

BOOKS

**BOOKS  
FROM  
TAIWAN**



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## Left to Right

- 014 **Open Eyes, Open Mind!**  
by Pei-Chia Lan • illustrated by Pam Pam Liu • translated by Jenna Tang and Michelle Kuo • published by Dyna Books
- 026 **House Husband in Tokyo: A Romp through D-Tier Attractions and the City's Hidden Gems**  
by Mickeyman • translated by Lin King • published by Dyna Books
- 036 **Three Unmarried Women**  
by Ri Shia Zao • translated by Michelle Kuo • published by Gamania Digital Entertainment
- 046 **Sleeping Brain**  
by KUCHiXO • translated by Yichen Hao • published by Tōkhiu Books

## Right to Left

- 066 **Memories of an Actress**  
by Jason Chien • translated by Michael Kearney • published by Gaea Books
- 076 **The Black Comedy: Fairy Tale Edition**  
by Aman • translated by Yichen Hao • published by China Times
- 086 **A Two-Faced Couple**  
by Wu Shi-shan • translated by Mike Fu • published by Ever Glory Publishing
- 096 **Grandma and Her Ghosts: Dou Dou's Graduation Yearbook**  
Original work by Rice Film International Co., Ltd • illustrated by Ning Lo • translated by Michelle Kuo • published by Dyna Books
- 106 **Gei Shu Dou's Sweet & Antique Vacation**  
by Kiya Chang • translated by Kenny Yim • published by Gaea Books
- 116 **Dong Hua Chun Barbershop**  
by Ruan Guang-Min • translated by Jenna Tang and Michelle Kuo • published by Yuan-Liou Publishing
- 126 **The Gardener of Verses**  
by Tonn Hsu • translated by Lorena Rivas Kuang • published by Dyna Books
- 136 **The Gift**  
by Ebi • translated by Evian Pan and Michelle Kuo • published by Ever Glory Publishing
- 146 **Four Clear Days In Early Summer**  
by Chen Xiao-Ya • translated by Christina Ng • published by Halftone Press
- 156 **Western Pacific War: The Invasion of Taiwan**  
by Shao-Hsien Liang • translated by Yiyi and Michelle Kuo • published by Sparks Publishing
- 166 **Op.9 The Swan**  
by Greamo • translated by Chris MacDonald • published by Kadokawa Taiwan Corporation



## 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rex How', is positioned above the name.

Rex How, Managing Director  
Books from Taiwan

It is a pleasure to introduce the Taiwanese comic books featured in this catalog. Spanning historical fiction, science fiction, supernatural mysteries, slice-of-life, and contemporary drama, this collection showcases the depth and diversity of Taiwanese comics. Whether exploring Taiwan's past, imagining alternate realities, or capturing everyday experiences, these works offer something for every reader.

Science fiction and alternate realities take center stage in *Op. 9 The Swan*, where Chiyo, a baby cloned from a renowned astronaut, grows up under the guidance of his caretaker robot, Anders. As Anders begins to age, Chiyo faces the inevitable reality of loss and change in this thought-provoking sci-fi tale. Meanwhile, *Western Pacific War: The Invasion of Taiwan* presents a gripping fictional scenario set against the Taiwan Strait Crisis. Written by an author with a military background, the story explores Taiwan's geopolitical challenges, military strategy, and the looming threat of war.

History and the supernatural intertwine in *Four Clear Days in Early Summer*, a poignant tale of reconciliation across generations. Set in Huwei Military Dependents' Village, the story weaves together personal and historical trauma, with each ghost's tale reflecting universal themes of love, grief, regret, and loss.

*Sleeping Brain* uses forest butterflies as a powerful symbol of Taiwan's past, following a Chinese entomologist and a Japanese photographer as they encounter a mysterious girl in the mountains. As their journey unfolds, they confront echoes of Taiwan's White Terror period. In *Memories of an Actress*, created in collaboration with the National Center for Film and Television Culture, the golden age of 1960s Taiwanese cinema comes to life through the rise and fall of actress Bai Hua, whose personal struggles mirror the fate of Taiwan's film industry.

