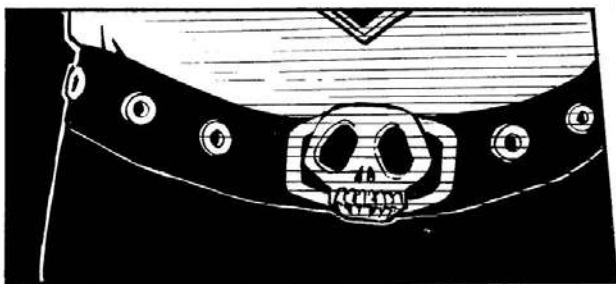
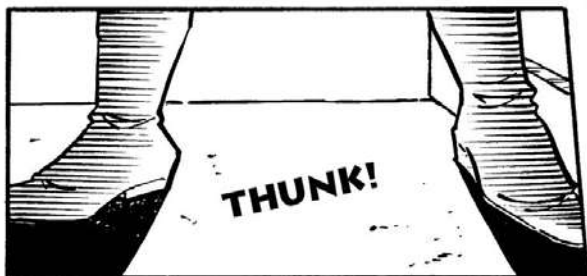


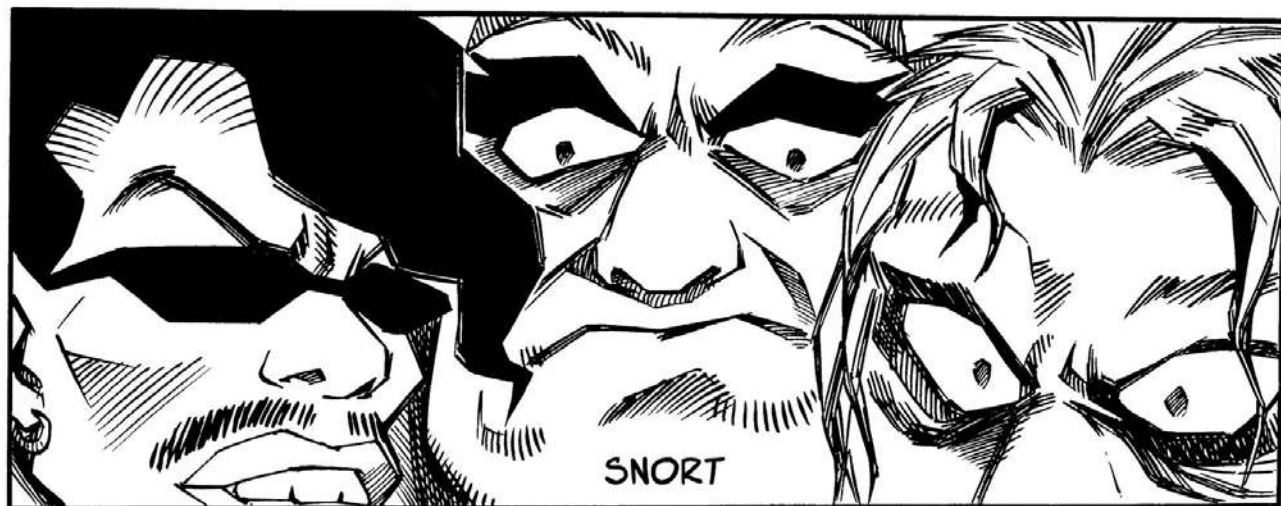




SCHOOL'S
OUT,
MR. CHIEN!

OOPS!





AH!

BOOM!

RUMBLE!

CREAK!

HELP!

BOOM!



THE LION IN THE MANGA LIBRARY

獅子藏匿的書屋



- **Publisher:** Dyna Books
- **Date:** 2/2021
- **Rights contact:**
booksfromtaiwan.rights@gmail.com
- **Pages:** 186
- **Volume:** 1 (ongoing)

* 2021 Golden Comic Award, Grand Prize

A young woman who works liquidating the stock of manga rental shops has a secret past. A former child prodigy, her career as a tournament go player ended due to unfortunate circumstances. When another elite go player turns up at her door seeking a room to rent, the two begin an unusual friendship that helps each to resolve their conflicted relationship to the game.

A young woman who has made a career out of assisting defunct manga rental shops auction off their wares hides a secret past. In a former life she was a go prodigy who began competing professionally at age 12. Then, for reasons not publicly known, she quit the professional go circuit.

One evening, a stranger shows up at her door asking to rent a room. The young man claims to be a former go professional, and, indeed, he is a remarkably talented player. As the two adjust to life together as roommates, they are surprised to find themselves healing from the burnout they experienced as elite players – but a far more unexpected outcome still awaits them.

In preparation for undertaking this work, artist Xiaodao did extensive research by interviewing competitive go players. The result is a refreshingly original graphic novel that merges a realistic portrait of the professional go community with a tension-filled plot, all the while sprinkling in nostalgia for an era when manga rental shops formed the hub of Taiwanese youth culture. No matter their degree of familiarity with the classic strategy game, readers will love this go-themed story about finding oneself and finding companionship.



Xiaodao 小島

Cutting edge comic book artist Xiaodao is celebrated for her unique and immediately recognizable style. *The Lion in the Manga Library* is her first commercial graphic novel.

“A FLASH OF RECOGNITION”: HOW GO, MANGA, AND STEFAN ZWEIG CROSS PATHS IN THE LION IN THE MANGA LIBRARY

Written by Xiaodao

Translated by Joshua Dyer

One intriguing aspect of the graphic novel is how it brings together two seemingly distant subjects: the strategy game go, and Taiwan's manga rental industry. Can you share how you came up with this setting for your book?

I'm obsessed with the idea of rebellious acts, like “escaping from the world”, or “straying from the usual path”, so I decided the main character should be an “escapist”. I made her a professional go player since the game has been an interest of mine for many years. The decline of the manga rental shops makes them a setting that can evoke a lot of stories and memories, and they are just the sort of place an “escapist” would go to get away from the world.

How did you organize the materials gathered from your interviews and observations and apply them in the graphic novel? Can you use some concrete examples from the book to demonstrate?

The presentation of the basic information about go and the psychology of the game came from my personal experiences as a player in addition to what I learned from interviews with professional players and my observation of tournaments. The specific game layouts (used in the graphic novel) were taken from recorded professional games in Taiwan, and from the records of AlphaGo games.

For information about the world of manga rental shops I visited a platform called *Zu Meng Wang* (Dream Rental Net) where industry people gather, interviewed some shop owners, and did on-site observations of their workflow and working environment. All the details of the process of closing down a shop and the warehouse environment that appear in chapters four and five come straight from my memories of those visits.

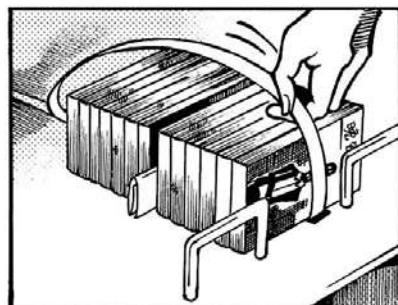
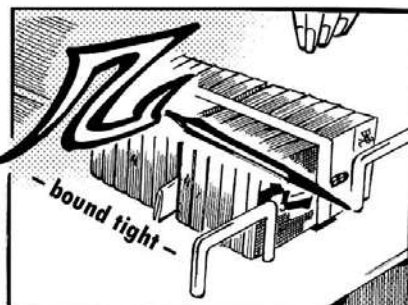
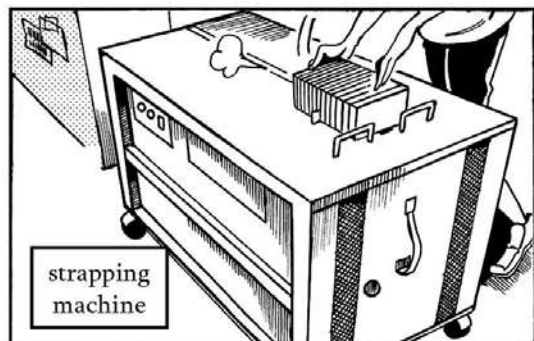
The plot is mostly driven by the two main characters. Could you walk us through your process of developing these characters?

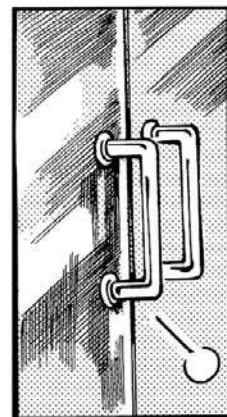
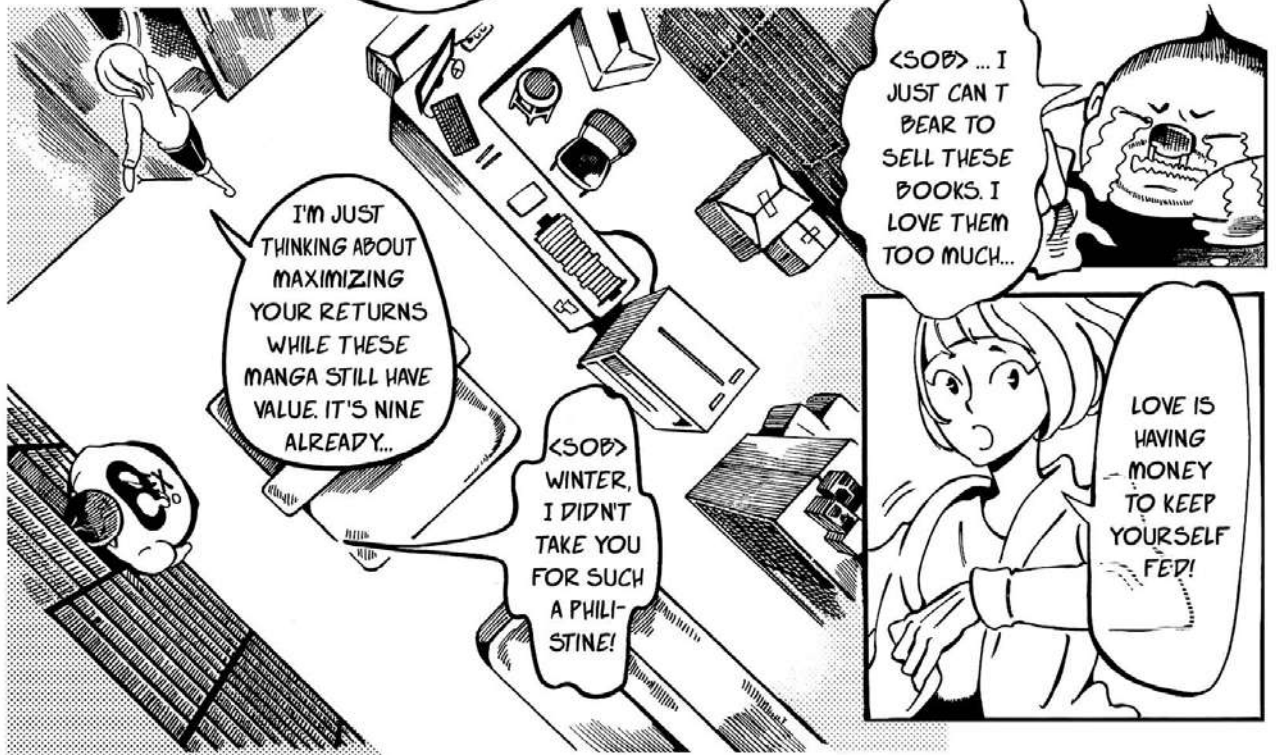
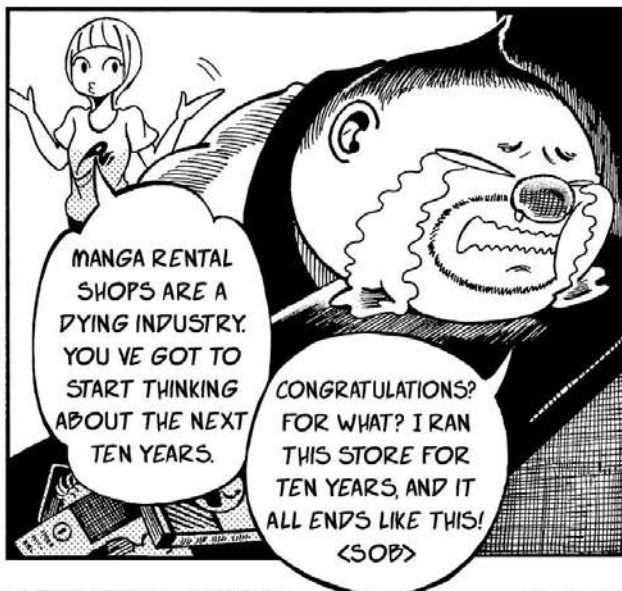
The model for Winter is Dr. B from Stefan Zweig's novella *The Royal Game*. Dr. B developed his prodigious chess ability as a distraction while imprisoned by the Nazis, but when he exercises his abilities in an intense game, it nearly drives him mad. The source of Hsia-sheng's character is the suffering and pain I've witnessed in people around me. He is a composite image of all victims of abuse, bearing witness to the intergenerational trauma, and the deep and seemingly irresolvable resentment that results.

Your graphic novel has go scenes drawn in the style of shonen manga (action comics targeted at teenage boys), the emotional content of shojo manga (sentimental manga targeted at teenage girls), and the real-world observation and detail of workplace manga. Taken together, it becomes hard to categorize. How would you define your work, or, how would you suggest that readers approach it?

