



BOOKS FROM TAIWAN

BOOKS FROM TAIWAN

Comic BOOKS I 2024

BOOKS FROM TAIWAN

2024

DEMOCRACY ON FIRE: BREAKING THE CHAINS OF MARTIAL LAW IN 1977
BONE SCALE
THE AGNOSTIC DETECTIVE
THE ORACLE COMES
THE BANANA SPROUT
THE RED ROPE
A LEVER
FORMOSA OOLONG TEA
ISLAND RHAPSODY: LISTEN TO THE VOICE OF TAIWAN
MISS T'S SEXCAPADES IN JAPAN

BOOKS FROM TAIWAN

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2024

LOCAL HEROES: TAIWAN NEW WAVE CINEMA
THE CAT
THE GIRL WHO FEEDS THE SECRET OF FORGETFUL SCHOOL

ABOUT THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE

The Ministry of Culture of Taiwan (Republic of China) was established on May 20, 2012. As a member of the Executive Yuan, the Ministry oversees and cultivates Taiwan's soft power in the areas of arts and humanities, community development, crafts industry, cultural exchanges, international cultural participation, heritage, literature and publishing, living aesthetics, TV, cinema, and pop music. The logo of the Ministry is an indigo dyed morning glory. The indigenous flower symbolizes a trumpet heralding the coming of a new renaissance, in which cultural resources and aesthetics permeate all corners of the nation. The morning glory also represents the grassroots tenacity of Taiwan's diverse culture, a yearning for the positivity, simplicity, and warmth of earlier days, and a return to collective roots and values.

ABOUT BOOKS FROM TAIWAN

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BOOKS

**BOOKS
FROM
TAIWAN**



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Foreword

In Taiwan, comics hold a unique and vital place in our hearts. Our artists explore subversive topics, challenge traditional hierarchies, and envision new futures. They have a special ability to connect with people from all walks of life. Comics both reflect and propel the spirit of Taiwan, a country where people believe in democracy, practice freedom, and embrace an open society.

In recent years, Taiwanese comic creators have increasingly showcased diverse styles, gaining growing recognition on the international stage. In this year's latest booklet of recommended comic works, you'll find not only many pieces that have won prestigious international awards or secured multi-language rights sales, but also a wealth of creators with their own distinctive styles. Whether you're

just beginning to explore Asian comics or are already familiar with them, I hope this booklet provides you with valuable insights.

It's an honor to share these works with you. Surrounded on all sides by the sea, Taiwanese people have a deep desire to connect with the world. We're grateful that you are reading our books and joining us in this journey. We hope that the diverse styles and passions of these artists offer you a glimpse into the openness and expansiveness of life in Taiwan.



Rex How, Managing Director
Books from Taiwan

From themes of political resistance to scenes of ordinary life, from the birth of New Wave cinema to the rise of oolong tea, this collection of Taiwanese comics reflects the diversity and creativity of the country's artists. Just a couple of generations ago, under martial law, the idea that these stories could be told, published, and widely read would have been unimaginable.

It has become almost a cliché for international observers to describe Taiwan's democracy as "vibrant." But what does that word really mean? These books bring that description to life. *A Lever Scale*, adapted from the works of Lai Ho, a writer imprisoned twice for his activism, tells the story of the birth of Taiwanese consciousness under Japanese colonial rule. *Democracy on Fire* opens with a scene from the 2014 Sunflower Movement—one of the largest global protests of the 2010s, drawing over half a million people to the streets. *The Red Rope* adapts the story of a Chinese

refugee in Taiwan who endured one of the 20th century's most brutal civil wars. And *The Banana Sprout* shares the story of a friendship between two teenagers, one Japanese and one Taiwanese, as they pursue intellectual freedom.

These books also explore feminist ideas. *The 207th Bone* imagines a world where society's power hinges on a woman's willingness to sacrifice her life. In *Miss T's Sexcapades*, a young woman travels to Japan in search of sexual pleasure, a still-taboo subject in Taiwan. *Guardienne*, set during Qing colonial rule, depicts a woman's search for freedom.

Other books explore ritual and religion with great flair. *Brides, Weddings, and Li* follows a young woman who helps couples navigate wedding taboos and rituals. *Divine Flesh* delves into the legend of Nezha, a deity venerated in Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and folk religion. *Agnostic Detective* features an unconventional Taoist with special powers

who solves paranormal mysteries.

Still more comics celebrate music and film. *Island Rhapsody* presents ten adaptations of classic Taiwanese songs, even including a QR code to listen to each song. *Local Heroes* tells the story of how Taiwan's New Wave cinema became internationally celebrated.

For younger readers, *Secret of Forgetful School* features a monkey who keeps forgetting things and is sent to a special school for forgetful students. The author describes it as "a gift for little ones who often forget things." As an adult prone to forgetfulness myself, I found this book delightful.

What struck me while reading about the origins of these books was the deep, cross-disciplinary collaboration involved—a characteristic that feels uniquely Taiwanese. The author of *A Teatime Adventure*, herself from a tea-farming family, consulted with researchers

at Academia Sinica to tell the story of how Taiwanese oolong tea became world-renowned. *Plant Collectors' Notebook*, with its stunning illustrations of native plants, reflects meticulous collaboration with botanists from the Taiwan Forestry Research Institute. *The Girl Who Feeds the Cat* grew out of field interviews conducted by clinical psychologists to understand how cyberbullying causes depression and anxiety in young adults. This is one meaningful aspect of living in a vibrant democracy: knowledge flows from history to natural science to social issues, circulating across society and finding its way into the hands of comic artists—and now, into yours.



Michelle Kuo, Editor-in-chief
Books from Taiwan

潮浪群雄

那些做電影的人

1



Local Heroes
Taiwan New Wave Cinema
小莊
Sean Chuang

Local Heroes: Taiwan New Wave Cinema

潮浪群雄 1

Author: Sean Chuang **Illustrator:** Sean Chuang **Publisher:** Dala Publishing

Date: 6/2023 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

172 pages | 17 x 23 cm **Volume:** 3 (END)

BFT2.0 Translator: Michael Fahey

In the 1980s, Taiwan New Wave cinema gained global acclaim at festivals like Cannes and Venice, sparking a cinematic revolution not only in Taiwan but across the global film landscape.

After decades of authoritarian rule, Taiwan began to open up. The public thirst for high-quality entertainment posed a serious challenge to the stodgy Taiwan's Central Motion Picture Corporation (CMP), a film studio closely tied to the ruling Kuomintang (KMT) party.

This is a story that dramatizes how industry outsiders reshaped one of Taiwan's most conservative film studios into an art-cinema powerhouse. Ming Ji, the general manager of CMP, made a bold move by hiring two gifted artists to breathe new life into the company. He recruited Wu Nien-jen, an independent screenwriter still completing his accounting degree in night school, and Hsiao Yeh, a part-time novelist who paused his PhD studies in the United States to return to Taiwan. The results were remarkable: Taiwan New Wave won global acclaim.

But what took place at CMP during those transformative years? How did these newcomers manage to produce such groundbreaking work amidst bureaucratic corporate culture and state censorship?

This book is an intimate account of the birth of the Taiwan New Wave, capturing the spirit and vision of revolutionary filmmakers. Sean Chuang, a renowned artist, collaborates with some of Taiwan's greatest directors to understand the political and social atmosphere of 1980s Taiwan. In this story, idealism triumphs over ideology, authenticity over propaganda, and artistic freedom over censorship.

Local Heroes: Taiwan New Cinema is the first of a five-volume series that documents Taiwan's New Wave cinema of the 1980s.



Sean Chuang

Sean Chuang is a renowned advertising director, comics book author, and illustrator. He has been honored with multiple awards, among them the Times Advertising Award and the Asia-Pacific Advertising Award. His comic book *Memoirs of an Ad Man* set a publishing record of eighteen editions. *80's Diary in Taiwan* won the Golden Comic Award for "Best Comic of the Year" and Youth Comic Award. *Chuang's Etudes for Papa* was nominated for the Golden Comic Award's Youth Comic Award. He has collaborated with novelist Wu Mingyi to create an illustrated edition of *The Illusionist on the Skywalk* and has been exhibited at festivals across the world, including multiple times at the Angoulême International Comics Festival.

Dedicated to the Movie Makers: A Word from Sean Chuang

Written by Sean Chuang

Translated by Joshua Dyer

In 1982, while I was still in middle school, I stumbled across a copy of the Taiwanese movie *In Our Time* in a pile of boisterous Hong Kong movies.

At the time my impression of Taiwanese films was that of a complete mess. Schools gave free showings of patriotic movies like *Eight Hundred Heroes* and *Everlasting Glory*, while commercial movies were about gambling, “social realist dramas,” or salacious tales of vengeance populated by gangsters and their molls. Their suggestively eye-catching posters were pasted pell-mell on the blank walls I passed on the way to school. If I mentioned Taiwan films to my elders, they would reply by shaking their heads with derision.

My father would only take me to see foreign films, explaining that they were more “authentic.” Based on that single word, I established my cinematic

standard. Domestic productions at the time were generally overdubbed in painfully exacting Mandarin, and the image quality was rigid and grainy. The plots were completely disconnected from real life, like watching a stage play. I readily adopted my father’s view that the higher quality foreign films were the luxury goods of the cinema marketplace.

Later, in the VHS era, video stores were buzzing with word-of-mouth recommendations for *Growing Up*. I watched it with my brother and found it moving, so we dragged our mother out to see it. She had the ability to become completely emotionally invested in TV dramas, so I wanted to see if a Taiwanese film could also get her waterworks going. My mother, a woman with zero faith in the domestic film industry, tears streaming down her cheeks, declared, “It’s fantastic! It really tugs at the heart strings!”

As far as I can recall, that was the first Taiwanese movie that felt “authentic” to me. The characters, the story, the way they talked—it all seemed like the sort of thing I observed all around me in daily life.

Years later I was working in the film industry and had the good fortune to have brief but rewarding encounters with

directors such as Hou Hsiao-hsien, Wu Nien-jen, and Ko I-chen, and the great film editor Liao Ching-Sung. Just observing the passion and intelligence they brought to their work was an education. I began to develop a deep admiration for that generation of movie makers. They were a community of idealistic risk-takers, always lending a hand in each other’s projects. Only then, after my curiosity was finally piqued, did I go back and watch all those movies I had missed out on before—the same movies my friends had told me were “pretty dull” in my younger days.

Those movies we all thought were dull

now seethed with subtle power. Even contemporary filmmakers would have struggled to match their depth of insight. It defies the imagination that movies made decades ago, often under difficult circumstances, are still being discussed in international film circles today.

After watching some documentaries and reading about the history of the Taiwan New Wave, I began to understand both the course of its development and its impact. But I was curious how this group of young movie makers had managed to achieve so much, as they worked within an authoritarian system that discouraged independent thought.

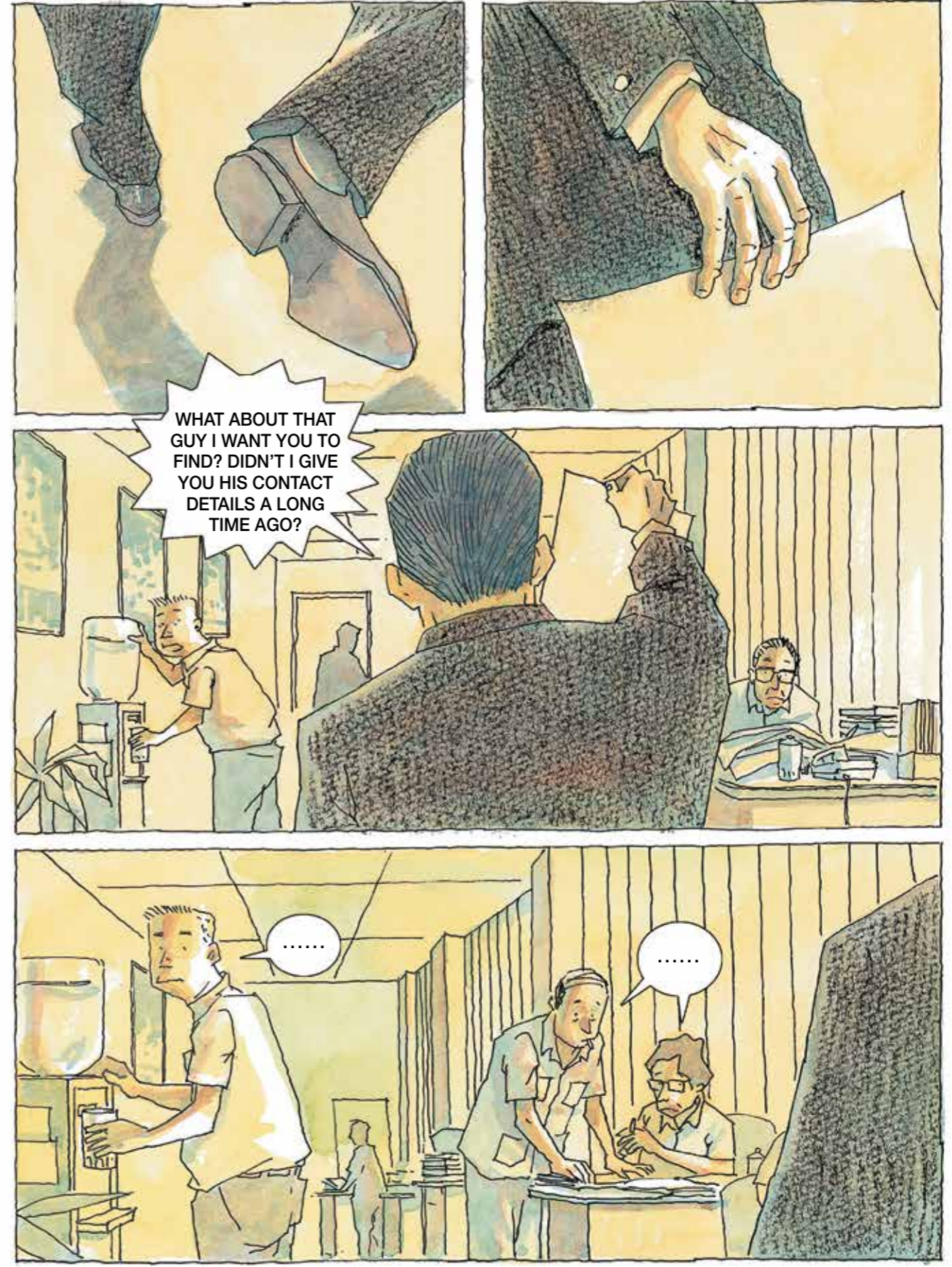
With the lifting of martial law still years in the future, many of them had worked directly inside the official media organizations of the KMT, the ruling political party. What were their thoughts in those times? What did they experience?

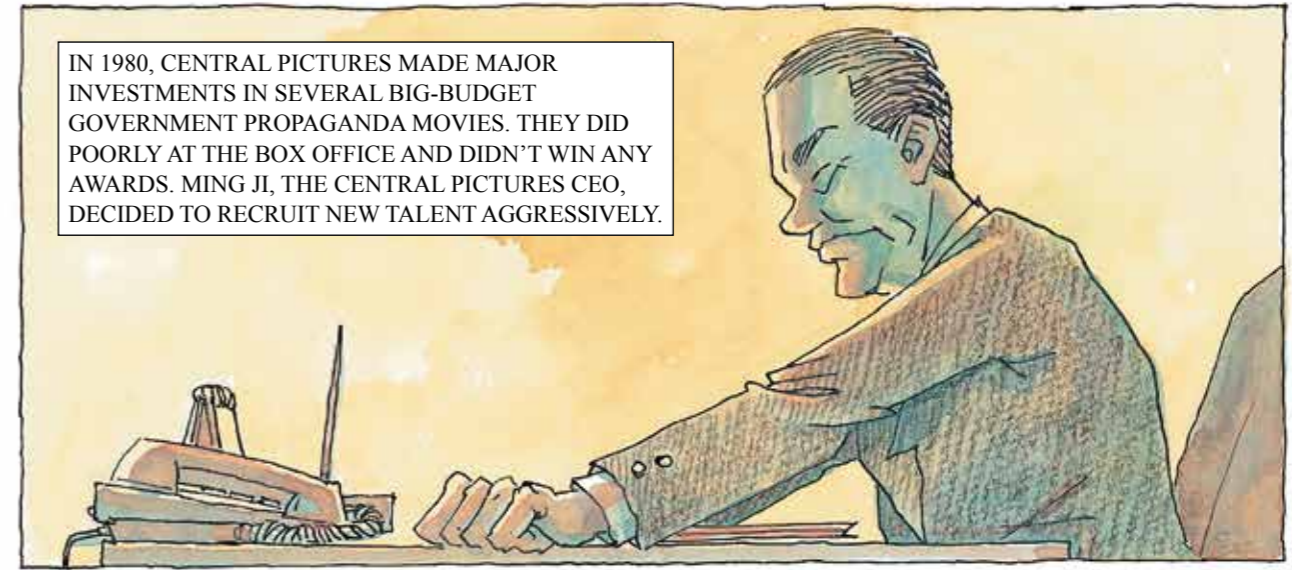
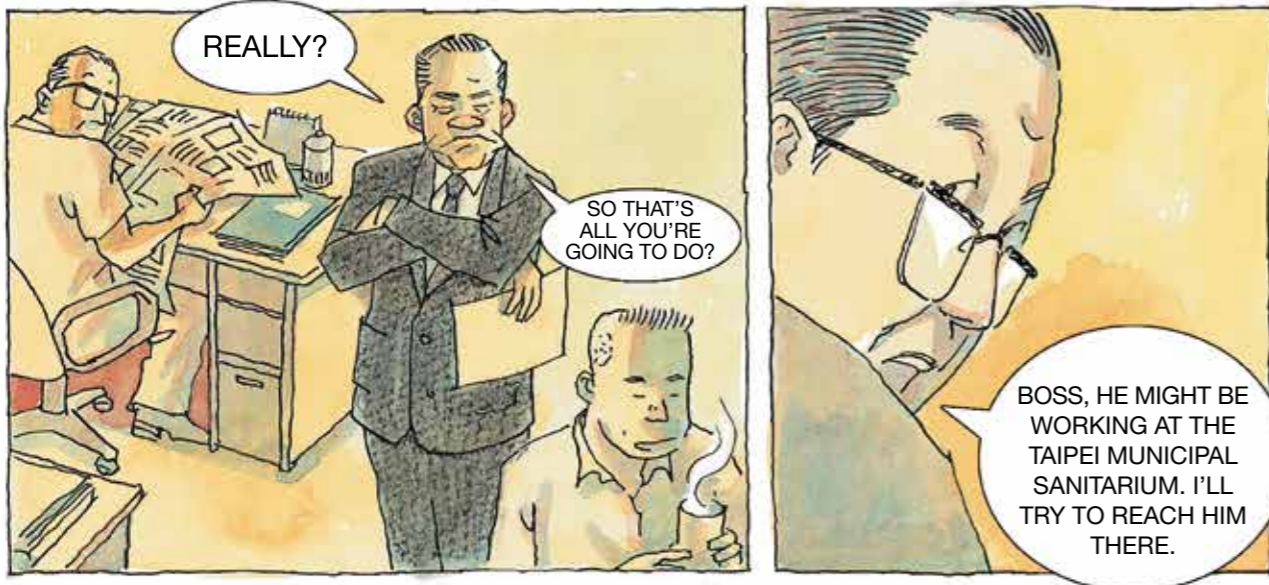
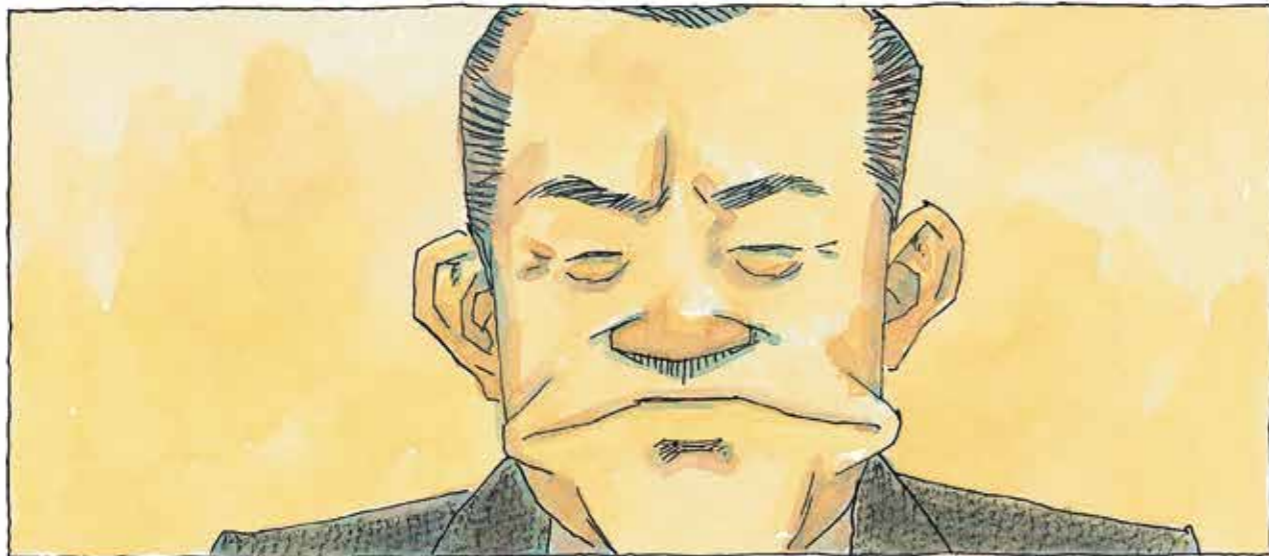
This essay has been edited for the purposes of this booklet.

I was curious how this group of young movie makers had managed to achieve so much, as they worked within an authoritarian system that discouraged independent thought.



TAIPEI, 1980







TAIPEI MUNICIPAL SANITARIUM

HELLO? WHO ARE YOU TRYING TO REACH? WU NIEN-JEN?

WHO ARE YOU? CENTRAL PICTURE?



BOSS MING. YES, IT'S ME. I'M WU.



WORK AT CENTRAL PICTURES?

PLEASE SIGN HERE.

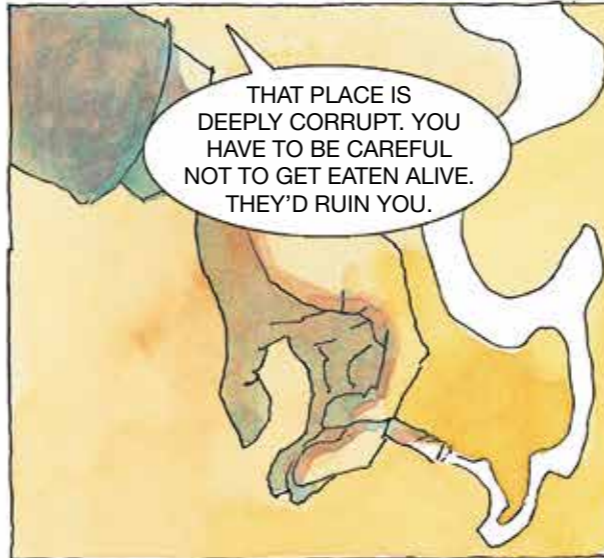


I'M SORRY. I ALREADY HAVE A JOB WORKING AT THE HOSPITAL.



YOU'RE THAT FAMOUS? CENTRAL PICTURES CALLED THE HOSPITAL LOOKING FOR YOU?

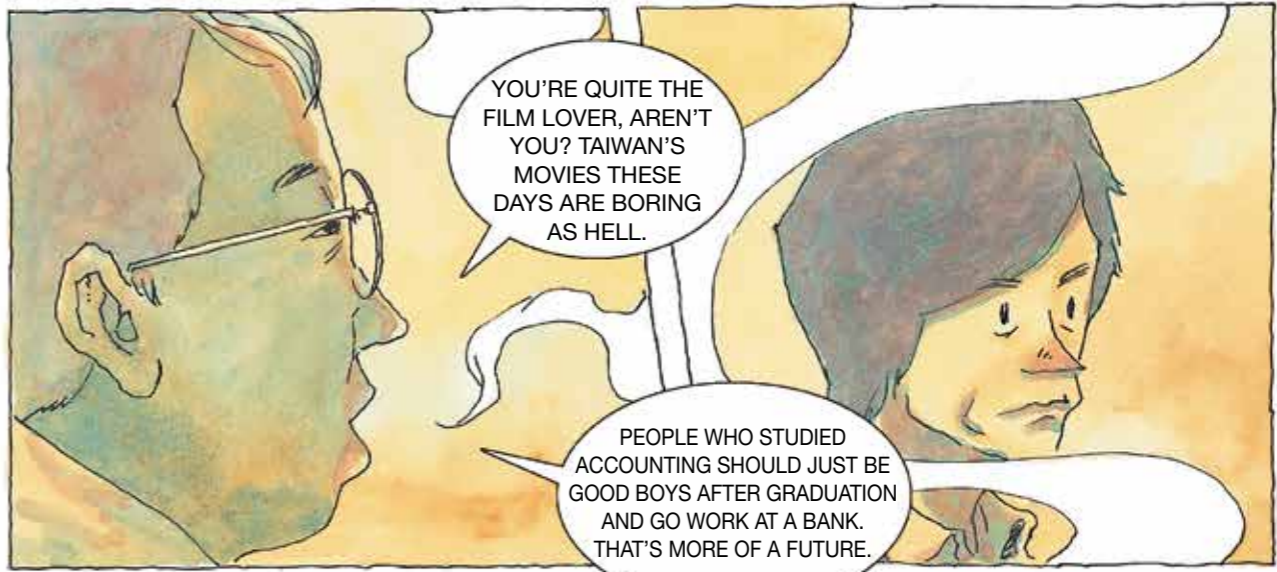
GO WORK IN THE PARTY-STATE MACHINE? YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING ME.



THAT PLACE IS DEEPLY CORRUPT. YOU HAVE TO BE CAREFUL NOT TO GET EATEN ALIVE. THEY'D RUIN YOU.



THAT'S RIGHT. YOU'RE AN ARTY HIPSTER.



YOU'RE QUITE THE FILM LOVER, AREN'T YOU? TAIWAN'S MOVIES THESE DAYS ARE BORING AS HELL.

PEOPLE WHO STUDIED ACCOUNTING SHOULD JUST BE GOOD BOYS AFTER GRADUATION AND GO WORK AT A BANK. THAT'S MORE OF A FUTURE.



The Girl Who Feeds the Cat

餵貓的女孩

Author: Yaya **Illustrator:** Yaya **Publisher:** Fisfisa Media

Date: 12/2022 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

144 pages | 15 x 21 cm Volume: 1 **Rights sold:** Russian, Italian

BFT2.0 Translator: Lya Shaffer

As smartphones become increasingly common on campuses, cyberbullying is emerging as a significant issue. Among these concerns, the spread of sexual images is particularly shocking and impactful for teenagers. In a society where gender bias persists, how can those affected take control of their own situation?

An ordinary, introverted high school girl uploads a sex video featuring herself and her school idol, a senior, to the Internet, stating simply, "I did it." This act leads to severe consequences, including cyberbullying, violence, and social ostracism, prompting widespread speculation about her motivations. As the community grapples with the fallout, a counselor works to facilitate both collective and individual healing.

The narrative is brought to life by Yaya, a cartoonist associated with the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts. Yaya employs vivid European-style imagery alongside dramatic Japanese narration, creating a profoundly empathetic portrayal of this contemporary school incident. This story resonates with modern social issues, highlighting the complexities surrounding youth, identity, and the impact of digital actions in today's world.

This urgent story is the result of extensive consultation with experienced clinical psychologists and children's advocates. Its aim is to offer students empathy, understanding, and a model for effective support.



YAYA

Based in Yilan, Taiwan, Yaya is a manga artist and Japanese teacher. She's been involved in doujinshi activities for over two-thirds of her life. From 2012 to 2019, she lived in Kyoto and worked as a manga assistant. She has been selected for the 2023 Ministry of Culture's 45th Selection of Reading Materials for Primary and Secondary Students and received the 2022 Ministry of Culture Manga Creation and Publishing Marketing Award. Recently, in addition to creating illustrations and picture books, Yaya has also worked on the manga *A Hundred Years of Romance: The Encounter of Manga and Taiwanese Art - Lin Yushan Chapter*.

Navigating the Thorns of Cyberbullying

by LEE, CHAO-HUI
(originally published at Fisfisa Media)

In today's social media-driven world, the prevalence and impact of cyberbullying and online stalking are more significant than ever. It is crucial to help teenagers understand cyberbullying, sexual exploitation, and the potential harm they can cause, as well as to teach them how to seek help and support effectively.

This urgent series published by Fisfisa Media aims to help readers through these painful and complex issues. I'm honored to take part in it. I collaborated with Professor Zhang Shuhui, a leading advocate for policies that protect teenagers, and someone I deeply admire. Professor Zhang's dedication to public welfare and her tireless

efforts to safeguarding teenagers were instrumental to our collaboration with Fisfisa.

The book *The Girl Who Feeds the Cat* explores the common challenges teenagers face during a cyberbullying incident in a school setting. Additional challenges include family issues such as domestic violence, parental conflicts and difficulties related to parent-child interactions, as well as sibling relationships, gender identity, adolescent self-concept, peer dynamics, and cultural biases. This book highlights the importance of supporting teenagers, who have experienced cyberbullying or other difficulties, with understanding, empathy, and warmth, helping them realize their

self-worth through acceptance and support.

Our working group conducted field interviews to gain a deeper understanding of real situations before creating the story and illustrations. The stories in this book do not represent any specific real-life cases.

Cyberbullying uses communication media as a tool to harm others. According to the *Journal of Psychosocial Research* (JPR), victims of cyberbullying are more likely to experience anxiety, depression, despair, loneliness, low self-esteem, trust issues, and suicidal tendencies. Alarmingly, the journal reports that five out of ten victims of cyberbullying have attempted

Victims of cyberbullying are more likely to experience anxiety, depression, despair, loneliness, low self-esteem, trust issues, and suicidal tendencies. This book raises awareness of these issues by providing strategies for teenagers to protect themselves and build confidence.

suicide—a statistic that demands urgent attention.

The primary goal of this book is to raise awareness of these issues, enhance teenagers' self-protection skills, and provide actionable strategies for dealing with cyberbullying.

We hope that this book will empower teenagers to face the future with greater confidence, resilience, and a sense of fulfillment.

Lee, Chao-Hui is a clinical psychologist in Taiwan.

This essay has been lightly edited for the purposes of this booklet.

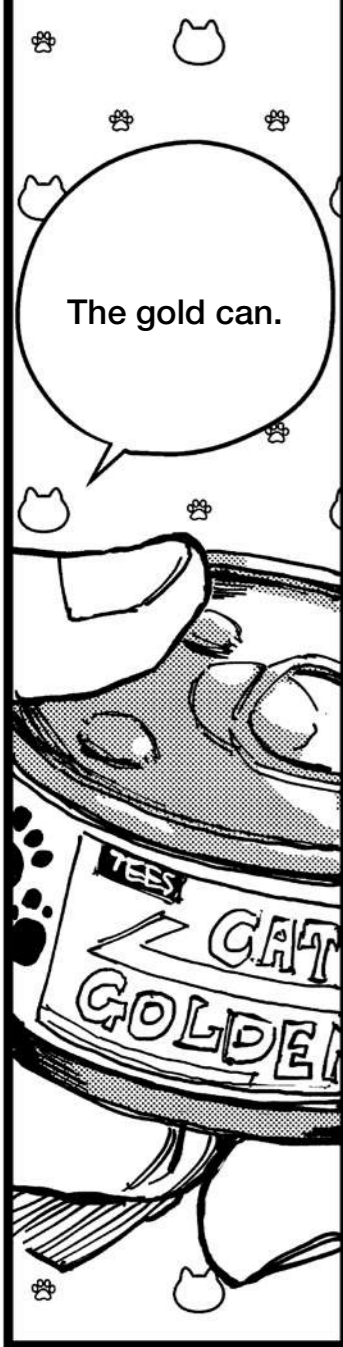


Is it an expression of anger, or fear?

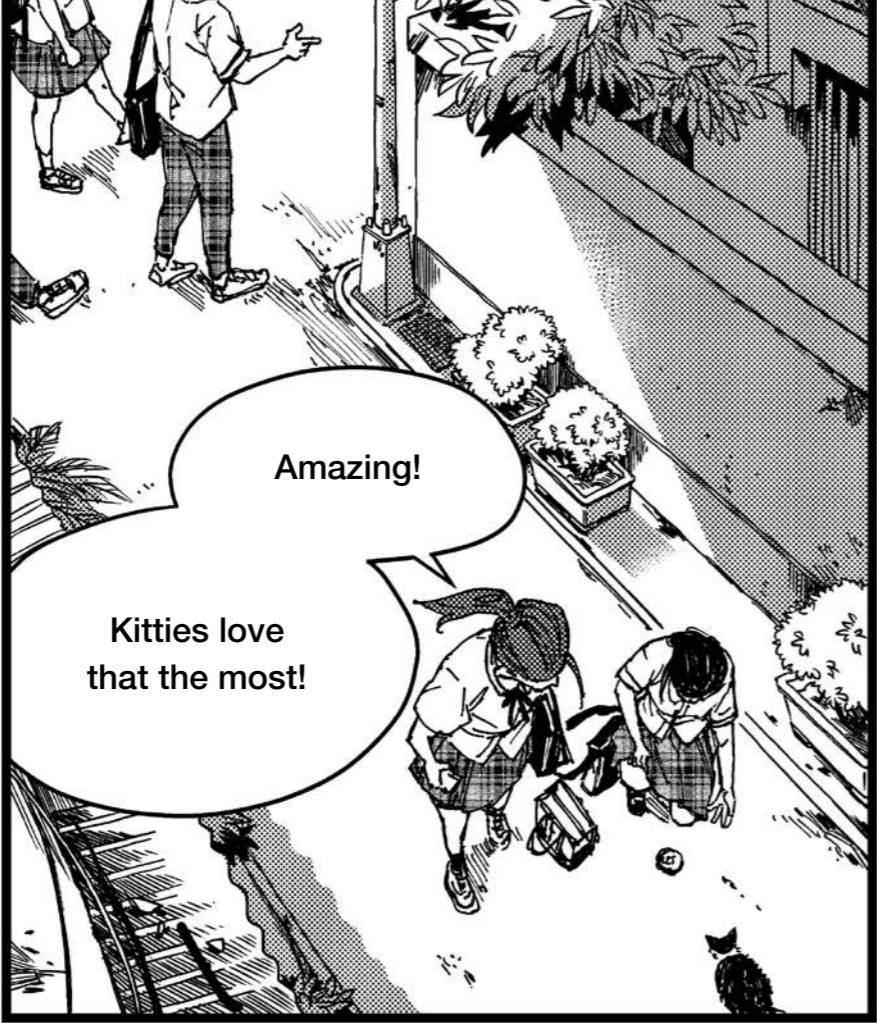


Or is it simply because...





The gold can.



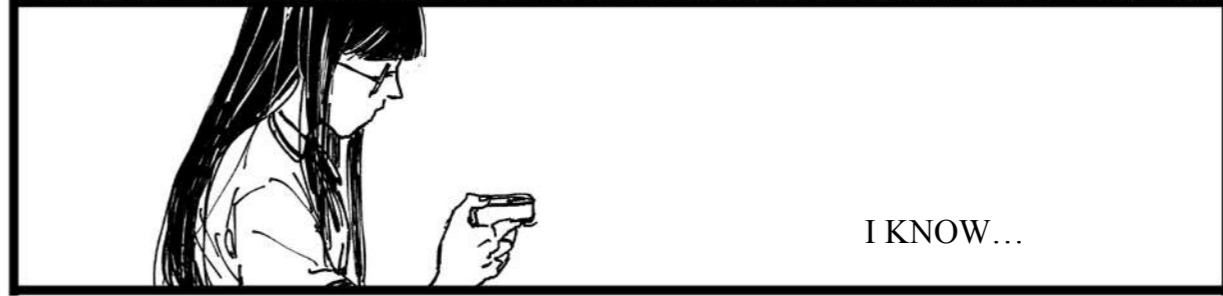
Amazing!
Kitties love that the most!



...



Let's see if it gets closer to you today.



I KNOW...