Stories featuring women in contemporary life explore themes of identity, independence, and self-discovery. *The Gift* follows a woman who, to avoid family scrutiny, enlists a colleague to pose as her boyfriend during the holidays, only to be confronted with deeper questions about her future and self-worth. In *The Gardener of Verses*, a woman who has spent her life suppressing emotions meets a mysterious gardener who helps her unlock long-buried feelings through a magical fortune-telling cylinder. *Open Eyes, Open Mind!* humorously captures Taiwanese family life through the eyes of fifth-grader Angel, who struggles with school pressures and an overwhelming schedule until an art assignment forces her to see the world differently. *Three Unmarried Women*

follows three vastly different sisters—a police officer, a sharp-tongued beauty influencer, and a BL fangirl who is a student of drama—challenging the outdated belief that singlehood equates to unhappiness.

Love, relationships, and identity take a fresh perspective in *A Two-Sided Couple*, a BL romance following a handsome man whose quiet younger male colleague unexpectedly confesses his feelings. Initially dismissing it as a joke, he begins to wonder if he is indeed gay—and finds himself caught in a passionate and surprising pursuit.

Other stories capture the beauty of everyday life. *Dong Hua Chun Barbershop* is a profound exploration of memory and healing, set in a small-town barbershop unchanged for 30 years, where three seemingly unrelated individuals cross paths and confront their pasts. *Gei Shu Dou's Sweet & Antique Vacation* takes readers through Tainan's rich cultural and culinary history as a Taipei pastry chef relocates to open a dessert-and-antique shop—only to close indefinitely after a single bad review. Finally, *House Husband in Tokyo* follows Taiwanese manga artist Mickeyman as he navigates life as a househusband after moving to Tokyo. Turning daily errands into quirky travel adventures, he uncovers offbeat city gems in an unconventional blend of

travelogue and slice-of-life storytelling.

Children's comics and nostalgic adventures bring warmth and humor to young readers. *Grandma and Her Ghosts* returns with a sequel capturing the magic of 1990s Taiwan elementary school life. From raising silkworms and school field trips to Grandma's magical potions, this comic revives childhood joys and lessons, continuing the heartwarming charm of the original animated classic. Meanwhile, *The Black Comedy: Fairy Tale Edition* reinterprets beloved fairy tales such as *Pinocchio*, *The Frog Prince*, *Rapunzel*, and *Momotaro*, using them as the foundation for his darkly humorous and haunting reimaginations.

From history and geopolitics to love, memory, humor, and slice-of-life storytelling, Taiwanese comics offer a rich reading experience. We hope you enjoy these extraordinary stories from Taiwan.



Sincerely,  
Michelle Kuo  
Books from Taiwan



# Taiwanese Comics in the 21st Century

Interview with Yang Shuangzi and Lin King by Michelle Kuo

*Books from Taiwan* interviewed Yang Shuangzi and Lin King to gain a picture of Taiwanese comics in the 21st century. Both are longtime readers of Taiwanese comics and have achieved global acclaim for their contributions to literature. Yang is a celebrated author of five novels, among them *Taiwan Travelogue*, which won the National Book Award for translated fiction. She is the scriptwriter of the comic book *The Flower Tales of Fantasy*, illustrated by Monday Recover, which won the 2021 Golden Comic Award. Lin King is a translator of *Boy from Clearwater* (Levine Querido), authored by Yu Pei-Yun and illustrated by Zhou Jian-Xin. Its original Taiwanese title, published by Slowork Publishing, has been translated to a number of languages, including German, French, Japanese, Korean, Arabic, and Italian. King is the translator of the

aforementioned award-winning *Taiwan Travelogue*. She also translates comic books for *Books from Taiwan*. Together, they discuss the strengths, evolution, and global potential of Taiwanese comics.

**Books from Taiwan: What makes Taiwanese comics unique on the global stage?**

**Yang Shuangzi:** Taiwan's uniqueness lies in its ability to absorb and transform diverse influences into something distinctly its own. Just as Taiwanese cuisine blends flavors from various cultures, our comics reflect a mix of influences—Japanese manga, American comics, Hong Kong drama, K-POP, and even indigenous Austronesian and Qing Dynasty Han Chinese traditions. Taiwan has long been open to external trends, adapting them



## Yang Shuangzi

Author of *Taiwan Travelogue*, which won the National Book Award for translated fiction. The scriptwriter of the comic book *The Flower Tales of Fantasy*, which won the 2021 Golden Comic Award.



## Lin King

A translator of *Boy from Clearwater* (Levine Querido) and the aforementioned award-winning *Taiwan Travelogue*.

while fostering a society where multiple subcultures coexist.