My creative work always contains elements that are rearrangements of my own experience. But because I am limited by what I know, I also have to draw from others. This graphic novel grew out of the life experiences of quite a few different people, incorporating them into a collage of life-fragments. Within these somewhat arbitrary experiences, I hope that readers will feel a flash of recognition, a resonance of feeling that lingers even after they put the book down.

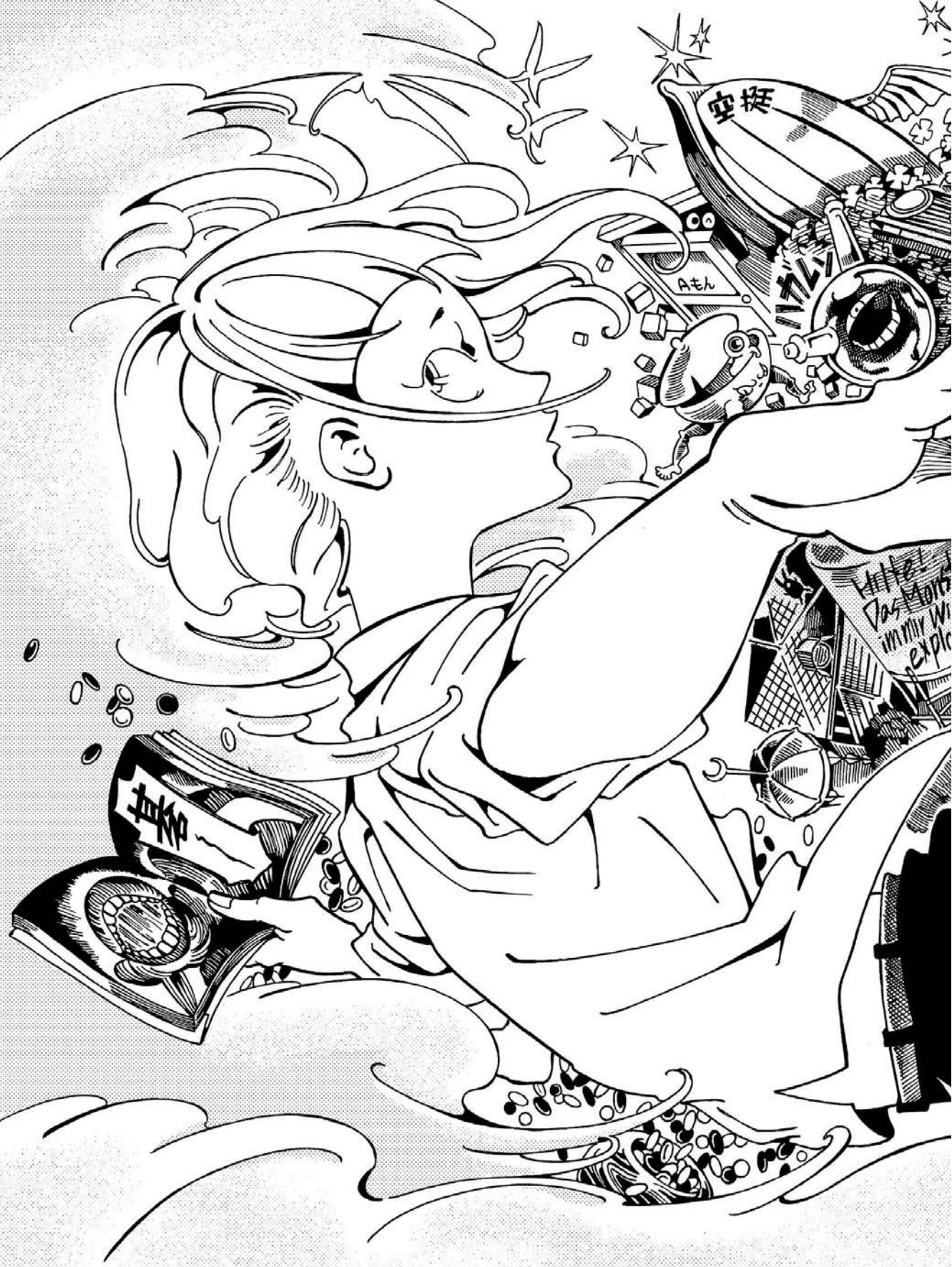








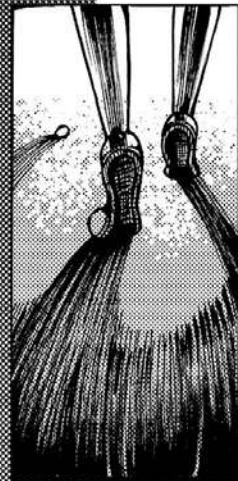






MOST OF THEM RENTED OUT MANGA, NOVELS, AND DVD'S. SOME ALSO SOLD SOFT DRINKS AND SNACKS.

THE LATE 90'S AND EARLY 2000'S WERE THE GOLDEN AGE OF TAIWAN'S MANGA RENTAL SHOPS. AT THE TIME THERE WERE OVER 4000 OF THEM THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.



AND SLOWLY MANGA RENTAL STORES WERE DISPLACED AS THE MAIN SOURCE OF ENTERTAINMENT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN TAIWAN. WITHIN THE LAST TWO YEARS, THERE HAS BEEN AN AVALANCHE OF STORE CLOSURES.

ADD TO THAT THE IMPACT OF RAMPANT ONLINE PIRACY AND COMPETING SOURCES OF ENTERTAINMENT MADE AVAILABLE BY THE PROLIFERATION OF SMART PHONES...



IN RECENT YEARS, INCREASES IN URBAN RENTS AND THE COST OF GOODS ADDED TO THE OVERHEAD OF THESE SMALL STORES.



THE MOVIE PAINTER

畫電影的人：手繪海報的美好時光



- **Publisher:** Gaea Books
- **Date:** 2/2021
- **Rights contact:**
booksfromtaiwan.rights@gmail.com
- **Pages:** 208
- **Volume:** 1 (END)

Struggling to get by in the 1960's Taiwan, the island nation's golden age of cinema, a young man alters his destiny by turning away from a life of crime and becoming a master of the art of hand-painted movie billboards.

When he's not loafing around on the streets or engaging in petty burglary, small-time hoodlum Li Mo-cheng occasionally engages in legitimate work delivering packages. One day he accidentally damages a delivery he is making for a one-armed man with a fearsome reputation. When Li Mo-cheng opens the package to inspect the damage, he finds he has ruined part of a hand-painted movie poster intended for a movie production studio. To cover his error, he decides to repaint the damaged portion himself. His ruse is easily discovered, but when the one-armed seeks out Li Mo-cheng, it is not to give him a retaliatory beating, but to offer him a job as a painter's apprentice!

Only after entering the trade does Li Mo-cheng discover that the one-armed man is the most in-demand movie poster and billboard painter in Taiwan. But as an apprentice, Li Mo-cheng's duties are to wash paint brushes and perform other menial tasks – hardly a step up from his days of loafing about, and difficult pill to swallow for a man who overrates his own abilities. Only after secretly accepting a commission and having his work rejected by the client does Li Mo-cheng realize there is more to the art of painting movie posters than he first imagined. He further witnesses the role a well-painted poster plays in creating a box office sensation, and feels a sense of accomplishment when one of his sketches is praised by his teacher. However, none of this is enough to spare him from the temptation of easy money when some old associates ask him to help carry out an armed robbery....

Hand painted movie posters and billboards have a special role of the cinematic history of Taiwan, China, and Japan. Golden Comic Award winner Jian Jia-Cheng recreates the heyday of this overlooked art form with vivid characterizations and compelling storytelling. Additionally, the lives of Taiwan's most famous movie poster painters are interwoven into the plot to help situate the story within the historical development of the craft.



Jian Jia-Cheng 簡嘉誠

Despite having graduated with a BA in English, Jian Jia-Cheng decided he would spend his life drawing comics while still at middle school. After college, he worked as a financial cartoonist and as a storyboard artist for animation studios and advertisements. He began to publish his own original works, not only as a solo artist and writer, but also as a collaborator with others. His published works include *Back Street Dusk* and *Time Train*, and he has represented Taiwan at the Angoulême International Comics Festival in 2014.

REKINDLING THE PASSION FOR CLASSIC TAIWANESE CINEMA: JIAN JIA-CHENG ON CREATING COMICS WITH A PURPOSE

Written by Jian Jia-Cheng

Translated by Joshua Dyer

Your previous book focused on the subject of film restoration. The current one focuses on the art of hand painted film posters and billboards. Are there any interesting anecdotes you can share from the process of developing these graphic novels?

While drawing the previous book I accompanied the Taiwan Film Institute team on a trip to Taichung to better understand the film restoration process. We went to a warehouse on the outskirts of the city, where, along with a bunch of other junk, there were these neat stacks of film canisters. The family of the warehouse owner once ran a business showing open air movies in the squares in front of local temples. That's why all of this stuff was there.

The team carried out all these dusty canisters and stacked them in their truck one by one - it was hard physical labor! I thought about everything that would happen next - each would have to be carefully inspected back at the archives and ones that were too badly decayed would be thrown out - so much work. But somewhere in that stack of canisters they might find a lost film. The work of saving old films is so labor intensive, and sometimes you find nothing at all. It's a bit like panning for gold. But it is still necessary.

While I was collecting material for the second book, I came across an interesting fact: sometimes the people painting the posters didn't know what would be in the movie! Because there was a mad rush to produce these Taiwanese-language films, sometimes studios ran short of cash, so they would go to the movie theaters begging for capital. The movie theaters needed to show movies to make money, and generally the movies would be profitable as long as they controlled costs. So the theaters would agree to invest, but they needed some kind of guarantee that the studio would actually complete the film. The movie poster was the guarantee. The studio would take photos of their actors and some preliminary plot sketches to the poster artists, and from this limited information they would have to create a poster as if the movie already existed. The studios could then take the poster to the movie theater to request funding. To me, this was a really interesting way of doing things.

We've heard that the character of the painter in the book is derived from Chen Tzu-Fu, an famous painter of movie posters from the period. How much of the original Chen Tzu-Fu remained once you were finished molding the character? Why did you retain these parts of Chen Tzu-Fu's life?

Two painters, Chen Tzu-fu and Juan Ta-yung, supplied elements of the character, though I took greater inspiration from Chen Tzu-fu. Because Chen Tzu-fu was recruited into the Japanese army, and because at the time I was reading Wu

Ming-Yi's *The Stolen Bicycle* which talks about the experiences of Taiwanese soldiers in Southeast Asia, I started to form this image of a macho, tough-guy sort of painter. Since he lost his arm in the war, the image also became associated with the character of Yang Guo from *Legends of the Condor Heroes*, and that set the form of the character.

What's your impression of Taiwan's hand-painted movie posters? Can you share with our readers your favorite poster?

The beauty of hand-painted movie posters can't be captured in reproductions. The way the text and images are arranged reveal a lot about the careful thought that went into compositions, as well as each artist's individual style. You can spend a lot of time just admiring this aspect of the art form.

There are so many that I like, but I'll share a bit about one from the movie *Son* which left a deep impression. You see three siblings on the train tracks. The son is blind. The middle sister is mute, and oldest sister leans on the middle sister because she can barely stand. Behind them, you can see the train hurtling towards them. From this image you can get a sense of the tragic character of so many Taiwanese-language films. You break out in a cold sweat seeing what could happen to the three siblings. I think this is a classic example of a poster that can stir the viewer's curiosity about the movie.

A number of movie posters make appearances throughout the course of the graphic novel. Is there one that you particularly liked? Can you tell us why?

My favorite is probably the poster for *Heaven and Earth Sword*, an *wuxia*, or martial-arts adventure film. Chen Tzu-fu had a lot of experience painting *wuxia* posters. He once said painting *wuxia* posters was second nature to him, and it really shows in his compositions and technique. I wanted to draw something like one of his posters, so for me it was a pleasure to envision this poster and draw it into the graphic novel.