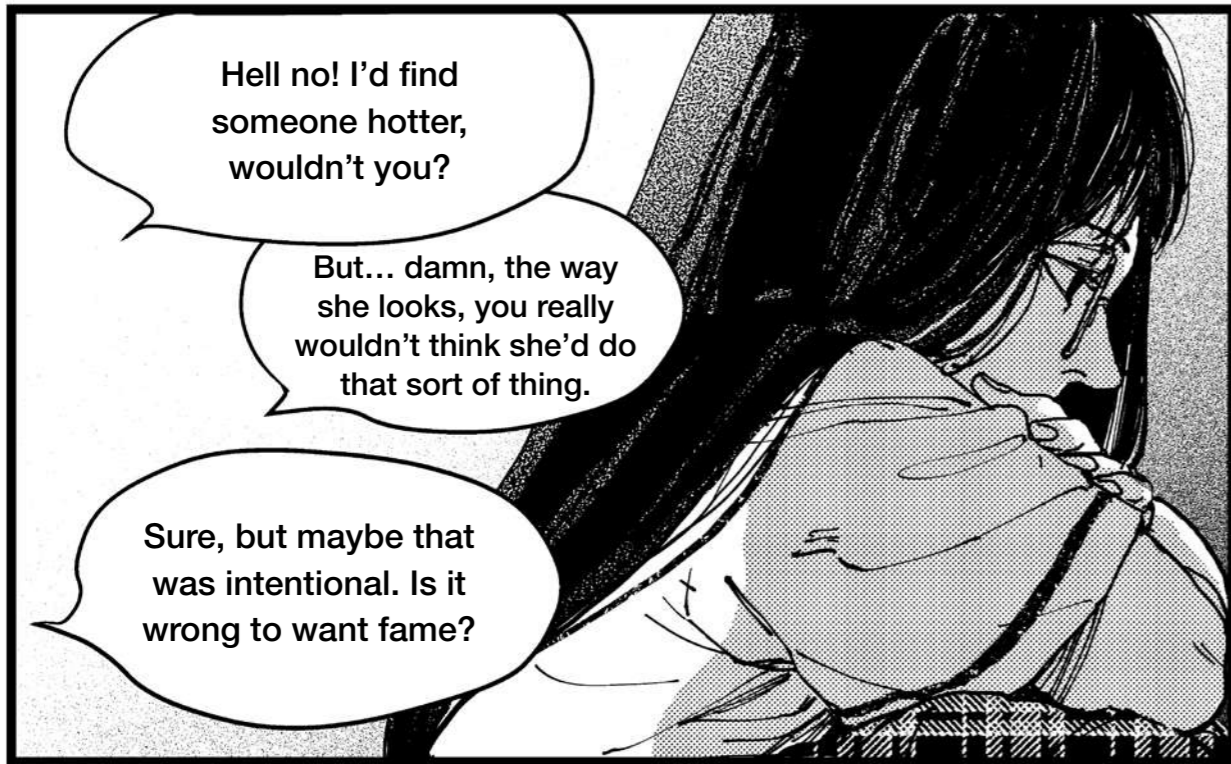


HEY LOOK, IT'S THAT GIRL.

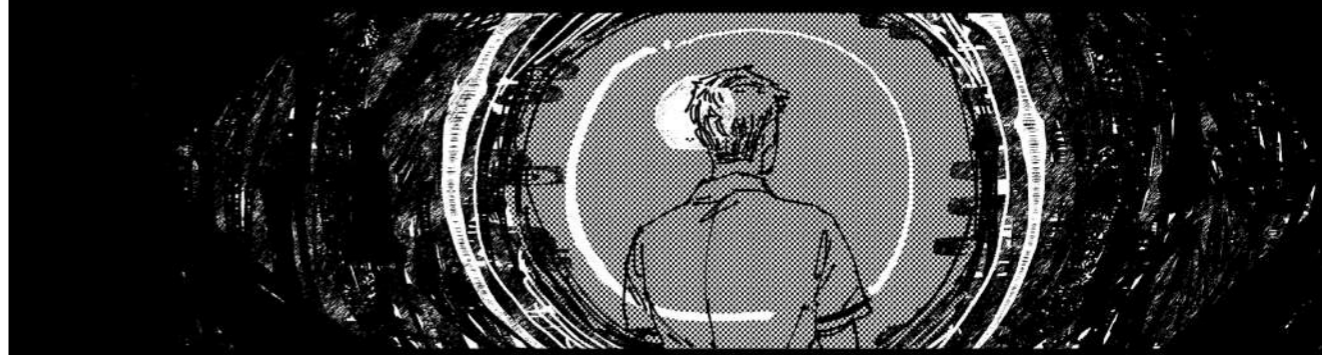
WHOA, HUH... YOU WOULDN'T THINK SHE WAS THAT TYPE.

I MEAN,

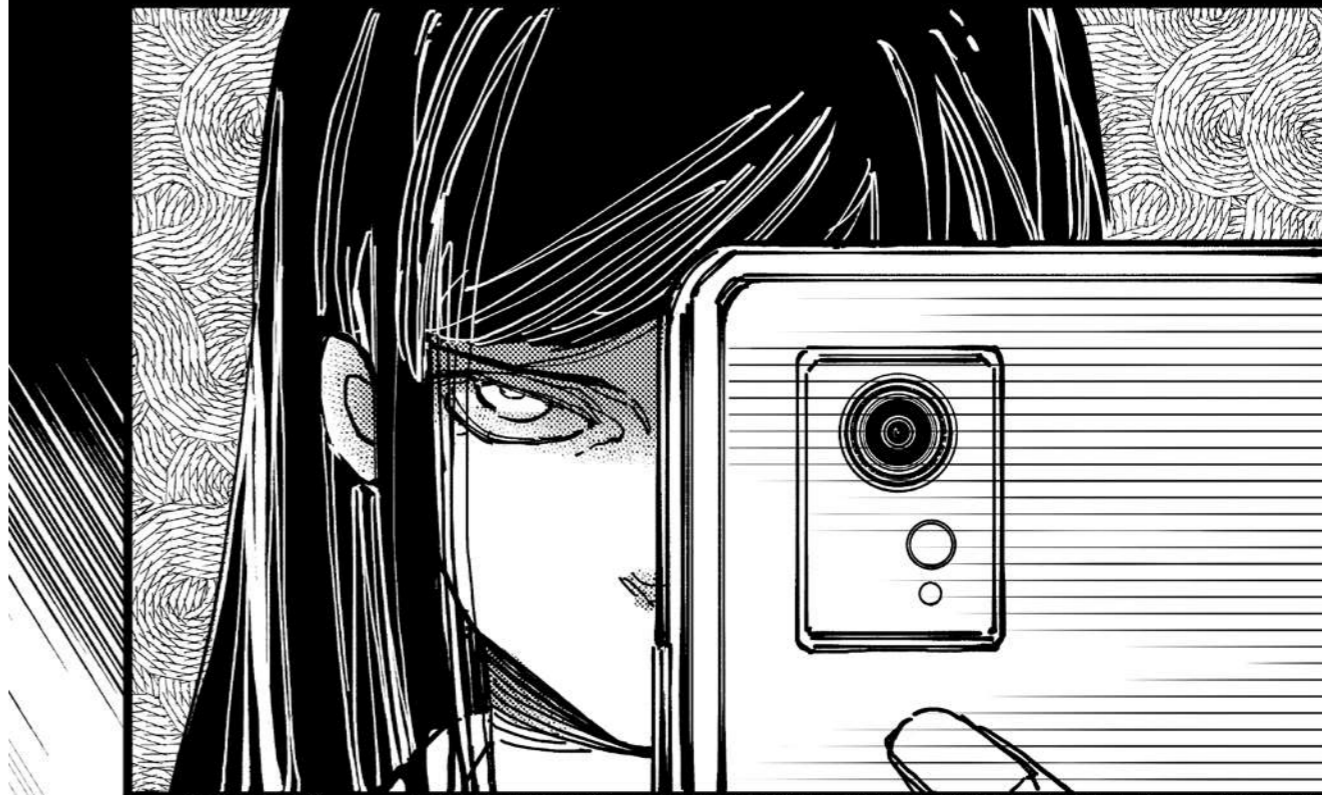
WOULD YOU WANT PHOTOS WITH HER?



In fact, I know...



... I'VE KNOWN THE ANSWER ALL ALONG.



COME ON, TAKE ALL YOUR CLOTHES OFF NOW.



The Secret of Forgetful School

忘忘小學

Author: Pei-Tzu Chen **Illustrator:** HURRICANE **Publisher:** Papa Publishing

Date: 3/2024 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

80 pages | 17 x 23 cm **Volume:** 3

BFT2.0 Translator: William Serrano

Wu Xiao Monkey always forgets things. He forgets his homework, his backpack, and just about everything else. His classmates warn him that if he forgets one more time, he'll be sent to Forgetful School—a place for extremely forgetful students. Wu Xiao, however, doubts that such a school even exists.

That is, until today. Today is peculiar. His classmates have forgotten their scissors, their erasers, and even their eyes. At this new school, they must learn how to remember important things.

This book is a gift for little ones who often forget things. Its whimsical and humorous story teaches children to build confidence and courage. For students who struggle with focus, the book offers a philosophy of holistic self-development through narrative rather than direct instruction. Its approach is playful, gentle, and encouraging.



Pei-Tzu Chen

Pei-Tzu Chen describes herself as a child at heart, with a love for exploring the worlds of music and anime. A passionate writer fueled by her love of reading, she graduated from the Children's Literature Department at National Taitung University. She holds three quiet wishes close to her heart: health and happiness for kind-hearted souls, peace and harmony in the world, and—shhh—the last one is a secret she keeps to herself.



Illustrator HURRICANE

HURRICANE, a Taiwanese picture book author and illustrator of animals, is known for his vibrant, colorful portrayals of animals. He also manages Animal Kingdom, a personal illustration brand centered around zoo themes. Characterized by his approachable and charming style, he hopes to make animal-related topics resonate with audiences.

“I Am Someone Who Often Forgets Things”: A Note from the Author

by Pei-Tzu Chen
translated by Michelle Kuo

I often forget things and can be quite absent-minded, which sometimes causes trouble for both myself and others. When I was young, every time I forgot something, my grandmother would laugh and say, “At least you didn’t lose yourself.” Her remark always made me laugh. How could anyone be so absent-minded as to lose themselves?

As I grew older, I took preventive measures to avoid forgetting important things, such as setting alarms and keeping a calendar. While I no longer forget major things, I still tend to misplace smaller items.

Once, I was late for school because I couldn’t find my glasses. The thought of facing punishment from the teacher distressed me. My grandmother, with

her characteristic smile, said, “You’ve improved—you just forgot where you put your glasses. At least you didn’t forget your eyes.” The image of a child hurriedly searching for their eyes popped into my head, and I couldn’t help but laugh.

As a teacher, my forgetfulness has decreased significantly. Yet, I often see students in my classroom who remind me of myself—rushing to find missing things or looking dejected after forgetting something again. During those moments, the image of the child who forgot their eyes, as my grandmother described, appears in my mind. It helps me smile at students who have forgotten their things, and I silently tell my grandmother, who has been an angel for a long time, “Look, they didn’t forget their eyes, so

let’s forgive them.” I then share my own little tricks with them to help prevent forgetfulness.

After all, they only forgot their things; at least they didn’t forget their eyes. I believe that one day they will find a method that

works for them and will no longer forget things.

This essay is an edited excerpt from the book’s afterword.

Let’s Not Scold Children For Forgetting Things: A Note from the Illustrator

by HURRICANE
translated by Michelle Kuo

As I’ve grown older, I’ve come to believe that forgetting is a natural part of life.

This book brought back memories of my childhood when I often forgot things. As a child, whenever I forgot something, the adults around me would react harshly, making me feel that forgetting was a terrible mistake. Even though I’m now past the age of being scolded for such things, I still worry about forgetting something;

often I have nightmares about it.

As I’ve grown older, I’ve reflected on these experiences and come to believe that forgetting is a natural part of life. Our focus shouldn’t be on the act of forgetting itself but on learning how to manage these situations with flexibility.

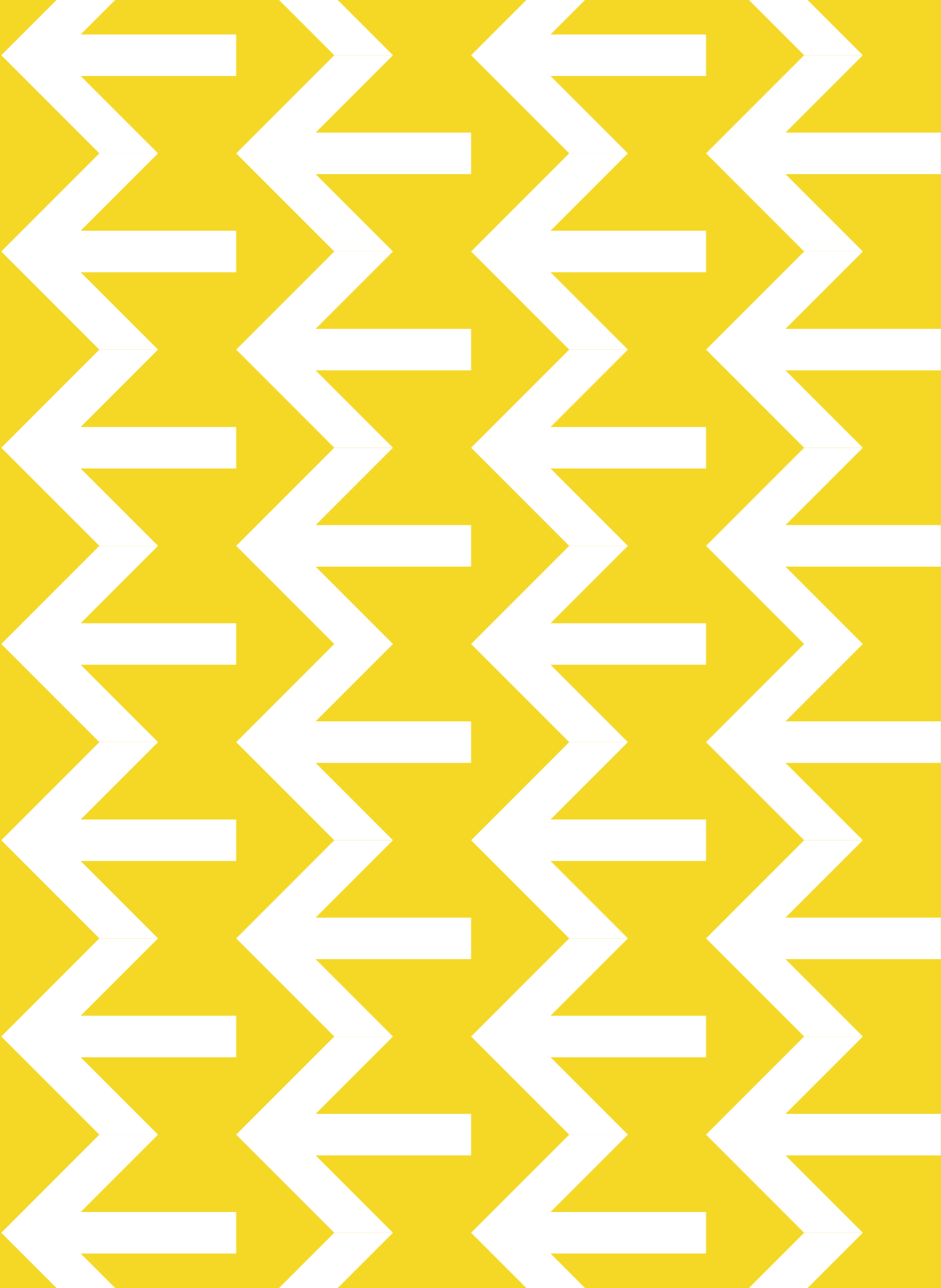
Still, I would probably end up being sent to the Forgetful School pictured in this book—ha, ha!

This piece is an edited excerpt from the book’s afterword.





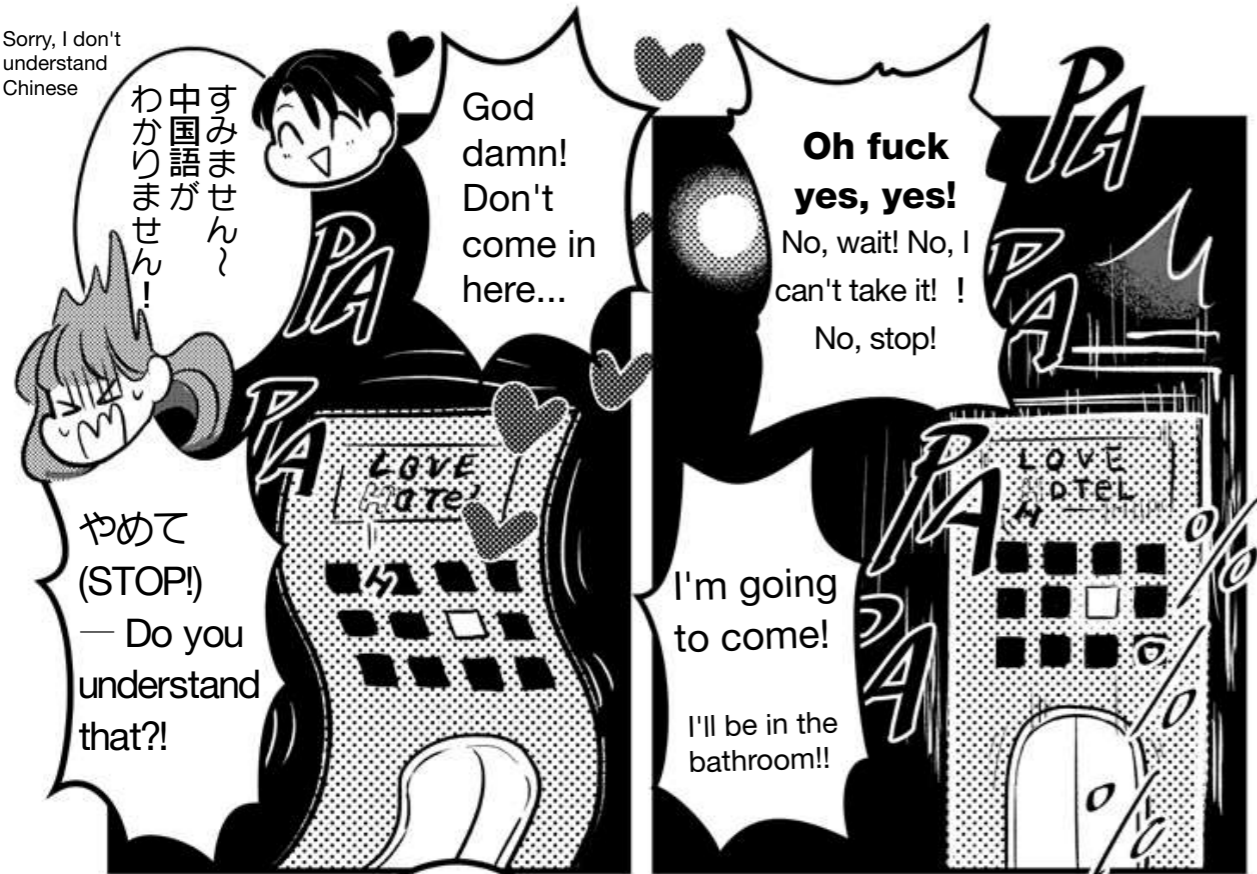




**TO READ THE OTHER
ARTISTS' WORKS,
PLEASE GO TO PAGE 170
AND TURN PAGES
FROM RIGHT TO LEFT .**

(THIS IS HOW TAIWANESE COMICS ARE READ.)

Sorry, I don't understand Chinese



すみません？
中国語が
わかりません！

God damn!
Don't come in here...

Oh fuck
yes, yes!

No, wait! No, I
can't take it! !
No, stop!

I'm going
to come!

I'll be in the
bathroom!!

やめて
(STOP!)
— Do you
understand
that?!



Didn't
understand
his bio

I mentioned
in my bio
that I'm into
domination!

陣亡

But
something
also irked
her...



But in
fact,
Miss T
liked it a
lot.



He's a
real-life
Kichiku
Megane!

This is my
first time
with a
Taiwanese
girl.

NOT an
herbivore
man!!

Since you're
so cute, I will
be gentle.♥

Yummy
muscles!





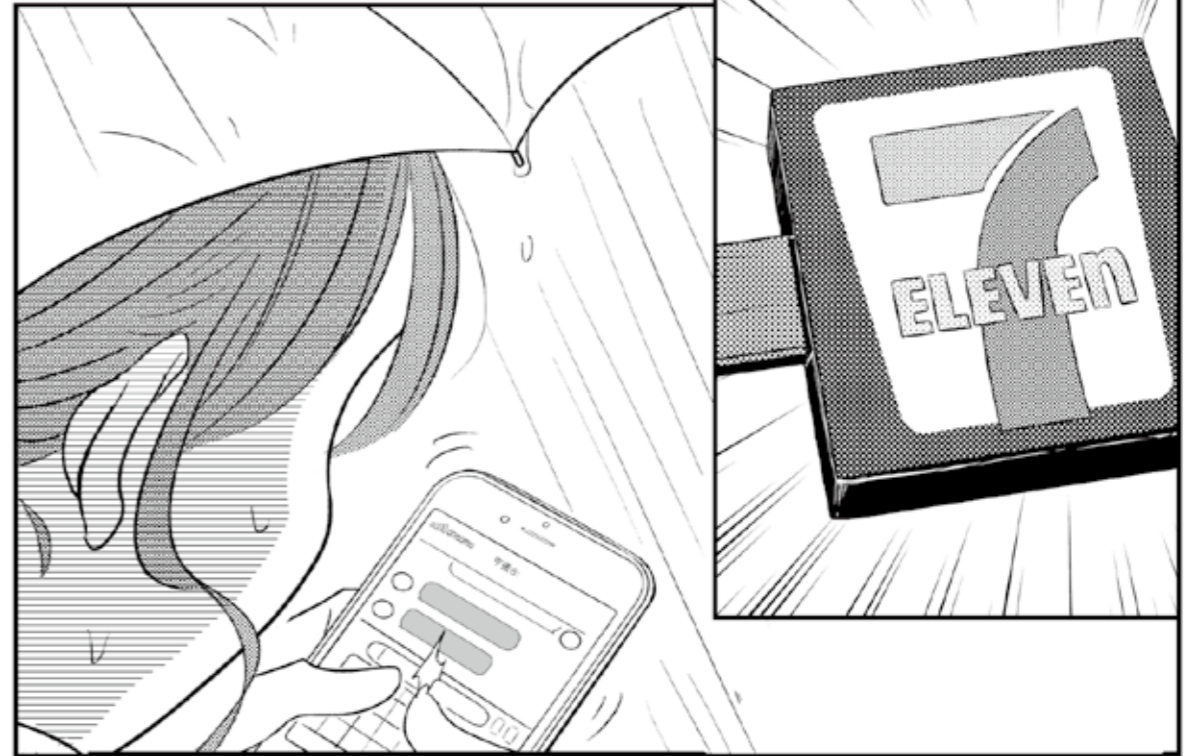
Did I misunderstand?
Maybe he was just trying to be polite? Did I misread his signal?
I'm so confused.
Why are Japanese people so ambiguous?

He didn't come?

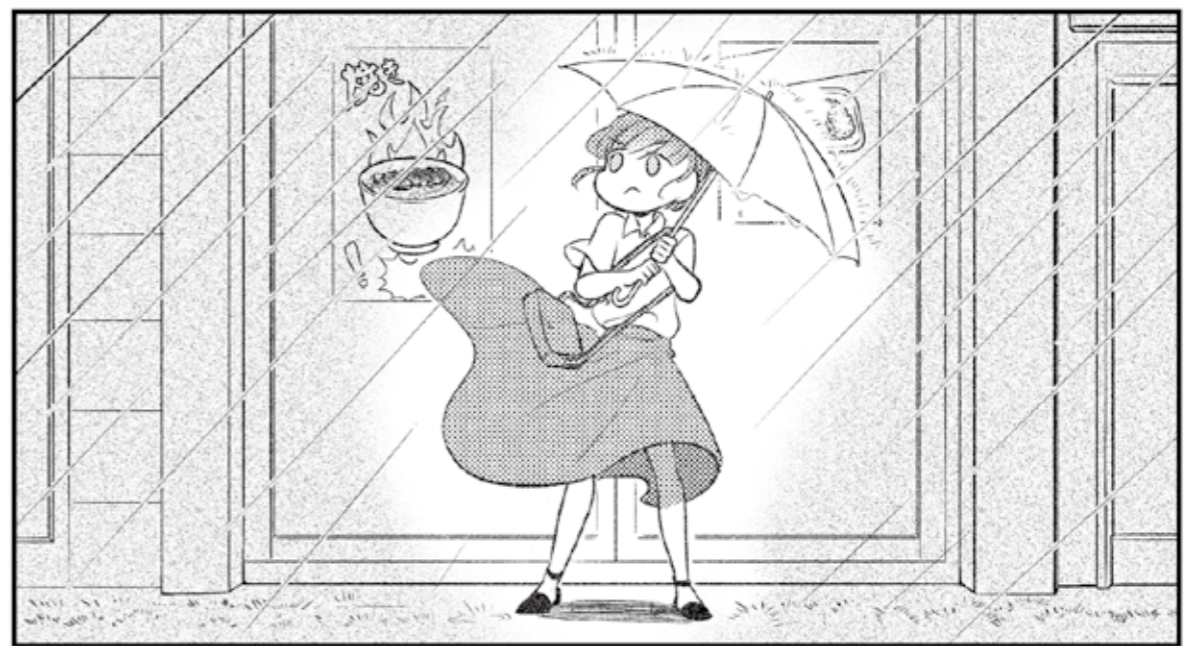
30 minutes later...



Excuse me, Miss T?



Ok, I'll wait for you by the Matsuya and 7-11 outside ○○ station



“I Wanted to Draw a Story About the Joy of Being a Young Woman”

by Anting Lu
translated by Joshua Dyer

Books from Taiwan invited RiceDumpling, the creator of *Miss T's Sexcapades in Japan*, to discuss the development of her book. During our phone interview, her voice was filled with the same energy and enthusiasm that radiates through her comics, setting the tone for a lively conversation.

Miss T embodies the same refreshing spirit as RiceDumpling herself, who defies the stereotype of Asian women, instead reminding me of that favorite gal-pal many of us know: easy-going, clear about her desires, and unafraid to pursue them. Miss T's attitude is unflappable even in the most awkward circumstances. “If there really was a Miss T in this world, she wouldn't be all that strange,” RiceDumpling says.

RiceDumpling's candid approach to writing about one-night stands

is refreshing in its avoidance of sensationalism, presenting sexual exploration as a normal aspect of adolescence and adulthood. When asked about balancing realism and humor in addressing hookup culture—a topic often met with content warnings—RiceDumpling responded, “Even in typical high-school drama, there are both light and dark sides. Writers can choose to focus on the positive or the negative aspects of a topic.”

Although initially shared only with close friends, RiceDumpling's work gained significant attention after publishing the first three chapters online, eventually attracting a publisher. Now, her comics are not only popular in Taiwan but also in Japan, the setting of the story.

Miss T's Sexcapades in Japan has become an unexpected aphrodisiac for many couples. One reader mentioned

that she and her boyfriend had one love-making session per chapter, completing the book in just two days. Others shared the graphic novel with partners to enhance their relationships. “I never imagined the book would become an intimacy aid!” RiceDumpling jokes.

Beyond improving relationships, RiceDumpling believes the book also serves as a valuable tool for opening discussions on sensitive topics. The story, centered on sex and hookups, addresses subjects still taboo in Taiwan. Readers often discuss their experiences with the book, allowing for the exchange of viewpoints. The humorous narrative helps mitigate the awkwardness of discussing taboo subjects, making the book a sort of conversational lubricant.

When asked what she hoped Miss T's journey would mean to readers,

RiceDumpling referred to an online discussion about the benefits of being a young woman. The vast majority of participants felt there were no benefits. Reflecting on her own experiences growing up—dealing with negative stereotypes, the pain of menstruation—RiceDumpling found she was sympathetic to their complaints.

“Reading those comments, I found I wanted to draw a story about the joy of being a young woman,” RiceDumpling said. She hopes her readers, in addition to enjoying the story, will feel inspired to go on their own adventures. Overseas readers, too, can gain a better

understanding of Taiwan and the young women who live here. Her hilarious and provocative narrative challenges cultural norms that frown upon explicit portrayals of sex.

Miss T's Sexcapades serves as a valuable tool for opening discussions on sensitive topics. The story, centered on sex and hookups, addresses subjects still considered taboo in Taiwan.



Miss T's Sexcapades in Japan

T子%走 1

Author: RiceDumpling **Illustrator:** RiceDumpling **Publisher:** Locus

Date: 12/2023 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

224 pages | 14.8 x 21 cm **Volume:** 2 (ongoing)

Rights sold: Japanese **BFT2.0 Translator:** Brian Borse

On her first solo journey to Japan, Miss T has one goal: to maximize sexual pleasure.

When Miss T arrives in Japan, she's on a mission to find the perfect hookup. Using a dating app, she encounters a variety of men: a shy student from a prestigious university, a quirky cat enthusiast, and a corporate party boy. But her experiences in the bedroom turn out to be less than thrilling—dedicated cuddlers, post-coital blunders, and even a party boy who claims he'd perform better without a condom. These frustrating encounters leave Miss T wondering: what does it really take to maximize her pleasure these days?

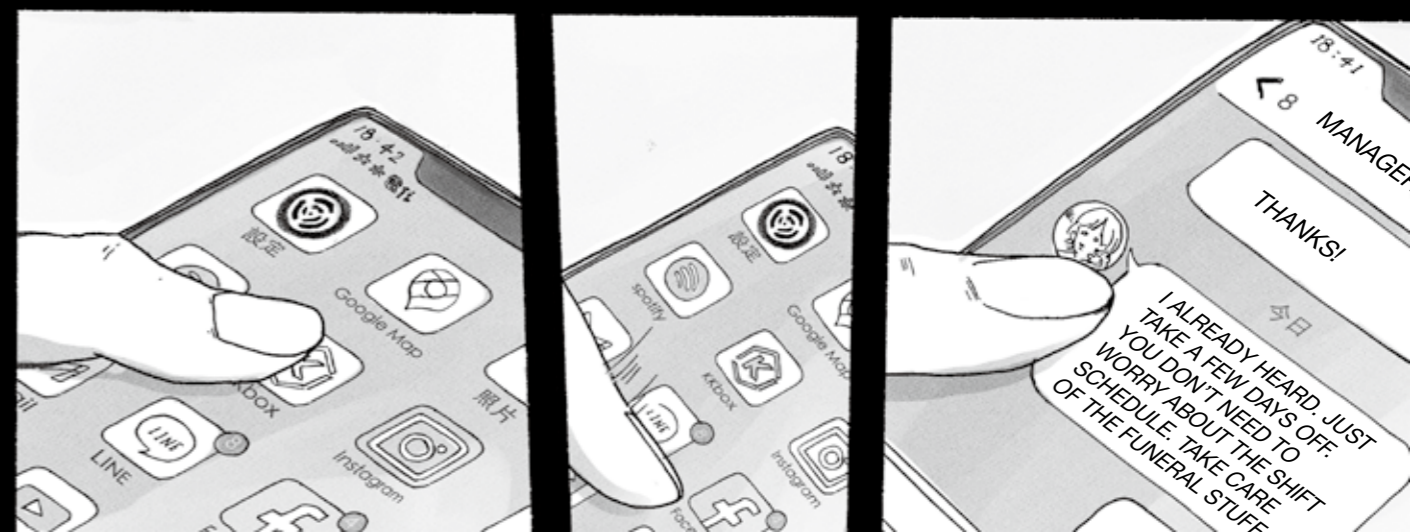
Miss T's Sexcapades in Japan is a provocative comic that tackles the often-taboo subjects of female sexuality with humor and candor. This honest portrayal of one-night stands and female desire highlights a young woman taking charge of her life.

Despite progress in gender equality in Taiwan, sex remains a taboo topic in the public sphere. This work promises to make its mark in manga history. Artist RiceDumpling breaks new ground with her portrayal of female protagonists and sparks discussions on dating, casual sex, and the quest for individual fulfillment.



RiceDumpling

Born in Taichung, RiceDumpling has been publishing original manga online since 2019. She excels at blending humor, modern life, women's struggles, and sexuality in a lively, dynamic way. Her distinctive characters, comic timing, and well-timed plot twists define her style. Her book *Miss T's Sexcapades in Japan* explores themes of casual dating and dating apps from a female perspective, gaining significant online attention. The first volume quickly sold 10,000 copies and secured a Japanese copyright. Additionally, her four-panel manga series, *Not a Good Love Consultant: All My Friend's Relationship Issues*, serialized on CCC Webcomics, has also received widespread acclaim, with its first volume now published in Taiwan.





I meet all kinds of people at work. I've seen all kinds but...

I'm a fourth year now. Most days I don't have any classes, so I can come in.

Good morning! I noticed that you've been working day shifts recently.

I normally work the night shift at a convenience store.



There's a 21 percent discount if you buy two. Do you want to get another one?

I still have no idea what kind of person I want to be.



No big deal. It's your break time now anyway.

Sorry. I'll be right back.

Lu! Your phone keeps ringing. Do you want to get it?



MY LOOKS ARE MIDDLING TOO.

I GO TO A MIDDLING COLLEGE. I GET MIDDLING GRADES.



I DON'T HAVE ANY PARTICULAR INTERESTS.



beep beep beep beep

Come over here and take a look at this.

My name is Lu. I'm 22.

I'm in my fourth year of college. I rent a room near the campus.



LU...LU



TIME TO GET UP...

A Groundbreaking Interpretation of Ten Popular Songs

By Itzel Hsu

Translated by Jacqueline Leung
(Originally published at Readmoo)

Comics may be a sequence of still images, but artists have long used the form to interpret music. Popular Japanese manga like *Nodame Cantabile* explored classical music, *Nana* portrayed a rock band, and *Blue Giant* followed the journey of a jazz musician.

Recently, Taiwan has seen a rise in music-themed comics such as *Demo* and *Bla Bla Song*. One particularly intricate and distinct collection is *Island Rhapsody*. It draws inspiration from the travel program *Listen! Taiwan Is Singing*, hosted by the renowned musician Chen Ming-Chang. In the show, Chen traveled

across Taiwan, experiencing its diverse local cultures and performing famous tunes with his signature yueqin or guitar. Ten of these songs were selected for this comic collection, each accompanied by a

QR code linking to the actual track, as well as printed lyrics and commentary by music critic Hung Fang-Yi.

The first volume opens with “If I Open My Heart’s Door” by Sen, told through

the perspective of a female protagonist returning to her old hometown. This story acts as a gateway that draws readers into a reflective and imaginative world. The second volume concludes with GGDOG’s

This inventive, collaborative two-volume book features ten adaptations of ten classic Taiwanese songs.

“Salt Ponds – The Home of the Black-faced Spoonbills,” where the protagonist wakes up in the summer heat of his room. Despite the vastly different artistic styles, the collection’s opening and closing stories share a dreamlike quality.

Among the ten comics, four lean toward science fiction, while six are set in real-life scenarios. As these narratives blend, reality and fantasy blur. Each story touches on a central theme: characters searching for a sense of belonging—whether to their environment, career, or life itself—leading them to act or reflect deeply on their paths.

Each comic reflects the distinct visual style of its artist. Ding Pao-Yen uses bold, urgent strokes and gray tones to depict a rain-soaked, desolate city, while Tseng Yao-Ching transforms the song “Miss So-Lan Wants to Get Married” into a modern-day vignette about human relationships. ROCKAT imagines a futuristic 2040 where Lukang is a tourist hotspot under the rule of a Chinese Federation, while

Zuo Hsuan tells a heartwarming tale of a young foley artist seeking meaning in his career. Lo Ning draws scenes of rural landscapes and opera performances to evoke the nostalgia of returning home, while Cao Chian depicts the struggles of Beitou hostesses with dark, thick lines. Peter Mann’s comic about women pursuing success provides a lighthearted exploration of family dynamics, and Mu Ke Ke narrates the meeting and separation of childhood friends, highlighting how loneliness touches everyone, regardless of age.

Alan Lee, editor-in-chief of the comics department at Gaea Books, remarked in an interview, “If these comics were simply adaptations of the lyrics, they’d feel too one-dimensional; readers could just listen to the songs. The artists needed the freedom to create new narratives, allowing their creativity to shine.” As a result, the collection offers a variety of rich, engaging stories that breathe life into the songs.



GGDOG

Making his living primarily through comics and illustration, GGDOG has developed a realistic style with manga influences that expresses his take on reality.



Ding Pao-Yen

Ding Pao-Yen, a semi-amateur manga creator who transitioned from pure painting, initially created manga for printing purposes. Interested in science fiction and dreamlike themes, Ding explores various possibilities in the medium.



Tseng Yao-Ching

Tseng Yao-Ching graduated from the Department of Fine Arts (Western Painting) at Taiwan Normal University. Through storytelling, Tseng explores themes such as dreams, theater, mirror worlds, and the deconstruction of values, gender, and desire. In 2020, *Lunatic is the Night* was jointly nominated for the Golden Comic Awards Best Comic Award.



ROCKAT

ROCKAT, often self-mocking as an unfree manga artist, graduated from National Taiwan University of Arts. In 2012, ROCKAT created the board game *Wonderful Island* and published the first manga volume *Nameless Song* at the end of 2014. *Nameless Song* won the Silver Award (Excellence Award) at the 9th Japanese International Manga Award in 2016.



Zuo Hsuan

In 2015, Zuo published the long-form manga *Rites of Returning*, which won the Bronze Award at the Japanese International Manga Award. Zuo represented Taiwan at the Angoulême International Comics Festival in France and the Frankfurt Book Fair in Germany in 2017. *The Banana Sprout* Vol. 1 won the 14th Golden Comic Awards.



Sen

Sen is a manga creator who graduated from the Department of Theater Design at Taipei National University of the Arts, majoring in Stage Design. Currently focused on manga, illustration, and graphic design, Sen's works include the short story collection *Everyday Youth* and the independently published *Insomnia Diary* and *Black Cat*.



Ning Lo

Hsinchu native Lo Ning is a freelance illustrator and designer who has recently begun experimenting with digital formats. She currently resides in Taipei.



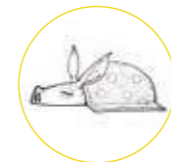
Cao Chian

A lover of comics and metal music, Cao Chian creates personal narratives around themes of growth, and draws in a style that fuses American and Asian comic book art. She is currently studying comic books and printmaking at Art Institute of Chicago.