Unlike countries with a clear mainstream narrative like Japan, Korea, or the U.S., Taiwan's comic industry thrives in its diversity. One of our strengths is in genres like Yuri and BL, where Taiwan leads in depth and awareness, especially regarding LGBTQ+ themes. Since Taiwan was the first in East Asia to legalize same-sex marriage, our comics explore what happens next—issues that have yet to be widely addressed elsewhere.

Taiwanese comics also reflect the island's

geopolitical reality. While some Asian countries feel secure, Taiwan exists under the constant shadow of potential conflict. This shapes our narratives, making them more sensitive to themes of war, security, and resilience. At the same time, Taiwan's rapid absorption of global trends can lead to feelings of inferiority when comparing our works to international hits. However, what we often fail to realize is that we are comparing our entire industry to the top ten percent of another country's output. If we look at the full spectrum, Taiwan produces remarkable work.

A lesser known but significant aspect

of Taiwanese comics is our adult and erotic comics scene, which has gained recognition abroad. The collective San-Se-Fang sells its works directly in Japan, sometimes even releasing in Japanese before Mandarin. A Ukrainian publisher reached out about publishing their comics in Ukraine, which is a testament to how niche yet influential Taiwan's comic creators can be. Unlike mainstream industries, they succeed without government subsidies, proving Taiwan has the potential to be a global leader in this space.

By the way, I think Taiwan should focus more on food-themed comics—I'm working on one now!

**Books from Taiwan: Lin, you translated *Boy from Clearwater*, which has been one of the most successful books in its foreign rights sales. We are big fans of this beautiful and ambitious book! Can you share your experience?**

**Lin King:** *Boy from Clearwater* is a biographical comic that spans a hundred years, touching on difficult topics like labor camps, bankruptcy, and political upheaval. It doesn't follow a conventional

plot structure, which initially made me worried about how readers would receive it.

When the first volume came out, I saw early reviews saying, *I wish it had a clearer ending or I want to relate to the character more*. But that's the reality of biography—life doesn't wrap up neatly.

However, when we did a book tour, we met readers who were incredibly moved. One elderly person told me, *This is the first time I can introduce my family's history to my grandchildren in English*. That moment made me realize how vital this book was in preserving and communicating Taiwan's past.

Many adults, even those unfamiliar with Taiwanese history, found it deeply engaging. The use of historical photographs also helped bridge the gap for non-Taiwanese readers. The author also has a Ph.D., and I'm moved that academics are invested in telling the stories to the young, believing that this genre is worthy of the academic brain. She was also influenced by *Persepolis*, which was her introduction to graphic novels. This global interchange of ideas shows how comics can transcend borders.

Books from Taiwan: What trends do you see in Taiwanese comics?

**King:** The industry's biggest challenge is financial sustainability. Many creators absorb the cost of production themselves. Only about 20-30% of projects can be considered commercially viable. In other countries, publishing giants filter works through highly competitive systems, but in Taiwan, indie creators rely on small businesses and boutique publishers to bring their vision to life.

Taiwan's publishing market is small, but the diversity of its output is remarkable. I translated three comics this year, and they were all radically different—one was a dystopian story about giant animals, another was a feminist critique wrapped in goopy romance, and the last was a guidebook to cheap attractions in Tokyo. The sheer range of genres and styles is astounding.

Whenever I open Taiwan's comic catalog, I'm blown away. There are sexy stories, cute stories, deeply philosophical stories. This level of creative freedom is rare, and it's what makes Taiwan's comic scene so exciting.

**Books from Taiwan: How have Taiwanese comics evolved over time?**

**Yang:** Taiwanese comics have gone through two major waves: one in the 1990s and another after 2010.

The 1990s wave was about experimentation—figuring out what Taiwanese comics could be. Creators absorbed influences from Japanese manga and American comics, trying to establish an identity. Then, after 2010, with technological advancements and lower barriers to entry, artists finally had the tools to realize their ideas.

Initially, comics in Taiwan were issue-driven, often shaped by government policies. Over time, as mainstream narratives faded, independent creators emerged with unique perspectives. Today, Taiwanese comics embrace niche genres, much like the music industry—there may not be million-selling hits, but there are thriving communities with diverse audiences.

**King:** That shift allows creators to refine their work and cater to passionate readers.

**Yang:** Exactly. However, many creators still rely on personal passion rather than financial stability. Government and publisher support often come at a later stage, meaning that by the time a comic gets funding, the creator has already invested years of labor. This makes it challenging to attract long-term investment, even though the return on investment for supporting comic creators is high.