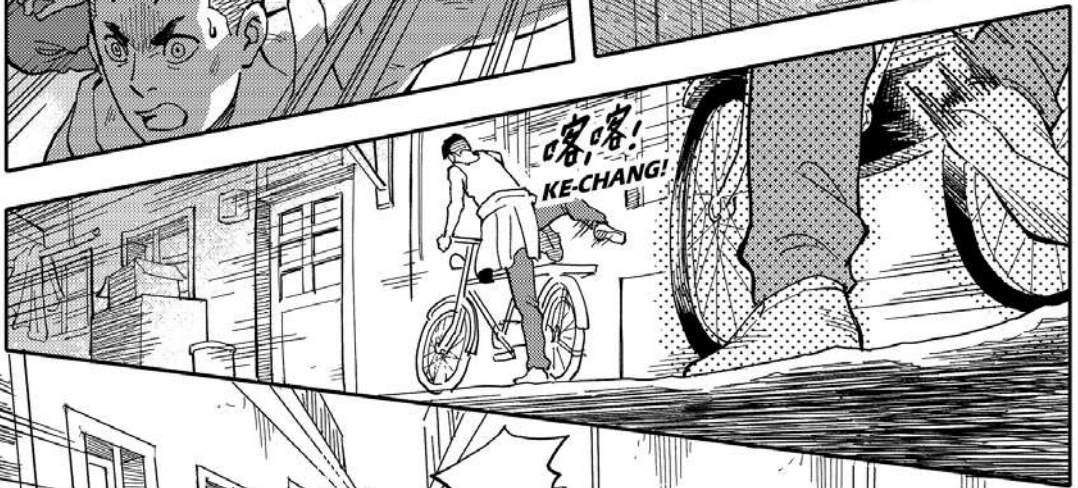


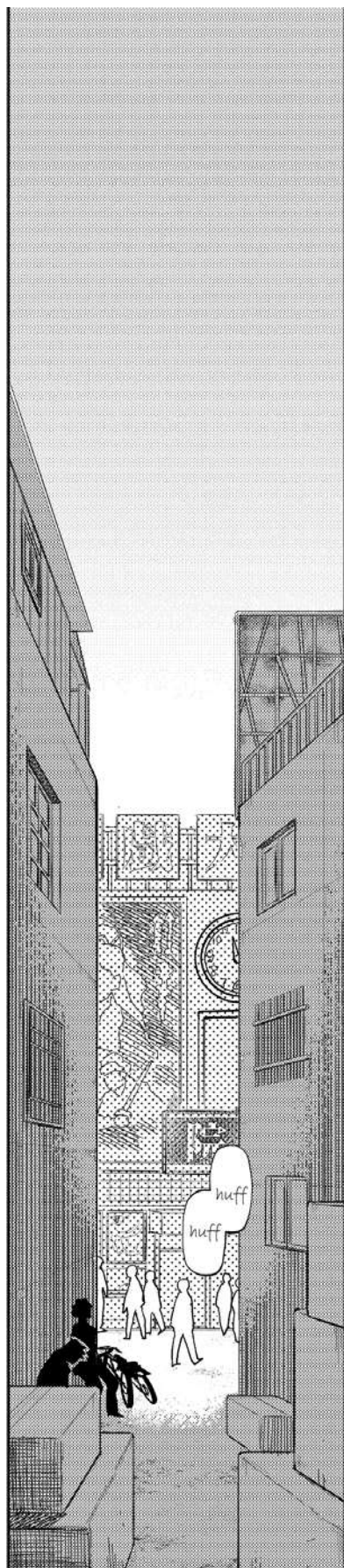


THEN
WHY
DIDNT
BUY NEW
ONES?

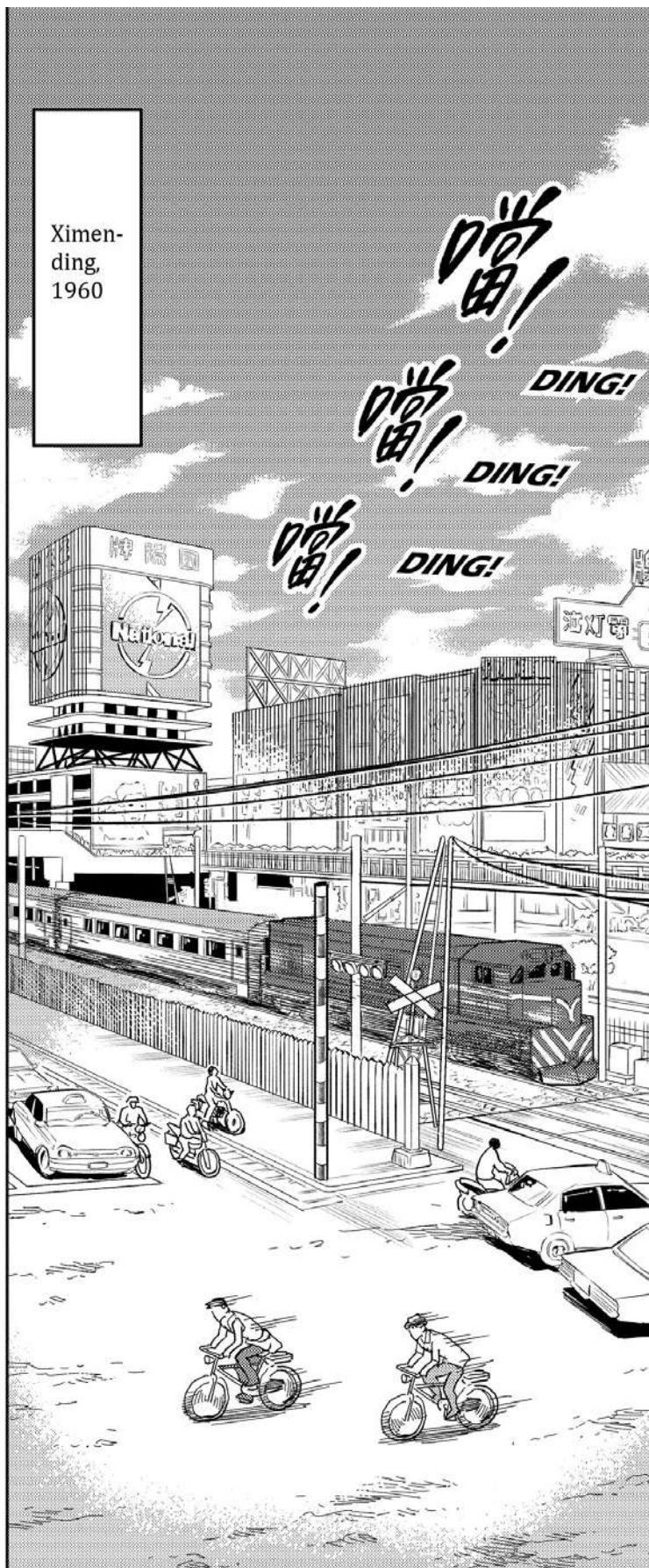
IF I HAD
MONEY
WOULD I
BE DOING
THIS?

...IT'S
OPENING



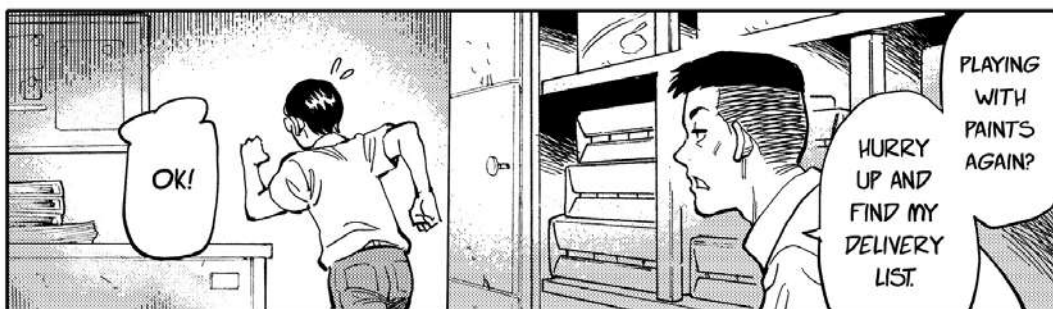


Ximen-
ding,
1960









ON HAPPINESS ROAD: THE DAYS OF CHILDHOOD

幸福路上：童年時光

* Full-length animated film *On Happiness Road* received prizes at Tokyo Anime Award, the Stuttgart Festival of Animated Film, Seoul International Cartoon and Animation Festival, and the Ottawa International Animation Festival

Following on the international success of animated film On Happiness Road, writer and director Sung Hsin-yin teamed up with comic book artist Lo He to create this graphic novel prequel about everyday life during Sung's childhood in 1980's Taiwan.

Taiwan in the 1980's is gradually opening up after decades of authoritarian rule. An atmosphere of hope permeates the country as manufacturing and small and medium-sized businesses flourish, and big ideas like freedom and democracy become mainstream.

Though elementary school student Lin Shu-chi is growing up on a Taipei street called Happiness Road, she doesn't consider herself particularly happy. The Barbie doll she received on her birthday is nothing like she imagined, the goose she raised on her own was almost cooked and eaten by her family, and she stumbled during a talent show, ruining her dreams of becoming a star. In fact, her troubles are so many they seem beyond counting. Yet, precisely because of these everyday struggles, her childhood is transformed into a stream of touching memories that will last a lifetime.

In these two volumes of six stories each, readers will make the acquaintance of a variety of vivid characters: Lin Shu-chi's magical grandmother, who remembers the old ways of the Amis aboriginal group, a local mixed-race girl with natural curls, a boy who is forced to leave school to work in a temple....

The stories gain an additional layer of depth from background details that conjure atmosphere of the era as well as its controversies, from racial discrimination to political power struggles. Simple line drawings by artist Lo He imbue the story with childlike warmth and energy, perfectly matching the tone of writer Sung Hsin-yin's work. Readers will be transported straight to Happiness Road, where they can experience everyday tragedies and wonders side-by-side with strong-willed, bumbling, and eternally day-dreaming Lin Shu-chi.



Comic by Lo He 羅荷

Comic book artist and 2D animator Lo He toured the international festival circuit with her first animated work, *Remember Me for a Day*. Her short comic *The Gift* received special commendation at the Tottori International Comic Art Contest. Her works include the animated music video *Rabbit Hole* and the *Wishing Pool* mini-comic.



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- **Date:** 6/2021
- **Rights contact:**
booksfromtaiwan.rights@gmail.com
- **Pages:** 192 / 208
- **Volume:** 2 (END)



Original Story by Sung Hsin-yin 宋欣穎

A former entertainment columnist, screenwriter and director Sung Hsin-yin has produced a diverse body of work in film and television ranging from drama to animation to documentary film. She is known for stories with roots in Taiwanese culture that have the power to move international audiences. Her film *On Happiness Road* was recipient of the best cartoon and audience choice awards at the Taipei Film Festival, best animated feature award at the Golden Horse Film Festival, and various other awards at the Seoul International Cartoon and Animation Festival, Tokyo Anime Awards, and the Stuttgart Festival of Animated Film.

THE DAYS OF CHILDHOOD

Written by Sung Hsin-yin

Translated by Joshua Dyer

Before producing the film *On Happiness Road*, my original intent was to make a Taiwanese version of *Chibi Maruko-chan*. After so many years of watching Japanese anime, it was inevitable that as a director I would want to make something for my fellow Taiwanese to watch.

The 1980's society was still in the closing years of martial law, but there was a wonderful feeling in the air. Things were simpler. If I had taken these everyday tales from the life of eternal first-grader Lin Shu-chi, with all their absurdity and wonder, and turned them into animated shorts, I'm sure the results would have been fantastic. At the time I wrote out the stories, I couldn't help but be moved, or even laugh out loud when I read them. I was so pleased with myself, I even imagined that these animated shorts would outdo *Chibi Maruko-chan*.

However, for a variety of reasons, I later decided to produce a full-length feature. I wrote the script from the perspective of the adult Lin Shu-chi. The stories of her childhood were all there, but when told from the perspective of an adult, these childhood memories inevitably became more sentimental.

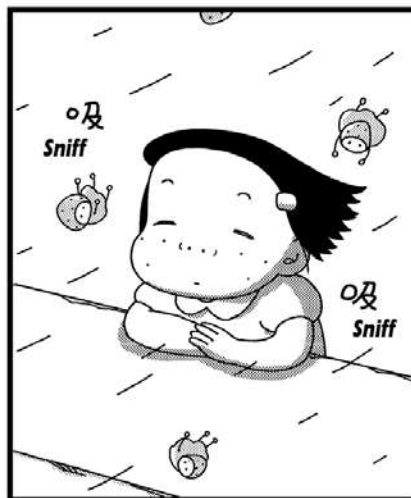
Later, the film toured the world, won various prizes, and received good reviews from a number of critics. I should have felt deeply satisfied and continued on with my life. But what a shame it would be to abandon those short stories that were still sitting on my hard drive! I wanted the world to see these little treasures. Thus, my mind got working on the idea of turning them into a graphic novel. After talking to a few artists I hired Lo He. The reason for my choice was simple. Just as I had throughout the entire process of making the movie, I followed my gut, and my gut believed Lo He was the best person for the job.

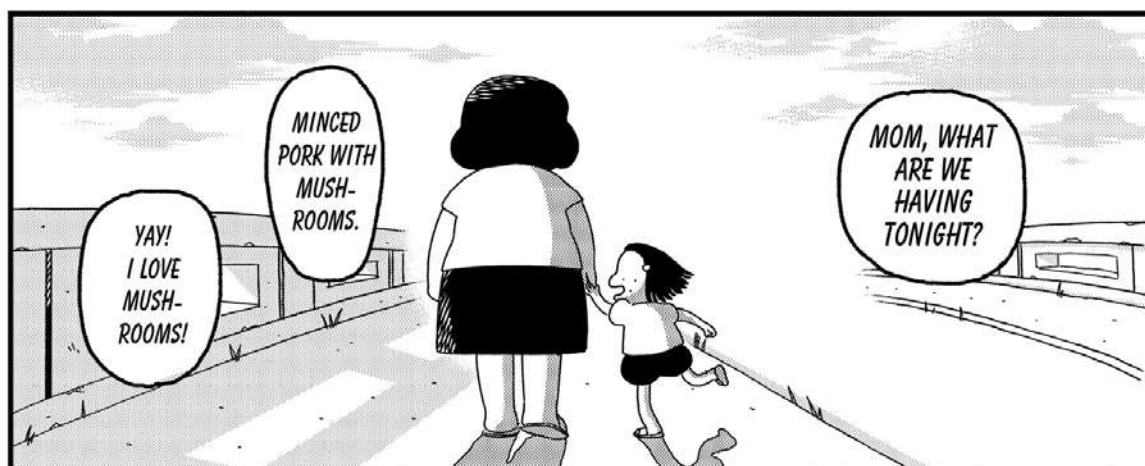
In the end, my gut was right. Despite being twenty years my junior, Lo He's handling of a story that took place before she was born was pitch perfect. She produced an outstanding work. Her layouts have verve, and her art brings out the absurdity and silliness of Lin Shu-chi's school days. Being the first reader of this comic universe, I often laughed out loud while reviewing the drafts on my computer screen. Passing by, my husband would ask, "Are you all right?" I'm proud of the graphic novel now that it is finished, but there is also a sense of sadness. What will I do now that there are no new drafts to chortle over?