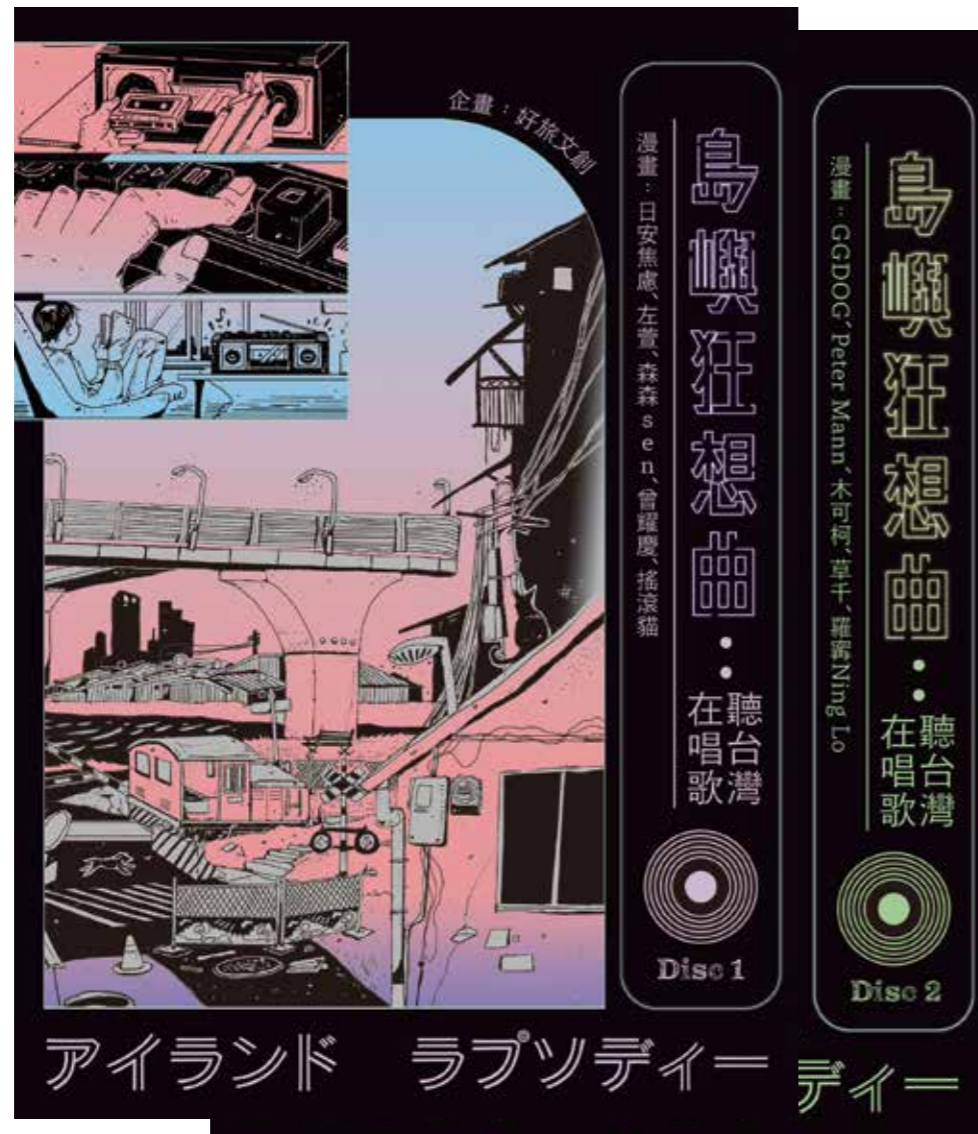
Peter Mann

Born in Germany but Taiwanese through and through, Peter Mann worked in animation until, by a roundabout path, he became a comic book artist and illustrator. Much of his illustration work is connected to music, including visual design for music festivals and album cover design.



Mu Ke Ke

Young comic artist Mu Ke Ke has received numerous awards, including a special jury prize awarded by comic website CCC, and a silver prize at the ACG Awards run by gaming website Bahamut. She has represented Taiwan as artist-in-residence at the San Diego Comic-Con and the Angoulême International Comics Festival.



Island Rhapsody: Listen to the Voice of Taiwan

島嶼狂想曲：聽台灣在唱歌

Produced: GoodTrip Creative **Author:** Lo Ning, Cao Chian, Peter Mann, Mu Ke Ke, GGDOG, Zuo Hsuan, Sen, Tseng Yao-Ching, Ding Pao-yen, ROCKAT

Publisher: Gaea Books **Date:** 8/2022 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

400 pages | 14.8 x 21 cm **Volume:** 2

BFT2.0 Translator: Michael Fahey

This two-volume set features ten short comics, each inspired by songs from the popular travel show *Listen! Taiwan Is Singing*, hosted by renowned musician Chen Ming-Chang. The stories capture the emotional essence of the songs through imaginative adaptations.

Blending film, music, and comics, *Island Rhapsody* offers creative interpretations of ten Taiwanese songs curated by Chen, who traveled across Taiwan, immersing himself in its diverse local cultures and performing iconic tunes.

The ten comic artists reinterpret the melodies and sentiments of the tracks, crafting new narratives that explore themes of family, social change, gentrification, food, and daily life. Acclaimed music critic Hong Fang-Yi also provides insight into the songs.

This innovative collection celebrates the diversity and creativity of Taiwanese artists and musicians. Each story is paired with a QR code, allowing readers to listen to the original music while enjoying the visual storytelling.



GoodTrip Creative

GoodTrip Creative Ltd. is committed to its mission of “seeing the world and being seen by the world.” The company specializes in producing high-quality, world-trending film and television works, including numerous internationally distributed and award-winning programs.

THE COMPRADOR QUIT????

NO!
NO!
NO!

...THE WESTERN BARBARIANS REALLY ARE JUST THE SAME AS THE WILD SAVAGES! TALKING ABOUT DOING TEA BUSINESS! COMPLETE NONSENSE!

I'VE ALWAYS SAID THAT...

WHAT?
HE DIDN'T EVEN LAST FOR ONE SINGLE DAY?

NO!!

.....

I OFTEN GO INTO THE DEEP MOUNTAINS TO VISIT MY FRIENDS AMONG THE WILD SAVAGES.*

哇哇哇

!!

NO.

* 'WILD SAVAGES': THIS WORD FIRST APPEARS IN THE VERITABLE RECORDS OF THE KANGXI EMPEROR (1693). IT WAS USED DURING THE QING DYNASTY TO REFER TO INDIGENOUS AUSTRONESIAN TAIWANESE WHO HAD NOT BEEN CULTURALLY ASSIMILATED AND DID NOT PAY TAXES OR DO CORVÉE LABOR FOR THE QING STATE.

...SO WHAT HAPPENED THIS TIME?
OH, UM, ...

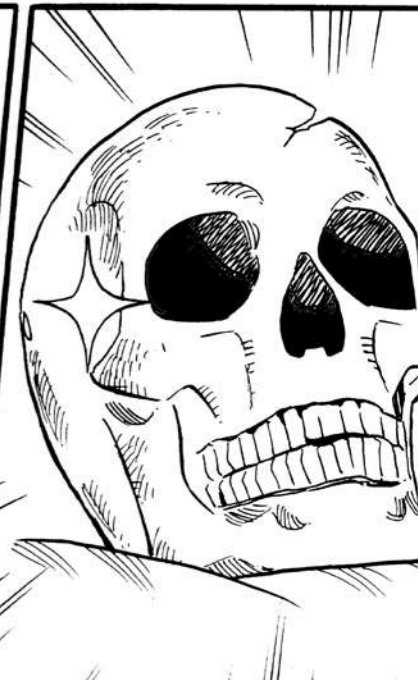
I KNOW. I KNOW...
MR. TODD!!
ONCE AGAIN...

.....

MR. DODD!
哇哇哇

THAT WAS THE FOURTH COMPRADOR, RIGHT?

哇哇哇哇哇哇





TUT-TUT. PFFT.

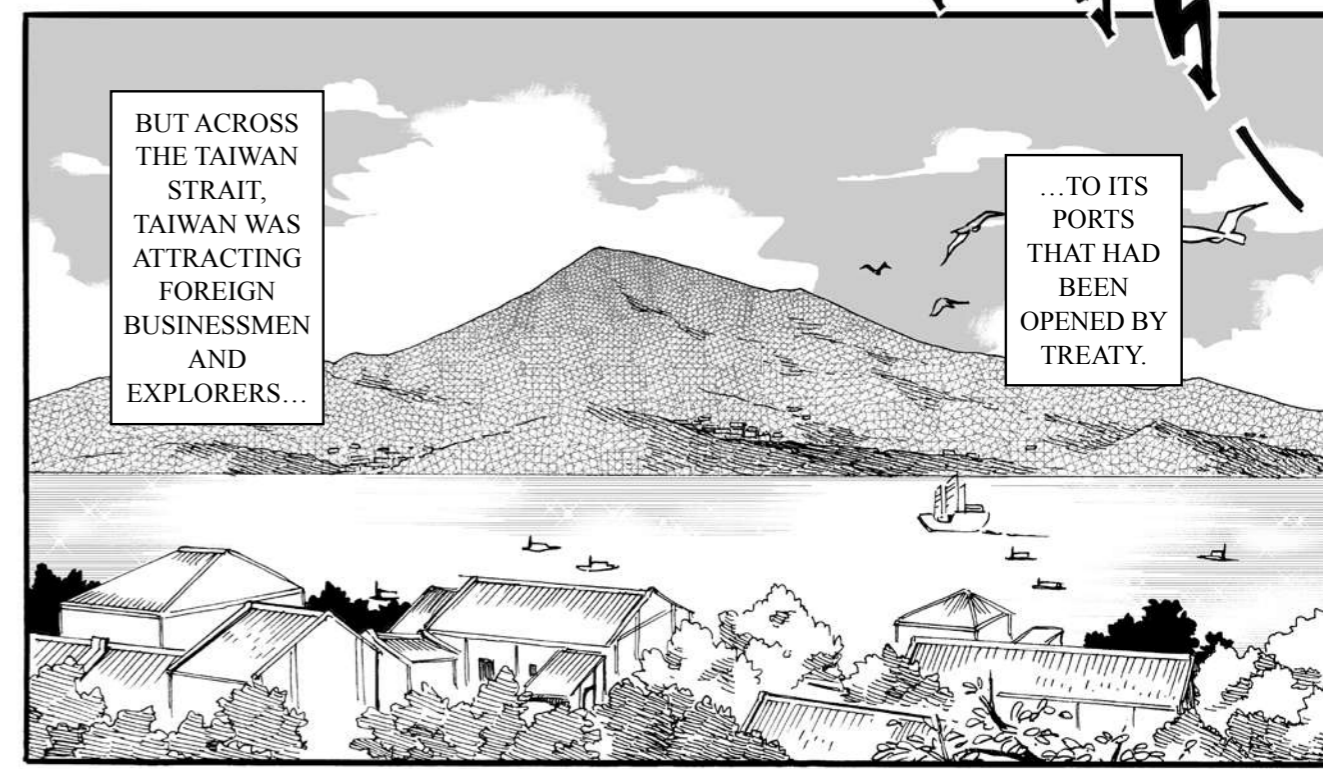
TEA?

THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

YOU WANT TO DO TEA IN TAMSUI.

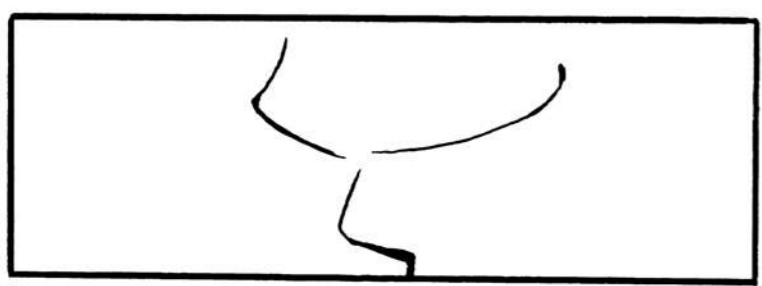
MR. DODD, YOU MUST BE JOKING.

PLEASE GOD, LET THIS COMPRADOR LAST A LITTLE LONGER.



BUT ACROSS THE TAIWAN STRAIT, TAIWAN WAS ATTRACTING FOREIGN BUSINESSMEN AND EXPLORERS...

...TO ITS PORTS THAT HAD BEEN OPENED BY TREATY.



SQUEAK.

DO YOU GO TO CANTON A LOT?

HERE'S MY NORMAL ITINERARY. IT'LL HELP YOU WORK WITH ME.



AS A COMPRADOR, IT IS MY DUTY TO TELL YOU THIS.

I RECOMMEND THAT YOU DO SUGAR INSTEAD. SUGAR FROM SOUTHERN TAIWAN SELLS REALLY WELL.

.....

I CAN ASSURE YOU BASED ON MY LONG YEARS AS A COMPRADOR ...

DO YOU KNOW HOW LOW THE PRICE FOR TEA FROM TAIWAN IS?



I'LL BET FIVE DOLLARS THAT HE WON'T LAST FOR TWO WEEKS AT THE MOST.



I'D BE HAPPY TO LOSE THAT BET.

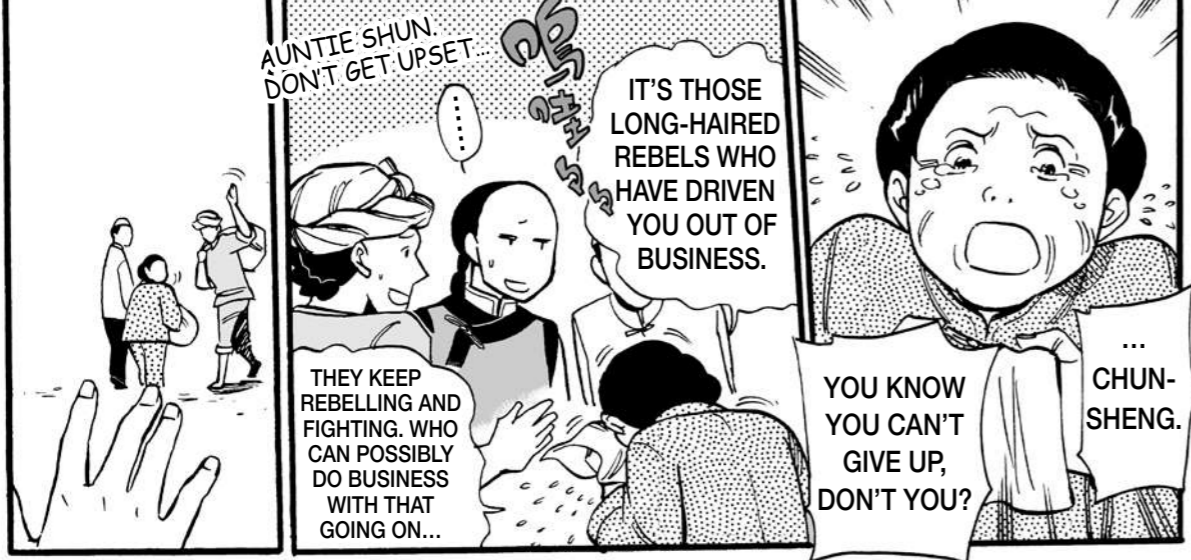


NO, I MEAN HOW LONG WILL HE LAST?

A SNEAKY COWARD?



WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE COMPRADOR THIS TIME?



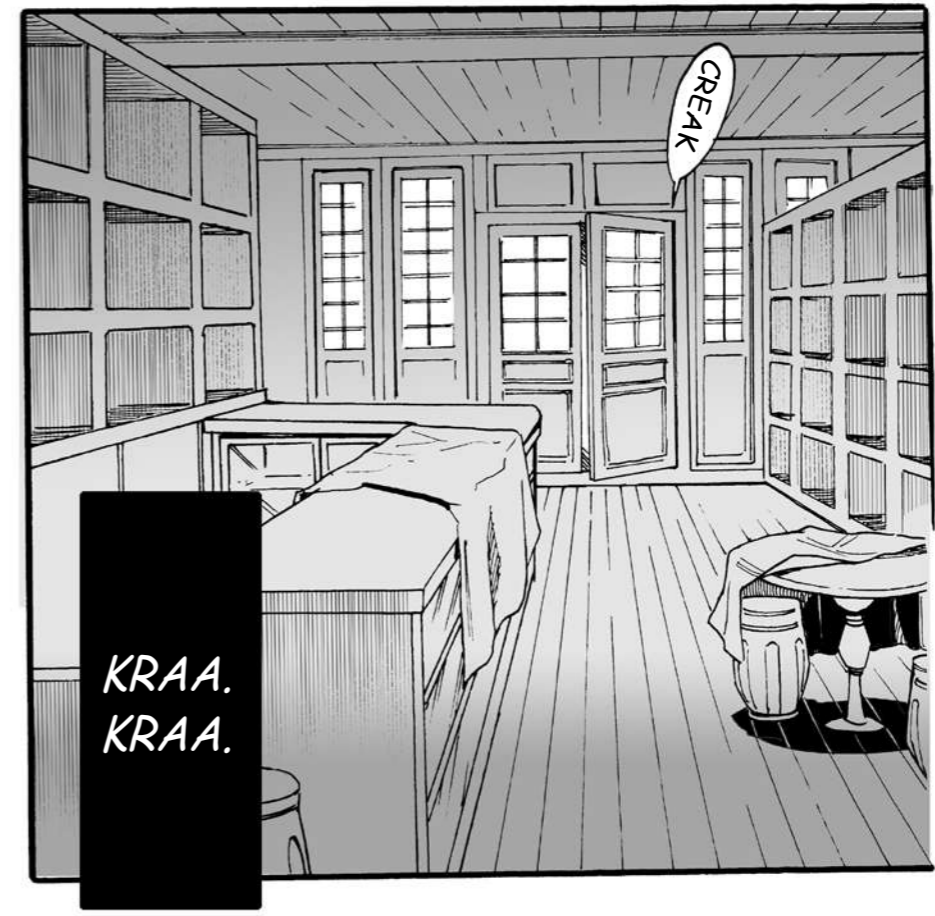
AUNTIE SHUN
DON'T GET UPSET...

IT'S THOSE
LONG-HAIRED
REBELS WHO
HAVE DRIVEN
YOU OUT OF
BUSINESS.

THEY KEEP
REBELLING AND
FIGHTING. WHO
CAN POSSIBLY
DO BUSINESS
WITH THAT
GOING ON...

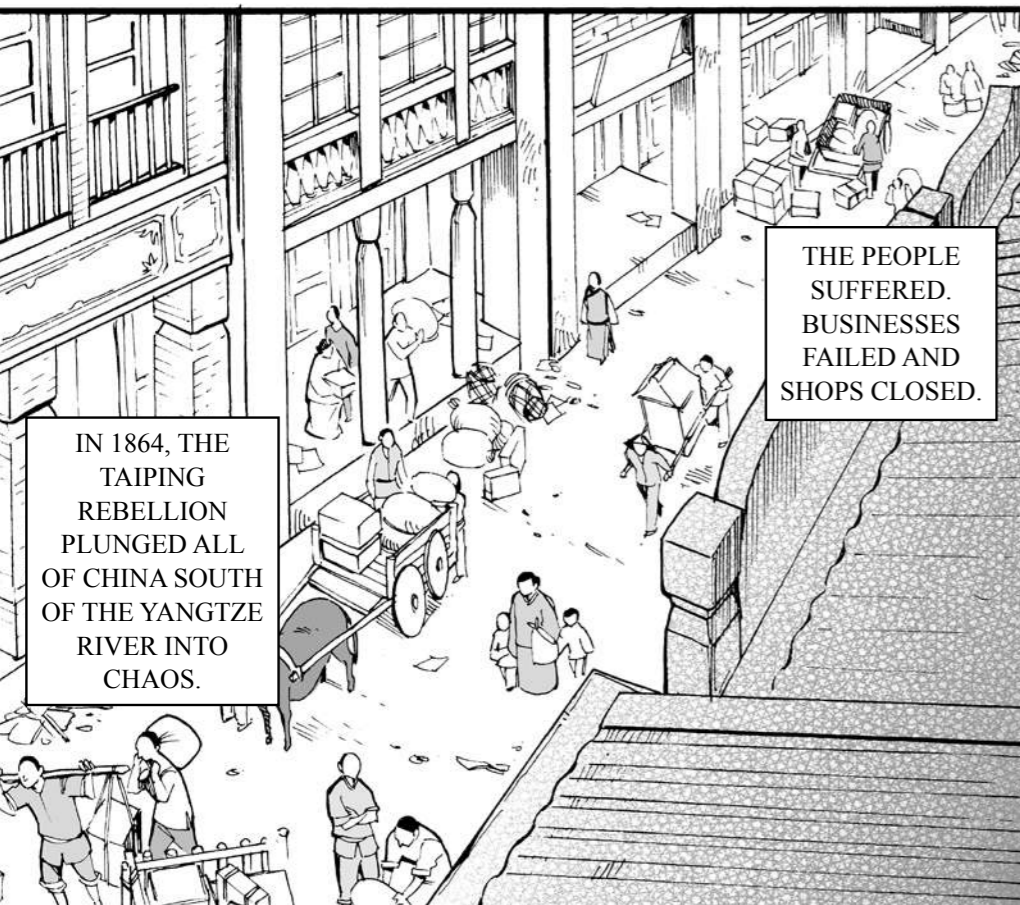
YOU KNOW
YOU CAN'T
GIVE UP,
DON'T YOU?

...
CHUN-
SHENG.



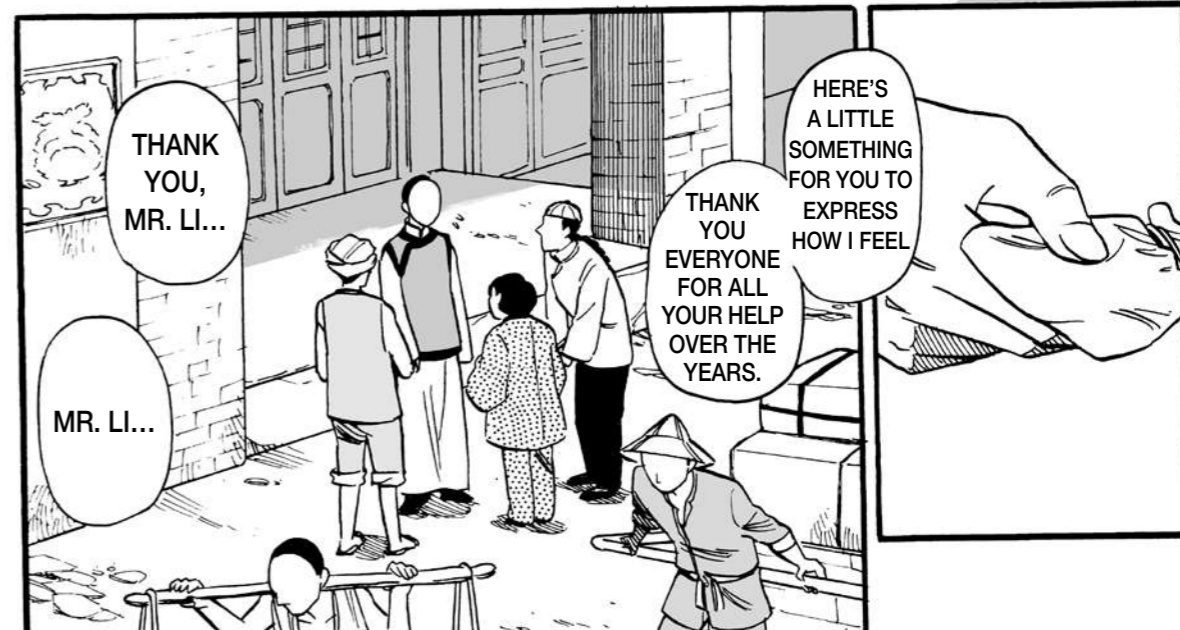
CREAK

KRAA.
KRAA.



THE PEOPLE
SUFFERED.
BUSINESSES
FAILED AND
SHOPS CLOSED.

IN 1864, THE
TAIPING
REBELLION
PLUNGED ALL
OF CHINA SOUTH
OF THE YANGTZE
RIVER INTO
CHAOS.



THANK
YOU,
MR. LI...

MR. LI...

THANK
YOU
EVERYONE
FOR ALL
YOUR HELP
OVER THE
YEARS.

HERE'S
A LITTLE
SOMETHING
FOR YOU TO
EXPRESS
HOW I FEEL

“Comics Are My Way of Communicating with the World”: An Interview with Kiya Chang About *Formosa Oolong Tea*

Interview by Lin Si-tong
(originally published on the website of Taiwan Creative Content Agency)

Kiya Chang was born into a family of tea farmers in Meishan, Chiayi. On weekends, her parents would take her to the family's tea farm. They hoped it would help her appreciate the hard work of farming and the privilege of being able to study. “They said I was helping, but as a child, I couldn't really do much. During tea-picking season, I would turn the leaves, which I found fun,” Kiya recalls.

Before starting *Formosa Oolong Tea*, Kiya still had only a vague understanding of her family's work. Despite spending much of her childhood on tea farms and in tea factories, she wasn't very familiar with the process of tea-making, let alone the art of tea culture. Laughing, she says that once she began working on the comic, she constantly “bothered” her father

with questions. Whenever she consulted historical records from the Qing Dynasty, she would ask her father for his input: Were ancient tea-making methods still viable today? Was the difference in production levels between the past and present realistic?

“Gathering information was hard enough, but determining its accuracy and understanding the real-life challenges was even more difficult. Since I didn't know how to make tea, I had to ask my father,” Kiya says. Fortunately, her relationship with her parents is strong, and working on *A Teatime Adventure* brought them closer. “Listening to my father talk about his work made me appreciate his job even more,” she says, smiling.

Kiya met with friends from the Creative

Comic Collection (CCC), a publication that is a part of Academia Sinica's Digital Archives Program, which aims to promote the archives through comics. Its hope is to make historical materials accessible and engaging to the public. As she put it, their thinking is, “Does promoting these archives really have to be done through dry publications? If the material is interesting enough, it will attract an audience.”

Although the CCC editorial team wasn't composed of professional comic artists, they were avid comic readers. Under their guidance, Kiya delved into the story of Scottish merchant John Dodd. Ultimately,

“Since I didn't know how to make tea, I had to ask my father,” Kiya says. Coming from a family of tea farmers, she found that working on A Teatime Adventure brought her closer to them: “Listening to my father talk about his work made me appreciate his job even more.”

she decided to base *Formosa Oolong Tea* on historical events and real people. In addition to consulting her family “advisor,” she also conducted field research, interviewing tea shop owners and elders in Dadaocheng, a historic district in Taipei. While historical records allowed her to imagine life in the Qing Dynasty, she felt that firsthand accounts from the elders brought her story to life.

Unlike typical serialized comics, *Formosa*

Oolong Tea was published volume by volume. Each captures a different phase of Dodd's efforts to introduce Taiwan's oolong tea to the world. From his arrival in Tamsui in 1865, to his collaboration with the tea farmers of Quanshan, and the establishment of a tea factory, each story is crafted carefully to reflect the historical and cultural significance of the events.

Reflecting on over ten years in the industry, Kiya has observed significant changes. When she first started, veteran comic artists lamented that they were living through the “dark age” of Taiwanese comics. There were few readers, and the connection between creators and audiences was weak. Marketing felt useless, and comics struggled to reach the public.

But times are changing. Thanks to the efforts of the CCC Creation Collection, government support, and platforms like the Taiwan Comic Base, Taiwanese comics are seeing a resurgence. “Now when you walk into a bookstore, you'll see Taiwanese comics alongside Japanese and Western ones,” says Kiya.

For Kiya, comics are more than just a medium—they're her way of communicating with the world. “To me, being able to create comics is important because it's how I connect with the world.”

This essay has been lightly condensed for this booklet.



Formosa Oolong Tea

異人茶跡

Author: Kiya Chang **Illustrator:** Kiya Chang **Publisher:** Gaea Books

Date: 6/2022 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

200 pages | 14.8 x 21 cm **Volume:** 5 (END)

Award: 2023 The 14th Golden Comic Awards, Comic of the year—*Formosa Oolong Tea Vol. 5: The Endless Tea Journey*

2022 The 15th Japan International Manga Awards, Bronze Award—*Formosa Oolong Tea vol.4: The Tea Enthusiasts of Dadaocheng*

2014 The 5th Golden Comic Awards, Best New Talent—*Formosa Oolong Tea vol.1: Tamsui 1865*

BFT2.0 Translator: Michael Fahey

This must-read Taiwanese classic chronicles the legendary journey of a Scottish merchant and a Xiamen trader who together sparked the global craze for Taiwanese oolong tea.

How did Taiwan's oolong tea come to be so famous? Before the Opium Wars, the major ports of Qing China bustled with sailing ships. Loaded with goods, these ships would sail away, traveling to Britain and Europe. The most significant of these goods was tea—second only to water as the most consumed beverage in the world.

After Taiwan's port Tamsui was established, the island became a new home for immigrants and adventurers. John Dodd, a Scottish merchant, partnered with Li Chunsheng, a savvy comprador. Together, they set their sights on the vast American market, betting their future on a dream product—Taiwanese oolong tea. They overcame the distrust and difficulties posed by tea farmers, government officials, inspections, and Hong Kong firms to bring their vision to life.

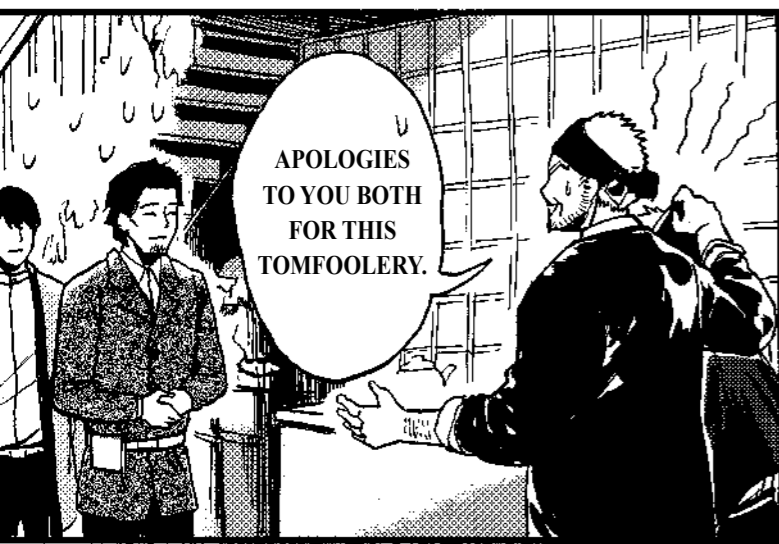
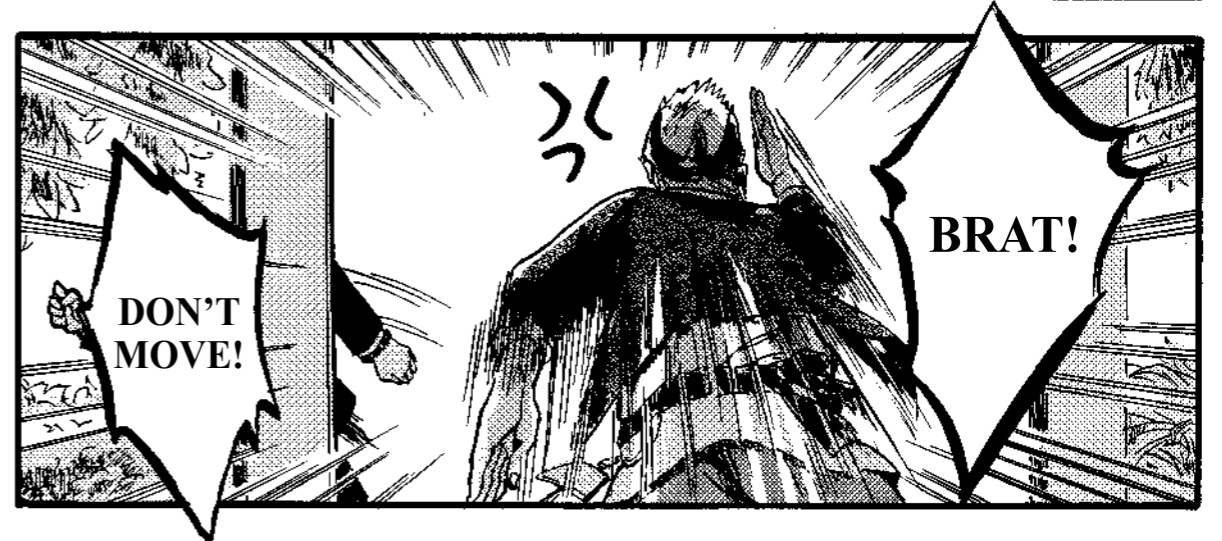
For the next thirty years, tea accounted for more than half of Taiwan's total export value, establishing Taipei as the island's political and economic center—a status it holds to this day. This book tells the story of two people who recognized the untapped potential of a local resource. Their pioneering efforts earned them the title of "Fathers of Taiwanese Tea."

This five-volume series captivated readers over a decade. Created by an artist from a tea-farming family in Taiwan, it tells the story of Taiwan's renowned oolong tea: how it began in the cherished Taipei district of Dadaocheng and journeyed to the world stage.



Kiya Chang

Kiya Chang, originally from a family of tea farmers in Chiayi, Taiwan, is now based in Taipei. Starting in the summer of 2010, her serialized stories chronicled the history of Taiwan's Formosa tea industry through the lives of British merchant John Dodd and Chinese merchant Li Chunsheng. From 2013 to 2023, Kiya published five volumes of *Formosa Oolong Tea* alongside a collection of short stories titled *Take Me Out to the Ball Game*. The fifth volume of *Formosa Oolong Tea* won the 14th Golden Comic Award for Best Comic. In 2022, *Formosa Oolong Tea* earned the Bronze Award at the Japan International Manga Award, while *Formosa Oolong Tea: Tamsui 1865* received the Best Newcomer Award at the Golden Comic Awards. Her work has also been adapted into a mystery-solving application and an interactive board game. *Formosa Oolong Tea* has been showcased at events like the Angoulême International Comics Festival in France and the Frankfurt Book Fair in Germany.





HOW WONDERFUL—

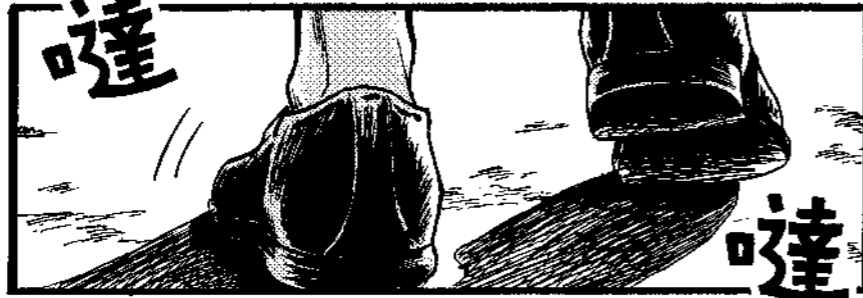
GOING FORWARD, IT'LL BE MUCH EASIER FOR US TO LOOK UP THE COMMON NAMES OF HERBS.

YES.

WOW! IT'S REALLY BECOME A BOOK.



哇哇



哇

哇



WHY DON'T WE HAVE SOMETHING TO EAT IF YOU TWO HAVE TIME? THERE'S A NEW RESTAURANT NEARBY THAT'S SUPPOSED TO BE PRETTY GOOD.

SURE, SO LONG AS WE CAN TROUBLE YOU TO LEAD THE WAY.



THEN LET'S BE OFF!

ALRIGHT.

喀



WELL!

I JUST COULDN'T WAIT TO SHARE THE NEWS WITH SOMEONE!

呀

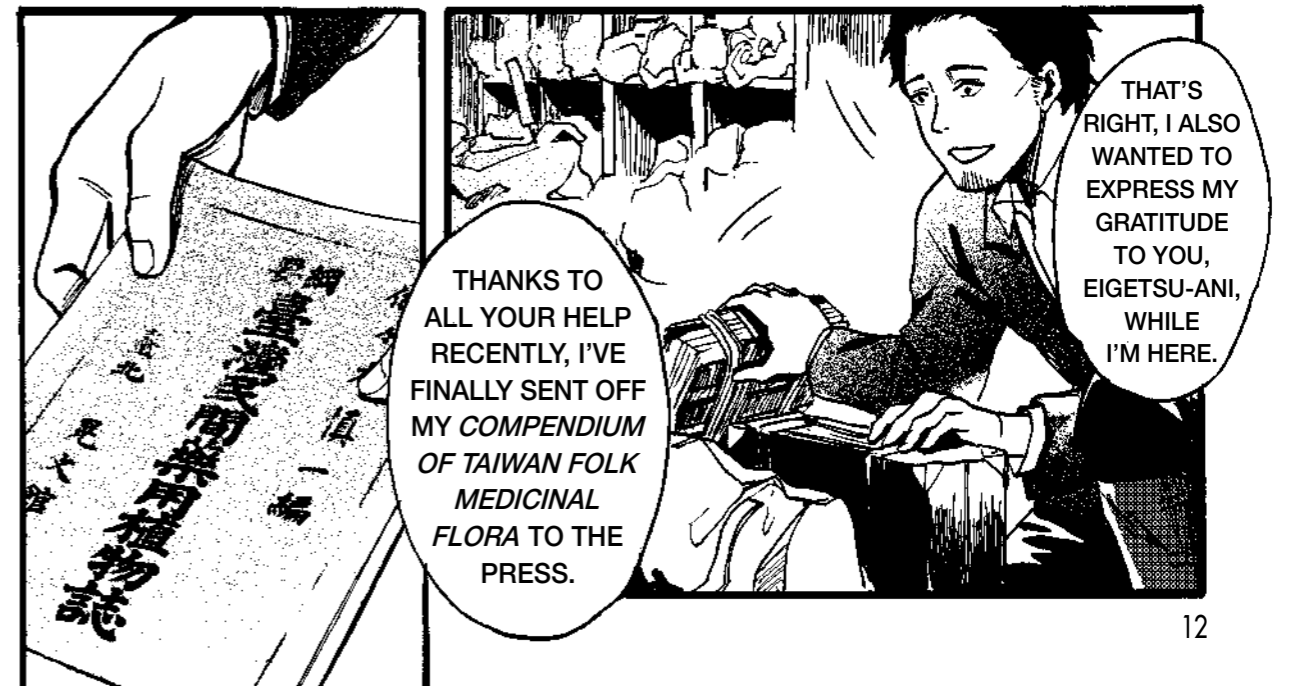
SHINICHI-SAN.