We rarely see artists rise to stardom purely through external support. Instead, they push through the early stages on their own. That's why Taiwan needs to frame this as an investment opportunity rather than just an artistic endeavor—highlighting the potential payoffs could bring in more funding.

**Books from Taiwan: Taiwan has had a presence at international comic festivals like Angoulême since 2012, and events like Manga City have introduced Taiwanese artists to European markets. How has that influenced creators?**

**Yang:** There are fan conventions such as FF (Fancy Frontier) and CWT (Comic World Taiwan) that have long sustained

the vitality of Taiwanese creative communities. Most participants in these conventions are influenced by Japanese manga as well as European and American pop culture trends.

The United Literary Magazine once ran a special feature interviewing creators in the Yuri-only scene, asking if they aspired to create commercial comics. While most responded yes, the reality proved difficult. As a result, many creators incorporated original works alongside their fan creations. This environment also contributed to the rise of CCC (Creative Comic Collection), which invited well-known fan creators to publish original series—such as [redacted], who successfully balanced commissioned work with personal projects.

Writer Tetsuya Terai once expressed his desire to become a self-sufficient creator. Increasing grants and funding could help more artists pursue this path, making the creative field feel less like a dead-end. It's similar to Taiwan's Taekwondo journey—when I was young, I practiced Taekwondo, but at the time, few imagined Taiwan could win gold at the Athens Olympics. Watching that live broadcast moved me

to tears. Had that level of support existed earlier, perhaps I would have continued practicing. If we provide more investment and examples of success, we could inspire new creative energy.

Grants are an early-stage support system, but the goal is to build a sustainable commercial industry. Personally, I benefited from cultural ministry grants all the way through to winning the U.S. National Book Award—which seems like a high return on investment! I hope *Books from Taiwan* can serve as an example of how meaningful this support can be.

**King:** Many fan artists express interest in going commercial, but it remains a difficult path. Some creators mix original works with fan art to sell at conventions. CCC helped bridge this gap by inviting popular fan artists to publish original series. Taiwan's indie scene thrives because many creators see self-publishing as the only way to maintain creative freedom. Grants and funding for artists help comics move beyond a passion project into a sustainable industry.