Our childhood memories are a kind of eternal homesickness. I wasn't particularly happy as a little girl, and I sought comfort by immersing myself in manga, movies, and TV shows. Now that I'm an adult, Taiwan is a radically different place, and I've become someone who tells stories for a living. Looking back on my childhood, an era of absurdities, of tragicomedies shaped by history, all I see are these wonderful stories everywhere. Recently it has become popular to say, "I laughed until I cried, then cried until I laughed." To me, a good story has to play things up in this way. As a creator of stories, this is what I hope to deliver to my audience.

I hope that readers of *On Happiness Road* will find that their laughter touched with tears, and their tears touched with love.

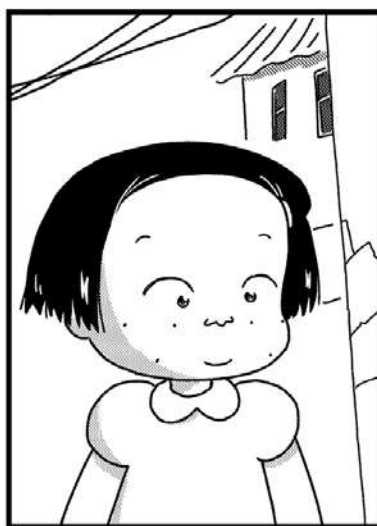


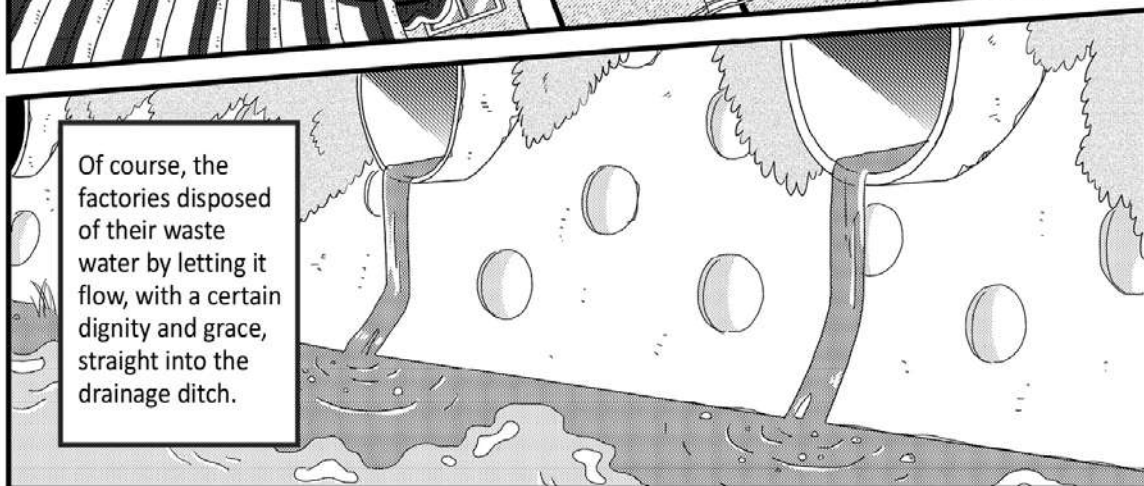
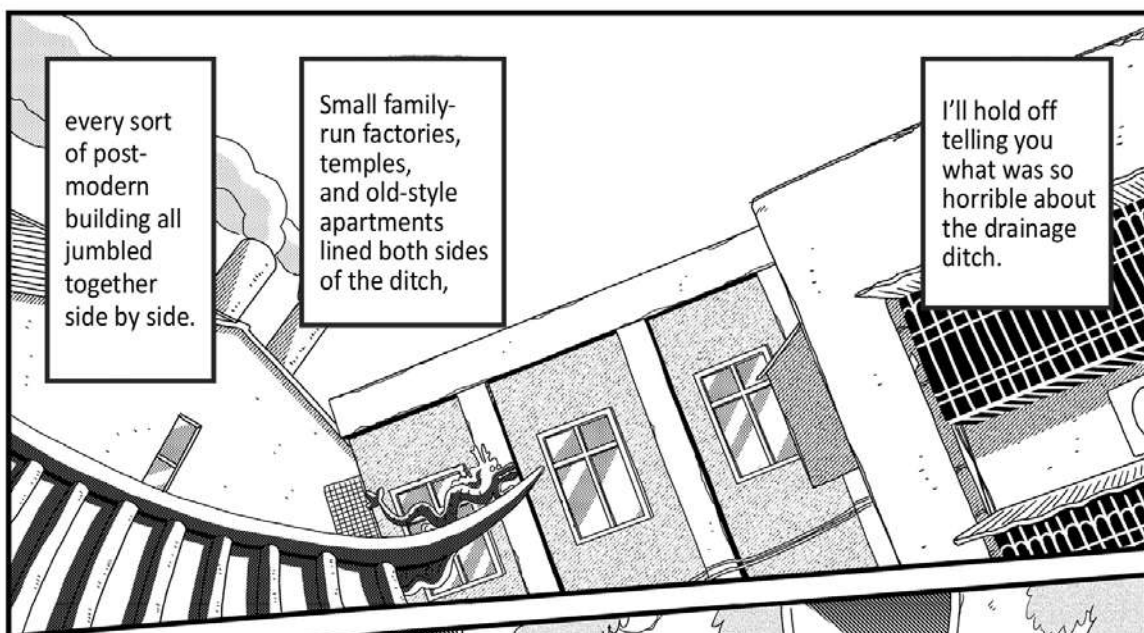
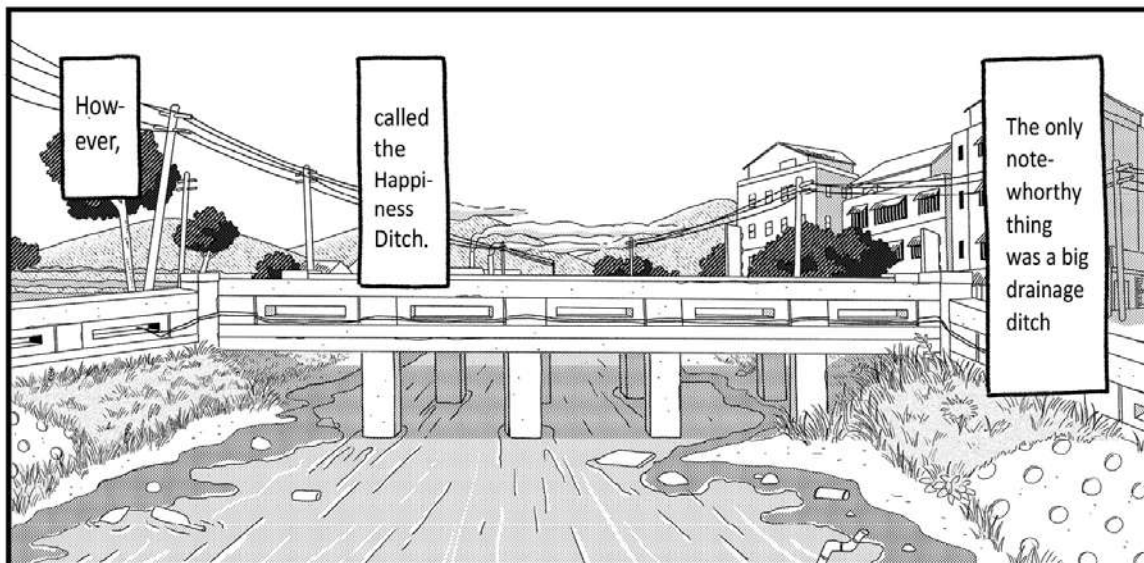


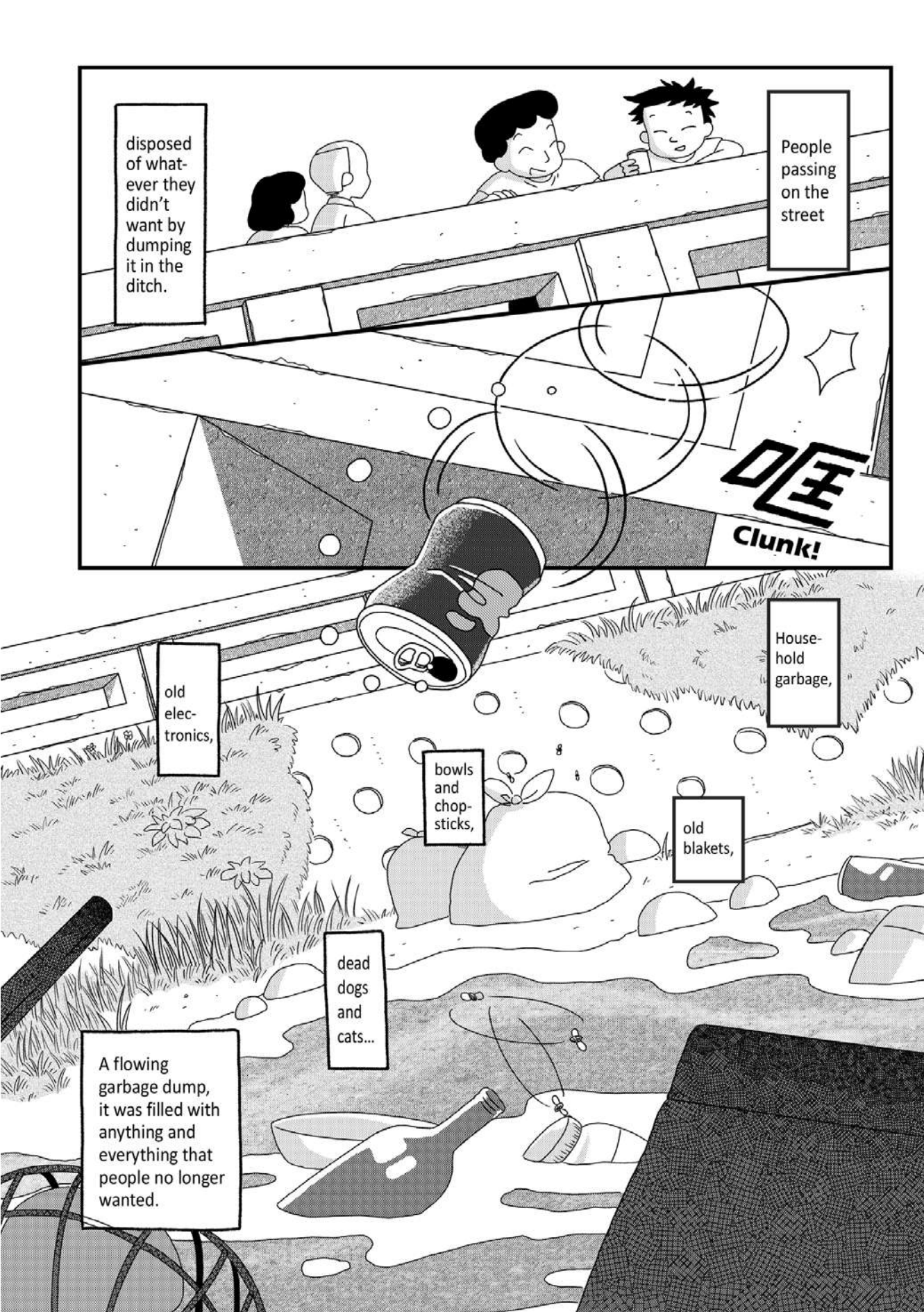


Chapter 1: The Secret Signal of Happiness Ditch









disposed of whatever they didn't want by dumping it in the ditch.