OH!



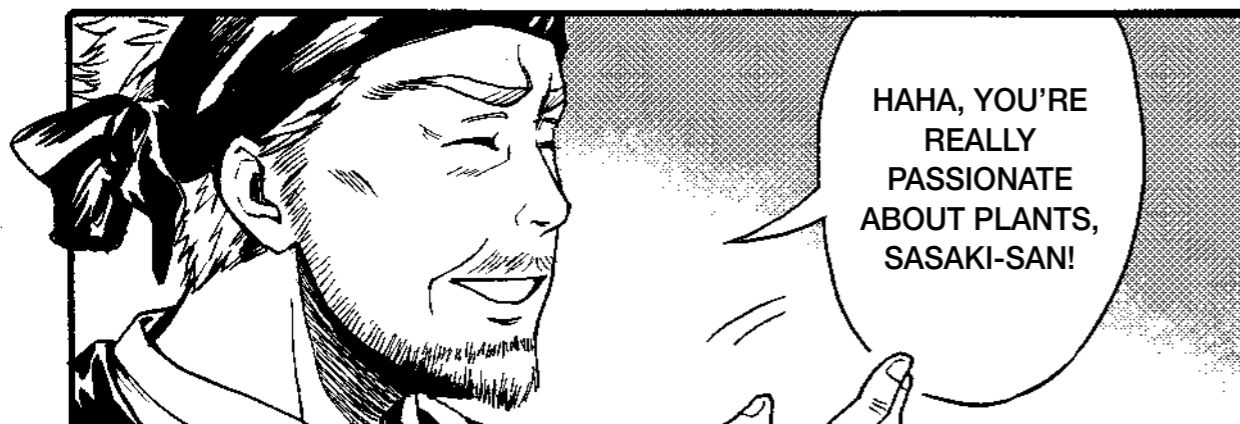
LOOK AT YOURSELF,

RUSHING OVER TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS BEFORE YOU'VE EVEN UNPACKED!



THANKS TO ALL YOUR HELP RECENTLY, I'VE FINALLY SENT OFF MY COMPENDIUM OF TAIWAN FOLK MEDICINAL FLORA TO THE PRESS.

THAT'S RIGHT, I ALSO WANTED TO EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE TO YOU, EIGETSU-ANI, WHILE I'M HERE.



Savoring the Inconspicuous

Written by Itzel Hsu

(originally published at Readmoo)

Translated by Joel Martinsen

Plants are food, neighbors, and the most intimate of strangers. Perhaps because of their everyday relevance, botany-related writing has flourished in recent years. Riding this wave of interest in native flora is *Plant Collectors' Notebook*, a graphic novel set during the Japanese colonial period that follows the lives of plant collectors. Despite its title suggesting a guidebook, this is a narrative-driven story that delves into the lives of three characters, each with their own dreams and scars. As they gather plants and produce specimens, they encounter new experiences and learn life-changing lessons.

Hsu Liang-Shan is the only son of a

Plants are food, neighbors, and the most intimate of strangers. Perhaps because of their everyday relevance, botany-related writing has flourished in recent years.

pharmacist who uses herbs and plants to treat illness. After his younger sister succumbs to a heart ailment despite herbal treatments, Liang-Shan is left heartbroken and loses faith in the healing power of plants. However, as he starts to work at the Taipei Herbarium, he gradually comes to appreciate herbal knowledge, discovering that plants have far more uses than he ever imagined. This newfound understanding helps him to grieve the loss of

his sister.

Liang-Shan's supervisor, Matsuo Haku, a botanical research assistant, is swift and decisive in his work. As the story unfolds, the reader learns that his dedication stems from a deep-seated sense of

inferiority and worthlessness caused by his frail health. Yet, his passion for plants quietly inspires those around him.

Wu-Tsao, an orphan raised in a village of mountain bandits, joins the Herbarium team shortly after Liang-Shan. Though illiterate, she is exceptionally skilled with her hands. She hopes that learning about botany will help her confront the lingering trauma of being abandoned as a child. Whether it's Liang-Shan helping her adapt to a new way of life or Haku teaching her to read, Wu-Tsao is constantly discovering new things.

To write and illustrate this book, the author and artist Ejan consulted extensively with botanists and historians. Each drawing, from branches to leaves, was reviewed by experts. For example, in the chapter introducing Wu-Tsao, the bandits not only rob travelers but also cultivate poppies and refine opium in a concealed encampment.

The choice to depict specific plants for these criminal activities was made with careful consideration of their plausibility during the Japanese colonial period. This underscores the meticulous character of Ejan's work.

As Ejan put it, "The name of a plant collector doesn't go down in history like a botanist's, but their work forms the foundation for all subsequent research." Her collaboration with botanists and historians is, in itself, a subtle tribute to that unrecognized labor. Perhaps this is what *Plant Collectors' Notebook* shares with its readers: just as its protagonists quietly support botanical research—and plants silently sustain human life—ordinary people like us contribute to the day-to-day functioning of the world.

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



Plant Collectors' Notebook

採集人の野帳 1

Author: Ejan **Illustrator:** Ejan **Publisher:** Gaea Books

Date: 2/2023 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

264 pages | 14.8 x 21 cm **Volume:** 4

Award: 2022 The 46th Golden Tripod Awards, Recommended Excellent Publication

BFT2.0 Translator: Mike Fu

The unruly son of a famous apothecary accidentally burns down the family home, destroying precious plant samples collected by visiting researchers. As punishment, he is sent to work with them, embarking on a passionate journey of discovery and plants.

In early 20th-century Taiwan, botanists from the local herbarium gather with a renowned apothecary to share their latest discoveries. While they chat over drinks, Liang-Shan, the rebellious son of the host, accidentally ignites a fire that burns down part of the family shophouse and destroys valuable specimens collected by the botanists. To make amends, the apothecary sends Liang-Shan to work in the herbarium.

Unhappy with his situation, Liang-Shan botches a series of tedious tasks. But soon, the researchers discover that this apparent good-for-nothing has an uncanny talent for identifying and collecting plant species. Over the course of his penance at the herbarium, Liang-Shan's cynical and impulsive nature raises the question: will he prove to be more of a help or a hindrance?

In the 1920s, the imperial government of Japan commissioned numerous studies of Taiwan's native plants and funded the construction of the herbarium featured in this graphic novel. Located within the Taipei Botanical Garden, the herbarium continues its work to this day, housing Taiwan's oldest and largest collection of botanical specimens. Drawing upon meticulous consultations with researchers at the Taiwan Forestry Research Institute, author and artist Ejan has crafted a remarkable account of individuals passionate about plants and plant-collecting.



Ejan

Ejan is a freelance creator known for comic versions of *Close Your Eyes Before It's Dark*, *Dark Forest Reading Club*, and *Plant Collectors' Notebook*. *Close Your Eyes Before It's Dark* won the Best Newcomer Award at the Golden Comic Awards in 2018. *Plant Collectors' Notebook Vol. 2* was selected as an Excellent Publication at the 46th Golden Tripod Awards in 2022. Ejan has received the Cultural Content Fund's Taiwan Original Comic Production Project grant for 2022.

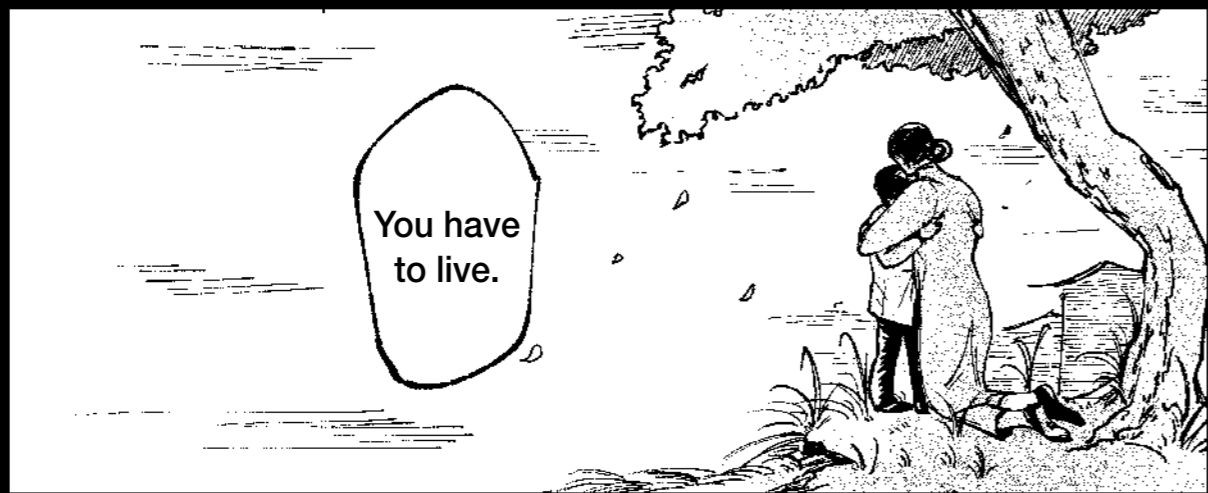


Bing-Han....

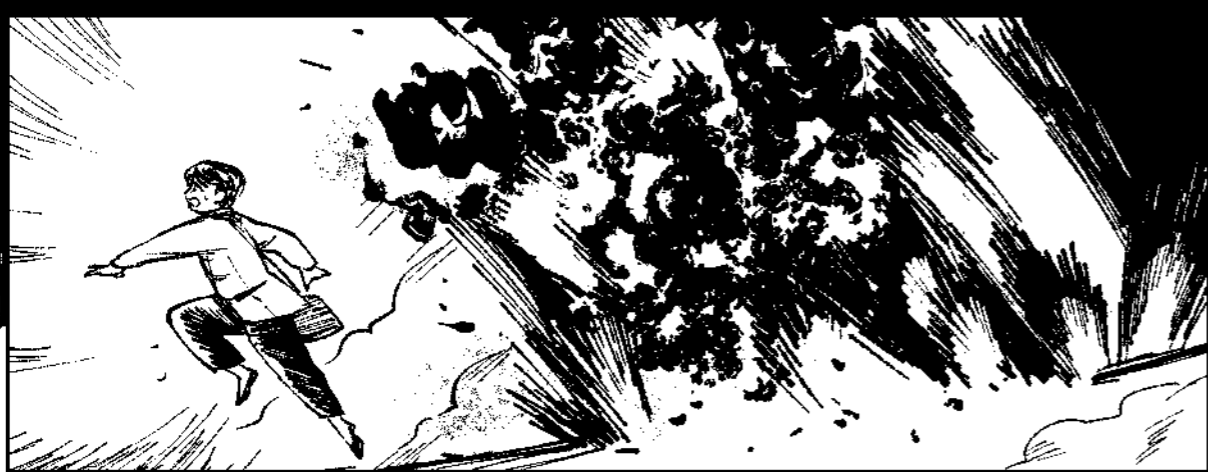
I won't ever come back....



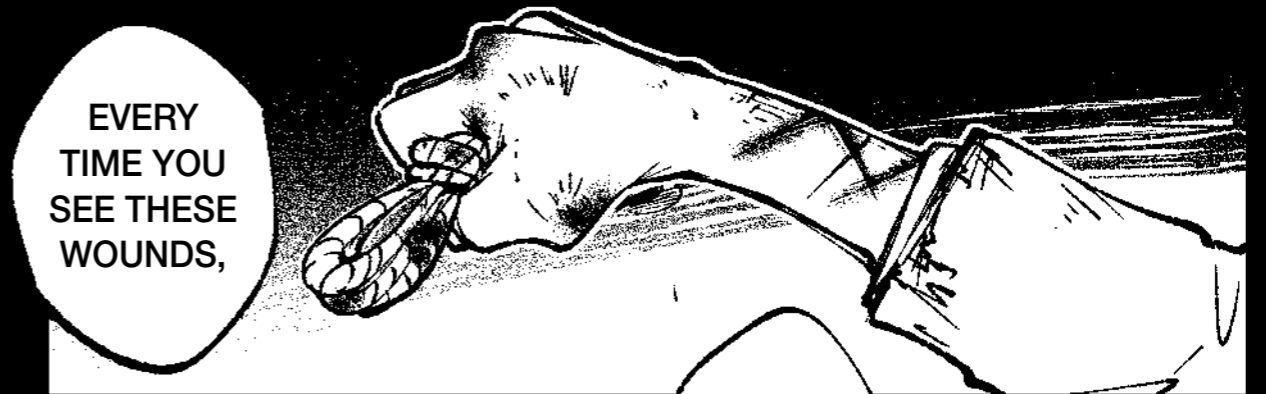
I.... I understand, mother....



You have to live.



WHAT HE HAD TO FACE WAS A BATTLEFIELD FULL OF SMOKE AND FUMES.



EVERY TIME YOU SEE THESE WOUNDS,



....WHAT I'VE TOLD YOU.



REMEMBER ...



At least a division!

How many soldiers are there?



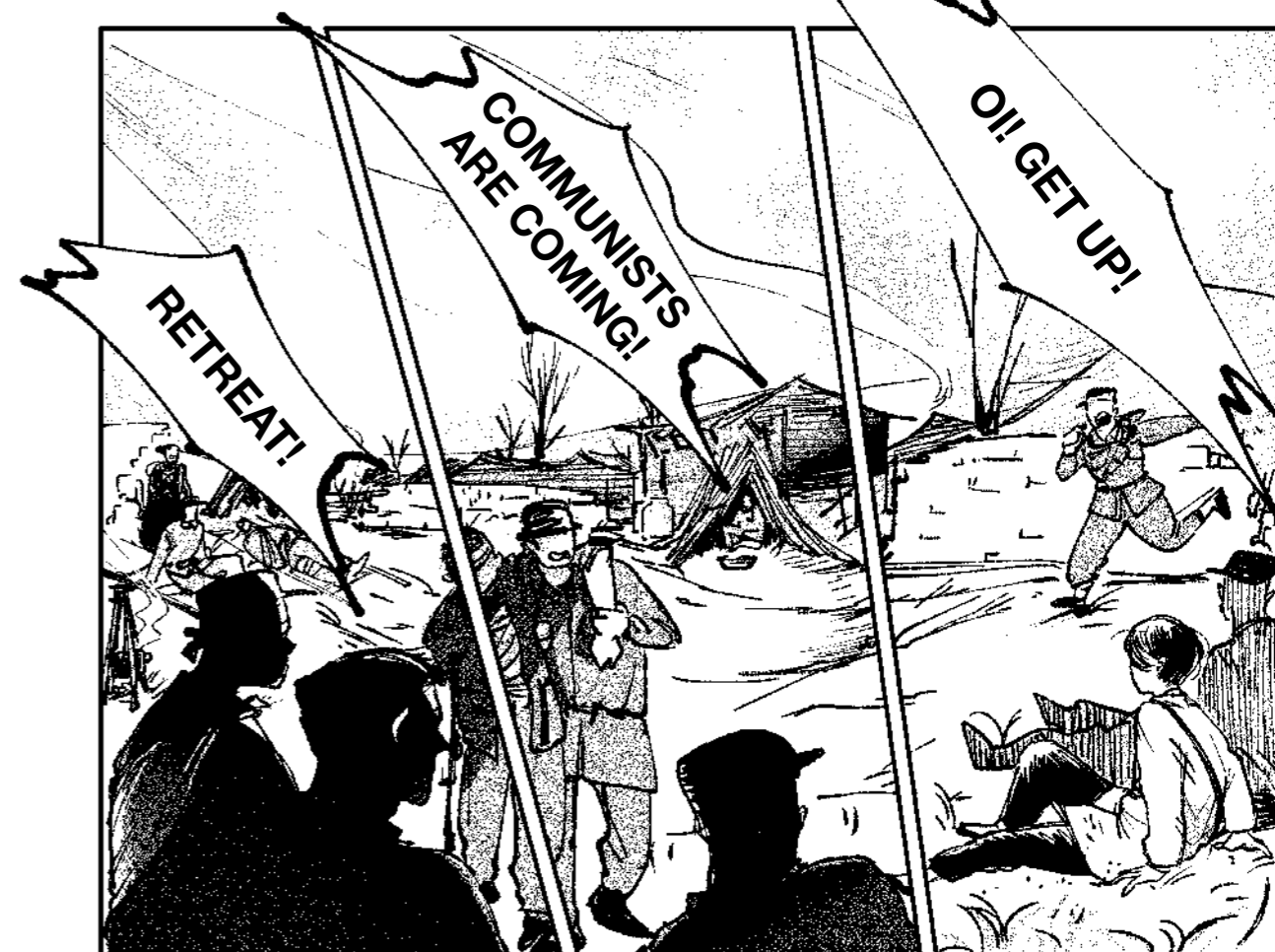
WAAAHH....!



In 1948, the Chinese civil war broke out.



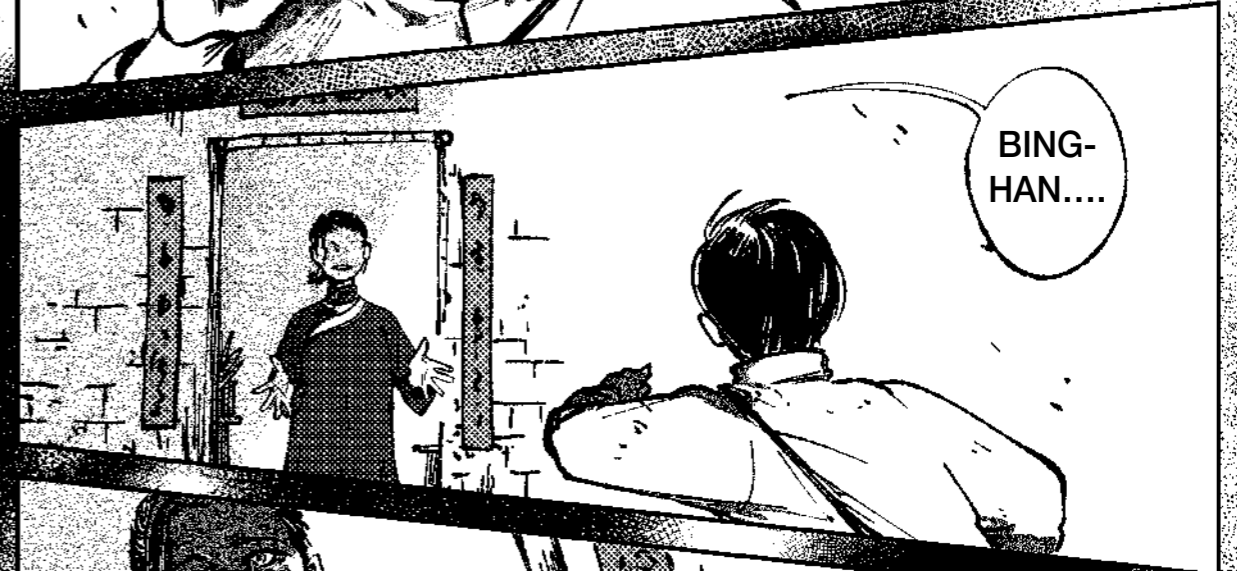
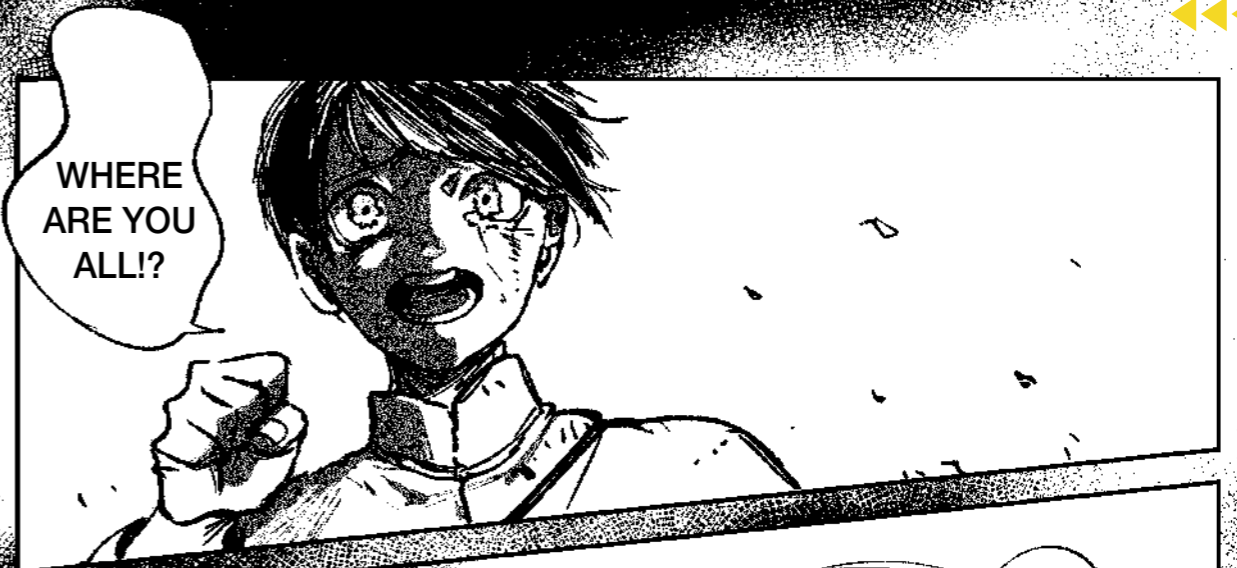
A young man from Shandong, Gao Bing-Han was studying at a school in Nanjing that was created for children in exile. He didn't know his school would close due to the civil war, and since then he was forced to live a life of uncertainty.



RETRACT!

COMMUNISTS ARE COMING!

O!! GET UP!



The Reason We Chose This Story

(from the postscript)

by Lu Yi

As I read through the memoirs dramatized in this book, I was deeply moved by this boy's journey. He witnessed his father being forcibly taken from their home and executed by Communist soldiers, attended a temporary school run by the Nationalist government that later dissolved, and, heeding his mother's words—"Follow the Nationalist Army, and if they don't return, you must never come back"—he followed the troops south. The path was perilous, filled with wild animals, death, and danger. He walked over 800 kilometers to Taiwan, despite severely burned legs and blistered feet that bled and healed repeatedly, until his flesh was raw and torn.

Through my work on a screenplay, I had the privilege of meeting Gao Bing-Han on whom this story is based. In his life, Communist soldiers executed his father, but on his journey, it was Communist

soldiers who treated his wounds when his feet became infected with maggots. When he scavenged for food at Taipei Station, a Taiwanese sanitation worker named Uncle Kong shared his meal and took him to see a doctor. When doctors wanted to amputate his legs, one of them, pitying the orphaned child, decided to save his legs, concerned about how he would survive in Taiwan without them.

Each time I meet Gao, I am in awe. How did a child endure such horrors of war, reach Taiwan alone, and live on with gratitude and resilience? If he could go through all that and still maintain a heart full of compassion, always thinking of others, then what excuse do we have not to do the same?

I deeply appreciate how *The Red Rope* captures Gao's life. His story isn't one of hatred. In spite of the atrocities of war, the book shines a light on the kindness

he encountered and the bittersweet regrets of his life—without losing hope. I've been brought to tears countless times reading the manga. Whenever the protagonist remembers his mother or realizes he cannot return to the mainland, it stirs something in me. Gao once joked that we're cruel for making him relive those memories during *i n t e r v i e w s* — especially when we press him on details he's tried to forget.

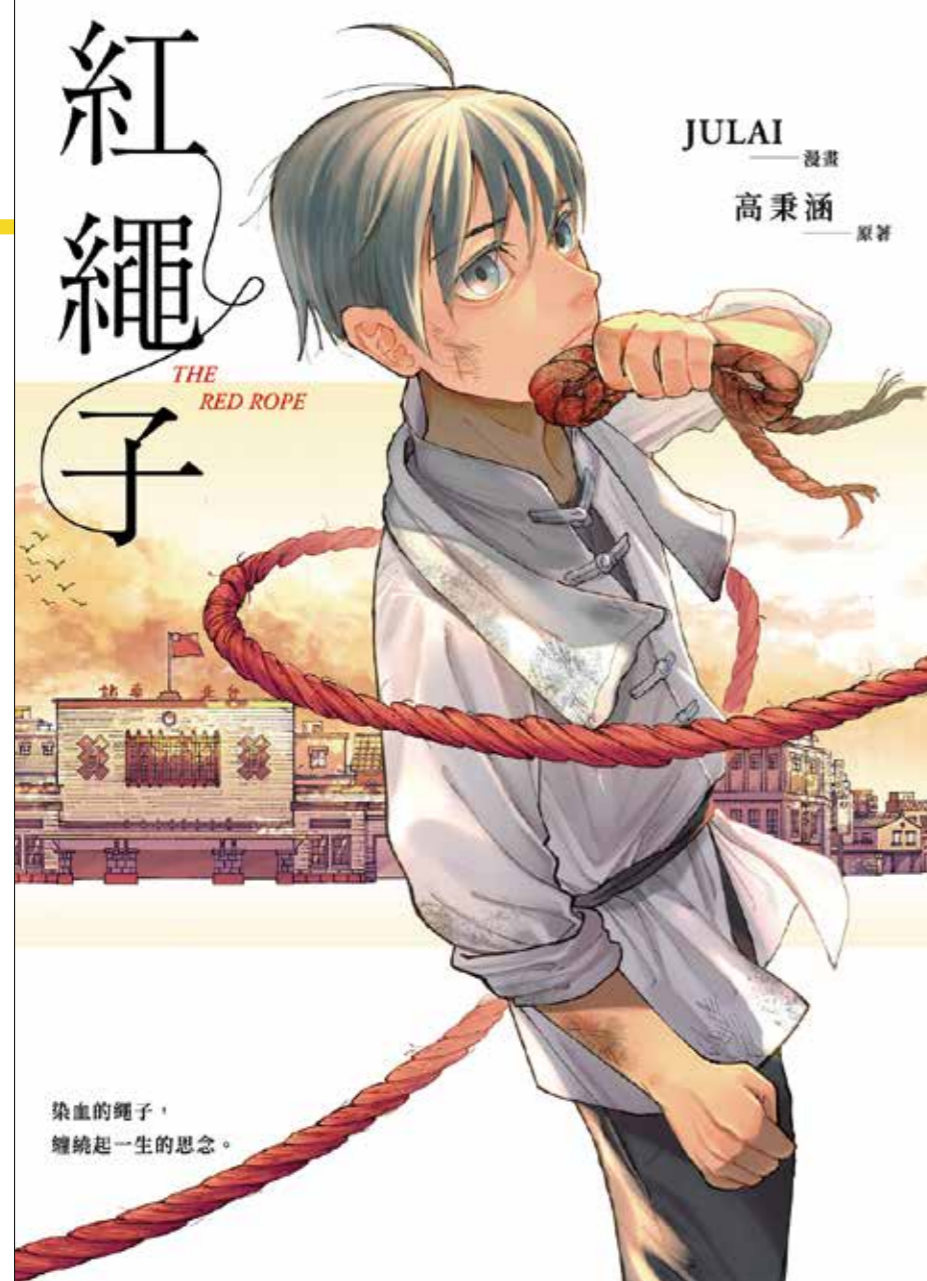
It's impossible not to question why wars happen, and what absurdity leads people to perpetuate such conflicts.

In his life, Communist soldiers executed his father, but on his journey, it was Communist soldiers who treated his wounds when his feet became infected with maggots. When he scavenged for food at Taipei Station, a Taiwanese sanitation worker shared a meal and took him to see a doctor.

Perhaps I'm too pessimistic, fearing that most will forget this past. But I'm happy to be wrong. Seeing Gao's story

adapted into manga and television, and watching the dedication of Gaea Books and Qseries 2, I know that great care was taken in preserving this history. I hope that everyone who experiences this story finds warmth and strength within it.

This edited essay appeared in the book's postscript.



The Red Rope

紅繩子

Comic Artist: JULAI **Original Author:** Gao Bing-Han **Publisher:** Dyna Books

Date: 6/2022 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

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

BFT2.0 Translator: Jenna Tang and Michelle Kuo

A story of nostalgia about displacement during wartime and the urgency of finding roots in a foreign land.

In 1948, during the Chinese Civil War, in a time of chaos, people were swept along by the tides of war. After crossing the great rivers and seas, there remained the deep yearning and hope for reunion.

Gao Bing-Han, a 13-year-old child in China, carries the love and hopes of his mother and a rope stained with his father's blood. He sets out alone on a journey of escape, struggling to survive.

He's lucky enough to board a ship heading to the other side of the strait. But he does not know the road back home would be endlessly long. In Taiwan, he puts down roots, meeting kind-hearted people. They support each other through hardships. But this young boy still holds on to his memories, waiting for the day he can return home.

This is a story about refugees and the homesickness that seeps into their lives.



JULAI

Julai is a comic and illustration creator who enjoys quirky, slightly melancholic stories. Julai excels at depicting humorous, light-hearted moments while also bringing warmth to harsh narratives. Julai was nominated for the Comic Newcomer Award at the 14th Golden Comic Awards in 2023. Her biography of Gao Bing-Han has been adapted into a cross-domain collaboration involving the original work Shandong Youth Legend, the comic *The Red Rope*, and the drama *Who Says Mother is Like the Moon* with the Qseries 2. She also received a grant from the Ministry of Culture for the Qseries 2 TV drama comic publishing project.



Gao Bing-Han

Gao Bing-Han, born in 1935 in Shandong, China, faced the hardship of walking a thousand miles alone at the age of 13 during the turmoil of war. Later, he became a lawyer in Taiwan. He dedicated his resources to fulfilling the last wishes of hundreds by returning their urns to families in China.

嘩
嘩
嘩

嘩
嘩
嘩

壹

踏火伏魔的罪人

One: The Sinner Playing with Fire

嘩
嘩
嘩

The total is 265 yuan.
I received 300 from you,
here's 35 in change.
Thank you for your business.



BECAUSE ...

I'M HERE TO FIND AN AMAZING MASTER!



AFTER THE FIRE TEN YEARS AGO, IT WAS NEVER REPAIRED, THEY SAY THERE ARE GHOSTS!

THIS PLACE IS DANGEROUS



THANK YOU, THERE'S NO NEED!

... AH!



MISS! DO YOU WANT ME TO WAIT FOR YOU?





**FORGET
ABOUT
IT**

**IT WAS
PROBABLY
JUST
UNIMPOR-
TANT
NONSENSE**

**WHAT
DID HE
SAY
AFTER
THAT?**

**IF THERE
IS NO
RETRIBU-
TION**

HM?

**THEN
THERE
IS ONLY...**

REMEMBER
THIS, YOU
LITTLE
BRAT

WHAT A
BEAUTIFUL
THOUGHT,
HMMMM?

GOOD IS
REWARDED
WITH GOOD,
EVIL WITH
EVIL

A Fresh Take on the Supernatural with a Distinctly Taiwanese Twist: On *The Oracle Comes*

By Brian Hioe

The Oracle Comes is a contemporary supernatural story with a distinctly Taiwanese flavor.

The story begins when college student Yeh Zhi-ling seeks out Han Jie, a renowned spiritual master and exorcist. Yeh hopes that Han can help solve the mystery of her father's strange behavior, which she believes is the result of demonic possession.

To her surprise, Han isn't a wizened old monk, but a rugged young man in his 20s, covered in tattoos. Initially reluctant to help, Han reveals himself to be a genuine spirit medium when a rival exorcist attempts to seize control of the building he lives in—a burned-down market where all its residents perished in a fire.

Han serves as the medium for Nezha, the trickster god, and frequently clashes with necromancers who seek to manipulate spirits for their own gain.

At first, Han suspects the involvement of a rival spiritual school, but soon he discovers the case is far more complex, especially as Nezha himself takes a particular interest in it. As the first installment of a larger series, *The Oracle Comes* introduces Han as its protagonist and teases his complicated relationship with Nezha. The deity and medium seem to be at odds, begrudging one another in subtle ways. The volume also hints at an overarching conflict between Han and other spirit mediums.

Though the story uses familiar tropes—

secret schools of exorcists being a staple in manga like *Jujutsu Kaisen*, *Blue Exorcist*, and *Yu Yu Hakusho*—*The Oracle Comes* distinguishes itself through its distinctly Taiwanese elements. Nezha, for instance, is one of Taiwan's most significant deities. The spiritual practices mentioned by Han and other exorcists draw heavily from Taiwanese temple customs and folk religion.

Set in modern-day Taipei, the story references various facets of contemporary Taiwanese life, from the supernatural lore surrounding places like Yangming Mountain to Taiwan's boisterous media culture. These touches ground the supernatural plot in a real-world setting, giving the story local depth and

authenticity.

The Oracle Comes aligns with recent Taiwanese films, games, and literature that blend traditional Taiwanese religion with contemporary supernatural narratives—works like the 2017 video game *Detention* and its related media, or horror films like the 2022 hit *Incantation*. As a genre work with a strong Taiwanese identity, *The Divine Flesh* stands out for its local flavor and fresh take on the supernatural.

Set in modern-day Taipei, the story references various facets of contemporary Taiwanese life, from the supernatural lore surrounding places like Yangming Mountain to Taiwan's boisterous media culture. These touches ground the supernatural plot in a real-world setting, giving the story local depth and authenticity.

Brian Hioe is a writer, editor, activist, and one of the founders of New Bloom Magazine.



The Oracle Comes

乩身（漫畫）：踏火伏魔的罪人 1

Author: Teensy **Illustrator:** BARZ **Publisher:** Dyna Books

Date: 11/2023 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

196 pages | 14.8 x 21 cm **Volume:** 1 (ongoing)

BFT2.0 Translator: Brian Hioe

The troubled human avatar of a powerful god uncovers a terrifying truth: a once-defeated enemy is once again preparing Earth for the arrival of a dark power.

Han Chieh may look like a hardened delinquent—he spends his days sparring and bears a tattoo of ancient armor across his scarred torso—but there’s more to him than meets the eye.

Han Chieh once struck a deal with the ancient deity Prince Nezha to protect his relatives trapped in Purgatory. In return, he pledged to become his avatar on Earth. As Nezha’s eyes, ears, and sword on Earth, Han Chieh is tasked with defending humanity from the encroaching forces of the Nine Hells.

When a young girl arrives at his door, pleading with him to investigate her father’s possession by a demonic woman, he tries to brush her off. But then he realizes she’s telling the truth. A young acolyte of a demon lord—an enemy Han Chieh once stopped from invading the human realm—is rallying forces for a second assault.

A tale of demons, damnation, and redemption, *The Divine Flesh* evokes comparisons to Constantine, but with distinct Taiwanese and Chinese folkloric elements woven throughout.



Teensy

Teensy began his career as an assistant to renowned manga artists. Since 2003, he has transitioned to writing. His series *The Divine Flesh*—inspired by Taiwan’s unique folk religion and beliefs in good and evil—features local deities and characters from everyday life. Its aim is to create a landscape that is at once realistic and magical. *The Divine Flesh* series received support from the Cultural Content Fund for its novel cross-domain adaptation into comics. Following its popularity among readers, *The Divine Flesh* series was adapted into a television series that will soon be released.

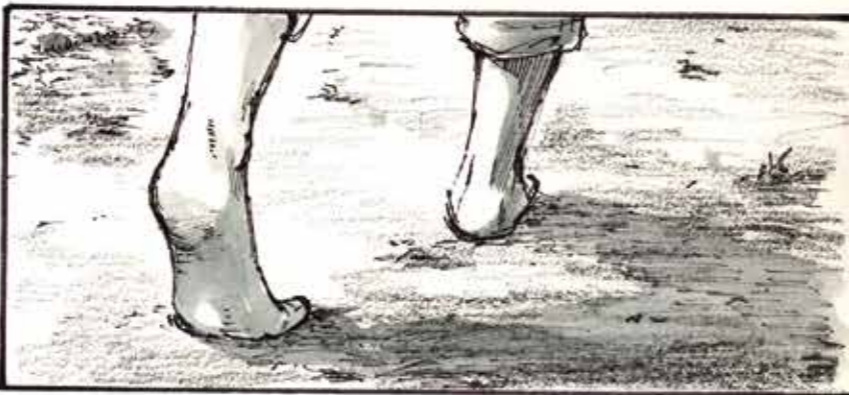


BARZ

Born in Zhongli, Taoyuan, Taiwan, Barz graduated from Dayeh University with a degree in Visual Communication Design. He excels in creating tightly paced manga that depicts intense emotions and conflicting values. He has won the Eastlink Publishing Comic Script Award in 2002 for *Demon King Earth*, received the 2nd Newcomer Award from Chingwin Publishing in 2006 for *Demon Catcher*, and secured the Eastlink Publishing Short Comic Award in 2007 for *Exorcism* and in 2008 for *Supreme Martial Arts*.



I GUESS I'LL TALK IT OVER WITH MOM AGAIN.



IT IS. BUT THERE'S MORE. YOU SEE, THE LANDLORDS ARE AFRAID OF OFFENDING THE JAPANESE.