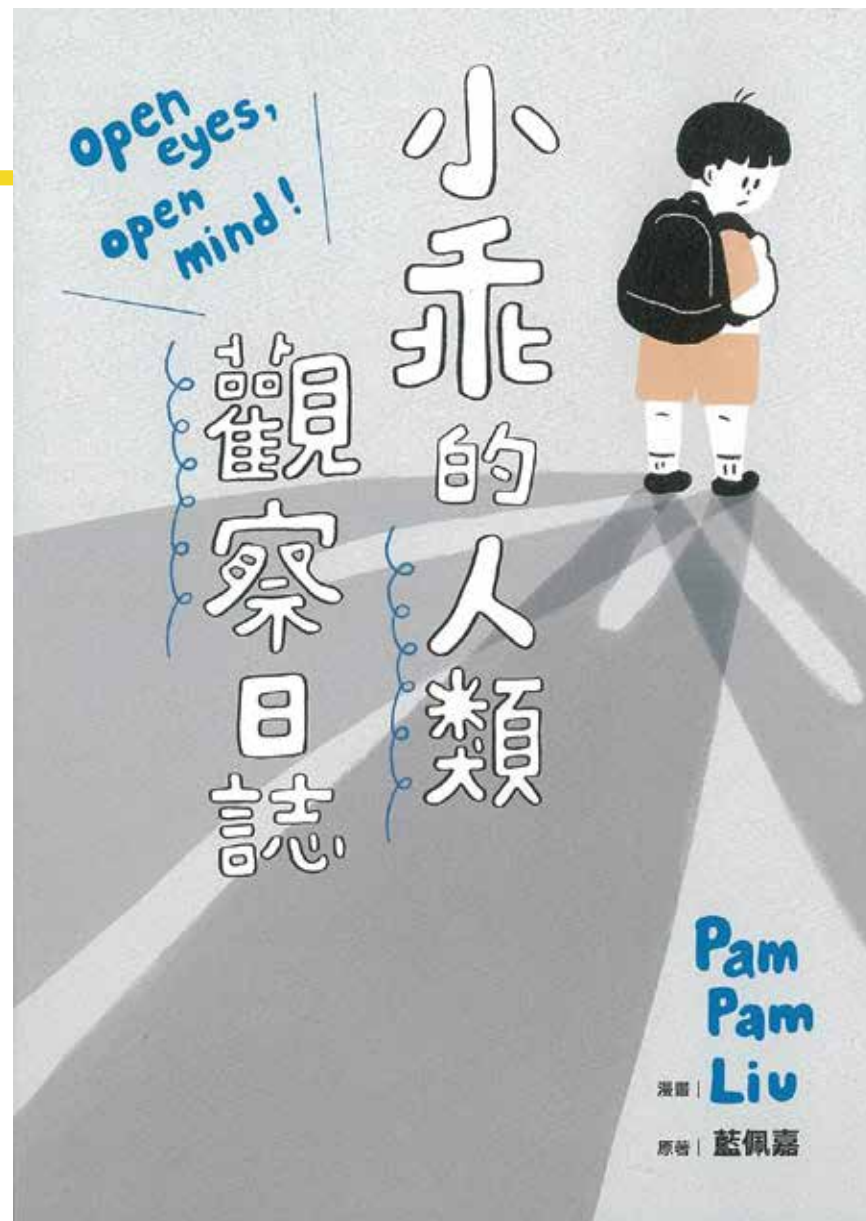
**Books from Taiwan: What defines a**

**uniquely Taiwanese motif or value in comics?**

**King:** A great example is in the picture books. *Dou Dou*, a picture book where people are releasing water lanterns. It's deeply rooted in Taiwanese tradition, yet universally engaging. Another example is *Home* by Lin Lian En, which uses collage art to depict Taipei's distinctive urban landscape.

Taiwanese comics blend history, grassroots culture, and artistic experimentation, making them accessible yet deeply personal. Unlike heavily commercialized markets, Taiwan's industry allows creators to follow their vision, leading to dynamic, boundary-pushing storytelling.

Through comics and picture books, Taiwan is telling stories that resonate worldwide, and that's something truly special.



# Open Eyes, Open Mind!

小乖的人類觀察日誌

**Author:** Pei-Chia Lan **Illustrator:** Pam Pam Liu **Publisher:** Dyna Books

**Date:** 11/2022 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

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

**BFT2.0 Translator:** Jenna Tang and Michelle Kuo

Fifth-grader Angel is buried under endless homework, unfinished exercises, and a packed schedule of extracurricular classes. Now, she's stuck on her latest art assignment: "Getting to Know Someone."

What does it really mean to get to know someone? Is it by learning their name, birthday, or social media account? Some people see each other every day yet remain strangers. With a gentle touch and humor, Pam Pam Liu adapts Pei-Chia Lan's *Raising Global Families*, offering a vivid and lively observation of Taiwanese family life from a child's perspective.



Illustrator **Pam Pam Liu**

Pam Pam Liu is a freelance illustrator and comic artist. In 2021, she became the first comic artist in Taiwan to win a novel award with *A Trip to Asylum*, and that same year, she also won the Golden Comic Awards for Best Comic of the Year. She has been an artist-in-residence at Angoulême's Cité Internationale de la Bande Dessinée et de l'Image and Berlin's LCB. Her works have been featured multiple times on the Books from Taiwan comics list. In 2021, *A Trip to Asylum* won the Taipei International Book Exhibition Award for Best Novel and the 12th Golden Comic Award for Best Comic of the Year.



Author **Pei-Chia Lan**

This image is provided by SpringHill Publishing

Pei-Chia Lan is a professor in the Department of Sociology at National Taiwan University and the director of the Center for Asian Comparative Social Research. Her research focuses on gender, family, international migration, and social inequality. Her first book, *Global Cinderellas: Migrant Domesticity and Newly Rich Employers in Taiwan*, and its adaptation have won numerous awards, including from the American Sociological Association, the Taipei International Book Exhibition, and the Golden Tripod Awards. Her second book, *Raising Global Families: Parenting, Immigration, and Class in Taiwan and the US*, published by Stanford University Press in 2018, compares family dynamics in Taiwan and among immigrants in the US, exploring how globalization and migration challenges have shaped different parenting strategies.

# The Storytelling and Art of Pam Pam Liu

by Jenna Tang

Angel, a fifth grader with a passion for art, spends her days attending cram schools, learning piano, English, drawing, and more. Her mother, Amy, meticulously arranges every possible program to ensure Angel remains “competitive.”