People passing on the street

Clunk!

old electronics,

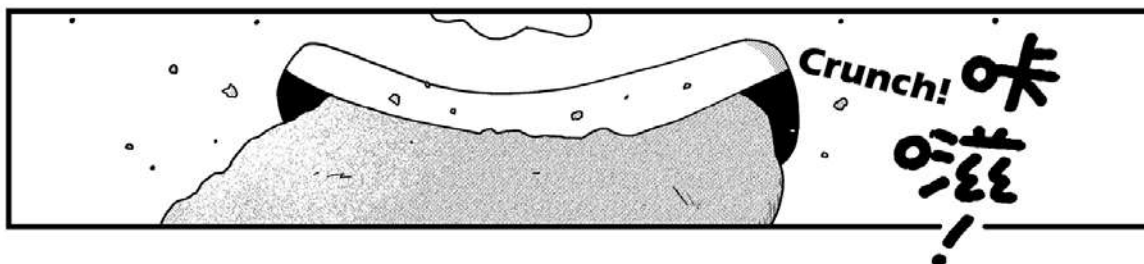
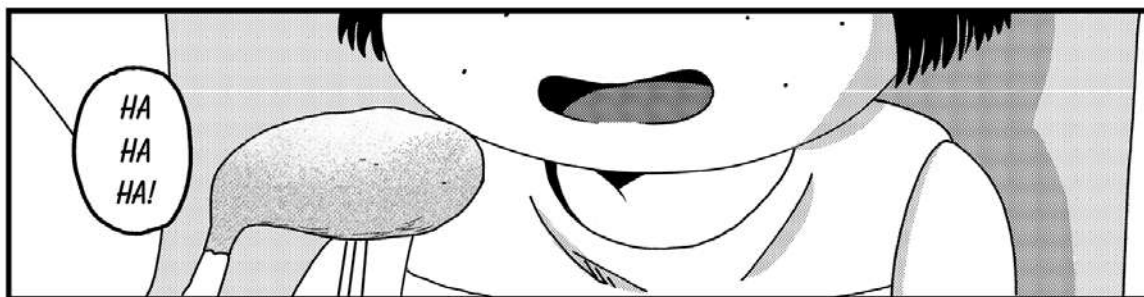
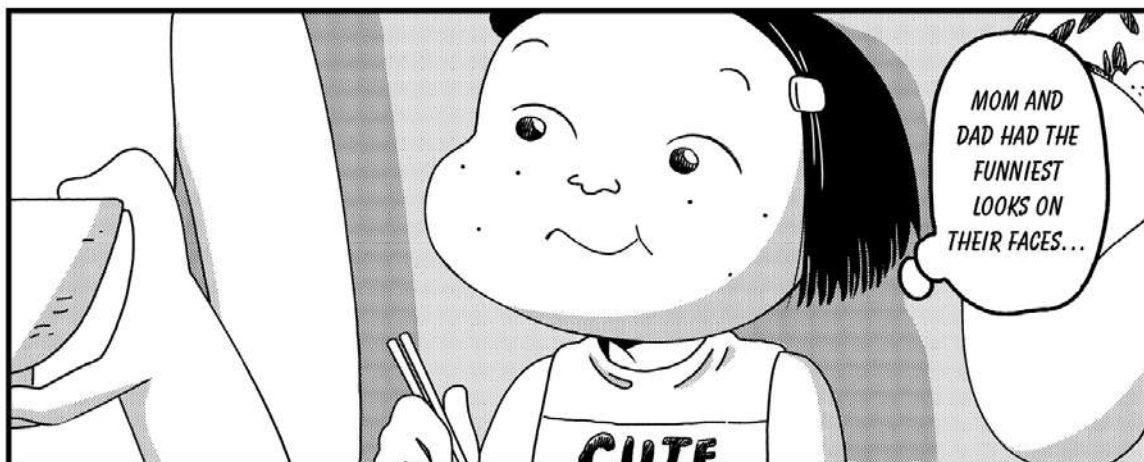
Household garbage,

bowls and chopsticks,

old blankets,

dead dogs and cats...

A flowing garbage dump, it was filled with anything and everything that people no longer wanted.



THE EYE OF SARUTAHIKO

海龍改改：消失的猿田彥之眼



- **Publisher:**
Yes Creative / Papa Publishing
- **Date:** 3/2021
- **Rights contact:**
booksfromtaiwan.rights@gmail.com
- **Pages:** 256
- **Volume:** 1 (ongoing)

* Animated film adaptation of the source novel currently in production

A jaded youth sent back to his hometown, a military history geek, a pretty freshman Japanese major, and a precocious teen car mechanic are about to set off on the treasure hunt of a lifetime, following clues from a 75-year-old notebook left in Taiwan by a Japanese soldier.

When he fails to get into college, 18-year-old Lin Hui-sheng returns to Laomei, the small fishing town on the north coast of Taiwan where he spent his childhood. One day while browsing a second-hand shop he inadvertently purchases an old notebook leftover from the Japanese occupation. Though he doesn't understand a word of Japanese, his curiosity is piqued by the drawings he finds inside, particularly the hand-drawn map of a seemingly familiar landscape. Believing he is on the verge of a momentous discovery, he resolves to crack the riddle of the mysterious diary!

Unable to read Japanese, Lin Hui-sheng enlists the help of his high school buddies. Starting from a map in the shape of a Tengu, a creature from Japanese mythology, the trio manage to locate an abandoned bunker. The bunker opens into an underground corridor, but all they find at the end is an empty cavern where they can hear the sounds of the wave pounding against the famous Laomei reefs. Is there really some kind of treasure to be found here? Exactly what was the purpose of the map?

The Eye of Sarutahiko is the comic book adaptation of Chang Kuo-Li's novel of the same name. While undertaking the adaptation, the team conducted a survey of the region around Laomei in order to more accurately depict the setting of the novel, and to better introduce readers to the beauty of the northern Taiwan coast. With its distinctive characters and humorous narrative style, *The Eye of Sarutahiko* will be loved by readers of all ages.



Comic by Han Tsai-Chun 韓采君

Art director and illustrator Han Tsai-Chun has more than ten years of experience in comic books and related industries. Known for her exquisite sense of color and her ability to capture powerful visual effects in a freehand style, Han Tsai-Chun is currently art director of Pig Box Studio.



Comic by Chao Ta-Wei 趙大威

Director, animator, and illustrator Chao Ta-Wei has dedicated himself to creating original animations and teaching his craft to others. His work has garnered major domestic and international awards and is characterized by images infused with the details of everyday life.



Original Story by Chang Kuo-Li 張國立

Chang Kuo-Li, one time editor-in-chief of *China Times Weekly*, has won numerous awards for his writing. A linguist, historian, army expert, sports fan, food critic, as well as poet, playwright and novelist, he is truly a Renaissance man. He has published a dozen books over his career, including *Italy in One Bite*, *Birdwatchers*, *The Jobless Detective*, and *The Sniper*. His work *The Sniper* has been translated into Dutch, German, French, English, Russian, and Turkish.

NOVEL, GRAPHIC NOVEL, AND ANIMATED FEATURE: THE CREATORS OF THE EYE OF SARUTAHIKO ON THE PROCESS OF ADAPTATION

Written by Han Tsai-Chun and Chao Ta-Wei

Translated by Joshua Dyer

What were your first impressions of Chang Kuo-Li's novel, the novel from which the graphic novel is adapted? What left the deepest impression? Why did it move you?

Chao: I've always read Chang Kuo-Li's novels. When I read *The Eye of Sarutahiko* in 2018, I loved it because it has Chang Kuo-Li's warmth and humor. I also identified with the values in the novel. The main character, Hui-sheng, would be considered a loser by most people. But he never gives up. He's always working to change his life, which creates all kinds of possibilities. Not miraculous changes, but more like the aspiration to create something beautiful. I also like Chang Kuo-Li's environmental views. He's concerned about the environment, but he's not focused on blame.

Han: I like the gentle tone of the novel. Like the way Hui-sheng is always concerned about the people around him. He doesn't express his concern as criticism. Instead he works to improve himself and others.

What made you want to create an animated film and graphic novel based on the novel?

Chao: I had images appearing in my mind the whole time I was reading the novel. As a director of animated films, I really wanted to see what these characters and settings would look like if they could move. Especially the scenes of the submarine restoration. Another thing is the way the stage of the story is filled with all these props and backdrops familiar to Taiwanese people. This is the kind of story I like to bring to life, so I decided to speak with the author about the rights for graphic novel and film adaptations.

Han: I wanted to see the characters interact with one another. (The story) brought back memories of my youth.

What attracted you to the various characters?

Chao: We both liked Li Wang. There is a lot of the author in him. Witty, honest, broad minded, and a bit mysterious. He's rough around the edges, but also sharp and meticulous. He supports the kids, but at his own pace, and in his own way. He's this magical character who is directing things behind the scenes. The character design for Li Wang contains a lot of my feelings from my first meeting with Chang Kuo-Li.

Hui-sheng has the most depth in the novel. Our emotional journey follows him, and we care about him the most.

Han: Because Hui-sheng cares about his friends, we, in turn, care about him.

The plot and characters are altered a bit in the graphic novel. Why is that?

Chao, Han: The Hui-sheng of the novel is a bit simple-minded and naïve. Hui-sheng in the graphic novel thinks more about things, which makes him feel a bit older. Also, we made Hsiao Lai a tomboy to help with gender balance.

As for the length, we end the graphic novel when the submarine is discovered, but we also quickened the pace so that most of the story takes place in Laomei. If we were to complete the story it would take three more graphic novels!

An animated film adaptation is also in the works. What is the relationship to the graphic novel?

Chao, Han: Animation and comics are two different mediums. The pacing is different, but the atmosphere and feel of the characters are the same. We hope that readers of the graphic novel will be eager to see the movie. We also hope that we will have the opportunity to do three more graphic novels!





HAVE YOU
SEEN MY
GRANDPA?

AUNTIE,

My name is
Lin Hui-sheng.
I'm 17 years
old, and I just
graduated
from high
school two
days ago.



YUP!

ARE YOU BACK
ON VACATION,
HUI-SHENG?

Every summer
and winter
vacation she
sends me back
to Laomei.



YOUR
MOTHER
DIDN'T
COME
WITH
YOU?


SHE HAD
TO WATCH
THE STORE.



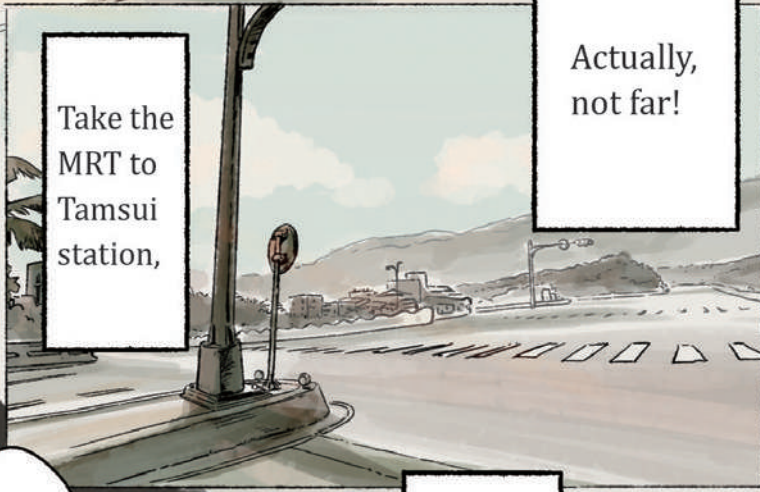
JUST
NOW.

WHEN
DID YOU
GET
BACK?

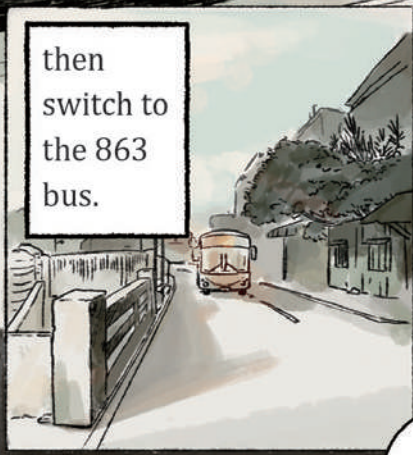
My mother
and I
moved
to Taipei
when I
was 12.



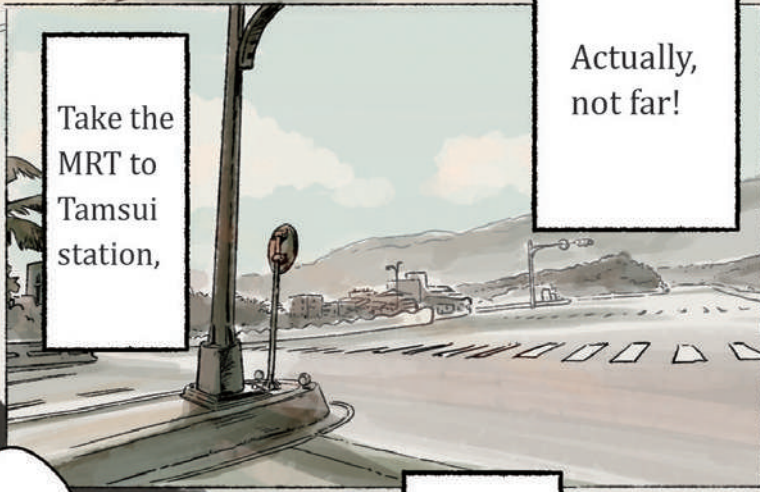
How far is
Laomei?



Actually,
not far!



then
switch to
the 863
bus.




Take the
MRT to
Tamsui
station,




HUI-
SHENG,

YOU HAVE
TO KEEP
AN EYE ON
GRANDPA.
DON'T GO
OUT RUNNING
AROUND!