EVEN IF YOU CAN FIND A LANDLORD WILLING TO RENT TO ORDINARY PEOPLE, HE'S GOING TO ASK FOR THE SAME RENT.



KUN WANTED TO PLANT SOMETHING ELSE SO THAT HE COULD MANAGE THE RENT AND GET BY.

IT NEVER OCCURRED TO HIM THAT THE SUGAR REFINERY WOULD PAY THE LANDLORD MORE TO RENT HIS FIELD.



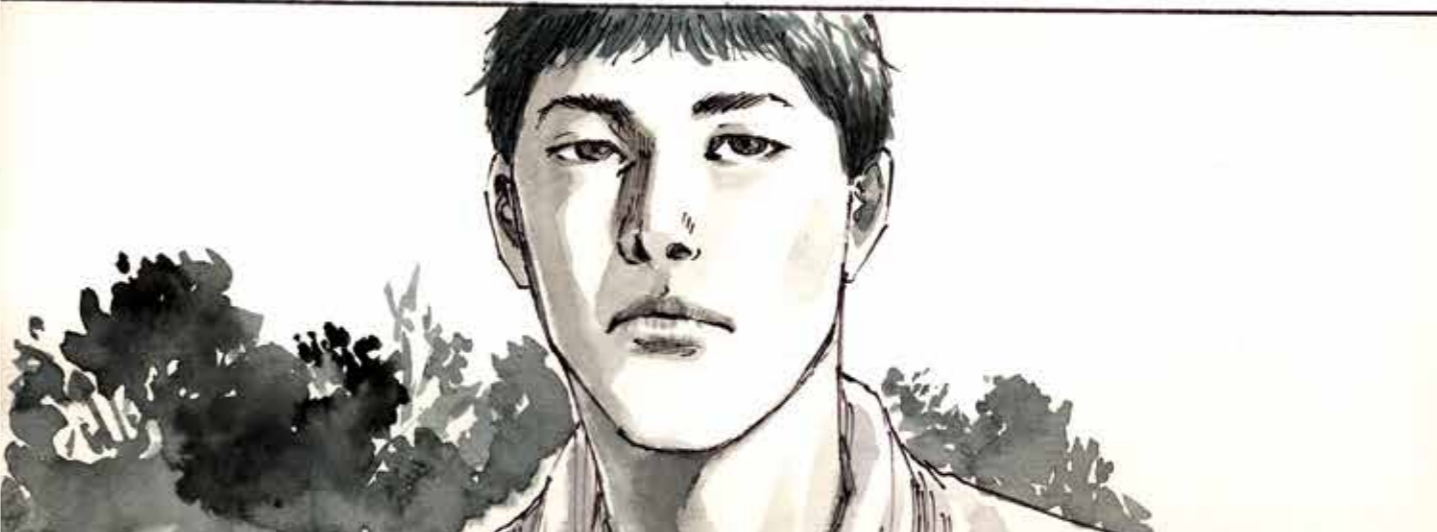
THAT'S LAND-GRABBING!



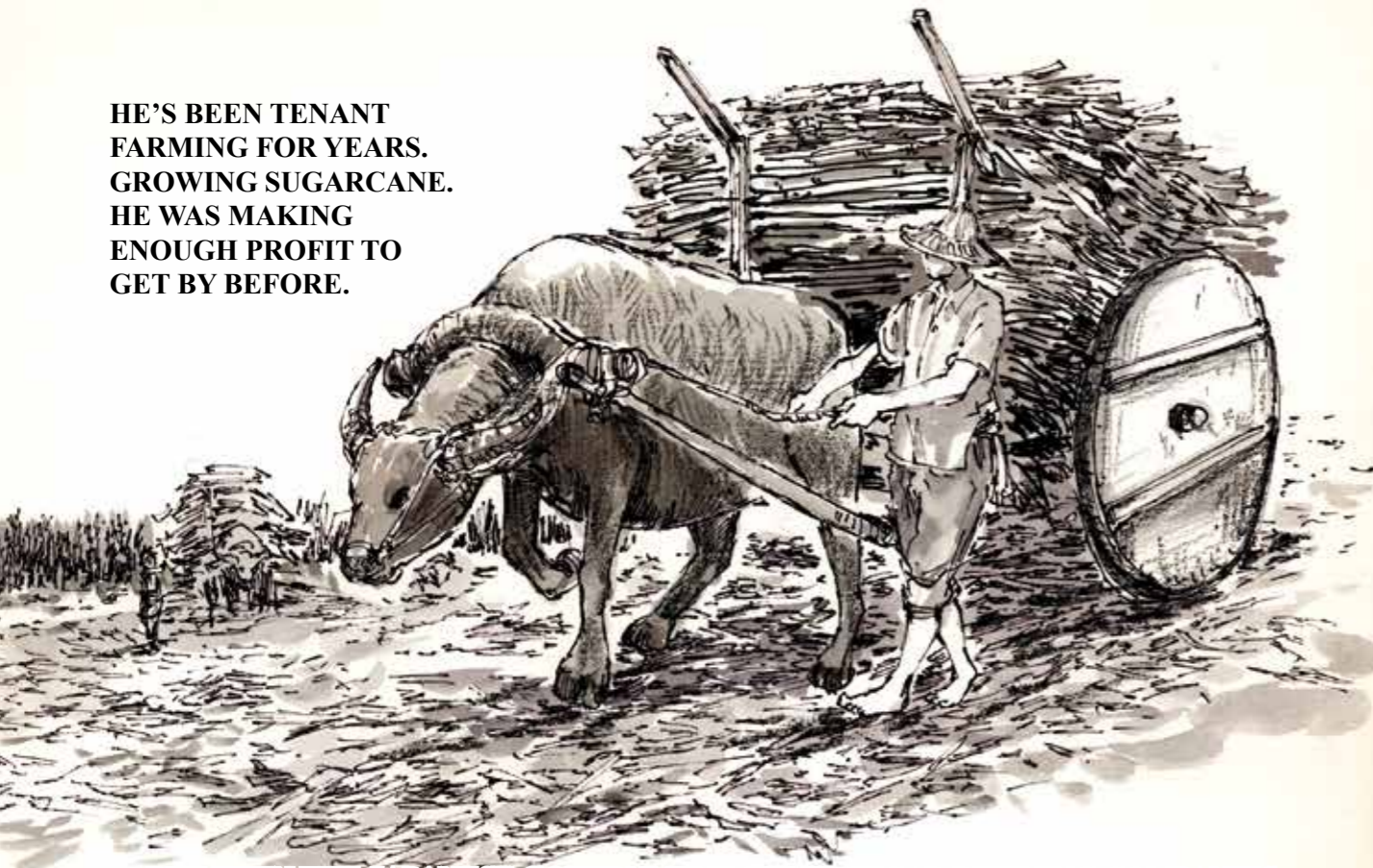
HUH?!



CHAM, YOU'D BETTER THINK TWICE ABOUT LEASING A FIELD.



HE'S BEEN TENANT FARMING FOR YEARS. GROWING SUGARCANE. HE WAS MAKING ENOUGH PROFIT TO GET BY BEFORE.



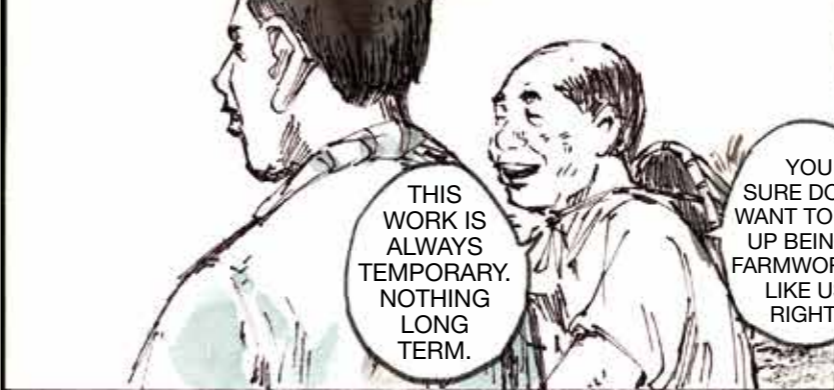
BUT THEN THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT SET UP SUGAR REFINING COMPANIES.

社會式株糖製濟臺



THE JAPANESE HAVE CONTROLLED EVERYTHING SINCE THE REFINERIES TOOK OVER. THEY EVEN CONTROL THE WEIGHTS USED TO WEIGH THE CROPS.

THEY HAVE THE FINAL SAY. THE SUGARCANE FARMERS GET SHORTED, BUT THEY JUST HAVE TO ACCEPT WHAT THEY ARE GIVEN AND KEEP QUIET.

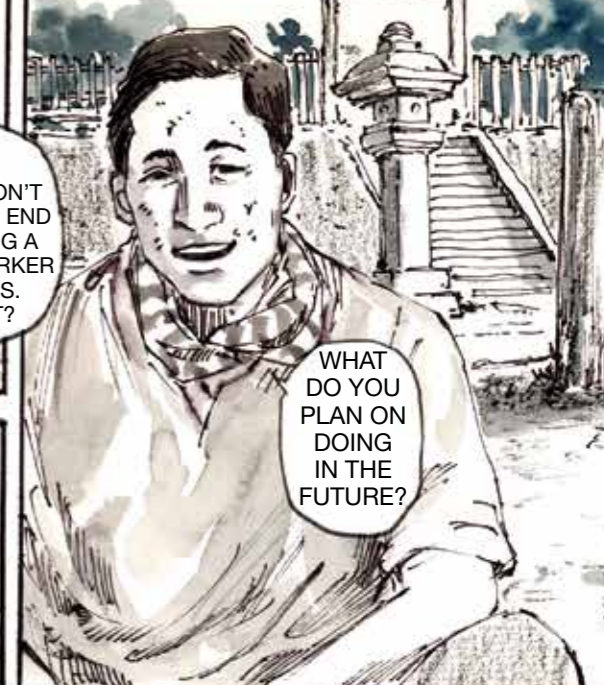


THIS WORK IS ALWAYS TEMPORARY. NOTHING LONG TERM.

YOU SURE DON'T WANT TO END UP BEING A FARMWORKER LIKE US. RIGHT?



I TALKED IT OVER WITH MOM. I WANT TO LEASE A FIELD AND DO SOME FARMING.



WHAT DO YOU PLAN ON DOING IN THE FUTURE?



WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?



.....



CHAM ...

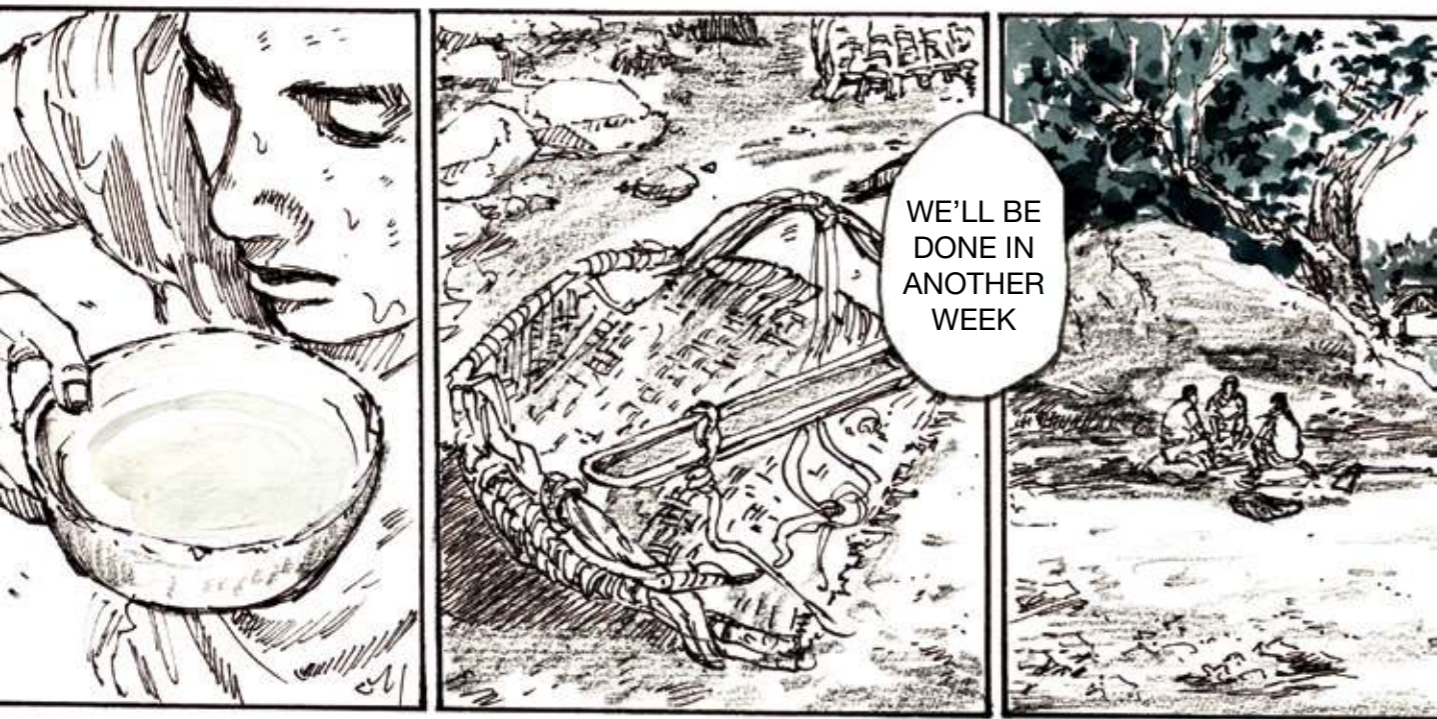
THIS IS NOT THE RIGHT TIME TO BECOME A TENANT FARMER.



YOU KNOW KUN FROM THE VILLAGE, RIGHT?



OH, WHY'S THAT?



SCENE 1 CHAM



Cross-Border Dialogue Between Comic Artist Ruan Guang-min and Scholar Chen Wan-yi: The Timelessness of Lai Ho's "A Lever Scale" and Its Contemporary Significance

The Lai Ho Foundation is an organization dedicated to preserving Lai Ho's legacy. Known as the "Father of Modern Taiwan Literature," Lai Ho was a champion for the rights of Taiwanese people under Japanese colonial rule. He endured imprisonment twice for his activism.

Professor Chen Wan-yi: The mission of the Lai Ho Foundation is threefold. First, it upholds Lai Ho's humanitarian spirit. Second, it stands on the side of the weak. Third, it nurtures passion for social protest.

These three principles capture the spirit of Ruan Guang-min's adaptation *A Lever Scale*. Its reference to *Crainquebille*,

written by the Nobel Prize-winning French novelist Anatole France, is telling. *Crainquebille* depicts how the police oppress the weak. Upon reading Anatole France, you must have realized that the abuse of power is not unique to Taiwan but is an issue that crosses all borders.

Ruan Guang-min: Lai Ho's writing resonates deeply with me. He tells the story of how small, ordinary people under Japanese colonial rule struggle. The emotions I experience while reading transcend differences in time, clothing, and space. It's worth noting that the issue of oppression isn't limited to colonizers and the colonized, but more broadly to

those with power and those without. In the modern era, those with power should not oppress the vulnerable but instead should seek to understand.

Lai Ho's writing resonates deeply with me. He tells the story of how small, ordinary people under Japanese colonial rule struggle. The emotions I experience while reading transcend differences in time, clothing, and space.

Chen Wan-yi: This is a concern for all creators of literature and art. This theme doesn't change with the times or government. Lai Ho once said he was a youth of the transitional era, a progressive. Reading Guang-min's graphic novels, one can feel the rapid changes of the past two decades. The readership of printed texts

has quickly diminished, giving way to new forms and technologies. Thus, "reading" is no longer just about reading words one by one. Young people might derive their reading experiences more from videos, images, and music. To make classic works meaningful in contemporary times, they must be embraced by the current generation.

Modern readers need artists like Ruan Guang-min, who can adapt classic texts into graphic narratives for today's youth. This work reflects the trend of the times. If Lai Ho knew his novels were adapted into comics, he would likely nod in agreement, seeing his texts gain contemporary relevance.

This edited excerpt appeared in the book's postscript.



A Lever Scale

一桿秤仔

Author: Lai Ho **Illustrator:** Ruan Guang-Min **Publisher:** Avanguard

Date: 5/2023 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

208 pages | 19 x 26 cm **Volume:** 1

Award: 2024 The 15th Golden Comic Awards, Comic of the year & GCA Grand Prize

BFT2.0 Translator: Michael Fahey

Renowned comic artist Ruan Guang-Min draws inspiration from the classic short story "A Lever Scale," written by Lai Ho, one of Taiwan's most important literary figures. Known as the "Father of Modern Taiwan Literature," Lai Ho was a champion for the rights of Taiwanese people under Japanese rule and was repeatedly imprisoned for his activism.

Set during Taiwan's colonial period under Japan, the story recounts the tragic event of a vegetable vendor killing a policeman. Amidst the sweeping changes of the time, a humble and loving couple strive to find their own small happiness.

Celebrated for his rich, emotional depictions of everyday life, Ruan masterfully captures both the warmth and cruelty of the world with his brilliant and sensitive brushstrokes.



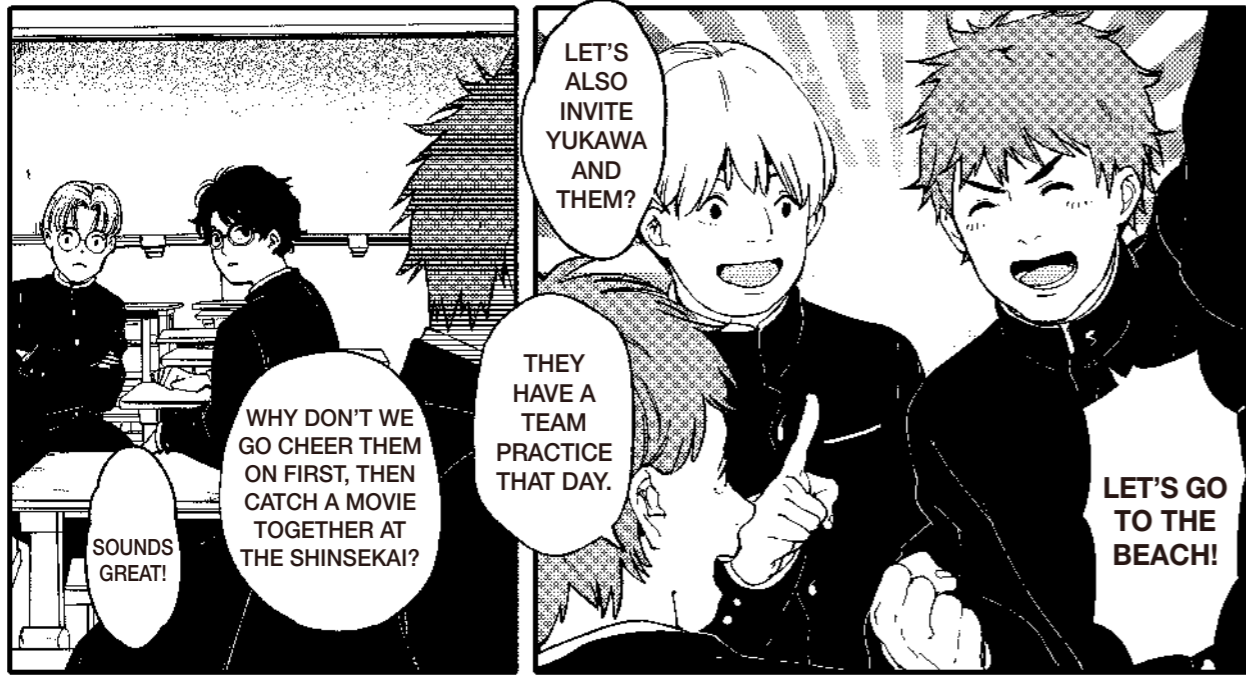
Lai Ho

Enduring imprisonment twice for his activism, Lai Ho was actively involved in social and cultural movements. He gained literary fame through his Chinese poetry and made significant contributions to Taiwan's new literature. He played a pioneering role in the Taiwan *Minbao* newspaper, chairing the literary section and mentoring emerging writers. He also co-founded the *Nan Yin* (Voice of the South) magazine, advocating for the use of the Taiwanese language in writing. Revered as the "Father of Taiwan's New Literature," Lai Ho graduated from the Taiwan Governor-General's Medical School and established Lai Ho Hospital in Changhua, his hometown.



Ruan Guang-Min

Ruan Guang-Min is a Taiwanese comic artist known for combining humor, empathy, and sensitivity to portray family dynamics, parent-child relationships, and human conflict. He excels at capturing the authentic grassroots culture and sentiments of Taiwan. Ruan has received numerous accolades for his work, including dual awards at the 8th Golden Comic Awards for "Youth Comic Award" and "Comic of the Year," as well as awards at the 11th Golden Comic Awards. He won the Silver Award at the 14th Japan International Manga Awards. In 2002, *Dong-Hua-Chun Barber Shop* was adapted into a TV drama, followed by the adaptation of *Yong-Jiu Grocery Store* in 2019.



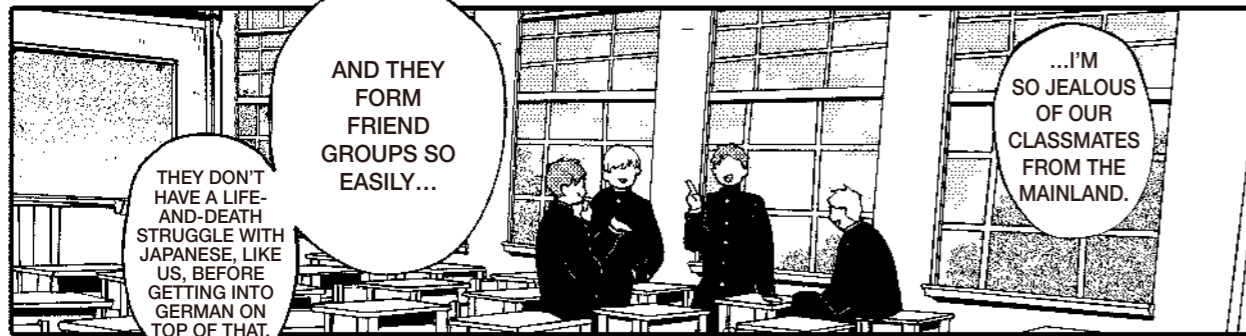
SOUNDS GREAT!

WHY DON'T WE GO CHEER THEM ON FIRST, THEN CATCH A MOVIE TOGETHER AT THE SHINSEKAI?

THEY HAVE A TEAM PRACTICE THAT DAY.

LET'S ALSO INVITE YUKAWA AND THEM?

LET'S GO TO THE BEACH!



THEY DON'T HAVE A LIFE-AND-DEATH STRUGGLE WITH JAPANESE, LIKE US, BEFORE GETTING INTO GERMAN ON TOP OF THAT.

AND THEY FORM FRIEND GROUPS SO EASILY...

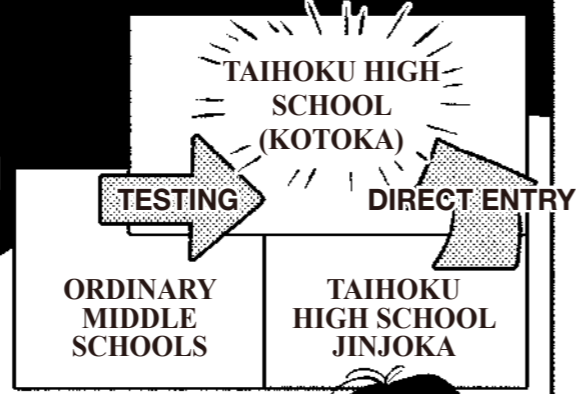
...I'M SO JEALOUS OF OUR CLASSMATES FROM THE MAINLAND.

*JINJOKA: SIMILAR (BUT NOT EXACTLY EQUIVALENT) TO JUNIOR HIGH IN TAIWAN NOWADAYS.



WANT TO COME ALONG AND STUDY AT THE LIBRARY WITH ME?

THERE ARE SO FEW TAIWANESE IN OUR CLASS. IT'S HARD TO GET OUR SCHEDULES LINED UP ON OUR DAYS OFF.



EVERYONE'S STUDYING HARD.



I'LL SKIP DOING MY PAPERWORK FOR MOVING INTO SHICHISEI DORMITORY.

ALRIGHT.



MAYBE THEY WERE FRIENDS ALREADY DURING JINJOKA?*

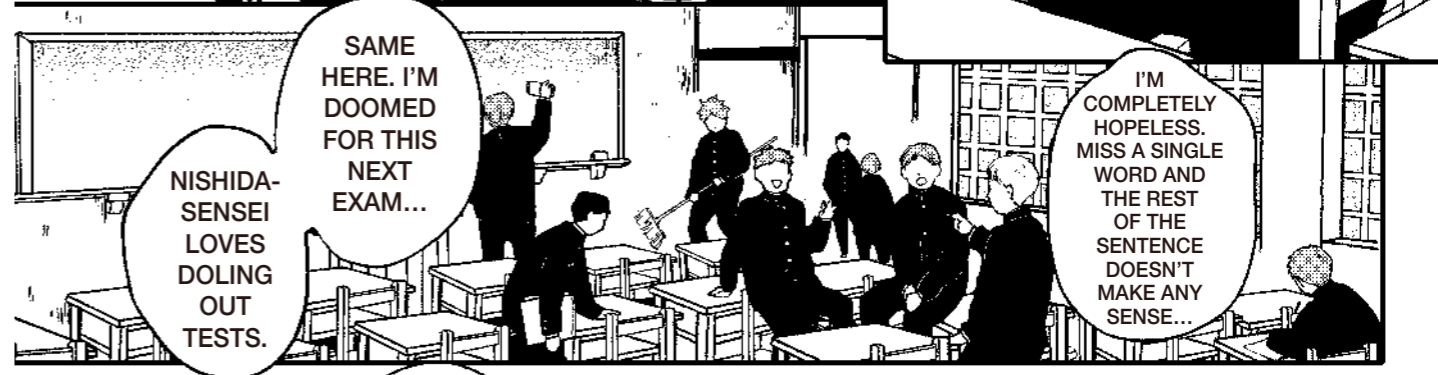


DID YOU GET ALL OF THAT?

YAP KO-HUA,

THE NEXT EXAM WILL ACCOUNT FOR A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF YOUR GRADE. PLEASE BE SURE TO SPEND SOME MORE TIME STUDYING.

A NUMBER OF YOU ARE MAKING LESS THAN IDEAL ACADEMIC PROGRESS.



NISHIDA-SENSEI LOVES DOLING OUT TESTS.

SAME HERE. I'M DOOMED FOR THIS NEXT EXAM...

I'M COMPLETELY HOPELESS. MISS A SINGLE WORD AND THE REST OF THE SENTENCE DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE...



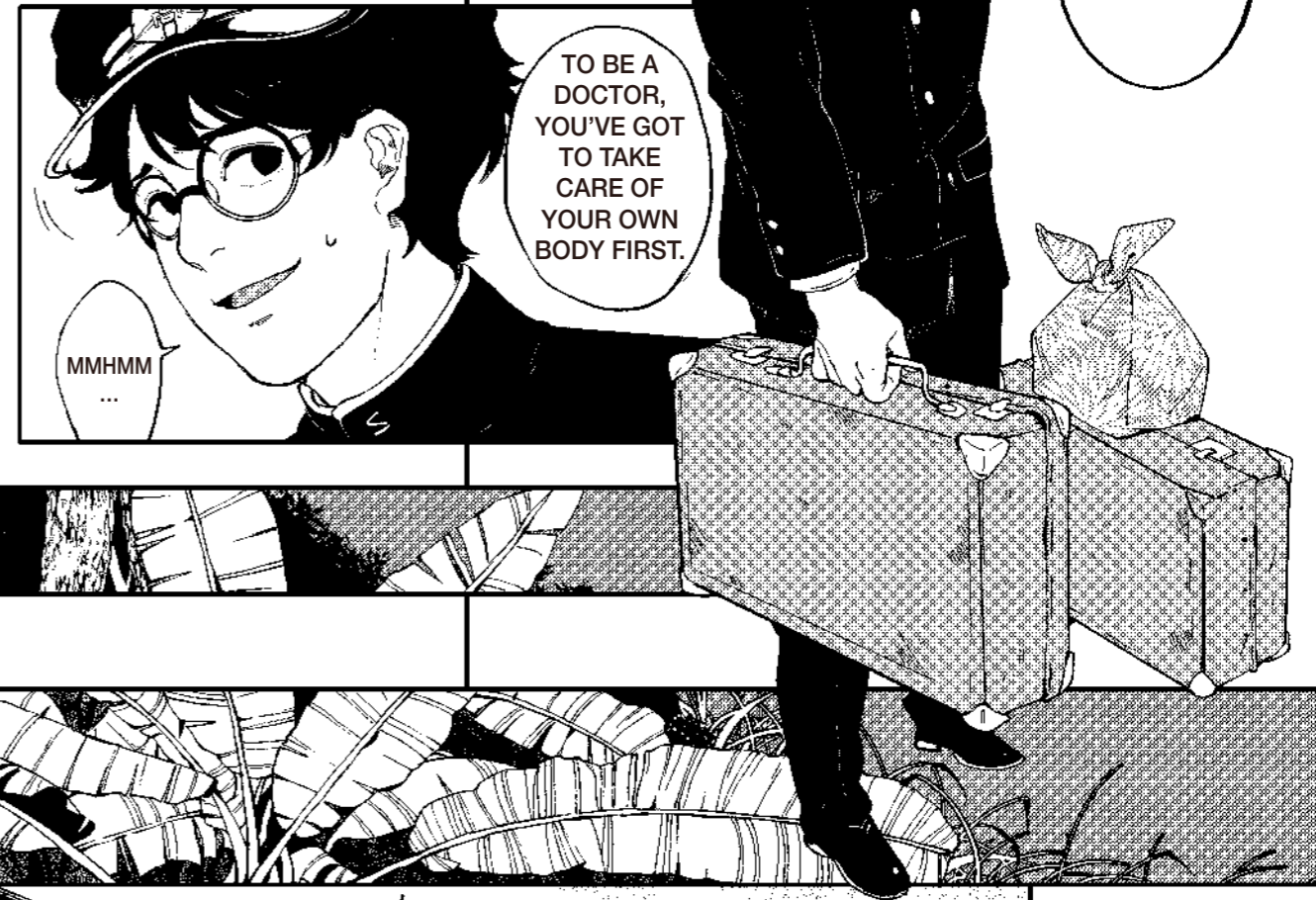
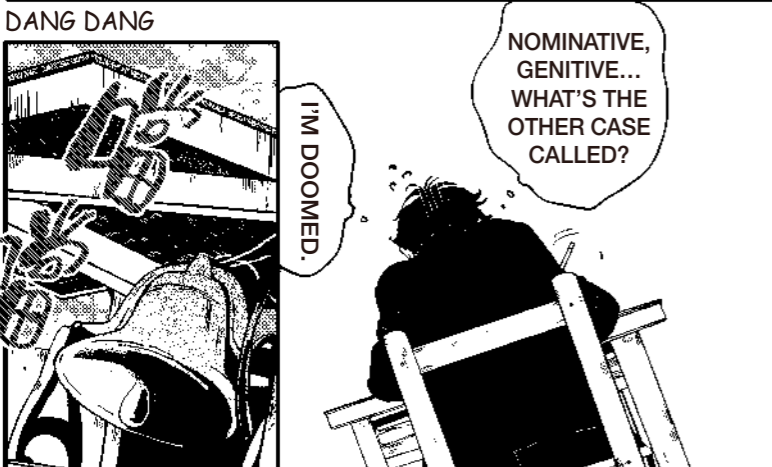
YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT THAT...

LET ME THINK ABOUT GETTING THROUGH GRADUATION FIRST!

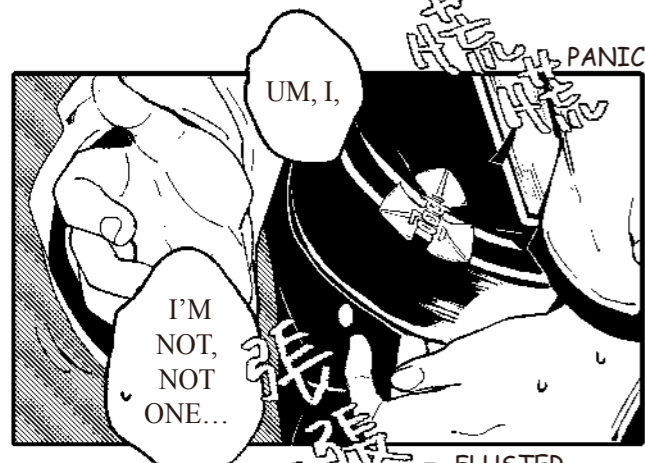
IT'S BECAUSE WE'RE SCIENCE MAJORS.

ARE YOU FELLOWS FREE ON SUNDAY?

WHEN WE BECOME MED STUDENTS AT IMPERIAL UNIVERSITY, ALL THE TEXTBOOKS WILL BE IN GERMAN.



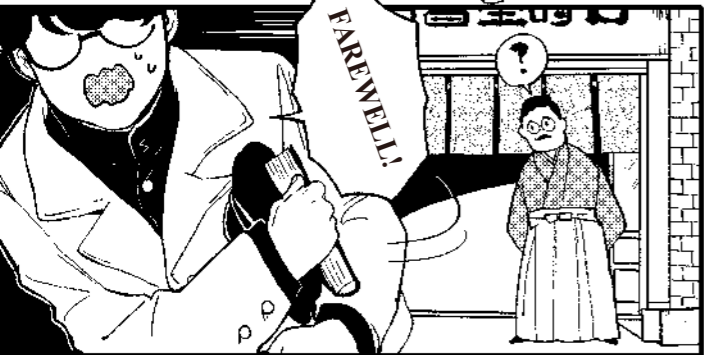
TAIHOKU HIGH SCHOOL —



UM, I,

FLUSTER PANIC

I'M NOT, NOT ONE...



FAREWELL!

FLUSTER

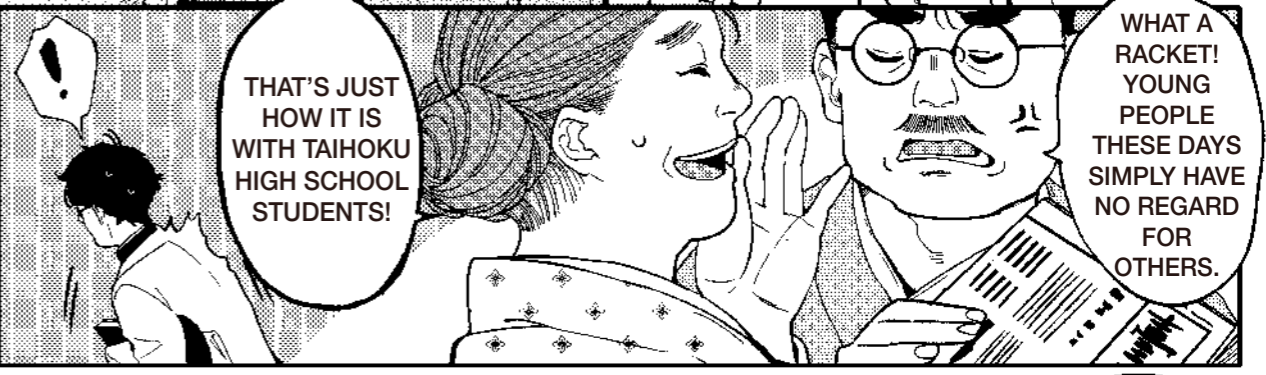


AH, OUR CUSTOMER, YOU MUST ALSO BE...

OUR OWN LITTLE TAKESHI-CHAN IS GOING TO STUDY AT TAIHOKU HIGH SOMEDAY, TOO!



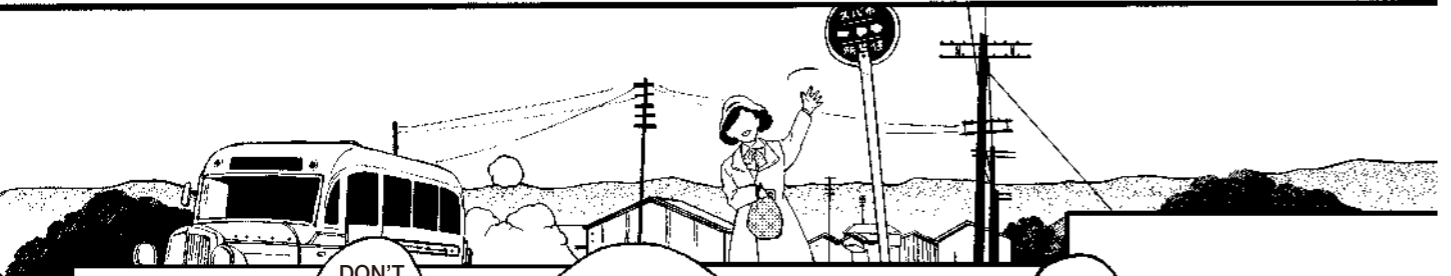
HAAAAHAHA!



THAT'S JUST HOW IT IS WITH TAIHOKU HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS!

WHAT A RACKET! YOUNG PEOPLE THESE DAYS SIMPLY HAVE NO REGARD FOR OTHERS.

YOI-- DEKANSHO-- DEKANSHO--



DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, AUNTIE.