At school, a new art teacher assigns a project called “Getting to Know Someone,” prompting Angel to search for a candidate for her final presentation. Along the way, Angel begins to see those around her in a new light. There’s Jun, who spends her time alone while her father is often absent and creates her own art without attending any cram schools. Then there’s Chen Chia-Sheng, a former friend who has grown distant after Angel witnessed him being scolded in public. And Lin-Lin, who is rumored to have a famous artist father—only to reveal that this story was her grandmother’s fabrication.

But what does it really mean to get to know someone we think we already know? In the end, Angel chooses to interview her own mother, Amy, gradually uncovering her reasons for filling her life with classes and activities. Amy, like many Taiwanese parents, wants her child to be competitive, capable, and successful enough to achieve her dreams. However, the pressures of this social structure often lead to overwhelming demands on both parent and child.

This heartwarming and thought-provoking story explores the complexities of family relationships, societal expectations, and the true meaning of understanding one another.

Published in 2022, the graphic novel *Open Eyes, Open Mind!* adapts the social concepts and themes discussed in *Struggling to Raise Children:*

*Globalization, Parental Anxieties and Unequal Childhoods* by National Taiwan University sociology professor Pei-Chia Lan. The story delves into Taiwan’s cram school system, the educational culture of “making your children learn a lot,” toxic competitiveness, and parental anxieties.

Despite the weighty themes, artist Pam Pam Liu deftly incorporates them into engaging visual storytelling, offering readers a more personal and accessible way to connect with the topics.

The graphic novel has broad appeal across generations. Its vibrant art and relatable language make it engaging for young adults and younger readers, while its exploration of parental anxieties and critique of the education system offer fresh perspectives for parents and educators. Narrated from the viewpoint of a fifth-grader, the story balances the

experiences of children and parents, reflecting the realities of the world we live in and prompting readers to reconsider what education truly means.

For years, I have been an avid reader of graphic novels from around the world. Graphic novels often strike a unique balance between conversational storytelling and vivid illustrations, many of which capture slices of life to make the stories feel more personal and accessible—even to readers unfamiliar with the cultural or social contexts. Graphic novelists have their own distinct ways of using art to guide us on a journey, whether it’s a physical adventure or an exploration of emotional landscapes. Pam Pam Liu’s illustrations and narrative voice are a prime example of this style, and they hold significant meaning for me as an artist.



After I had completed my first novel in translation, on a cold winter day in Taipei, for the first time, I was introduced to Taiwanese artist Pam Pam Liu's graphic novel, *A Trip to the Asylum*. The book was the first graphic novel to have won a National Fiction Award in Taiwan. It is a journey in which readers were brought to explore childhood trauma, the lack of care in our societal system and family structure, and violence that comes from the society when one most desperately needs emotional support. The book itself deeply reminds me of the sense of dark mystery, sarcasm, and psychological journey that I have savored with American artist Nick Drnaso's works, such as *Sabrina and Acting Class*, which were both translated into Taiwanese Mandarin.

In this book, elementary school students, including the protagonist Angel, are tasked with an end-of-semester presentation based on the concept of "getting to know someone." Through

Angel's exploration of who she might want to understand better, the story vividly portrays life as an elementary schooler in a long-distance, dual-income nuclear family in Taiwan.

At the same time, it delves into the challenges faced by parents in such circumstances as she navigates educating their children about societal roles, family expectations, and personal identities. The story invites readers to reflect on what it truly means to understand someone we thought we already knew—doing so with greater depth, empathy, and respect.

*Bonjour, Angoulême!* is an earlier work by Pam Pam Liu, vividly capturing her experiences participating in the residency program and art festival in Angoulême, France. The book explores the joys of traveling to a new city as an artist, meeting other international creatives, and navigating cultural shocks and differences, all infused with Liu's signature wry humor.

More recently, Liu documented her participation in the MOCCA Festival in New York in 2024 through short comic strips on social media, offering readers a real-time glimpse into her journey as an artist in different parts of the world. Her acute, quirky, and intriguing observations of international social environments and cultural habitats reveal her effort to connect with a much larger world. This intention is further reflected in her choice to incorporate multiple languages into her graphic novels, emphasizing her global perspective.

Having read Liu's graphic novels over the years, I've found myself, as a writer, translator, and artist, deeply moved by her work. Her stories make me feel seen and accompanied, especially as I reflect on my own journey living overseas and returning to Taiwan, where my personal upbringing and experiences continue to shape me.

The iconic ghost figure often

featured in Liu's recent work, to me, symbolizes more than just the reality of being an introvert living in liminal spaces—both physically and emotionally. It embodies the experience of existing with an internal journey to navigate, process, heal, and grow from. These narrative voices serve as powerful reminders to readers that, no matter how isolating our paths may feel, we are never truly alone.