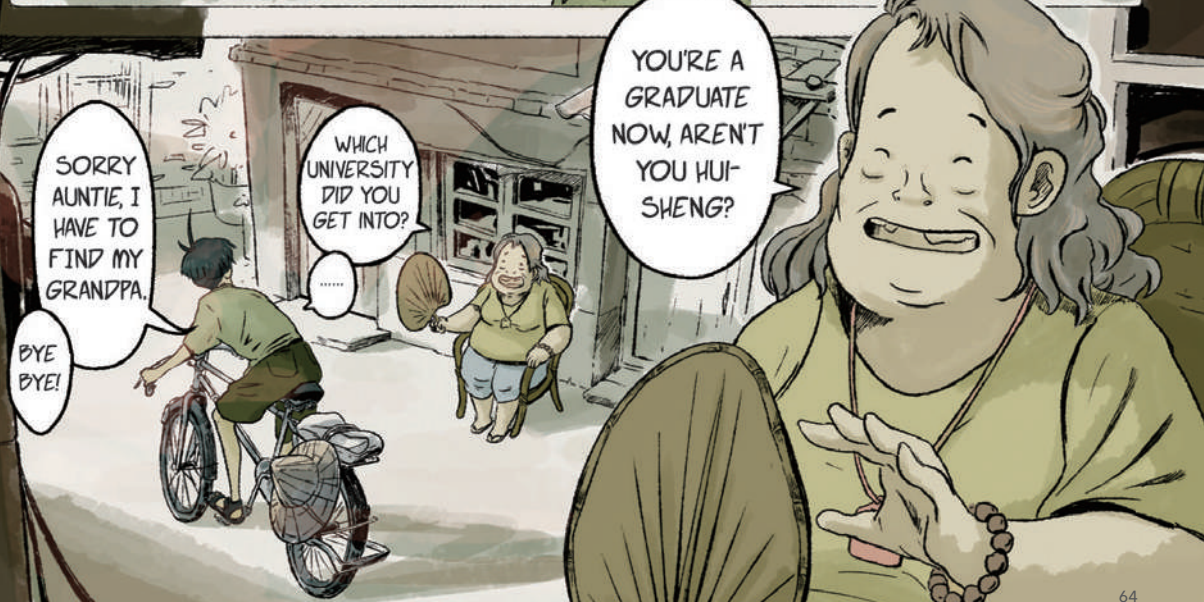
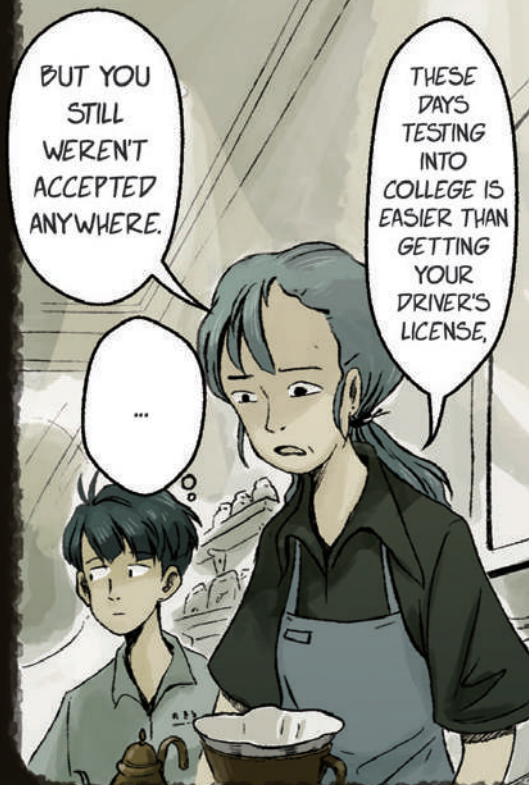


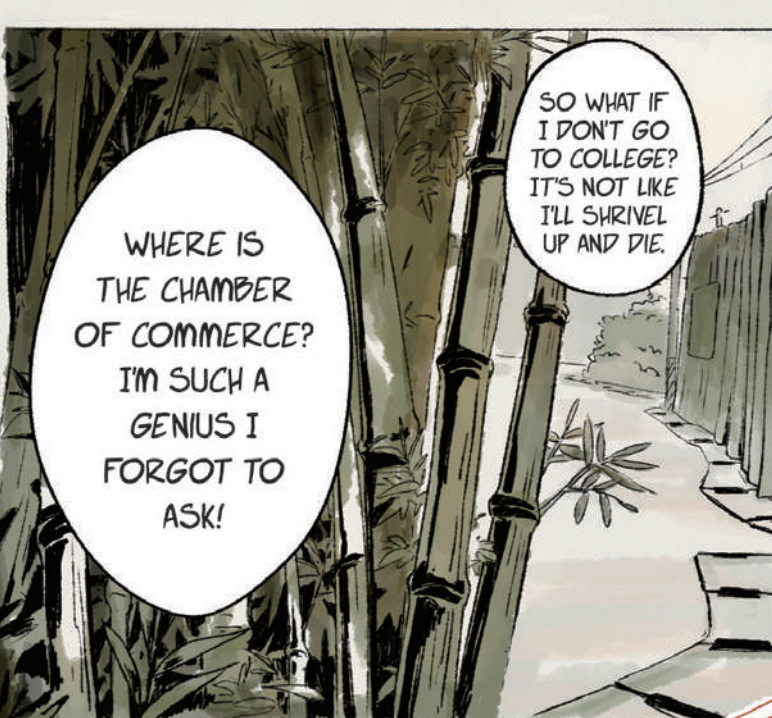
about the
time it
takes your
butt to go
numb,



Wait 53
stops,

and
you're
there!






WHERE IS
THE CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE?
I'M SUCH A
GENIUS I
FORGOT TO
ASK!

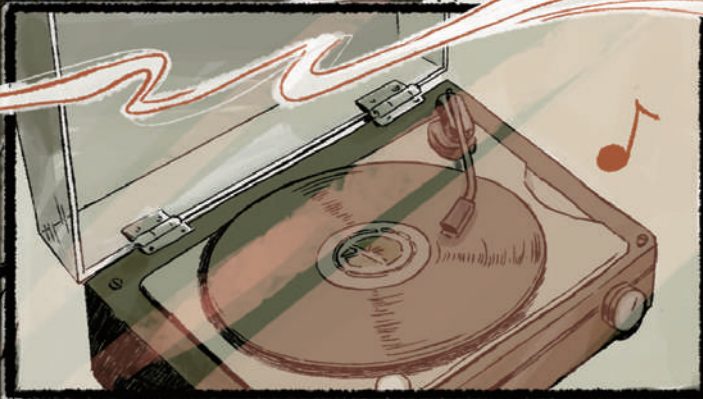
SO WHAT IF
I DON'T GO
TO COLLEGE?
IT'S NOT LIKE
I'LL SHRIVEL
UP AND DIE.



YOUR
GRANDPPA
WENT TO THE
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE
FOR THE
CONCERT.
EVERYONE'S
THERE.



HE MUST
NOT HAVE
PASSED HIS
EXAMS!



IS
THAT
MUSIC?



WHAT
A PAIN!





SINCE WHEN
HAS LAOMEI
HAD A JUNK
SHOP?

HEY!
LEON THE
PROFE-
SSIONAL.

67

NETHERWARRANT

閻王帖



- **Publisher:** Dyna Books
- **Date:** 8/2020
- **Rights contact:**
booksfromtaiwan.rights@gmail.com
- **Pages:** 196
- **Volume:** 1 (ongoing)



Yuzu 柚子

From Chiayi, Taiwan. Yuzu has published graphic novels *The King of Hell* and *The Tiger God*, and also the board game *The Wonderful Island II: Let the Shoes Fly*.

When a young man with the ability to see spirits encounters a strange boy in a mask and old-fashioned garb, he quickly finds himself forced on a journey through the Netherworld – one which teaches him to reevaluate his gifts. From there, his life becomes increasingly interwoven with events of the Netherworld in this darkly humorous re-imagining of the Buddhist afterlife.

Upon death, all spirits must first pass through the Netherworld before continuing to rebirth in a new life. There, King Yama sits before a high table, assigning penances that must be fulfilled before rebirth is attained. The living are forbidden from visiting the Netherworld unless they possess a special document called a Netherwarrant.

This graphic novel features a protagonist born with the ability to see spirits, but who views this gift as nothing less than a curse. Late one night the young man encounters an unusual boy wearing a mask and dressed in ancient garb who claims he is Black Impermanence, assistant to King Yama. Black Impermanence tells the young man he must use his gift of “the sight” to help people, and then, to help him realize the importance of his gift, gives him a folded blank sheet of paper – a Netherwarrant. Within moments, the young man crosses over to the Netherworld.

After returning from the land of the dead, the young man is indeed changed. Some time later, he and Black Impermanence are reunited once more. This time Black Impermanence has a special mission: to locate the missing King Yama. His only clue is that King Yama is located in a mysterious place on an island in the East. Thus, he and his counterpart White Impermanence have been investigating various unusual phenomena in Taiwan, but so far these strange occurrences are mostly the results of human ignorance, greed, and brutishness, and have nothing to do with the missing King Yama.

Artist Yuzu excels at depicting uncanny creatures and the expressions of terror and fright that they inevitably inspire in mere mortals. In *Netherwarrant*, she applies her personal style to elements of Buddhist belief to create a darkly humorous and immersive vision of the afterlife. The story avoids black and white approaches to morality, instead constructing a plot that reveals the complexity of human character, and will appeal to readers who love tales of adventure and the supernatural.

DRAWING INSPIRATION FROM THE AFTERLIFE: AN INTERVIEW WITH NETHERWARRANT CREATOR YUZU

Written by Yuzu

Translated by Joshua Dyer

What was the source of inspiration for the story? Why did you decide to use King Yama and the Netherworld as source materials?

When I was a kid I read a martial arts novel that had a kung fu move called “King Yama’s Travel Permit”. It was probably meant to make the move sound particularly devastating, as if it would send you straight to the Netherworld to see King Yama. The phrase left a strong impression, and I started thinking how interesting it would be if there really was a document that permitted one to travel to the Netherworld. Once the idea of the “Netherwarrant” was settled, I threw in a few characters, a few messed up things that happened to me, and a bunch of my personal gripes about life, and that’s the story.

The gods that figure most prominently in the graphic novel are Black and White Impermanence. Why did you choose to focus on these two characters? Are there any thoughts you can share about the process of designing the characters?

In folk tales, Black and White Impermanence are gods. One is short, the other tall. One is black, the other white. Selecting them to be main characters meant that the images in the graphic novel would be quite varied. In order to make the graphic novel more appealing, I depicted White Impermanence as a tall, beautiful woman, and Black Impermanence as a small boy. If I had drawn them as they appear in folktales, with the whole plot revolving around their quest to find King Yama, it might have seemed too pretentious. On the other hand, if I had modernized their appearance, the otherness of these folk gods would have been lost.

After a lot of fretting I finally decided to preserve their color schemes, but otherwise simplify their appearances. For example, White Impermanence should hold a fan of feathers, but a simple folded fan was easier to draw. Black Impermanence should have a black veil over his face, but a mask of white cloth was easier to draw. And White Impermanence should have white hair, but black hair is easier to draw, so once again I took the easy way out.

The second supernatural incident in the graphic novel takes place in an easily recognizable real-world setting. Was there some real life incident that formed the basis of the story? Are there any other backgrounds in the book drawn from actual places?

There was no incident on which the story was based. Because the main character is so burdened by high expectations, she can never settle for anything less than perfection. I imagine other people would see this kind of character as leading a charmed life, so when it came time to draw her university, naturally I chose the prestigious National Taiwan University as the backdrop. Other real-world places that made it into the graphic novel are Taipei Main Station, the shopping district around Taiwan Normal University, and a nightlife district in Banqiao.

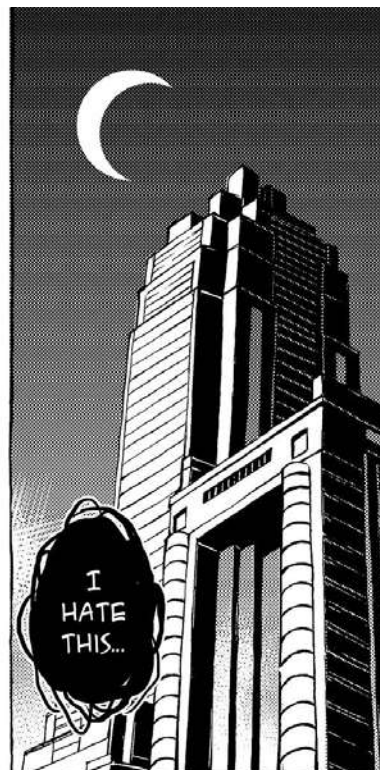
You mentioned that you used an ink brush while working on the graphic novel. What’s the difference between working with an ink brush and more conventional art tools? Is there anything interesting you can share about the ink brush?

The tip of an ink brush is quite soft so at first I had to work hard at controlling it to produce the desired line thickness. But once I got used to it, I found that I could produce any thickness of line I wanted using one tool. That makes it very convenient. Also, I no longer have to keep all this pointy dip pens on my table, which has greatly reduced the number of accidental jabs I receive in the name of art. The downside is ink brush painting doesn’t suit every kind of subject matter, and it is hard to find assistants who can use an ink brush. So in the end, using an ink brush increases my workload.





CHAPTER 1







WANDERING SPIRITS
Commonly known as ghosts. They often appear at night, but are undetectable to the eyes of ordinary people.



Image copied from Tsukioka Yoshitoshi's "Demon in the Form of an Old Woman, Fleeing with a Severed Arm," woodblock print, 1889.