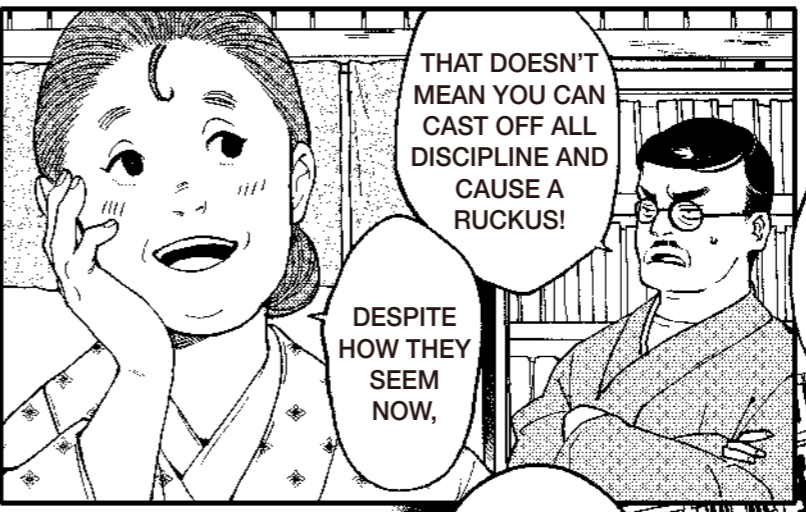
ALL BECAUSE YOUR UNCLE'S COMPANY IS SUDDENLY OPENING A NEW BRANCH IN KOBE, AND WE HAVE TO LEAVE RIGHT THIS WEEK...

THE DORM ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE.

AH KYO, I'M SO SORRY FOR MAKING YOU MOVE INTO



YOU ALREADY WENT OUT OF YOUR WAY TO PUT ME UP LAST SEMESTER. BESIDES, I'LL BE ABLE TO FOCUS MORE WHILE LIVING IN THE DORMS WITH MY FELLOW STUDENTS.



THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN CAST OFF ALL DISCIPLINE AND CAUSE A RUCKUS!

DESPITE HOW THEY SEEM NOW,

ONCE YOU GET IN, YOU'RE BASICALLY GUARANTEED ENTRY INTO IMPERIAL UNIVERSITY.

I HEARD THAT THEIR ENTRANCE EXAM IS THE TOUGHEST IN ALL OF TAIWAN. TALK ABOUT A HIGH BAR!



I BET THEY'RE ALL GOING TO BECOME GREAT SCHOLARS AND MINISTERS!



The Surprising Constancy of Youthful Anxiety Across Time

By Itzel Hsu

Translated by William Ceurvels

(Originally published by Readmoo)

In *The Banana Sprout*, our protagonist Yeh's first encounter with his new roommate, the notorious oddball Nanjo, is one of the most jaw-dropping moments. As Yeh walks past the dormitory, relishing the cool relief of a gentle rain, he suddenly hears the dorm matron cursing. Looking up, he sees a curly-haired youth zipping up his pants and nonchalantly calling out, "My bad!" It's only then that Yeh realizes the "rain" he enjoyed was not rain at all.

Despite this shocking introduction, Yeh quickly learns that Untaro is not a slouch. His room is packed with books, both in Japanese and foreign languages. Untaro, in fact, reads so voraciously that one of their teachers admits to being less well-read. Though he frequently skips class, Untaro spends much of his time in independent study, mastering German—a language that Yeh struggles to grasp.

Yeh's disciplined and obedient nature contrasts sharply with Untaro's carefree

attitude. At first, Untaro is nothing more than a source of frustration for Yeh. However, through their daily interactions and insights from a teacher, Yeh begins to see that Untaro's impulsive behavior stems from the same uncertainty about the future that Yeh feels himself.

After a heartfelt conversation, the two come to a conclusion: if they both feel lost about the future, perhaps they can explore it together. They decide to combine their literary talents and create a new, more open-minded literature journal—one that challenges the rigid conventions of the school's official journal.

The Banana Sprout could be easily mistaken for a modern Japanese high school bildungsroman. It features the familiar elements of the genre: two young friends with opposite personalities unite in pursuit of an ambitious goal. Their enthusiasm is inspiring, their antics hilarious, and their moments of self-

discovery full of melancholy.

But once we understand when and where the novel is set, we can't help but marvel at Zuo Hsuan's

skill. This charming, poignant story is the result of meticulous historical research. Without Zuo Hsuan's detailed recreation, even the average Taiwanese reader might struggle to imagine what life was like at Taihoku High School in the 1930s.

Taihoku High School, the predecessor of today's National Taiwan Normal University, was an elite all-boys academy during Japanese rule. It was a seven-year school, with a four-year middle school program (the "Basic Program") and a three-year college preparatory program (the "Advanced Program"). Graduates of the preparatory program were automatically admitted to Japan's top universities, such as Tokyo and Kyoto University, without having to take entrance exams. Competition was fierce: of the 160 students admitted to the Advanced Program each year, fewer than thirty were Taiwanese, with the rest being Japanese. Regardless of nationality, wearing the Taihoku High School uniform marked a student as someone destined for greatness—future doctors or influential politicians.

Surprisingly, this academic elite was far from a bunch of bookish nerds. Like the banana leaves that adorned the school crest, these students were lively and exuberant. The school's lax

In a society strictly regimented under colonial rule, Taihoku High School was a rare oasis of freedom and liberalism.

regulations allowed for a great deal of freedom, giving students the space to pursue their own academic interests and extracurricular

activities. They were free to explore life without restrictions. Some, like Untaro, adopted a disheveled appearance, while others relished late-night sessions of singing, dancing, and drumming. This open and bold campus culture likely blurred the ethnic divide between Japanese and Taiwanese students. In a society strictly regimented under colonial rule, Taihoku High School was a rare oasis of freedom and liberalism.

Will modern readers relate to these youths from ninety years ago? That question didn't even cross my mind while reading. Zuo Hsuan's clean, precise prose and meticulous detail pulled me into Yeh and Untaro's world. From a modern perspective, their uncertainty about themselves and their future feel surprisingly similar to those of today's high school or college students. As the story progresses, we may encounter conflicts of race, gender, and agency that reflect the specific tensions of that era. But for now, readers are likely to have just one desire: to see more of these young men, who, like the banana sprouts of their school's insignia, embody limitless potential.

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



The Banana Sprout

芭蕉的芽

Author: Zuo Hsuan **Illustrator:** Zuo Hsuan **Publisher:** Gaea Books

Date: 6/2022 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

188 pages | 14.8 x 21 cm **Volume:** 2

Award: 2023 The 14th Golden Comic Awards, Comic of the year

BFT2.0 Translator: Mike Fu

In the 1930s, Yeh Hsing-Chiao, a new student at a top prep school known for fostering independent learning, moves into the dormitory. There, he meets his roommate, Nanjo Untaro, a student on the verge of dropping out. Inspired by the school's culture of intellectual freedom, the two decide to create a magazine together.

Yeh, a diligent student with a talent for writing, earns a place at Taihoku High School, a prestigious institution known for nurturing an atmosphere of intellectual freedom.

Upon moving into the dorms, Yeh meets his Japanese roommate, Nanjo, a notorious campus eccentric who frequently skips class. At first, the straight-laced Yeh is frustrated by Untaro's unorthodox behavior.

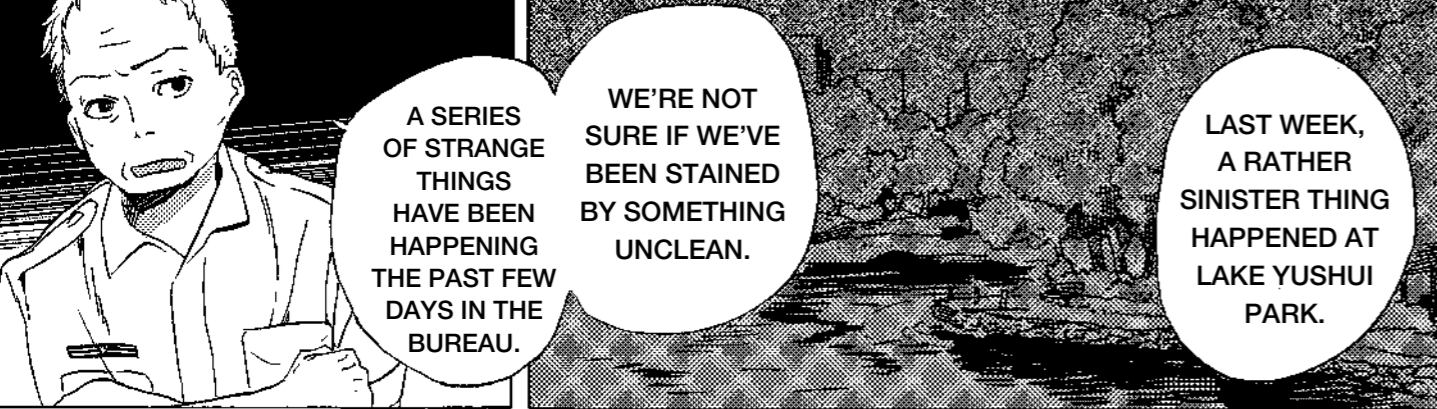
But soon Yeh discovers another side to Untaro: a voracious reader who skips class to pursue self-directed learning. To Yeh's surprise, Untaro has even mastered German, a subject Yeh struggles with. The roommates decide to start a campus literary journal. Will these unlikely partners succeed?

Author and artist Zuo Hsuan conducted extensive research to authentically portray the campus, uniforms, and student life in Taiwan during Japanese colonial rule. Her delicate, warm linework brings to life this story of two young men with contrasting personalities, who risk everything to pursue their passions and shape their own path.



Zuo Hsuan

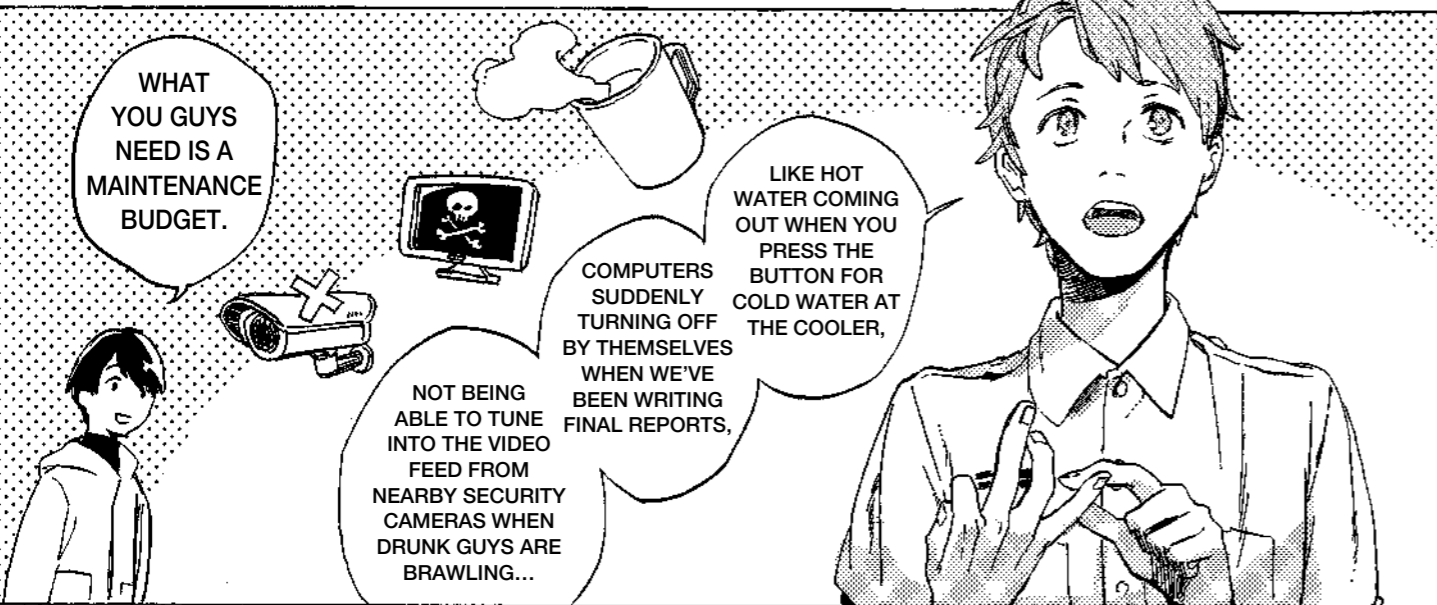
Comic artist and illustrator Zuo Hsuan's *The Banana Sprout Vol. 1* won the 14th Golden Comic Award for Comic of the Year and was selected as an Excellent Extra-Curricular Reading for Elementary and Secondary Students. In 2014, Zuo Hsuan published *Rites of Returning*, which won the Bronze Award at the Japan International Manga Awards. It also sold rights in Japanese, French, Italian, and Vietnamese and was adapted into a television drama that aired in 2020. Zuo Hsuan participated in the "Comic Plant Theatre" project, creating a comic adaptation of *What She Put on the Table*, which was selected as an Excellent Extra-Curricular Reading for Elementary and Secondary Students and included in the Books From Taiwan program. Zuo Hsuan has represented Taiwan at the 2017 Angoulême International Comics Festival in France, the Frankfurt Book Fair in Germany, the 2022 Lucca Comics & Games in Italy, and the 2023 BDFIL Comics Festival in Switzerland.



A SERIES OF STRANGE THINGS HAVE BEEN HAPPENING THE PAST FEW DAYS IN THE BUREAU.

WE'RE NOT SURE IF WE'VE BEEN STAINED BY SOMETHING UNCLEAN.

LAST WEEK, A RATHER SINISTER THING HAPPENED AT LAKE YUSHUI PARK.



WHAT YOU GUYS NEED IS A MAINTENANCE BUDGET.

NOT BEING ABLE TO TUNE INTO THE VIDEO FEED FROM NEARBY SECURITY CAMERAS WHEN DRUNK GUYS ARE BRAWLING...

COMPUTERS SUDDENLY TURNING OFF BY THEMSELVES WHEN WE'VE BEEN WRITING FINAL REPORTS,

LIKE HOT WATER COMING OUT WHEN YOU PRESS THE BUTTON FOR COLD WATER AT THE COOLER,

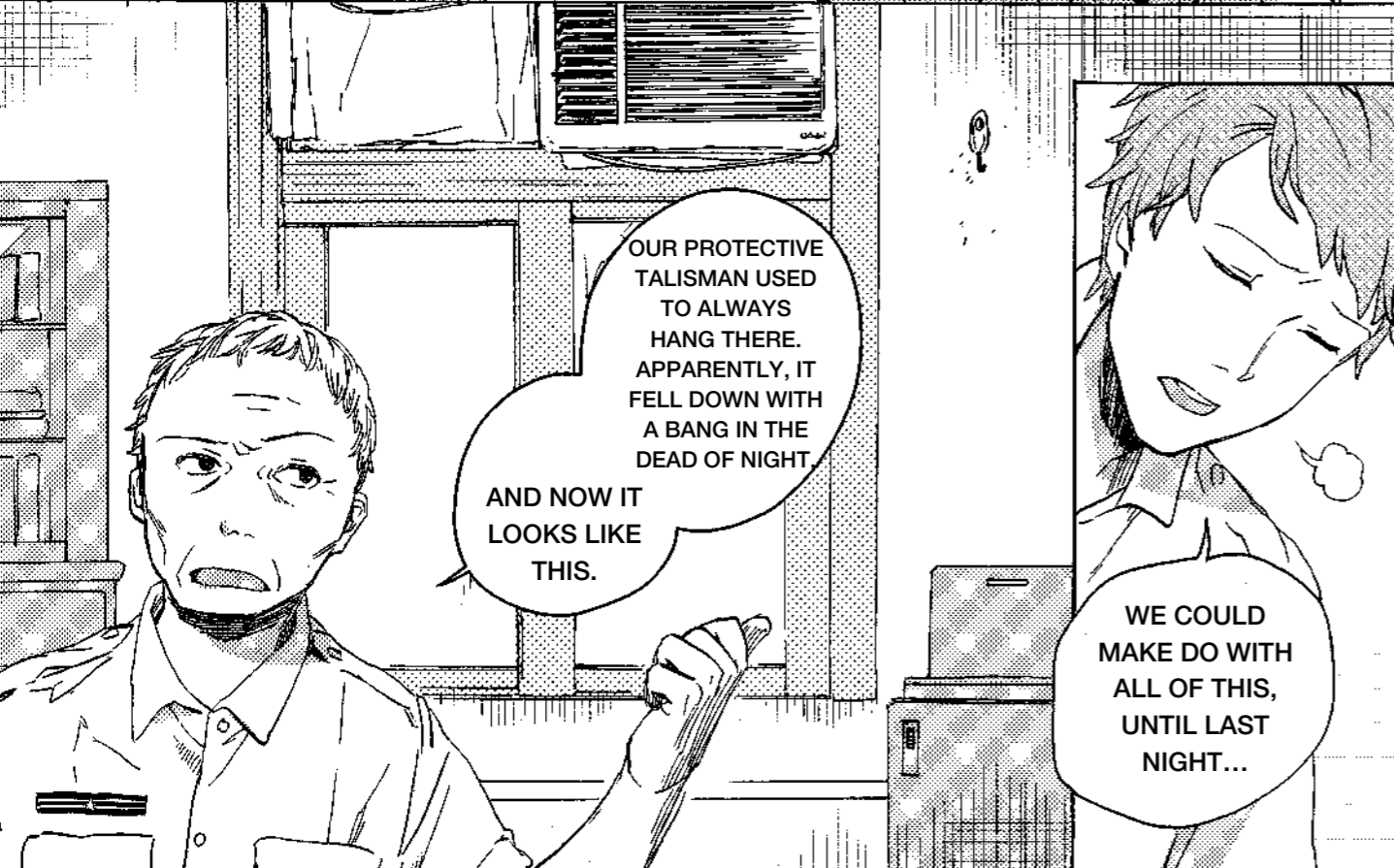


WE'LL SEE WHETHER I'M UP TO SNUFF OR NOT, BUT SINCE I'M GETTING PAID BY THE HOUR,

ONE LOOK AT THIS YOUNG DUDE AND YOU CAN TELL HE'S NOT UP TO SNUFF!

LOTS OF DISCUSSION

WE HAD BETTER CUT TO THE CHASE.



AND NOW IT LOOKS LIKE THIS.

OUR PROTECTIVE TALISMAN USED TO ALWAYS HANG THERE. APPARENTLY, IT FELL DOWN WITH A BANG IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT.



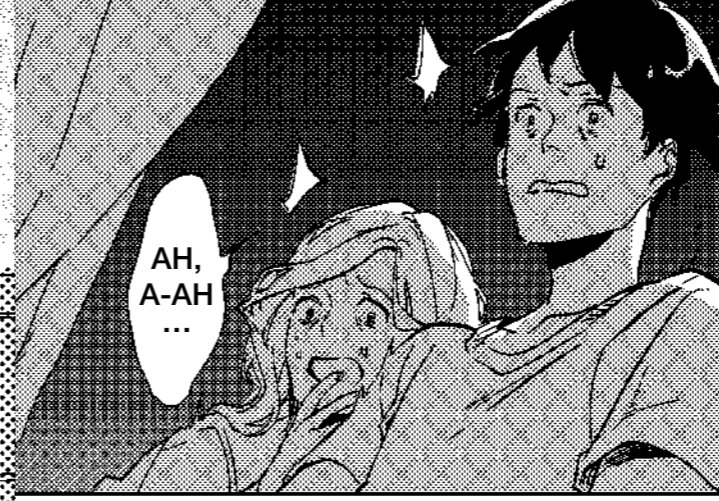
WE COULD MAKE DO WITH ALL OF THIS, UNTIL LAST NIGHT...



WHAT HAPPENED HERE?



THIS IS A PROTECTIVE TALISMAN THAT THE GRANDMASTER OF GUANGMING TEMPLE WROTE HIMSELF.





YES, YOU CAN HEAR THE SOUNDS OF CONSTRUCTION LATE AT NIGHT.

IT'S THE "GHOST TEMPLE"!

AH!

YOU MEAN THAT URBAN LEGEND ABOUT A RUN-DOWN TEMPLE NEAR LAKE YUSHUI?

YOU'RE JOKING, RIGHT?

WHY WOULD THERE BE CONSTRUCTION?



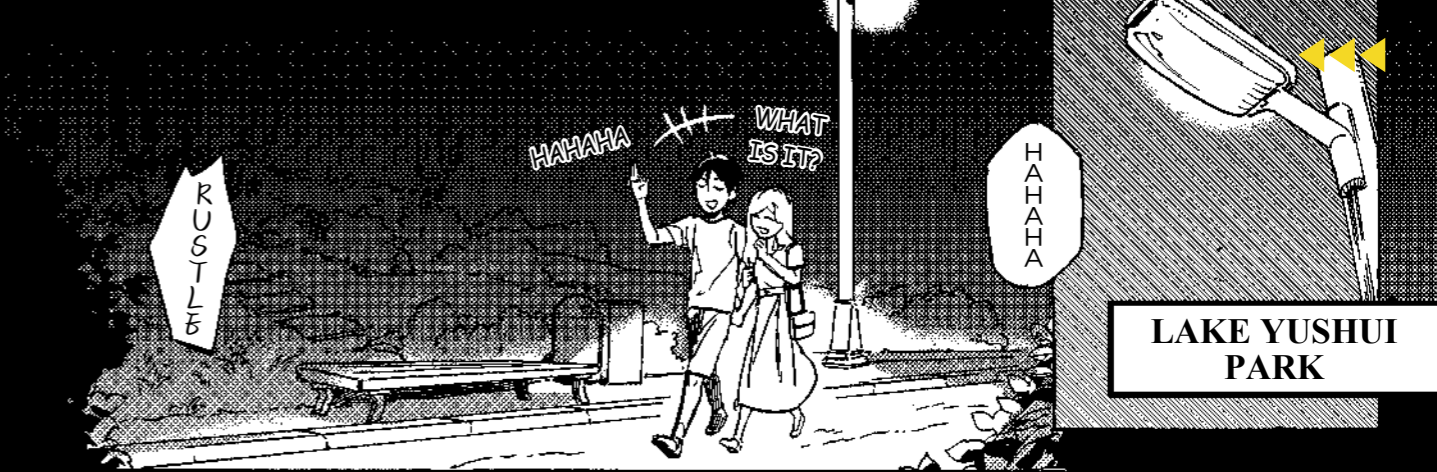
SUCH A SCAREDY-CAT!

MAYBE WE'LL RUN INTO THE PEOPLE WHO ARE BUILDING THE TEMPLE AND CRACK THIS MYSTERY!

DIDN'T YOU HEAR THAT SEVERAL PEOPLE HAVE DROWNED IN LAKE YUSHUI THIS YEAR?

SUPPOSEDLY THIS TEMPLE IS BEING BUILT BECAUSE SOMEONE WANTS TO WORSHIP THE "DEARLY DEPARTED" IN THE WATER!

THAT'S TERRIFYING. LET'S GO HOME...



RUSTLES

HAHAHA WHAT IS IT?

HAHAHA

LAKE YUSHUI PARK



EH?

DID YOU HEAR SOMETHING MAKE A NOISE?



IT SOUNDED LIKE IT CAME FROM OVER THERE.

Solving the Mysteries of the Supernatural: the Legends Inspiring *Agnostic Detective*

by Ren Rong

Set in a supernatural mystery world, this story follows Hai Linzi, a Taoist priest, exorcist, and detective of the paranormal. To conceal a fish-shaped mark on his body, he always wears long sleeves and gloves, and he is followed by a strange malevolent spirit.

The title, *Agnostic Detective*, references his beliefs. Unlike atheism, which denies the existence of gods, to be an agnostic means to believe that the existence of deities cannot be definitively proven or disproven. Even if gods were to exist, they are ultimately unknowable. An unconventional Taoist, Han Linzi can see both the living and spirit worlds, yet he doesn't believe in the gods.

An unconventional Taoist, Han Linzi is a detective tasked with solving paranormal mysteries. He can see both the living and spirit worlds, yet he doesn't believe in the gods.

Parrot and Xerses draws inspiration from mysterious cases and legends spanning from the Japanese colonial period to modern times. The first case in the book, "The Self-Sacrificing Arhat", is

based on the ancient Taiwanese custom of human sacrifice during irrigation construction, where homeless individuals were selected as sacrificial offerings. In the summer of 2017, a series of

seven suicides and accidental drownings occurred at Dahu Park in Neihu, Taipei. The number of incidents far exceeded the annual average, reigniting discussions about the "live human sacrifice" legend tied to the Neihu Laogong Temple.

Dahu Park, formerly known as "Shisifen Bi," was an irrigation pond used for agriculture. At the southeast corner of the lake stand two small temples: Fuyou Temple and Laogong Temple. According to local elders, Laogong Temple, regarded as an "evil temple," enshrines the spirit of an old beggar who sacrificed himself for the irrigation system of Shisifen.

Legend has it that during the construction of the Shisifen canal, the embankments repeatedly collapsed, delaying the project. To resolve the issue, locals visited the beggar colony in Manka, where they found an old, frail beggar. They provided him with fine clothes and food, and a few days later, he was buried alive as a sacrificial offering. After his sacrifice, the water project was successfully completed.

Similar legends of human sacrifice exist at Amituo Pond in Zuoying District and Neiwei Pond in Gushan District, both in Kaohsiung. During the Qing Dynasty, ghostly disturbances plagued Amituo Pond even during the day. To resolve the issue, locals paid a beggar a hefty sum,

allowing him to indulge in all his desires for a time. When the period ended, the beggar was dressed as a deity—wearing straw sandals, golden armor, a dog's cauldron on his head, and holding peach and willow swords—and was buried alive by the pond. A stele inscribed with "Namo Amitabha" was erected to suppress the spirits. A similar tale exists at Neiwei Pond, though the stone steles in both places have since disappeared.

Hai Linzi can see both the living and the dead, but he cannot confirm the existence of heaven or hell. For him, the transcendent promises of many religions may be nothing more than illusions. Yet, despite everything, Hai Linzi seems to hold onto a glimmer of hope that "the answer has yet to be revealed."

Ren Rong is part of the Creative Comic Collection.

This excerpt from the book's afterword has been condensed for this booklet.



The Agnostic Detective

不可知論偵探

Author: Xerses **Illustrator:** Parrot **Publisher:** Apex Press

Date: 1/2021 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

248 pages | 14.8 x 21 cm **Volume:** 2

Award: 2024 The 15th Golden Comic Awards, Comic of the year—*The Agnostic Detective Vol. 2*

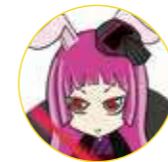
BFT2.0 Translator: Mike Fu

Combining mystery, suspense, and folklore, *Agnostic Detective* follows Hai Lin-Tzu, a young Taiwanese Taoist priest with clairvoyant abilities. Acting as an unconventional “detective,” Hai Lin-Tzu solves conflicts, mysteries, and crimes tied to the paranormal.

When a dead body is found in a temple and a drowned corpse surfaces in a public park, rumors spread that water ghosts are seeking human sacrifices. With his ability to see beyond the mortal world, the young priest takes on the chilling case.

These stories explore urgent themes, including human relationships, adolescence, Taiwanese history, and the complex connection between Taiwan and its former colonial ruler, Japan. The series delves into spiritual exorcism and supernatural forces, combining thrilling suspense with cultural reflections.

Agnostic Detective is adapted from the short story “Coral Bones” in the Taiwanese bestseller *Chopsticks: Mysterious Tales*, which has been sold in many countries worldwide.



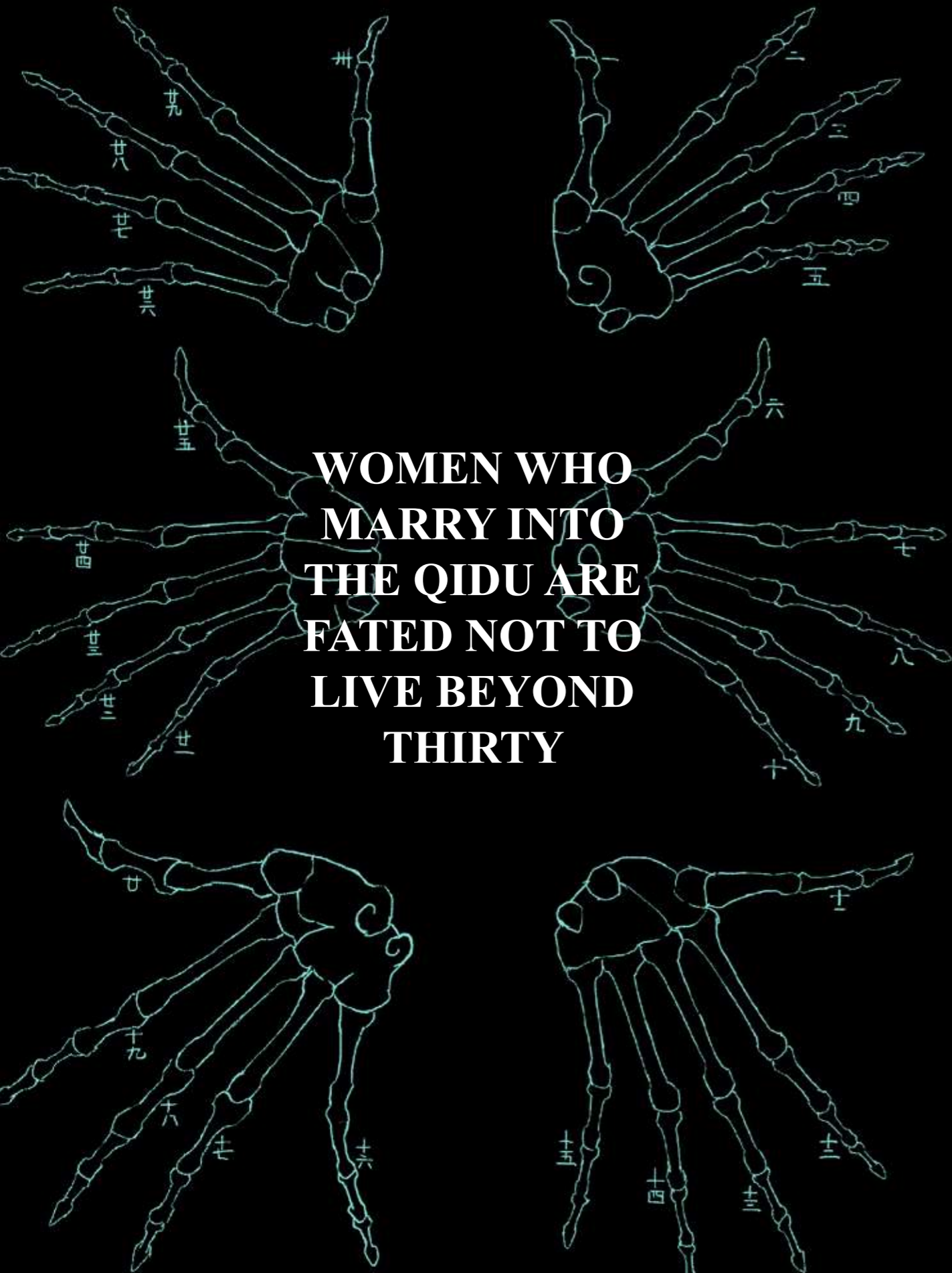
Xerses

Xerses has worked in a variety of genres, including mystery, martial arts, and speculative fiction. Xerses debuted in 2013 with *Lotus of the Same Fate*, winning the Bronze Award at the Kadokawa Light Novel Awards, followed by recognition for the martial arts novel *Immortal Bird*. In 2015, Xerses' mystery novel *H.A.* was a finalist for the Shiomida Shosuke Mystery Novel Award, and in 2020, the epic novel *K.I.N.G.: Natural Disaster Response Center* was nominated for the Taipei International Book Exhibition Grand Prize. Recent works include the suspense series *Witch's Spearhead* and the collaborative ghost story novel *Chopsticks: Strange Tales of the Occult*, which sold rights in Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. *The Agnostic Detective* has garnered over 100,000 views on the CCC online platform.



Parrot

Parrot is a rising Taiwanese comic artist, recognized for her illustrations and cover art contributions to various novels, including *OPUS*. Her artistic style is known for its clean, delicate lines and a distinctive sense of tranquility. *The Agnostic Detective* marks her debut in commercial comics, where she not only illustrates but also meticulously crafts the script, refines the story, and breathes life into the characters.



**WOMEN WHO
MARRY INTO
THE QIDU ARE
FATED NOT TO
LIVE BEYOND
THIRTY**



**THE MOTHER'S
SOUL WOULD
NOT FADE
AND WOULD
DEPART TO AN
EVERLASTING
PARADISE**

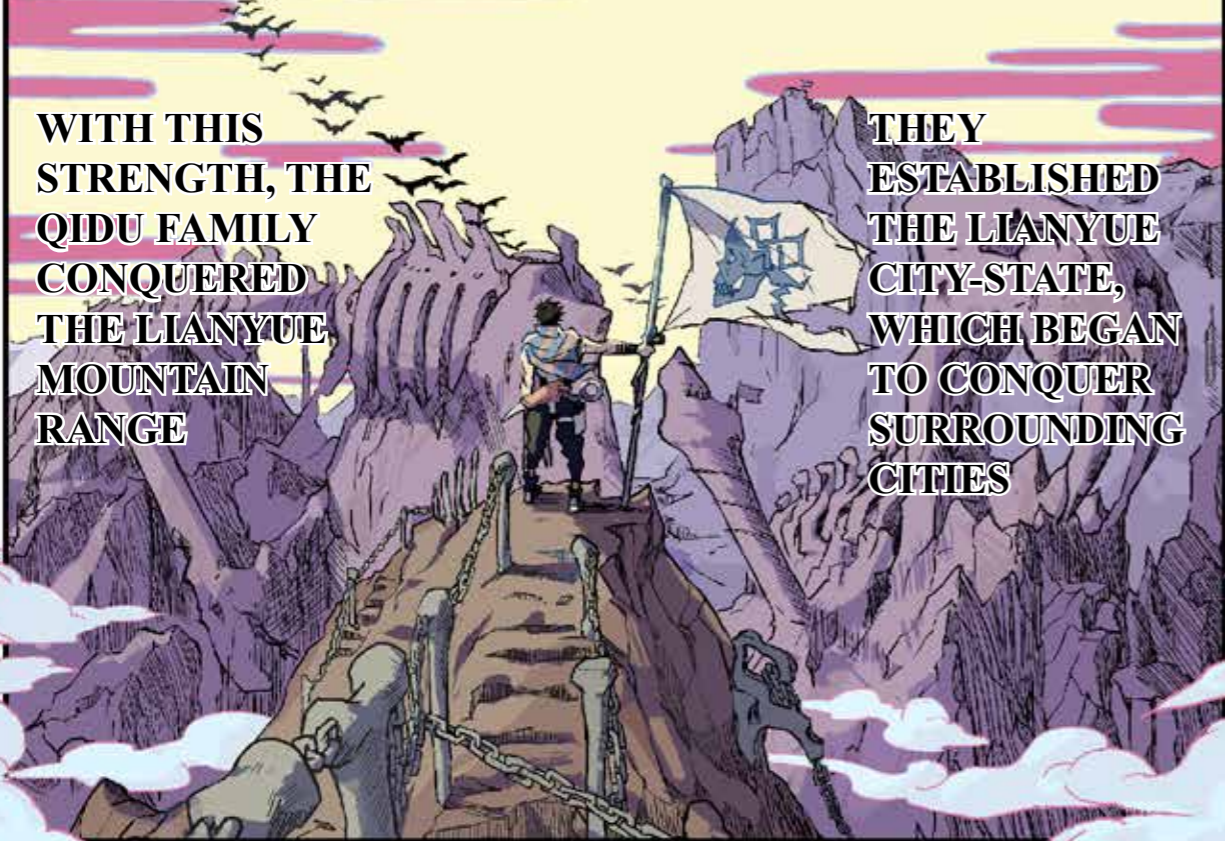
**THE QIDU
BELIEVED
THAT GIVING
BIRTH TO
A HEALTHY
CHILD WAS
PARAMOUNT**



YET SO...