*Jenna Tang is a Taiwanese writer, educator and translator who translates between Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, French and English. She is a board member and chair of the Equity Advocates Committee at the American Literary Translators Association.*



# 補習 自

CHAPTER 2 CRAM SCHOOL ROBOT

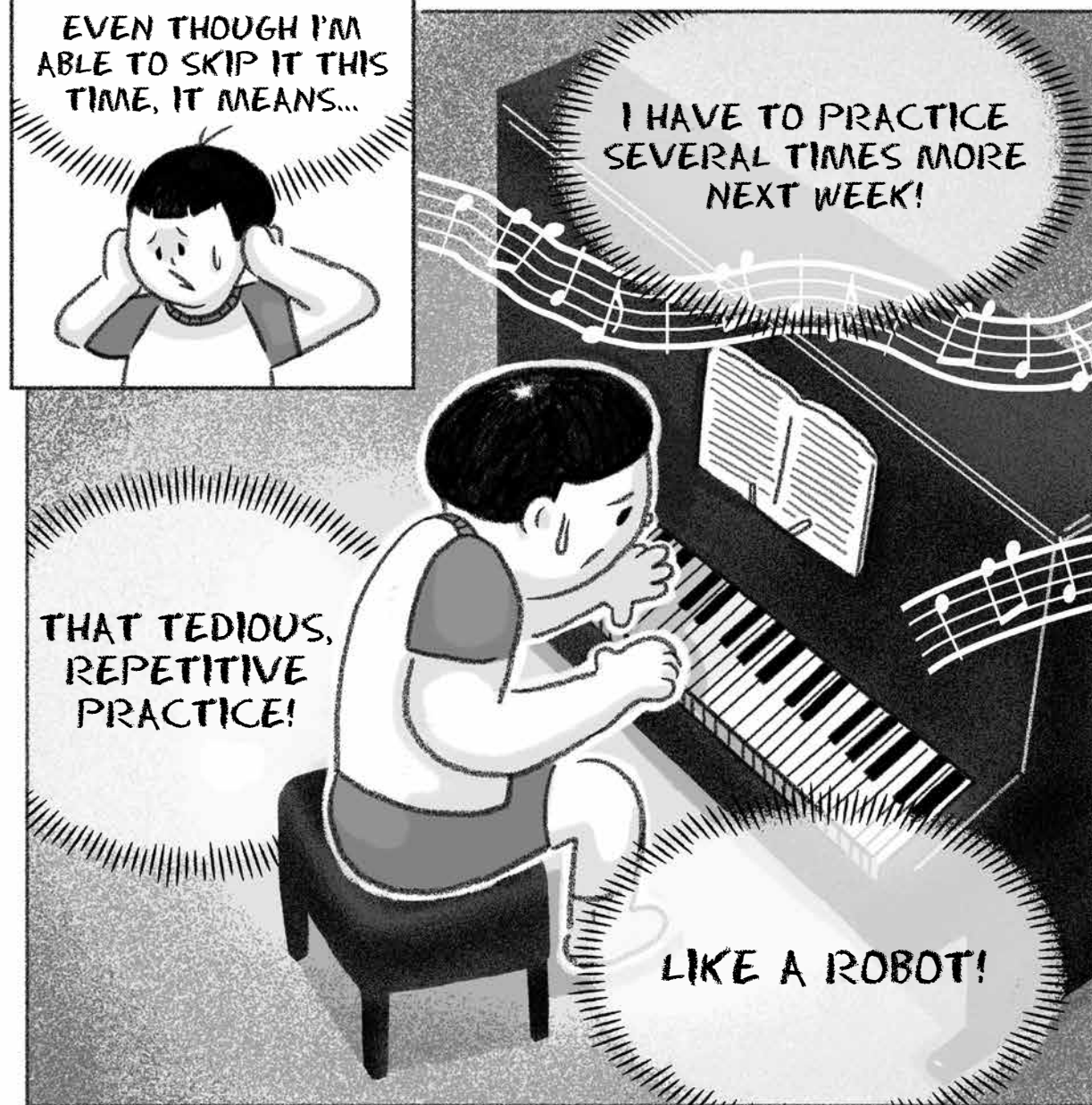
Chapter 2

# 機器人













D 級景點！踏破不為人知的東京秘境（？）：最軟！東京人夫日記

**Author:** Mickeyman **Illustrator:** Mickeyman **Publisher:** Dyna Books

**Date:** 09/2023 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

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

**BFT2.0 Translator:** Lin King

When Mickeyman moved from Taiwan to Tokyo for his wife's career, he dove headfirst into his new life as a househusband. But he's no ordinary homemaker. Between tidying up and managing the household, he carves out time for his whimsical "Grade D small trips"—secret spots that even locals often overlook. These quirky adventures focus on uncovering Tokyo's offbeat attractions while cleverly doubling as grocery runs and sticking to a tight budget. It's all part of his practical yet delightful approach to exploring hidden gems.