Only those with the rare gift of "the sight" can see them.



THE SISTER OF THE BAMBOO STOOL AND OTHER TALES OF THE SUPERNATURAL

婆娑島妖事錄



- **Publisher:** Linking
- **Date:** 3/2021
- **Rights contact:**
booksfromtaiwan.rights@gmail.com
- **Pages:** 232
- **Volume:** 1 (END)

Five legendary creatures lurking in Taiwan's recent past are catalogued in five short graphic novels. This collection puts on display the colorful variety of Taiwan's traditional tales of the supernatural by blending spooky thrills with human pathos.

Water ghouls that were once human but remain bound to rivers in death, a child-like spirit that dispenses advice via a Ouija-board-like ritual, a pair of fearsome guardians that escort the dead to the Netherworld to face judgment... readers will veer between fascination, sympathy, and terror as they learn about the unlikely creatures that inhabit Taiwanese myths and legends.

These supernatural creatures vary in type and origin. Some began life as humans, but in death were transformed into spirits that remain in contact with the human realm. In certain circumstances cats and dogs are said to lead a second life on this earth in the form of cat-demons or hell-hounds. Other creatures introduced here are entirely other-worldly, such as the ox and horse-headed generals that serve King Yama of the Netherworld. Far from being purely malevolent, many of these entities have feelings and even a sense of morality, righting the wrongs of the human world, or providing guidance to those in need.

Artist Ticker's ink-painted panels perfectly capture the rich and darkly alluring atmosphere of the macabre that permeates these supernatural tales.



Ticker 提克

Originally a comic strip artist for the children's newspaper *Mandarin Daily News*, Ticker has adapted the techniques of ink and brush painting to the comic book medium. *The Sister of the Bamboo Stool and Other Tales of the Supernatural* is his first commercial graphic novel.

WHERE FANTASY MEETS REALITY: ARTIST TICKER ON SKETCHING A SUPERNATURAL HISTORY OF TAIWAN

Written by Ticker

Translated by Joshua Dyer

Before I began working on this graphic novel about Taiwan's supernatural creatures I knew as little about the subject as most readers. My knowledge was limited to the few ghost stories that everyone has heard. As I delved deeper, I came to understand that these supernatural creatures are intimately connected to our people and our land. They are reflections of the complexities of human life. Sometimes they act as warnings. Sometimes they represent forces in society or the natural world. More importantly, these creatures are not bound by ordinary human ethics. Wild and mysterious by turns, I am deeply drawn to these entities at the hinterlands of reality that embody so many imaginative possibilities.

"The Servant Girl's Cat" was the first story I completed. In it, a cat who died defending her master's virtue is reborn as a supernatural creature. When she witnesses Hsiao Chun, a girl working as a maid, being assaulted she begins to realize that though the world may never change, she must still do what she can to avenge the honor of these mistreated women.

Iakoo was once a little girl who died of abuse at the hands of her sister-in-law. In death, she becomes a god who protects unwed boys and girls. In the graphic novel, Iakoo appears as a little girl who loves to laugh and play, the very joys she was denied in her short, tragic life. This interpretation mirrors the situation of Kuei-mei, a young girl who seeks Iakoo's help.

The depiction of women in these stories contrasts strongly with the unfettered nature of the supernatural creatures. Whether it is the suffering Kuei-mei endures due to misogyny, or Hsiao Chun's attempts at self-determination, or Su's pursuit of freedom, all of these characters cling to what hope they can muster, despite the cruel hand fate has dealt them. Aside from the stories of these supernatural entities, this is what I most wanted to share with my readers - a window onto earlier times. There's Wang Ching, who sells roasted wheat mush to support his family. There's Inspector Li, caught between his personal and professional obligations. There's Ming-tu, pining for his older brother.

Through the vicissitudes of life, all of them are seeking some form of peace and contentment. Those times may have passed, but the striving and longing of these characters will elicit familiar resonances for contemporary readers. If even one of these stories or characters, or even one image, stays lodged in the readers mind, impossible to forget, then it was all worth it. This is my small hope now that these stories are complete.





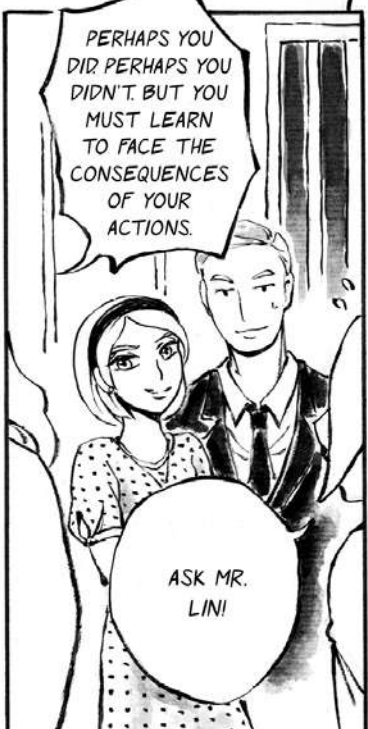
WHO
BROKE
IT?

THIS
PLATE WAS
A GIFT
FOR ONE
OF OUR
GUESTS!



SHE MUST
HAVE BEEN
AFRAID THAT
WE WOULD
FIND OUT!

IT HAD TO
BE KUEI-MEI.
SHE WAS
ACTING
SUSPICIOUS
JUST NOW.



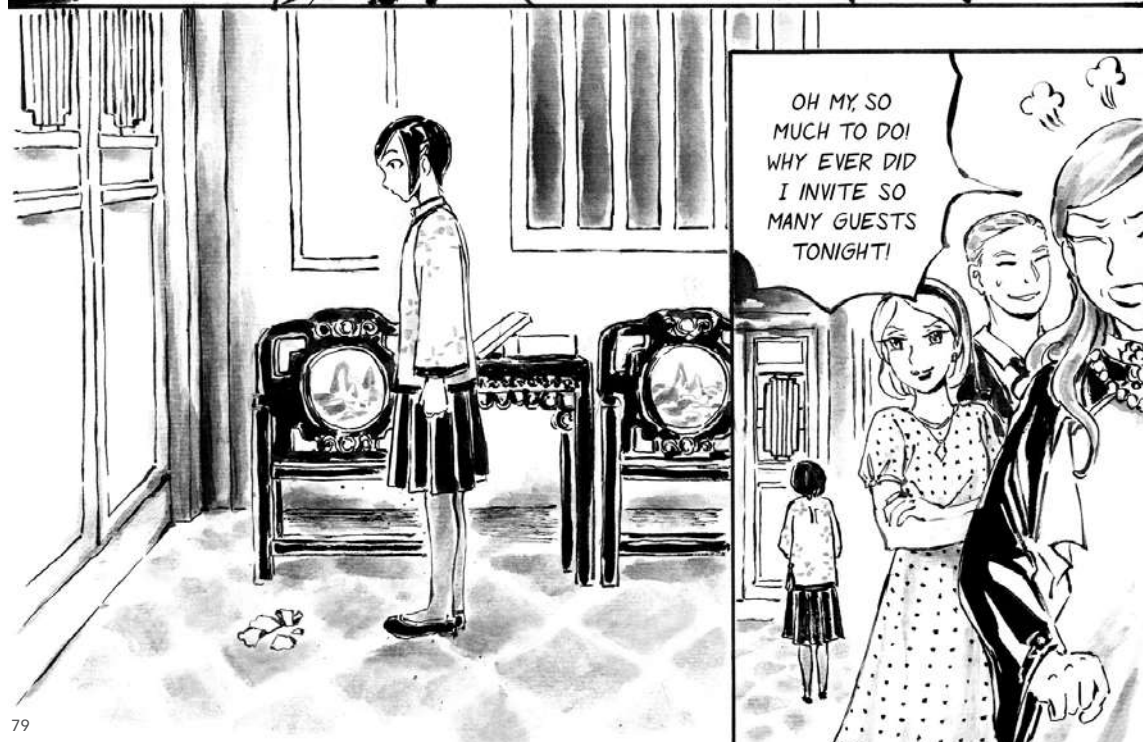
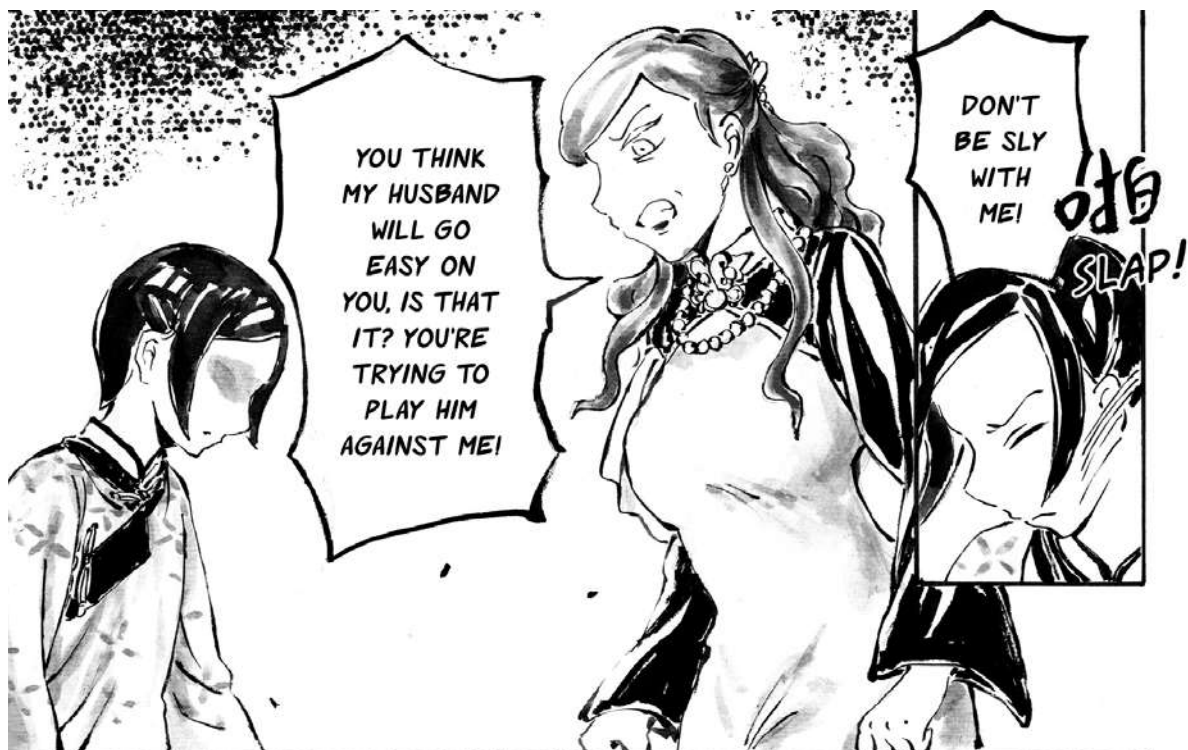
PERHAPS YOU
DID PERHAPS YOU
DIDN'T. BUT YOU
MUST LEARN
TO FACE THE
CONSEQUENCES
OF YOUR
ACTIONS.

ASK MR.
LIN!



I DIDN'T
EVEN
TOUCH IT!

MAAM, I
DIDN'T
DO IT.





BUT I'VE
NEVER
CARED
MUCH FOR
IT.



THEY SAY THE
FULL MOON IS A
TIME TO GATHER
WITH FRIENDS
AND FAMILY,



IT WAS MID-
AUTUMN FESTIVAL,
THE NIGHT OF THE
FULL MOON.



EXACTLY EIGHT
YEARS AGO I
WAS SOLD TO
THE LIN FAMILY
TO BE RAISED
AS THEIR
DAUGHTER,





SISTER
OF THE
BAMBOO
STOOL.

IAKOO.

ON THE
FIFTEENTH
NIGHT COME
TAKE YOUR
SEAT.



SETTLE
IN.

AND I
WILL BEG
YOUR
WISDOM.





I INVOKE
YOUR
SACRED
PRESENCE.

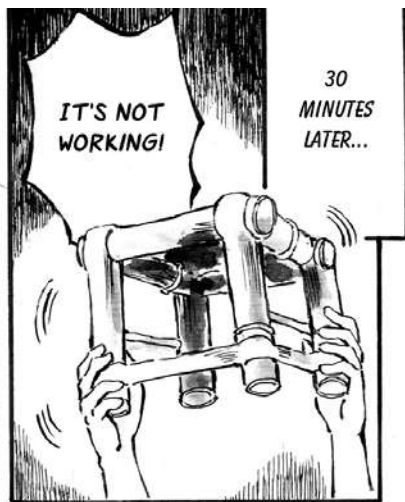
WITH
THREE
BOWS.

I'LL TRY A
FEW MORE
TIMES...

IAKOO,
SISTER
OF THE
BAMBOO
STOOL...

...