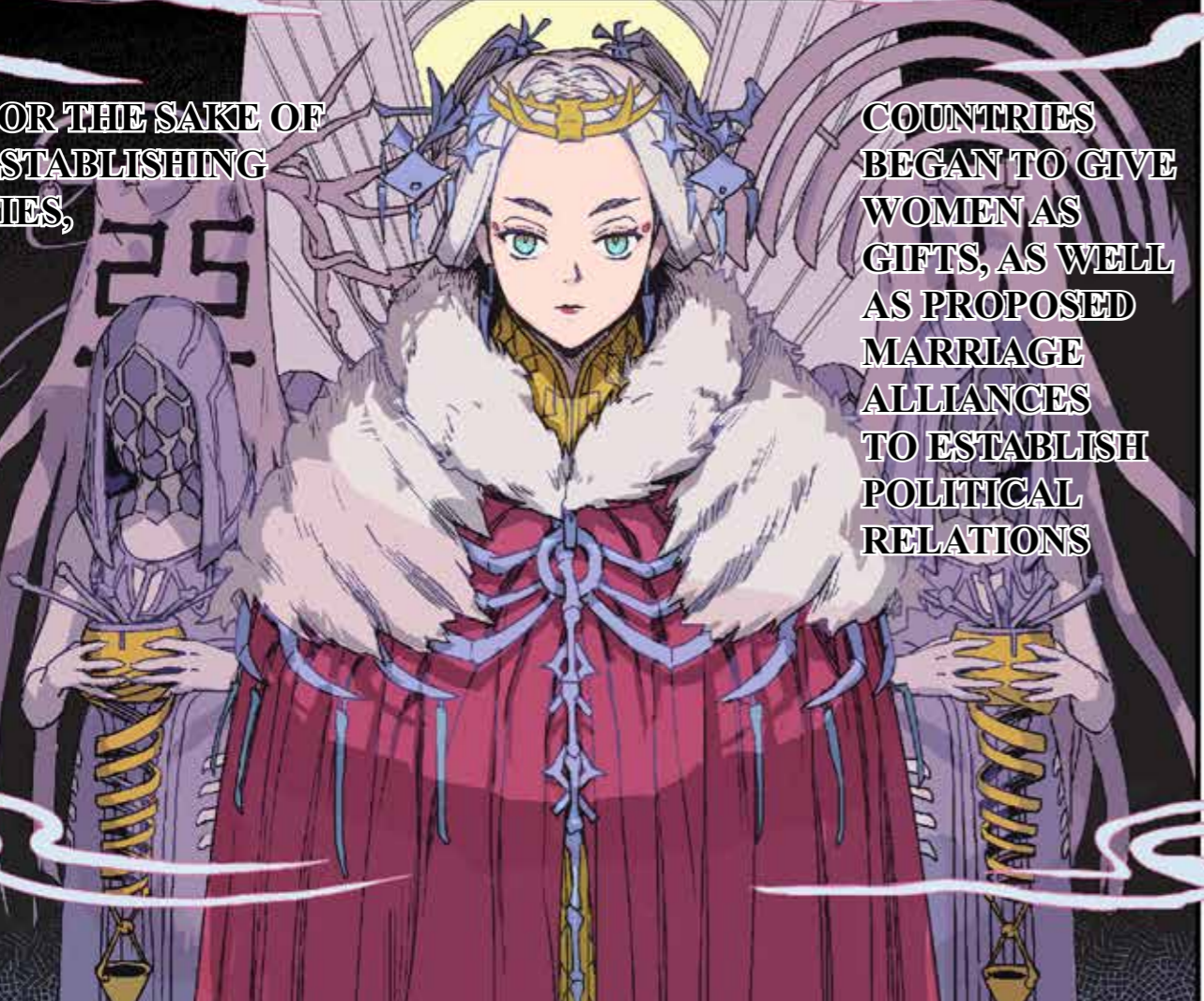
WITH THIS
STRENGTH, THE
QIDU FAMILY
CONQUERED
THE LIANYUE
MOUNTAIN
RANGE

THEY
ESTABLISHED
THE LIANYUE
CITY-STATE,
WHICH BEGAN
TO CONQUER
SURROUNDING
CITIES

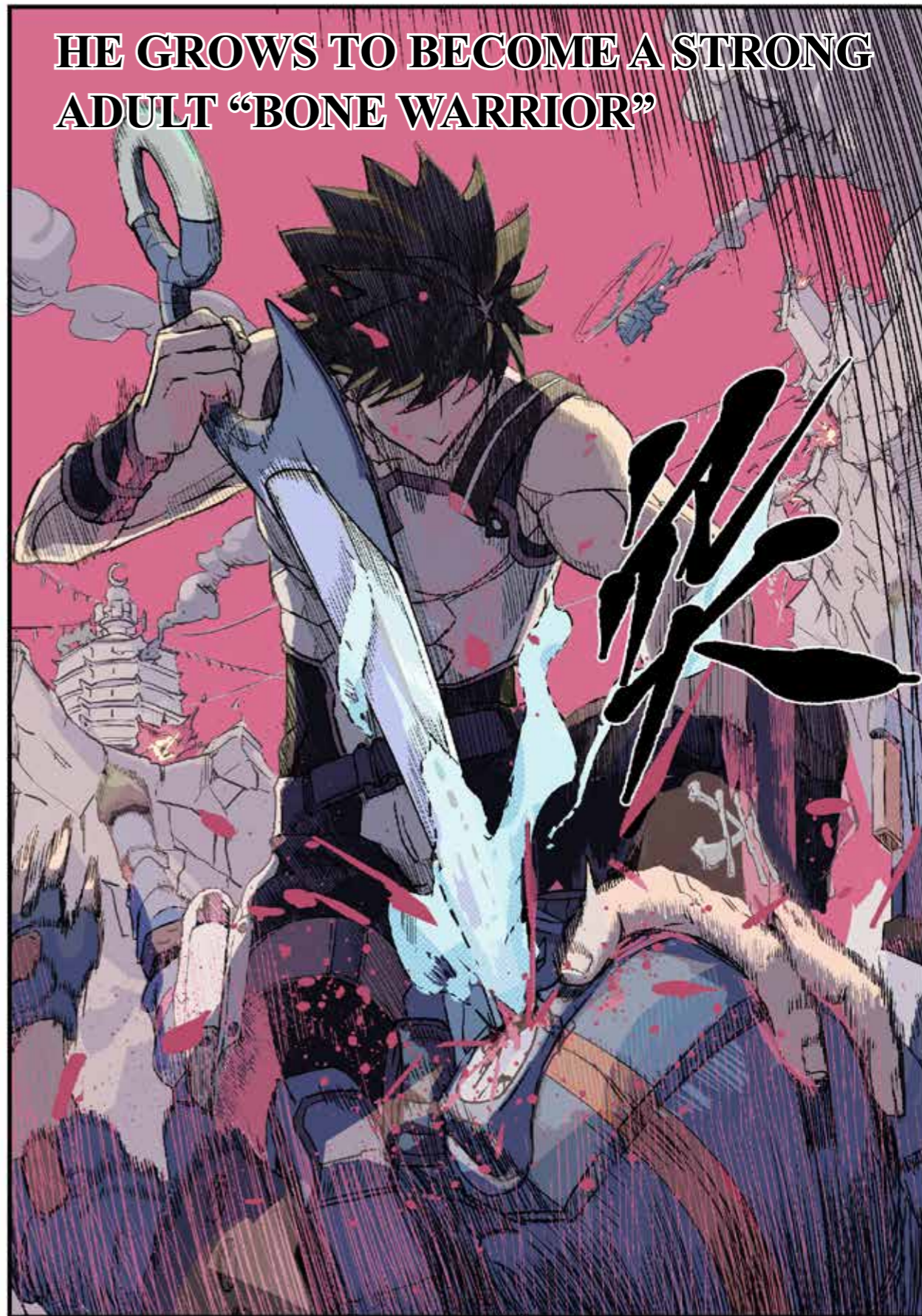


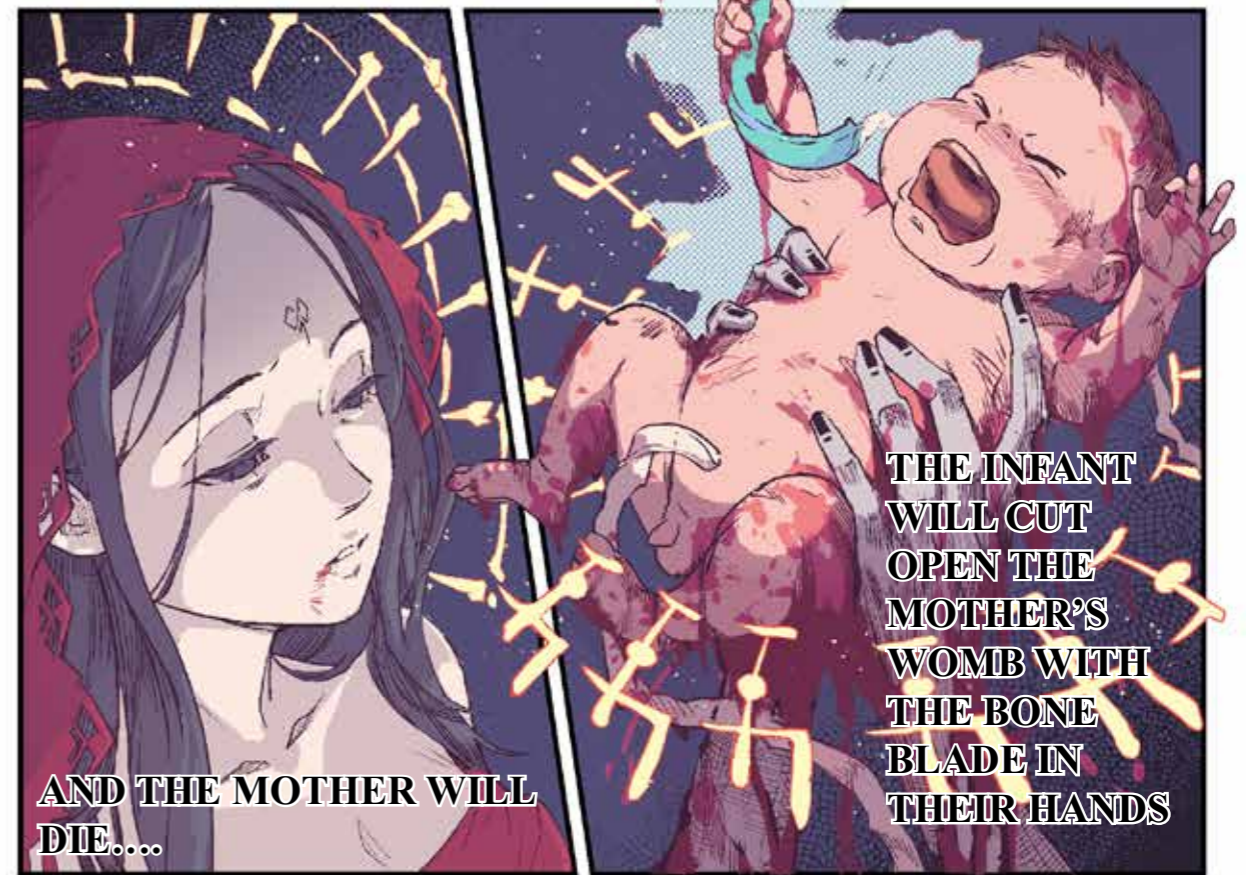
FOR THE SAKE OF
ESTABLISHING
TIES,

COUNTRIES
BEGAN TO GIVE
WOMEN AS
GIFTS, AS WELL
AS PROPOSED
MARRIAGE
ALLIANCES
TO ESTABLISH
POLITICAL
RELATIONS



HE GROWS TO BECOME A STRONG
ADULT "BONE WARRIOR"





The 207th Bone

by Brian Hioe

The 207th Bone is a unique and compelling work, distinguished not only by its strong characters but also by its highly imaginative setting. In many ways, *The 207th Bone* feels like a fusion of *The Handmaid's Tale* and Hayao Miyazaki's *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*.

The story unfolds in a war-torn world where the technologically advanced Half-Dragon Empire clashes with the fiercely independent Lianyue City-State, ruled by the warrior clan known as the Qidu. Although the empire boasts greater military power, the relentless ferocity of the Qidu has brought the empire to the brink of defeat.

The Qidu are no ordinary fighters; their supernatural combat skills stem from an extra bone that ordinary humans lack—the titular 207th Bone. This unique trait allows them to use their bones as weapons and armor in battle, with combat sequences reminiscent of Sui Ishida's Tokyo Ghoul.

But the Qidu's powers come at a steep

price. In the process of birth, Qidu mothers are killed by their children. This grim reality has shaped a patriarchal and war-driven society, where matricide is seen as a natural, primal act. Abortion is the highest crime among the Qidu, as it is viewed as a perversion of this brutal natural order, allowing mothers to survive childbirth.

At the novel's outset, Princess Hengpo of the Half-Dragon Empire has just married the Second Prince of the Qidu. However, Hengpo soon flees while pregnant, accompanied by Qidu Hachiexie, the half-human son of the Qidu emperor, and pursued by Sayi, the Qidu emperor's top executioner.

This sets the plot in motion, with the stakes extending beyond the ongoing war to a deeper conflict between two vastly different ideologies, particularly regarding the role of women in society. As the story quickly reveals, Hengpo is not merely a princess but a leading scientist from the Half-Dragon Empire, who infiltrated Qidu society under the guise of royalty to learn

the secrets of the Qidu.

Visually, *The 207th Bone* is striking, with distinct aesthetics defining both the Half-Dragon and Qidu empires. Lin

excels at worldbuilding, deftly establishing the cultural and political tensions between the two factions. The setting stands out in the genre for its seamless blending of science fiction and fantasy elements. Artist Lin I-chen proves adept at handling complex, action-packed scenes with skillful paneling, guiding the reader through moments of exposition and intense combat alike.

Yet the true strength of *The 207th Bone* lies in its character-driven narrative. The story's momentum is propelled by the motivations and choices of its key characters: Hengpo, Sayi, and Hachiexie.

The Qidu's powers come at a steep price. In the process of birth, Qidu mothers are killed by their children. This grim reality has shaped a patriarchal and war-driven society, where matricide is seen as a natural, primal act.

Sayi, in particular, is a fascinating character—while she serves as the Qidu empire's chief enforcer, she remains constrained by its patriarchal norms. Hengpo,

too, is a well-developed character; though she initially enters the Qidu as a spy, she grows empathetic toward their plight.

The 207th Bone stands as a compelling entry in contemporary Taiwanese fantasy comics, distinguished by its rich worldbuilding, dynamic characters, and thought-provoking themes.

Brian Hioe is a writer, editor, activist, and one of the founders of New Bloom Magazine.



The 207th Bone

二零七之骨

Author: LIN, I-CHEN **Illustrator:** LIN, I-CHEN **Publisher:** LIN, I-CHEN

Date: 6/2022

Right's contacts: bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

210 pages | 14.8 x 21 cm

Volume: 1

Awards: 2023 The 17th Japan International Manga Awards, Bronze Award

2023 The 14th Golden Comic Awards, Comic of the Year

2023 The 19th Golden Butterfly Award

BFT2.0 Translator: Brian Hioe

The Qidu are extraordinary warriors whose power comes from an additional bone that humans lack—the 207th bone. However, this power comes at a devastating cost: the Qidu mother is killed at childbirth.

For women members of the Qidu clan, pregnancy is fatal. As the fetus matures, it develops a blade-shaped bone that tears through the mother's abdomen, resulting in her death. Equipped with a powerful natural weapon, the child grows up to be a powerful warrior.

The story is set in a war-ravaged world, where the Qidu's prowess has brought the militarily superior Half-Dragon Empire to the brink of defeat. This character-driven book delves into whether the daughters of the Qidu family can break free from the oppressive chains of patriarchal tradition and forge their own path.



LIN, I-CHEN

I-Chen Lin is a comic artist and illustrator who made his debut with *Mosina*, a youth comic series. He won the Best Potential Award at the 3rd Golden Comic Awards and was nominated for the 7th Golden Comic Awards in Prototype Design for *Yu Jian'er* and the Youth Comic Award. *The 207th Bone* is his second independently published comic work and has received significant acclaim. It won the Best Comic of the Year at the 14th Golden Comic Awards, the 2023 Golden Butterfly Award (First Edition), and the Bronze Award at the 17th Japan International Manga Award. Lin I-Chen also received a grant from the Ministry of Culture's 108th Year for original comic content development and cross-industry development and marketing.

AND YOU, YU-LAN,
IF YOU CAN'T
MANAGE THE
SERVANTS,
HOW CAN YOU
MANAGE A
HOUSEHOLD?

I'M
SORRY
...



YOU'RE
USELESS!

YOU CAN'T
EVEN LOOK
AFTER A
BABY!

SHE JUST
STARTED
CRYING...

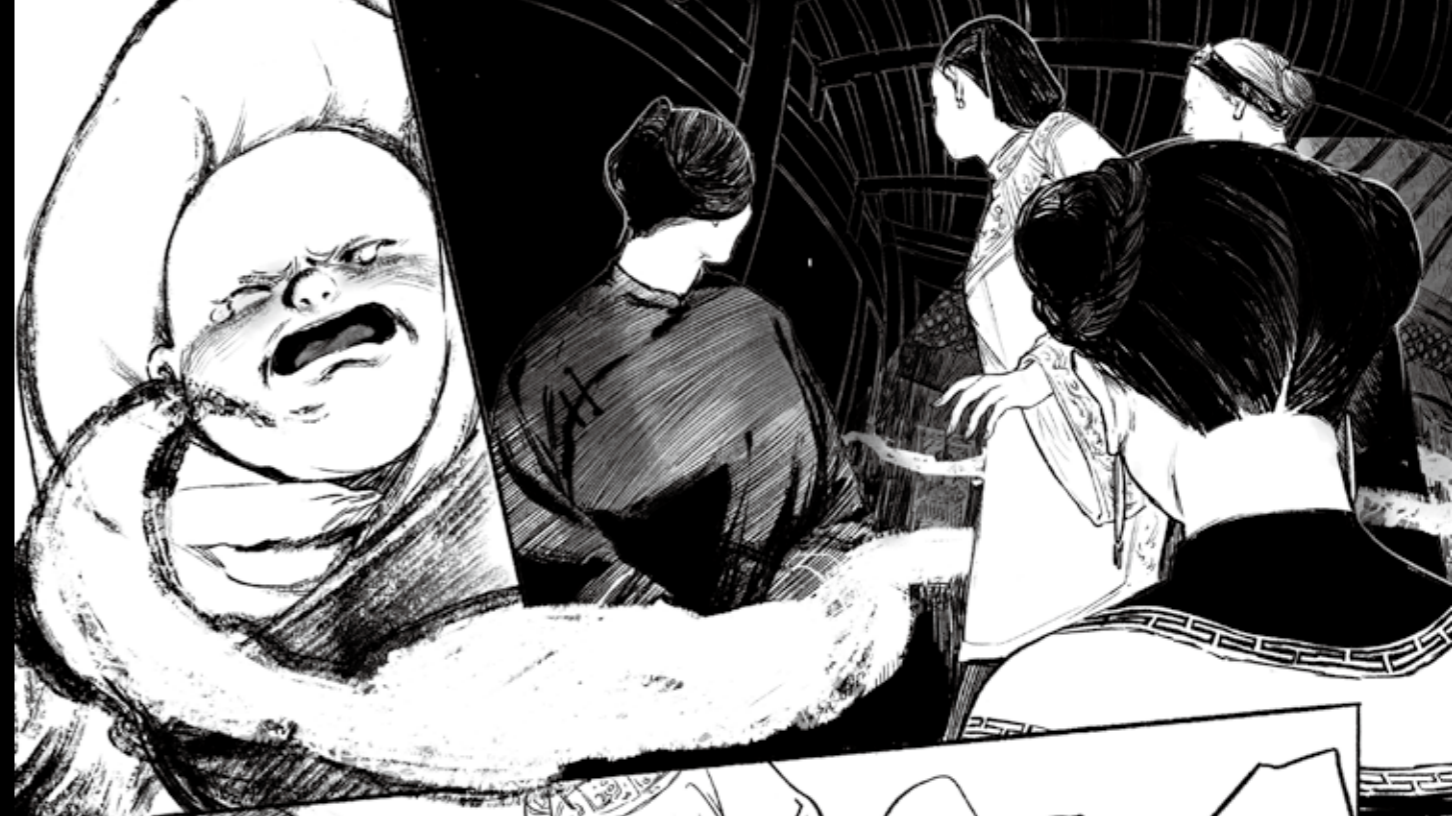
WHAT WILL
YOU DO IF
YOU RUIN
THE RITUAL?

IT'S
ALL MY
FAULT...

IT'S FOR
YOUR OWN
GOOD.

YOU SHOULD
BE WORRIED
ABOUT THE
CHILD, NOT
ABOUT
ATTRACTING
MEN.

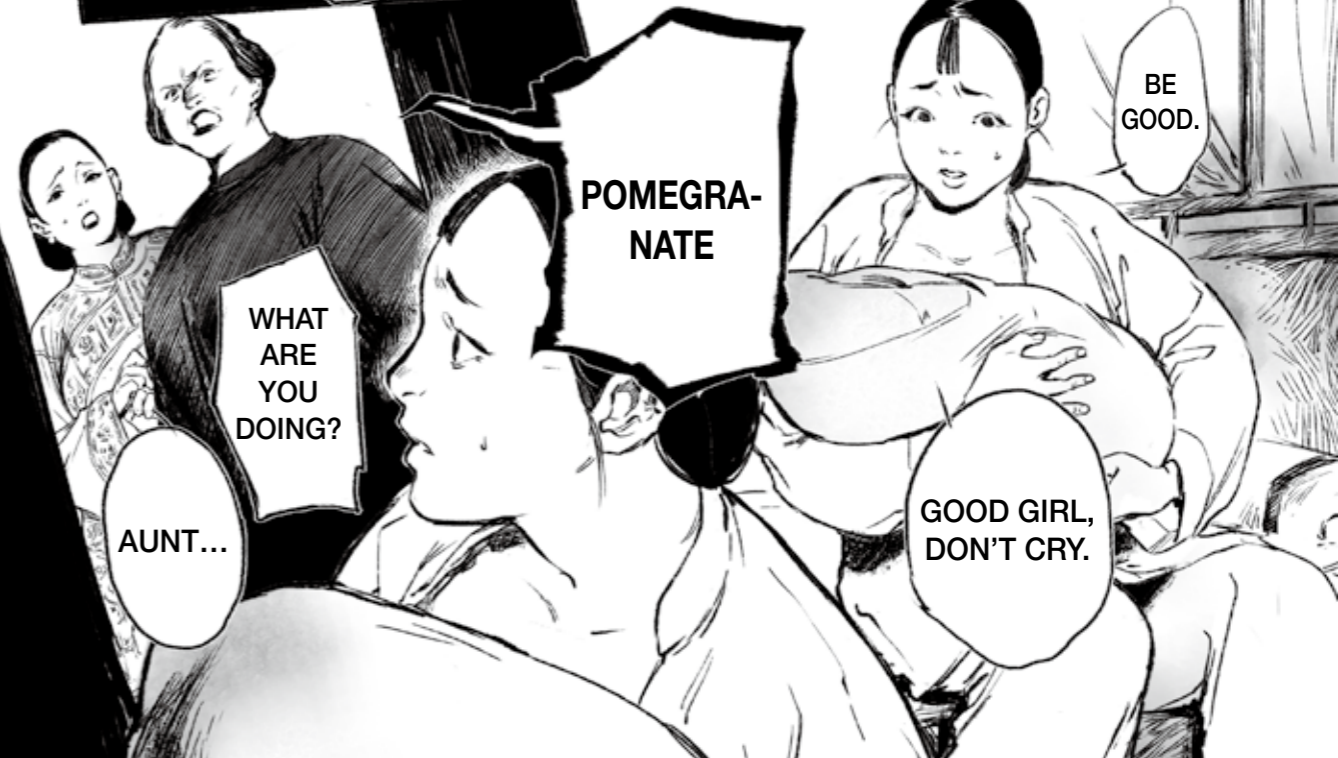
WHY ARE
YOU
WEARING
THOSE
CLOTHES?



AUNT!
AUNT,
PLEASE
WAIT A
SECOND.

OH,
THIS
ISN'T
GOOD.

SIS?!



WHAT
ARE
YOU
DOING?

AUNT...

POMEGRANA-
NATE

BE
GOOD.

GOOD GIRL,
DON'T CRY.



OF COURSE. TAKE CARE, MASTER.

WELL... SUCCESS DEPENDS ON THE PERSON, SO WE NEED TO KEEP A CLOSE WATCH ON YOUR LADY.

SIS,

MAY I TAKE THIS OFF?

JADE!



OH, NOT THIS AGAIN.

IT'LL WORK OUT.

A BIG-FOOTED GIRL LIKE YOU.

WHAT IF YOU REALLY CAN'T GET MARRIED?



THE MASTER TOOK A LOT OF EFFORT TO DO THIS!

SILLY GIRL!

BUT IT'S WET AND DISGUSTING!

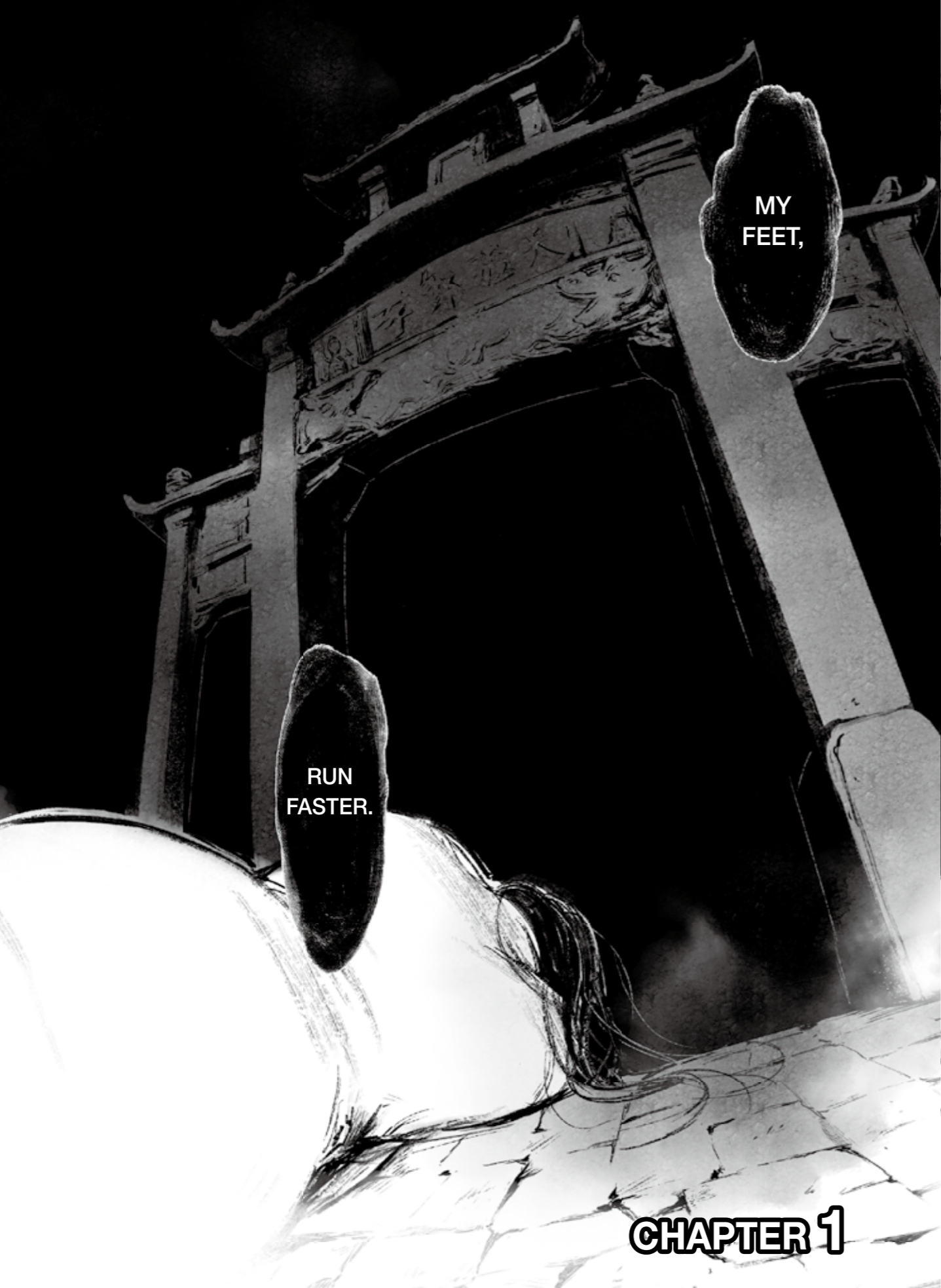


IT SHOULD BE FINE.

THANK YOU, MASTER!



HOY!



MY FEET,

RUN FASTER.

CHAPTER 1

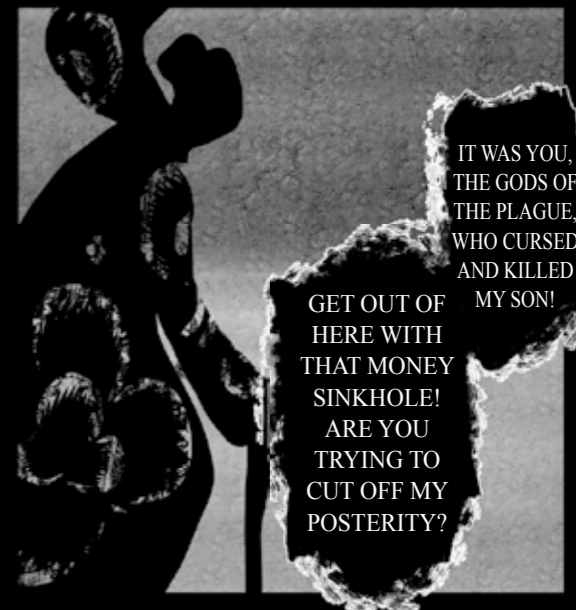


"BEAR A SON AND SECURE YOUR PLACE."



MOM, DON'T WORRY.

I'VE FOUND A GOOD WAY OUT FOR OUR SISTER-IN-LAW.



GET OUT OF HERE WITH THAT MONEY SINKHOLE! ARE YOU TRYING TO CUT OFF MY POSTERITY?

IT WAS YOU, THE GODS OF THE PLAGUE, WHO CURSED AND KILLED MY SON!



THOSE MONSTERS ARE COMING!



HURRY!



HURRY!

The Legend of Taiwan's Strongest Woman Ghost: On the Struggles of Women under the Qing Dynasty

by Liu Chi-an (originally published in OpenBook)

Tainan, the oldest city in Taiwan, holds countless stories and legends. Among the most famous is the story of Chen Shou Niang, often called the legend of Taiwan's strongest woman ghost.

The story goes like this: Shou Niang, a widow, refused to remarry after her husband's death. Her mother-in-law and sister-in-law abused her, ultimately killing her. A corrupt magistrate tried to cover it up and the people, outraged, rioted. Shou Niang's spirit became restless and vengeful, so she wreaked havoc upon those involved. In response, the gods sought to subdue her spirit, but her powers were so strong that even a revered deity of Yonghua Temple was defeated. Ultimately, Guanyin, the goddess of mercy, intervened, negotiating peace.

Shou Niang agreed on two conditions: first, she would not be held accountable for the deaths she caused, and second, her spirit tablet would be placed at a shrine dedicated to chaste women. Then, Shou Niang found peace, restoring order to the city.

Shou Niang's spirit tablet can still be seen at the Temple of Chastity and Filial Piety within Tainan's Confucius Temple. Inscribed as "Spirit Tablet of the Chaste and Filial Widow Shou Niang, Wife of Lin Shou," it serves as a reminder of one of the most infamous cases in Qing Dynasty Taiwan.

The narrative does not retell Shou Niang's story, but instead follows Du Jie Niang, a young woman from a wealthy family in Qing Dynasty Tainan. Literate

and unbound by foot binding, Du Jie Niang enjoys freedoms unavailable to many women of her time. However, her sister-in-law, Yu Lan, who married into the family and bore a daughter, becomes obsessed with superstitious fertility rituals like "womb exchange" to bear a son. Seeing her sister-in-law's desperation, Jie Niang resolves to avoid such a fate and

Tan-Tsiu-Niu stands out for its depiction of women's lives in Qing Dynasty Taiwan. The story portrays women from various social classes—wealthy elites like Du Jie Niang and Yu Lan, ordinary women like Xiu Niang and the shaman, and servants like Ah Lian, who was sold into servitude as a child.

resist the pressures to marry.

In Qing Dynasty society, however, marriage was viewed as a woman's ultimate destiny, with parental approval being required for any match. As Jie Niang walks through the city, reflecting on her future, she comes across a female corpse by the river. A "shaman auntie" has been called to perform a ritual for the deceased. Hoping that the shaman could speak sense to her sister-in-law and save her from marriage, Jie Niang asks to become her apprentice, but the shaman

refuses.

Tan-Tsiu-Niu stands out for its depiction of women's lives in Qing Dynasty Taiwan. The story portrays women from various social classes—wealthy elites like Du Jie Niang and Yu Lan, ordinary women like Xiu Niang and the shaman, and servants like Ah Lian, who was sold into servitude as a child. The comic captures the diverse experiences of women through richly detailed illustrations, from the elite's ornate clothing to the hardships of lower-class life.

Tan-Tsiu-Niu offers a vivid glimpse into women's struggles, raising thought-provoking questions about fate. It shows how women were subject to societal and familial pressures, among

them the threat of female infanticide, the painful practice of foot binding, and the oppressive expectation to marry or remarry as widows. These themes are poignantly woven into the narrative, touching on issues of autonomy, fate, and the enduring legacies of women ghosts. Readers will surely be left eagerly anticipating the next volume.

Liu Chi-an is a writer and student of history from Changhua.



Tan-Tsiu-Niu

守娘上

Author: Nownow **Illustrator:** Nownow **Publisher:** Gaea Books

Date: 10/2022

Right's contacts: bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

188 pages | 14.8 x 21 cm

Volume: 2 (END)

Rights sold: Ukrainian, Arabic, Japanese, Thai

Award: 2020 The 11th Golden Comic Awards, Best New Talent

BFT2.0 Translator: Yichih Wu and Michelle Kuo

"If I get married, will I end up like my sister-in-law, whose future depends entirely on whether she can bear children?"

Chieh watches her sister-in-law take increasingly desperate measures to conceive, and she herself faces constant pressure from her neighbors to marry. How can she escape the weight of these suffocating traditions?

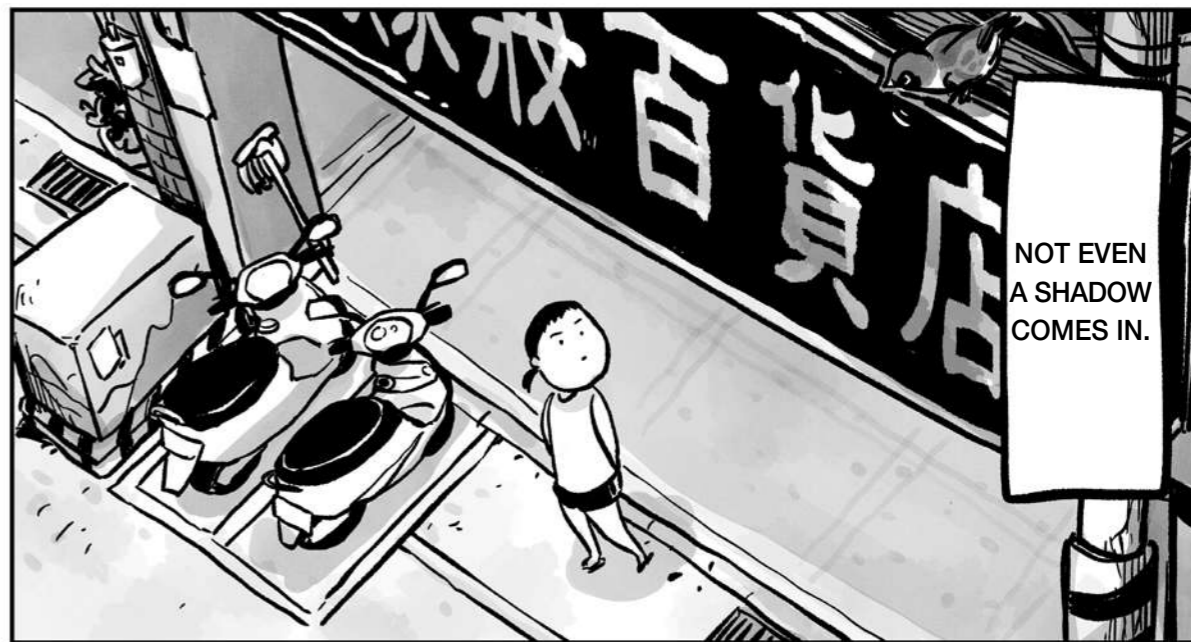
Salvation seems to arrive in the form of a mysterious, elegant woman and a powerful female ghost. Yet, Chieh is plagued by recurring nightmares and a series of eerie events—disappearances, abductions, and wrongful deaths. Will her journey lead to freedom through personal growth and transformation, or will she be confronted by a harsh and terrifying reality?

Blending folklore and ghostly elements, this story explores the coming of age of women in Taiwan under Qing rule. Comic artist Nownow is a rising star, and *Guardienne* offers a poignant depiction of their struggles and resilience.



Nownow

Nownow graduated from the Department of Fine Arts at Taipei National University of the Arts, specializing in creating works with ancient costume themes. *Tan-Tsiu-Niu Vol. 1* won the Newcomer Award at the 11th Golden Comic Awards in 2020. *Tan-Tsiu-Niu Vol. 2* was a finalist for the Annual Comic Award at the 14th Golden Comic Awards in 2023. She has received grants from the Ministry of Culture's Cultural Content Fund and her work has appeared in Ukrainian, Arabic, Japanese, and Thai.





I'VE BEEN AWAY FOR TOO LONG, I CAN'T REMEMBER HOW TO SELL!

MY PARENTS HAVE GONE TO VISIT OUR RELATIVES IN TAINAN, SO I'M HERE TO TAKE CARE OF OUR STORE.

MY PARENTS RUN A TRADITIONAL DOWRY SHOP SELLING WEDDING PRODUCTS—THINGS LIKE FIRECRACKERS, BETROTHAL GIFTS THAT COME IN SIX OR TWELVE.



I'LL PAY YOU NTD \$1,000 EVERY DAY!

IF YOU NEED ANYTHING, JUST LINE MESSAGE ME~

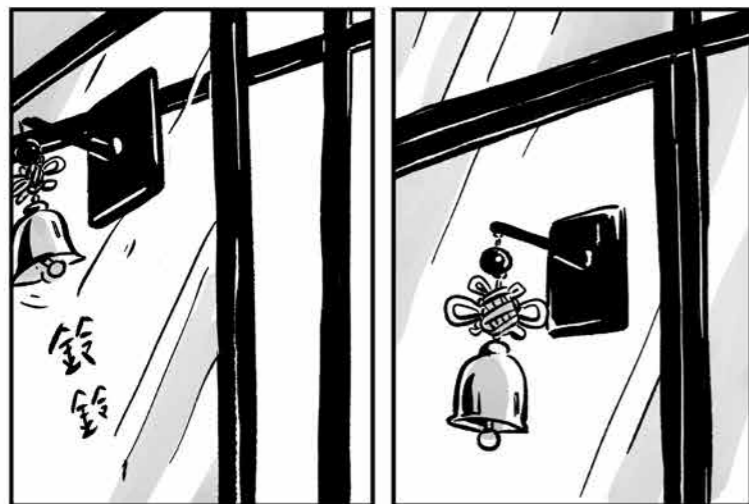


YOU WERE BORN AND RAISED HERE, YOU KNOW ENOUGH!

ALL GOOD!



JOBLESS, CAN'T COMPLAIN.

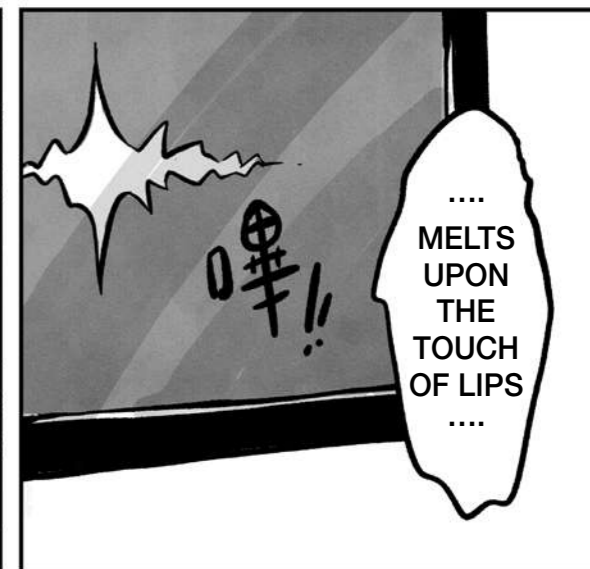


ANYWAYS, MY LIFE WITH OUR SHOP BEGINS. BUT THEN TODAY....

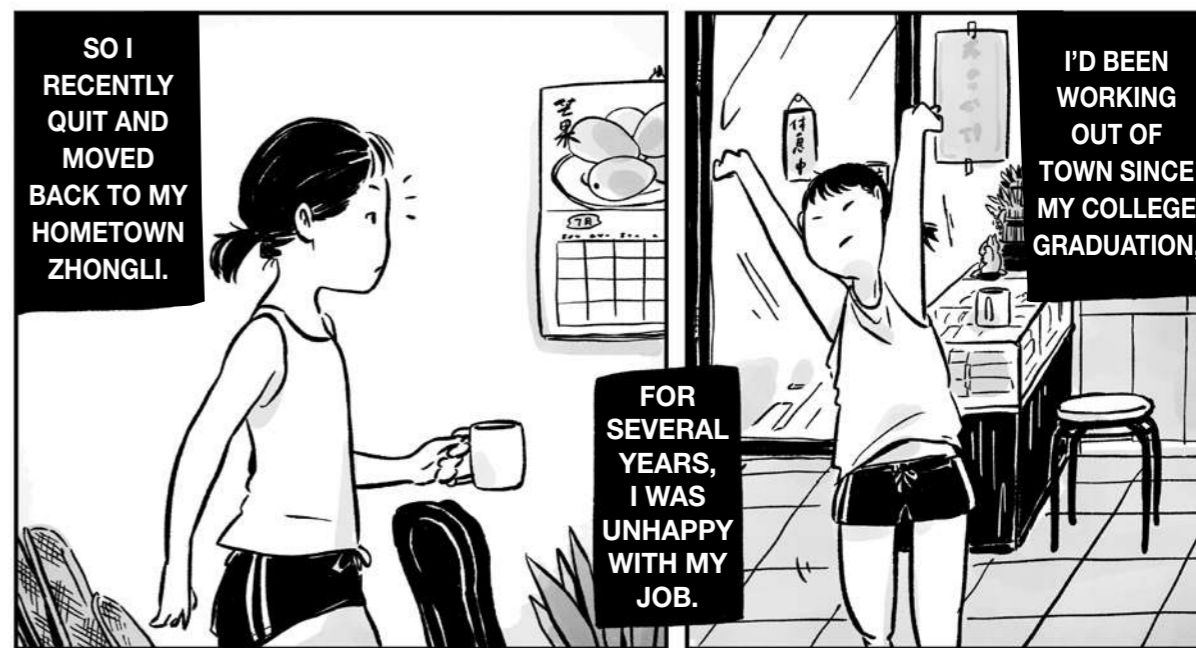


I'M A-LI, NOW 28 YEARS OLD.

SO BORING, HAVEN'T WATCHED TV IN A WHILE



.... MELTS UPON THE TOUCH OF LIPS



SO I RECENTLY QUIT AND MOVED BACK TO MY HOMETOWN ZHONGLI.

I'D BEEN WORKING OUT OF TOWN SINCE MY COLLEGE GRADUATION,

FOR SEVERAL YEARS, I WAS UNHAPPY WITH MY JOB.



TIME TO FIND ANOTHER JOB....



#1 THE BRIDES ARE GETTING OFF THE GRID!

If You Ever Feel Overwhelmed by Weddings, I Suggest You Read This Book

by Liu Rongjuan
(Originally published in Openbook)

Unlike other event planning roles, my job as a wedding planner involves everything—from early discussions about the banquet to managing the day itself. When I read *Brides, Weddings & Li*, I couldn't help but laugh in recognition.

A wedding is not just a one-day event. From the start, the consultant is there for the couple—particularly the bride. The entire process of planning a wedding is like preparing for battle, filled with unforeseen obstacles, useless allies, and helpful partners. Ceasefires and reconciliations are part of the routine—until suddenly, the wedding day arrives.

With humor and vivid storytelling, *Brides, Weddings & Li* explores how couples navigate the intricate customs and taboos of Taiwanese weddings. Once you understand the meaning behind

these traditions, you can better manage them. This book helped me realize why these customs are essential—they give parents time to accept that their child has grown up. From the proposal to choosing auspicious dates and preparing for the day their daughter leaves home, these rituals help parents adjust to their child's new life. It's their way of offering blessings, love, and support, even if it leads to some inevitable conflicts along the way.

Some traditions—like forbidding people born in the Year of the Tiger from attending weddings—may seem absurd to younger generations. But understanding them can reveal creative ways to adapt. For example, in one story, the bride-to-be, born in the Year of the Tiger, is told to avoid certain rituals. Her playful response? "No problem! I'll just

stay in the room for more than 15 minutes, and the bad luck is gone!" Her warmth and humor offer practical solutions to even the strictest taboos.

Beyond customs, the banquet venue and menu are the most important aspects of a wedding. Western-style menus, in particular, often present challenges. I once had two families attend a banquet tasting, and the father, accustomed to Chinese cuisine, expressed dissatisfaction throughout the meal. Despite the couple's love for the venue, it didn't matter. In such moments, my role isn't to push the contract but to ensure both families feel comfortable. (In the end, the bride's grandmother was a great help, thoroughly enjoying the Western meal. It turns out that if you win over the grandmother, you win over the father as well.)

I often hug the bride and remind her that a wedding isn't just about two people—it's about two families. If things don't work out, it's okay to part ways, just like Yi Jia and Yu Zhe in the story, each finding their own path. You'll eventually discover what's right for you, and it will be

the best choice, with no regrets.

On the wedding day, when the bride says her farewells to her parents, tears often fall before any words are spoken. No matter how much you prepare, some things remain unsaid.

If you ever feel overwhelmed by wedding preparations, I suggest you read *Brides, Weddings & Li*. You'll uncover delightful stories behind every tradition.

And when you find yourself at a crossroads in your relationship, unsure of the next step, turn to this book as well. Jiji reminds us that while A-Li and Da Mao's childhood love is precious, finding a like-minded partner isn't easy. If you haven't found the right partner, don't settle for less.

From the moment you sign the marriage contract, you become each other's partner.

But remember, you'll always be your parents' child.

Liu Rongjuan is a wedding consultant and banquet coordinator.

This has been condensed for the purposes of this booklet.

The entire process of planning a wedding is like preparing for battle, filled with unforeseen obstacles, useless allies, and helpful partners. Ceasefires and reconciliations are all part of the routine—until suddenly, the wedding day arrives.



Brides, Weddings & Li

婚禮大作戰

Author: Jiji **Illustrator:** Jiji **Publisher:** Dyna Books

Date: 1/2022

Right's contacts: bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

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

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

BFT2.0 Translator: Jenna Tang and Michelle Kuo

In this delightful, funny, and heartfelt story, a young woman named Li discovers the meaning of love, ritual, and ceremony when she begins managing the family bridal shop.

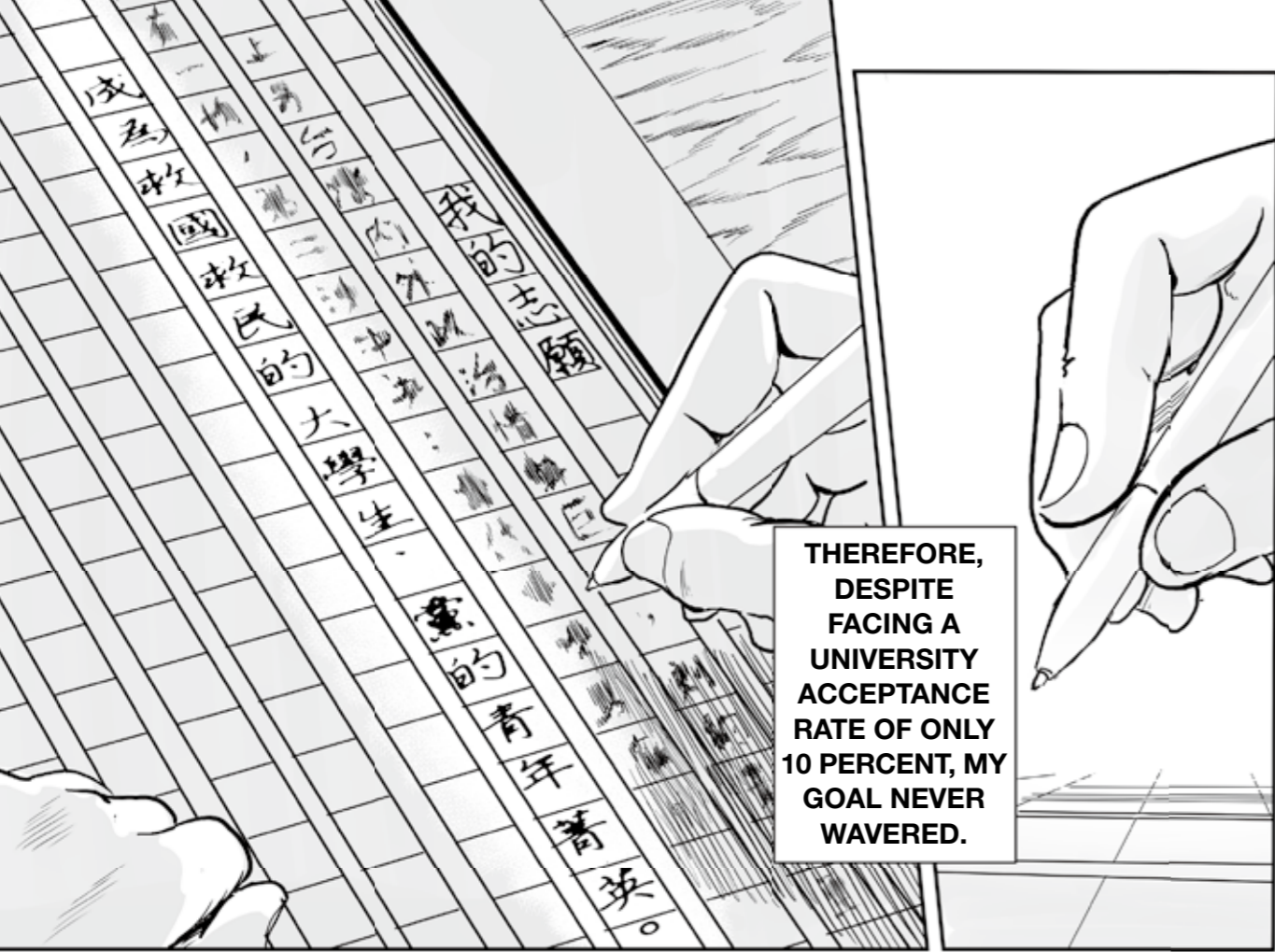
She meets three brides: Yi Qi, preparing to marry a classmate who is moving to the United States; Yi Jia, dreaming of a romantic wedding; and Man Man, an influencer with nearly a million followers, meticulously planning every detail of her big day.

Each bride faces unique and complex challenges. They must balance Eastern and Western cultures, navigate between traditional and modern ceremonies, mediate family expectations, and work around various taboos and customs. Will the couples find clarity and happiness, or will they part ways and forge their own futures? This humorous and intimate look at wedding planning will charm readers, offering a fresh perspective on love and tradition.



Jiji

Jiji holds a master's degree in veterinary medicine and is a licensed veterinarian. After dedicating seven years to saving animals, Jiji chose to save herself through drawing. *Brides, Weddings & Li* won the Annual Comic Award at the Golden Comic Awards. Her work has been licensed for adaptation into film and television.



THEREFORE, DESPITE FACING A UNIVERSITY ACCEPTANCE RATE OF ONLY 10 PERCENT, MY GOAL NEVER WAVERED.



WITHOUT THE PARTY, THERE WOULD BE NO COUNTRY. WITHOUT THE COUNTRY, THERE WOULD BE NO HOME.

HIS FAVORITE MOTTO IS...



UBIQUITOUS SLOGANS REMIND US OF WHAT WE MUST DO TO IMPROVE THE COUNTRY.



RESULTS OF THE UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE EXAM

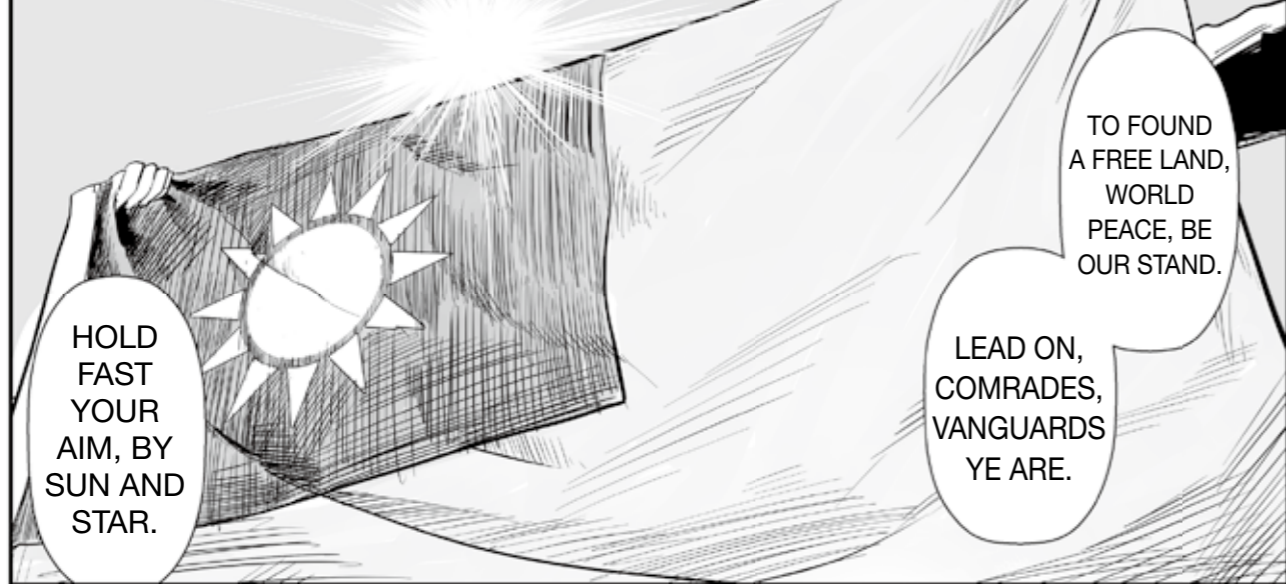


UNFORTUNATELY, MANY SPIES STILL LURK AMONG US. THEY ENDEAVOR TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PARTY.



I DON'T SPEAK DIALECTS





HOLD FAST YOUR AIM, BY SUN AND STAR.

TO FOUND A FREE LAND, WORLD PEACE, BE OUR STAND.

LEAD ON, COMRADES, VANGUARDS YE ARE.



ONE HEART, ONE SOUL, ONE MIND, ONE GOAL.

MY CODE NAME IS SHADOW. MY FATHER IS A CIVIL SERVANT AND A KMT MEMBER.



BE EARNEST AND BRAVE, YOUR COUNTRY TO SAVE,



WHY ARE YOU GOING THERE? IT'S POINTLESS.

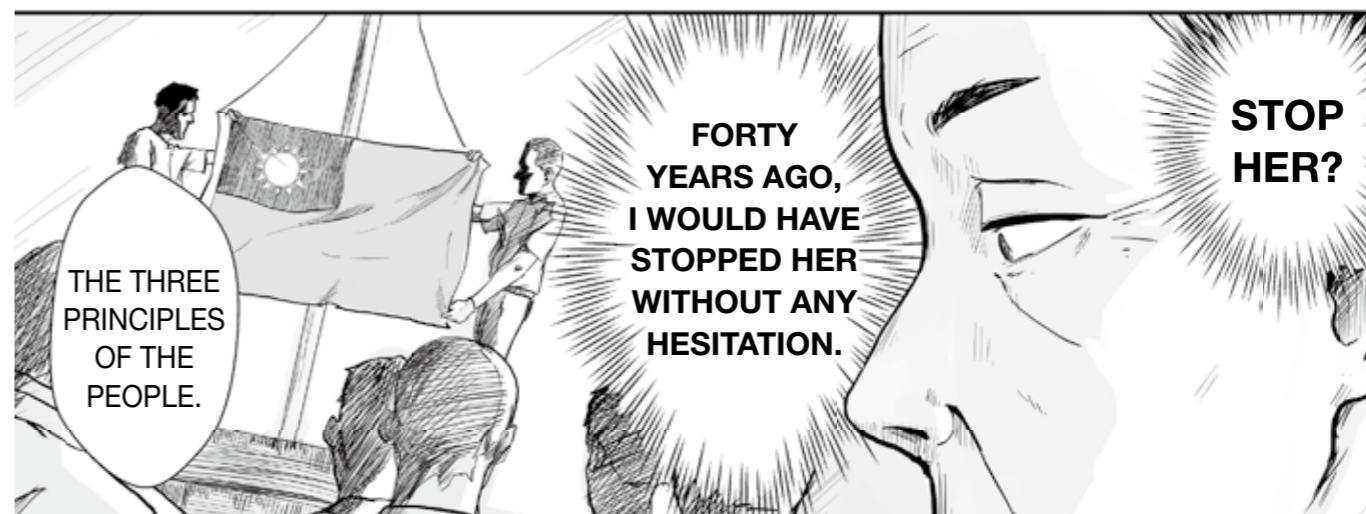
YOU'RE TAKING THE UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE EXAM SOON—



DAD, YOU SHOULD HAVE STOPPED HER!



SHE'D BE BETTER OFF LINING UP FOR CHOCOLATE.



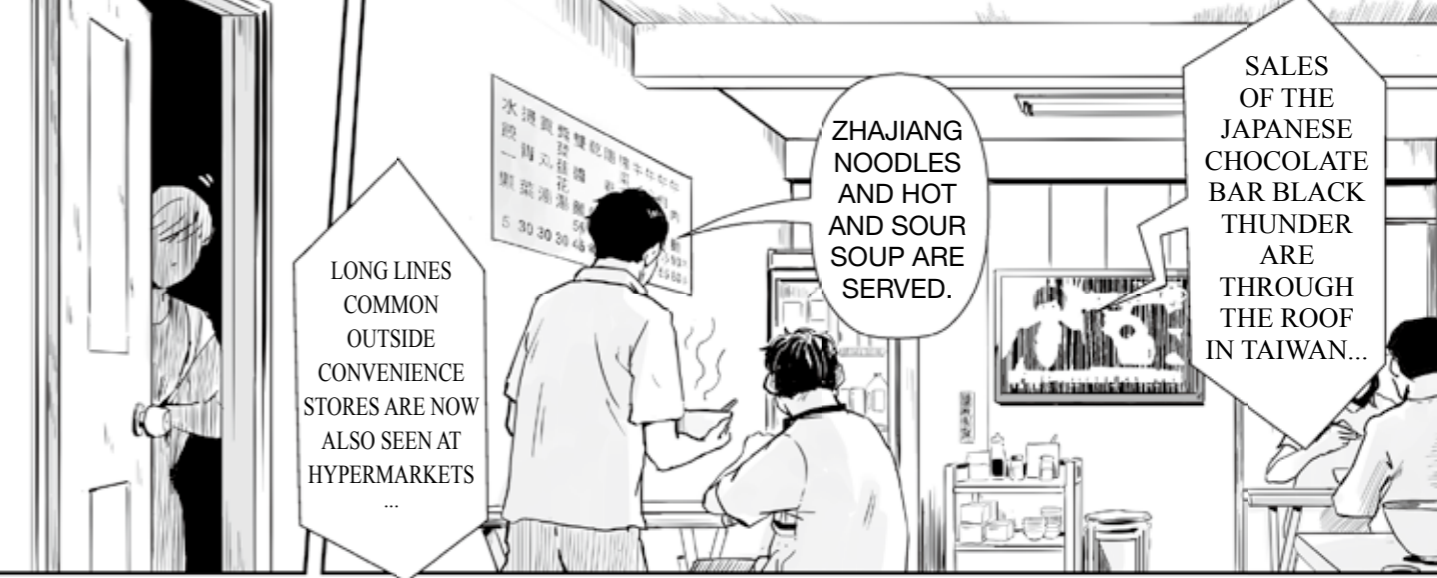
THE THREE PRINCIPLES OF THE PEOPLE.

FORTY YEARS AGO, I WOULD HAVE STOPPED HER WITHOUT ANY HESITATION.

STOP HER?



HSIAO HSUAN, ARE YOU GOING OUT?



LONG LINES COMMON OUTSIDE CONVENIENCE STORES ARE NOW ALSO SEEN AT HYPERMARKETS ...

ZHAJIANG NOODLES AND HOT AND SOUR SOUP ARE SERVED.

SALES OF THE JAPANESE CHOCOLATE BAR BLACK THUNDER ARE THROUGH THE ROOF IN TAIWAN...

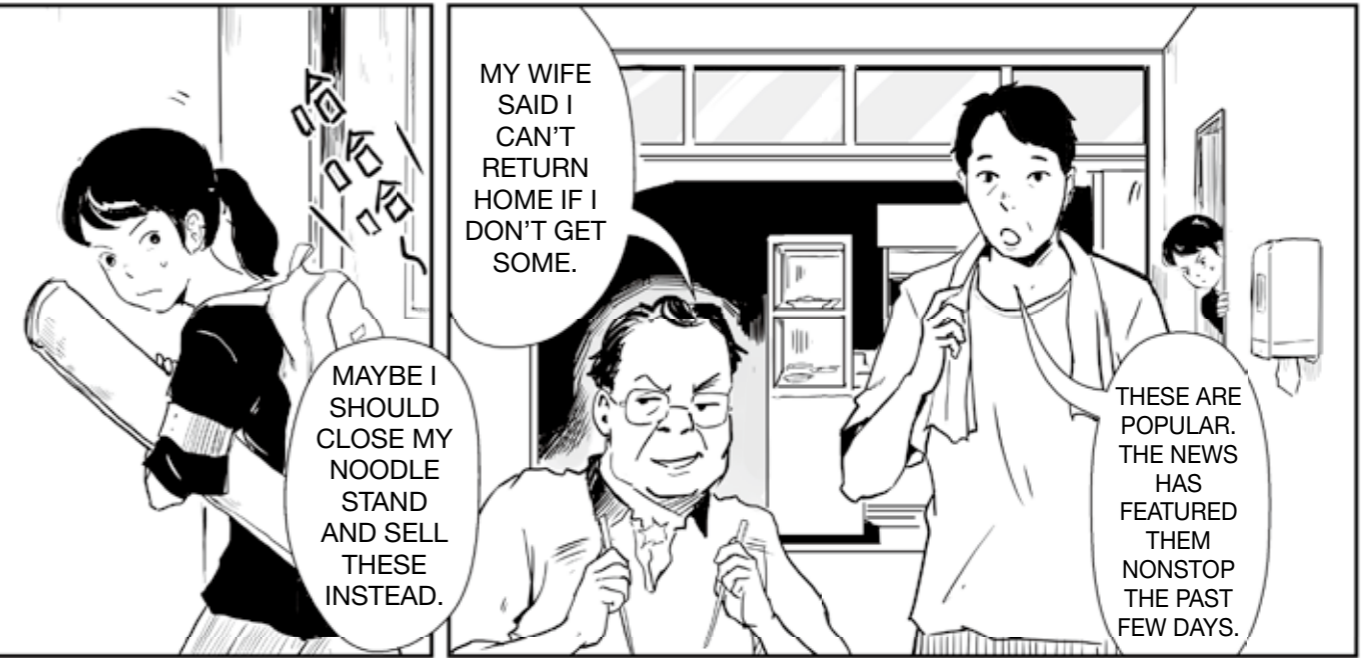


WHAT A STUPID DAUGHTER!

AH!



SHH!



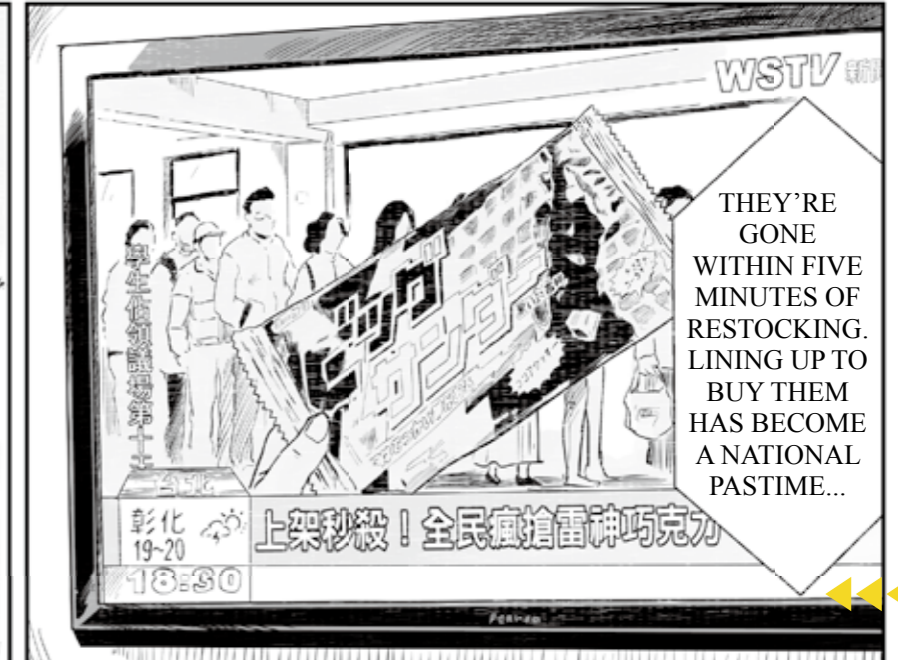
MY WIFE SAID I CAN'T RETURN HOME IF I DON'T GET SOME.

MAYBE I SHOULD CLOSE MY NOODLE STAND AND SELL THESE INSTEAD.

THESE ARE POPULAR. THE NEWS HAS FEATURED THEM NONSTOP THE PAST FEW DAYS.

KMT LEGISLATORS ARE URGING THE SPEAKER TO EXERCISE PARLIAMENTARY POLICE POWERS.

TODAY IS THE 10TH DAY THAT STUDENTS HAVE OCCUPIED THE LEGISLATIVE YUAN.



THEY'RE GONE WITHIN FIVE MINUTES OF RESTOCKING. LINING UP TO BUY THEM HAS BECOME A NATIONAL PASTIME...

彰化 19-20 18:30 上架秒殺! 全民瘋搶雷神巧克力

Democracy on Fire: Breaking the Chains of Martial Law in 1977

Written by Chen-Yu Chang

Translated by Michelle Kuo

Democracy on Fire: Breaking the Chains of Martial Law in 1977 depicts a pivotal moment in Taiwan's democracy movement when ordinary people rose up against electoral fraud.

From the 1950s until the 1980s, Taiwan held "elections" for citizens to vote for representatives and administrators at the county and city levels. But these were essentially meaningless, as the ruling Kuomintang (KMT) party manipulated or purchased votes.

By the late 1970s, the legitimacy of the KMT began to unravel due to international diplomatic isolation and an economic downturn. As the party's

This book depicts a pivotal moment in Taiwan's democracy movement when ordinary people rose up against electoral fraud.

grip weakened, the number of independent candidates participating in elections increased. These candidates spoke passionately about democracy and reform, openly criticizing the KMT's corrupt practices. Idealistic young volunteers emerged. They were dedicated to monitoring the elections and working for the independent candidates. Hope and protest became integral to the electoral process.

On the fateful election day of November 19, 1977, the staffers at a polling station at Zhongli Elementary School in Taoyuan tampered with the votes of an elderly couple. Instead of investigating the suspected fraudster,

grip weakened, the number of independent candidates participating in elections increased. These candidates spoke passionately about democracy and reform, openly criticizing the KMT's corrupt practices.

the police arrested the witness and the elderly couple. Meanwhile, the suspected fraudster was allowed to remain at the polling station and continue his official duties. This mishandling sparked public outrage, as many believed that the police had protected electoral fraud. Thousands of people gathered at the police station to demand justice, and tensions between the police and the public escalated. Ultimately, the crowd surrounded and set fire to the Zhongli police station, leading to the deaths of two citizens.

The Zhongli Incident, as it is called, was a watershed moment when the Taiwanese people openly challenged authoritarianism. It signaled that the dangwai (outside the party) movement had garnered enough popular support to influence society. As government control

and intimidation weakened, more people took to the streets to voice their demands. Subsequent large-scale protests such as the Qiaotou Incident and the Kaohsiung Incident became a key force in the battle for democracy in Taiwan. The Zhongli Incident showed it was possible to break free from the shackles of martial law, opening a new chapter in Taiwan's journey toward becoming a free society.

This essay is edited from the afterword.



Producer **Chen-Yu Chang**

Chen-Yu Chang currently serves as the Global Director of World Softest Productions. He is dedicated to developing works that possess Taiwanese and humanist qualities to popularize history. His works include television series, animation, manga, board games and designs for social purposes. He is promoting Talking about Taiwan, a manga series about Taiwanese history, and Social Affairs, a multimedia series of social satire.



Screenwriter **Noax Tao**

Noax Tao graduated from National Taiwan University with a degree in economics. She started her career in the media industry, initially focusing on finance and politics, and later participated in the startup of online media ventures. After eight years in institutional roles, she transitioned to become a freelance writer dedicated to creative endeavors. She has authored novels such as *Seductive Hostess*, literary journalism including *Trading Youth for Tomorrow: A Guide to the Adult Entertainment Industry - Portraits of Survival in a Sea of Desire*, and has ghostwritten numerous books.



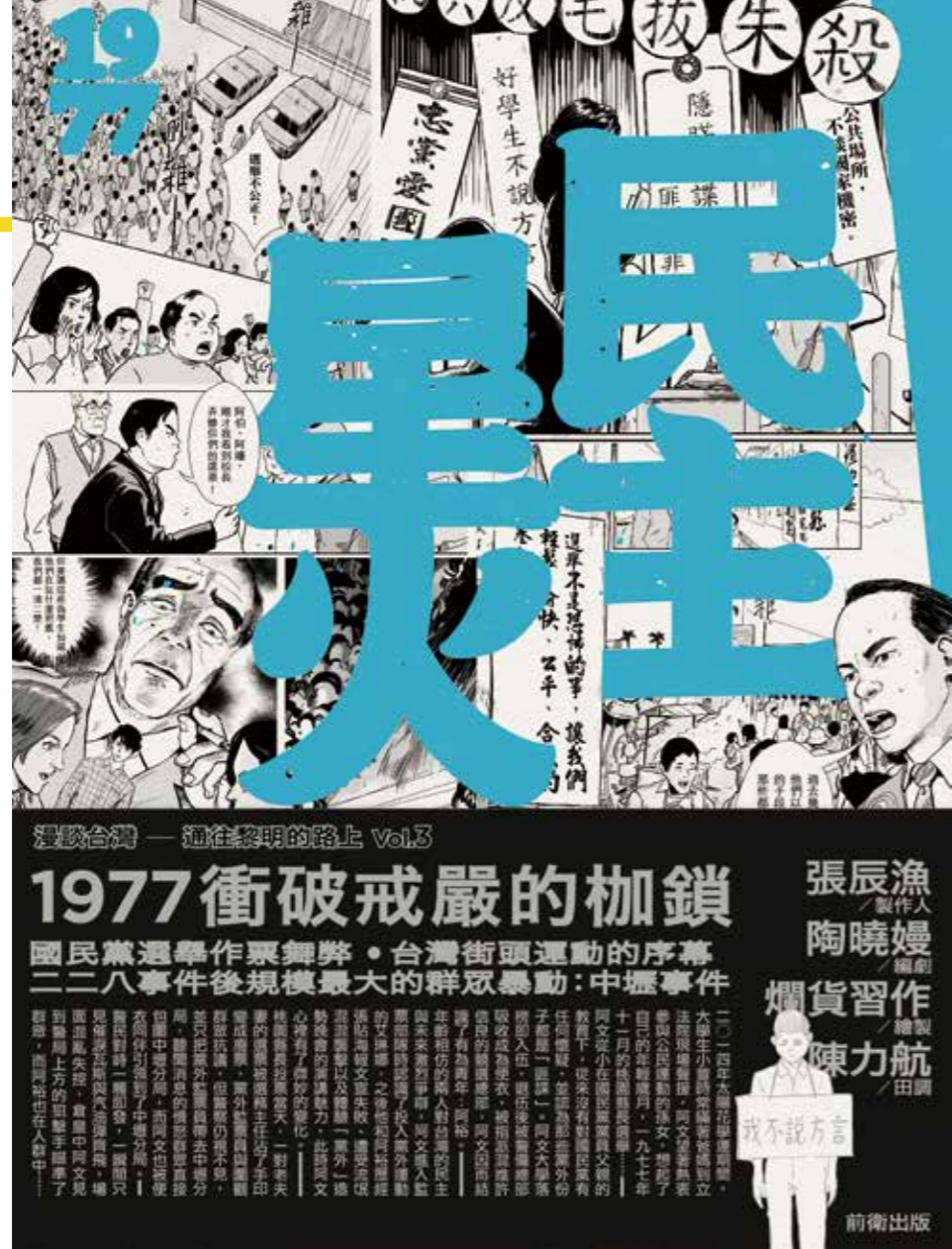
Illustrator **Xuan Lee**

Xuan Lee is a creator of animated cartoons and comics who believes in the existence of mysterious phenomena and enjoys crafting unusual stories. Xuan Lee has contributed to several hand-drawn animation productions and served as a 3D animator contracted by Taipei Veterans General Hospital's Neurosurgery Department. Xuan Lee received the Comico Original Manga Award for Potential and subsequently serialized a manga on the platform. The artist's short comics have been nominated for the MedibangXAdonit NoWords Manga Competition and honored with a special selection in the Action Comics category of the 5th Short Manga Awards. In 2019, Xuan Lee participated in the Taiwan Comic Base residency program, creating 360-degree comics.



Researcher **Lee-Hang Chen**

Lee-Hang Chen holds a master's degree from the Institute of Taiwan History at National Chengchi University. An independent researcher, he has authored academic publications, as well as several pieces of popular history and non-fiction articles.



Democracy on Fire: Breaking the Chains of Martial Law in 1977

民主星火：1977 衝破戒嚴的枷鎖

Author: Chen-Yu Chang, Noax Tao and Lee-Hang Chen | Illustrator: Xuan Lee | Publisher: Avanguard

Date: 1/2022

Right's contacts: bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

128 pages | 17 x 23 cm

Volume: 1

BFT2.0 Translator: Michael Kearney

In 1977, Ah Wen had been on the other side of history: recruited as a spy. His assignment was to infiltrate the campaign headquarters of an independent candidate.

As a spy, he met a promising young man named Ah Yu. The two young men engaged in intense debates about Taiwan's future. While working together to monitor the elections, they also met Elena, a participant in the democracy movement. Together they put up campaign posters, faced attacks from thugs, and attended inspiring rallies for independent candidates.

Growing up, Ah Wen had never questioned the KMT, the ruling party that had imposed martial law in Taiwan. His father, a KMT member, had taught him to view those opposed to their party as "communist spies." But during this time, Ah Wen's perspective began to change.

On election day, tensions between the police and civilians escalated. Amidst the chaos, Ah Wen saw a sniper on the police station roof aiming at the crowd—with his friend Ah Yu in the line of fire.

This historical backdrop resonates with recent issues in Taiwan, among them the Chinese Communist Party's interference in its democratic process.

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- 008 **Local Heroes: Taiwan New Wave Cinema**
by Sean Chuang • translated by Michael Fahey • published by Dala Publishing



**BOOKS
FROM
TAIWAN**