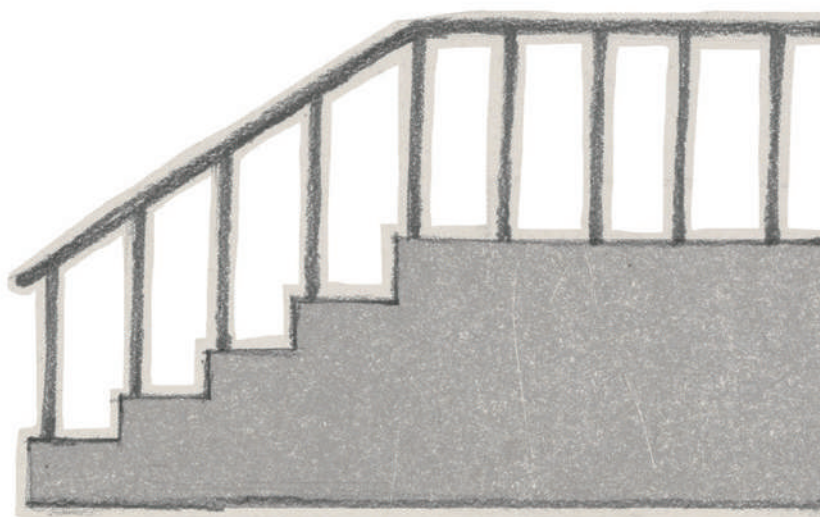
BOOKS FROM TAIWAN

COMICS

[FROM RIGHT TO LEFT]

Please turn to the back to enjoy the last comic which is read from left to right.

The Hostel of Lost Function did not refuse him,
even though X was just a baby.



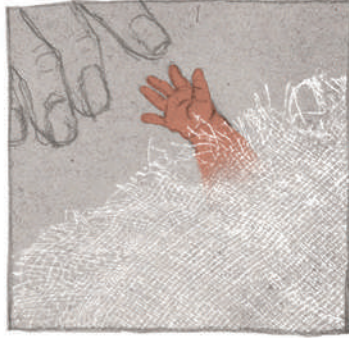






Finally, they found a hostel that would take him.

Being an orphan, X's journey from the hospital to a "home" took longer than one might expect. He criss-crossed the map, leaving a winding trail more complicated than other children's paths.



When X was born the world didn't seem to have space for him.

“WRITING OUR WOUNDS” IN HOSTEL OF LOST FUNTION

Written by Gami

Translated by Joshua Dyer

In April of 2016, I lost my mother quite unexpectedly. Immediately, I understood that heartache is not just some abstract description. It can take on many forms: a physiological pain, a violent headache, nausea, vertigo, a knot of tension in the chest. Even when I thought I was too exhausted to cry any more, the tears would start flowing again.

Because of this calamity, my older brother and I moved out of the house we had shared with our mother, and into a rooftop addition in Taipei. After we settled in, life and work returned to normal, though from time to time I would be seized by a kind of panic. I wondered exactly what this feeling was. Perhaps most of you have had the experience of staying in a dormitory or youth hostel. You might thoroughly enjoy the experience, but the moment you return home a knot of tension releases. The tension and panic I felt was like that - like always living away from home. When I realized this, the phrase “Hostel of Lost Funtion” suddenly appeared in my mind.

“That place where you stayed for so long - where you thought you would live forever - that is the Hostel of Lost Funtion.”

At first I felt uneasy and confused. “Hostel of Lost Funtion” sounds so negative. How could I associate it with someone I loved so deeply? Though I continued to work on a number of other creative projects, Hostel of Lost Funtion stayed lodged in my mind. I couldn’t stop thinking about it. In 2018, while studying illustration in London, I decided to start working on the story. The pictures become my language for re-establishing communication with the outside world. With pencil and engravings I recorded the feelings that my stilted tongue had never been able to speak. After reading the storyboards for *Hostel of Lost Funtion* at a mid-term evaluation, some of my classmates began to cry, and when I saw their tears, I cried as well. I felt understood. I realized that writing our wounds has the power to heal others as well.

Later, in 2021, as I sat in a meeting, listening as the publication of the book was discussed, my thoughts drifted away to the mountaintop where my mother’s ashes are buried beneath a tree. Now, I could finally take the book to the mountaintop and read it to her. “You see? You’re haven’t disappeared. You will always be here in this story.” Now, I can finally tell everyone, “This is the house I’ve been building for so long. It’s called *Hostel of Lost Funtion*.” There’s nothing complex about the structure, but my feelings for it are complicated. I’m afraid certain parts were not well made, and won’t hold as much love that they might have. I’m afraid I’ll never be able to build it as it really ought to be, because it is so much better than anything that can be conveyed by words and pictures. I’m afraid people will be disappointed (or perhaps I am the one who will always be most disappointed). But I have built it. Hostel of Lost Funtion exists for all to see.

“This strung-together form with no means to express, like a heart with no fixed residence, always living outside and unable to sleep, can finally have a bit of rest.” This is what the Hostel of Lost Funtion says to me.

HOSTEL OF LOST FUNTION

失能旅社



- **Publisher:** Dala
- **Date:** 5/2021
- **Rights contact:**
booksfromtaiwan.rights@gmail.com
- **Pages:** 76
- **Volume:** 1 (END)

What if you lived in a perfect hostel that took care of all your needs? And how would you cope if one day that hostel disappeared? Through the central metaphor of the hostel, this understated graphic novel guides us on a nuanced journey through of the issues of love, loss, and letting go.

Orphaned from birth, X has no place to go until a mysterious hostel agrees to take him in. Hostel of Lost Funtion has services to meet all the needs of its guests. There are always extra comforters, to keep the cold at bay. One room is packed with telephones, and at the other end of the line there is always someone who will listen patiently to tales of heartache and woe. The hostel takes in guests, no questions asked, feeds them nourishing food, and never asks for payment. Within the hostel's sheltering embrace, X slowly loses the ability to feel negative emotions and sensations.

But one day, a storm carries away the hostel. When X returns from work, he cannot find a single trace of its existence. Consumed with self-reproach and regret, he becomes isolated by a suffering he believes no one else can understand. Yet he also comes to recognize the depth of the love he had for the place that gave him a sense of home. As his lost funtions return to him, he has no choice but to face the pains and discomforts of living, and in doing so, finds that accepting loss may be the only way to reconnect with others.

A symbolic tale told through a surreal mixture of collage, printmaking, and illustration, *Hostel of Lost Funtion* was created as a tribute to the author's late mother. Though somber in tone, this strikingly original work proposes that suffering and loss, if properly embraced, can become gateways to greater wisdom and compassion.



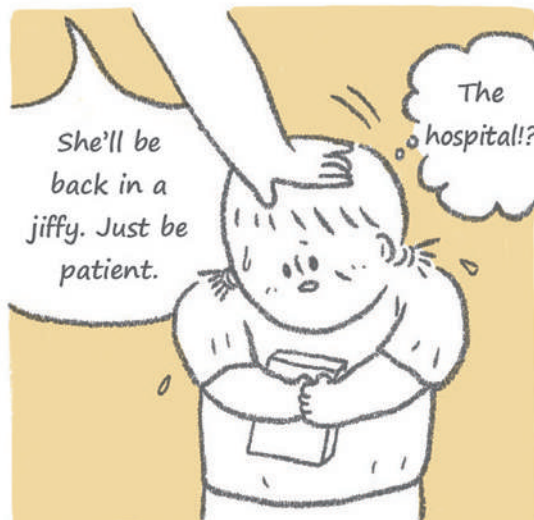
Gami

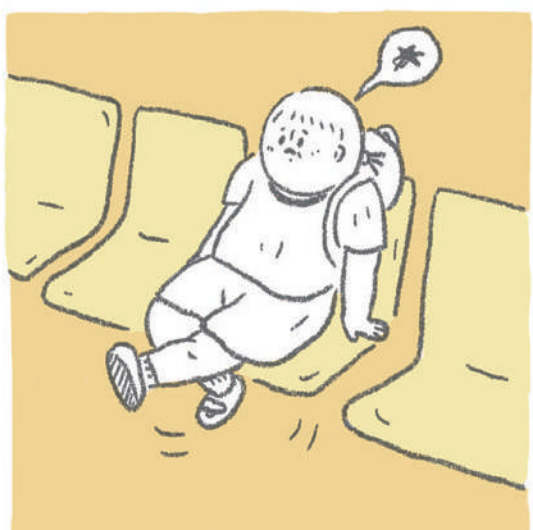
In the work of freelance illustrator Gami, intensely emotional stories become approachable through simple visual forms and a matter-of-fact narrative style. Gami's comics include *The Person Who Said No*, *An Art Project*, and *The Insignificant Exhibition*, which she independently published in London.













A TRIP TO THE ASYLUM'S CYCLE OF TRAUMA

Written by Jean Chen

Translated by Joshua Dyer

(This article is a condensed version of one originally published at Fountain.org.tw.)

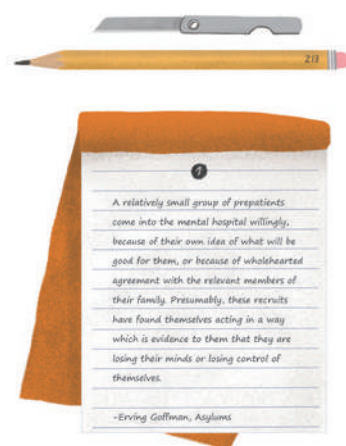
A Trip to the Asylum is the first full-length graphic novel from artist Pam Pam. It is her attempt to explain reality through fictional characters. The idea for the story had been percolating in her mind over ten years of working on original comics, during which she built up her confidence that she could do this story justice in graphic novel form. The seed of the graphic novel consisted of a single sentence: "The whole world is your asylum."

Pam Pam relates, "Sometimes I feel that all of the so-called 'normal' people who get societal recognition are actually far more messed-up than those who get labeled with a diagnosis, to the point that the 'normal' people are actually the source of other peoples' mental illnesses." Told in 15 chapters/336 pages, the story begins when a little girl's uncle enters a psychiatric care facility for treatment, and ends when he finally leaves. The man who has undergone "treatment" at the facility emerges as someone who still looks like her uncle, but also doesn't seem like her uncle anymore.

During his "trip to the asylum" the uncle encounters a diverse cast of characters. Number One has an overblown self-image, Little Yu is kind and definitely crazy, and long-haired, sweetly charming Ting-ting is hiding a big secret, but in each of them we also recognize ourselves, each wound-laden heart wrapped in layer upon layer of memory. As expected, Pam Pam skillfully laces these harsh realities with offbeat humor, helping readers understand the ways we are all shaped by childhood trauma.

A reading of *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* provided both the needed knowledge-base and motivation to complete this graphic novel. The little girl witnesses the way her uncle turned violent whenever things didn't go his way. But does that mean she will repeat the same pattern of violence in some future moment when she is pushed to the breaking point? Our psychological traumas are remembered in the body and childhood wounds remain embedded in the psyche.

At what point does the heart turn cold? When does it become overburdened with the scars it bears? *A Trip to the Asylum* dispenses with preaching, instead patiently unveiling the inner world of the so-called "insane" through humorous stories and wry observations of their inter-personal interactions. Along the way we are forced to question, are those who appear normal truly normal? In a world where violence begets violence, none of us can avoid trauma, nor can we avoid passing that hurt on to others. So, in the end, what standard is there to judge who is sane, and who is not?



A TRIP TO THE ASYLUM

瘋人院之旅：整個世界就是你的精神病院



- **Publisher:** Slowwork
- **Date:** 6/2020
- **Rights contact:**
booksfromtaiwan.rights@gmail.com
- **Pages:** 336
- **Volume:** 1 (END)

* 2021 Golden Comic Award

* 2021 Taipei Book Fair Award

What is life like inside a modern residential psychiatric facility? Pam Pam Liu's graphic novel A Trip to the Asylum peels away the stereotypes to reveal the inner world of psychiatric patients and the painful realities each grapples with while undergoing in-patient treatment

What is life like inside a modern residential psychiatric facility? Is it oversaturated patients slumped over board games as depicted in *12 Monkeys*? Or is it a place of simmering conflict and coercive control, ala *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*? Pam Pam Liu's graphic novel *A Trip to the Asylum* peels away the stereotypes to reveal the inner world of psychiatric patients and the painful realities each grapples with while undergoing in-patient treatment.

The story follows a new patient who enters residential care at the suggestion of his sister. With his hand bandaged, and clinging to the idea that "I'll be out of here before you know it," he begins to adapt to his surroundings and get to know his fellow patients. He meets a middle-aged man so terrified of life he hopes to never leave the facility, a former entertainment reporter never stops mumbling celebrity gossip, and a teen who struggles with gender identity and social ostracization. Though they appear "crazy" at first glance, each harbors a secret trauma that drives their behaviors, including our reticent protagonist.

Ten years in the making, *A Trip to the Asylum* incorporates author Pam Pam Liu's personal experiences as well as extensive research into the literature of mental illness, including works such as Erving Goffman's *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* and Bessel van der Kolk's *The Body Keeps the Score: Mind, Brain, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. With its indie comic aesthetic, absurd humor, and fast pacing, *A Trip to the Asylum* delivers deep issues in an entertaining package, bringing mental illness out of the shadows and into the realm of relatable, everyday interactions.



Pam Pam Liu

Active as an illustrator, an independent graphic novelist, and a musician, Pam Pam is also a talented animator. She often turns the dark side of life, its anger and failures, into fantastical graphic novels, but also creates true-to-life works such as *Good Friend*, *Cancer*. Her other works include *When My Brother was a Kid*. She was a resident of La Maison des Auteurs in Angoulême, France (2018-2019).



BOOKS FROM TAIWAN

COMICS

(FROM LEFT TO RIGHT)



BOOKS FROM TAIWAN