Taiwanese manga artist Mickeyman captures Tokyo's lesser-known attractions with a unique perspective, revealing unexpected insider tips and tricks for exploring the city's hidden gems. Tokyo is a must-visit destination for anyone traveling to Japan, but why stick to the usual tourist hotspots? With his trusty bicycle as his companion, Mickeyman leads readers on a charming and offbeat journey to experience the city.



**Author Mickeyman**

An atypical manga creator, this artist's work is deeply tied to travel, as inseparable as chicken fillet and pepper. He is known for his extremely frugal approach to traveling, often funding trips by selling personal work. His journeys have taken them to places ranging from Shinsaibashi to East London, Harbin to Paris. In 2016, he represented Taiwan as a resident manga artist at the Angoulême International Comics Festival in France. Currently, he works as a professional househusband in Tokyo.

# House Husband in Tokyo: A Romp through D-Tier Attractions and the City's Hidden Gems

# Grade D Attractions! Uncovering Tokyo's Hidden Gems: *House Husband in Tokyo*

by Shiuan Chiang

Tokyo is undoubtedly a top destination for tourists visiting Japan. With abundant resources on popular attractions available online and in guidebooks, it's easy to stick to the well-trodden paths. However, through the unique perspective of "the softest househusband," Mickeyman, readers are invited to explore Tokyo's lesser-known "Grade D attractions"—hidden spots even locals might not know, let alone tourists. Armed with his trusty bicycle, Mickeyman takes readers on a journey to uncover the fascinating stories behind these overlooked gems.

After relocating from Taiwan to Tokyo for his wife's job, Mickeyman fully embraced the role of househusband.

Between managing household chores during the day, he finds time and budget to plan his quirky "Grade D small trips." These trips center around offbeat attractions but are thoughtfully planned to include grocery shopping on the way back and remain budget-friendly—a practical approach for a househusband's hidden-gem adventures. Most importantly, the insights he gathers are often shared with his wife during weekend strolls, adding joy to their life as an expatriate couple navigating a foreign land together.

The attractions featured in the book range from historical archives and playground slides with intriguing backstories to thrift stores for bargain

hunting and luxury department stores for occasional indulgence. Mickeyman's unique taste and ranking of destinations make the book engaging and fun. Through his humorous and entertaining illustrations, he presents fascinating trivia about each location in a simple yet captivating way.

From the seemingly frivolous yet historically significant "Trash Wars" to the emotionally complex World War II "Peace Memorial" viewed through a Taiwanese lens, Mickeyman introduces readers to Tokyo's obscure cultural and historical tidbits. With each adventure, readers not only discover hidden corners of Tokyo but also gain insight into the city's lesser-known stories, all delivered with Mickeyman's signature humor and charm.

Beyond the Grade D attractions, the book chronicles the life of a Taiwanese couple living abroad. From cultural clashes and bizarre requests from Taiwanese friends for overseas shopping to comparisons between Taiwanese and

Japanese train bento and curry, this illustrated book stands apart from typical travel guides. Whether you're seeking a charming glimpse into a couple's life or looking to explore Tokyo off the beaten path, *House Husband in Tokyo* delivers a delightful mix of humor, heart, and travel inspiration.

*Shiuan Chiang was born and raised in Taipei, with time spent in Hsinchu, Tainan, and London. Fascinated by anything that brings an extraordinary atmosphere to everyday life, she finds inspiration in museums, idol groups, and literature. Once an avid novel reader, she has recently noticed her bookshelves filling up with nonfiction.*

*With a background in anthropology and art history, Shiuan has spent much of her time reading and writing descriptions of museum exhibitions and artifacts. When not immersed in these pursuits, she enjoys knitting and baking.*



# 奇観のD級景點 No.11 多摩川旁

Mickeyman's D-Tier Attractions  
No. 11 Tama River Banks

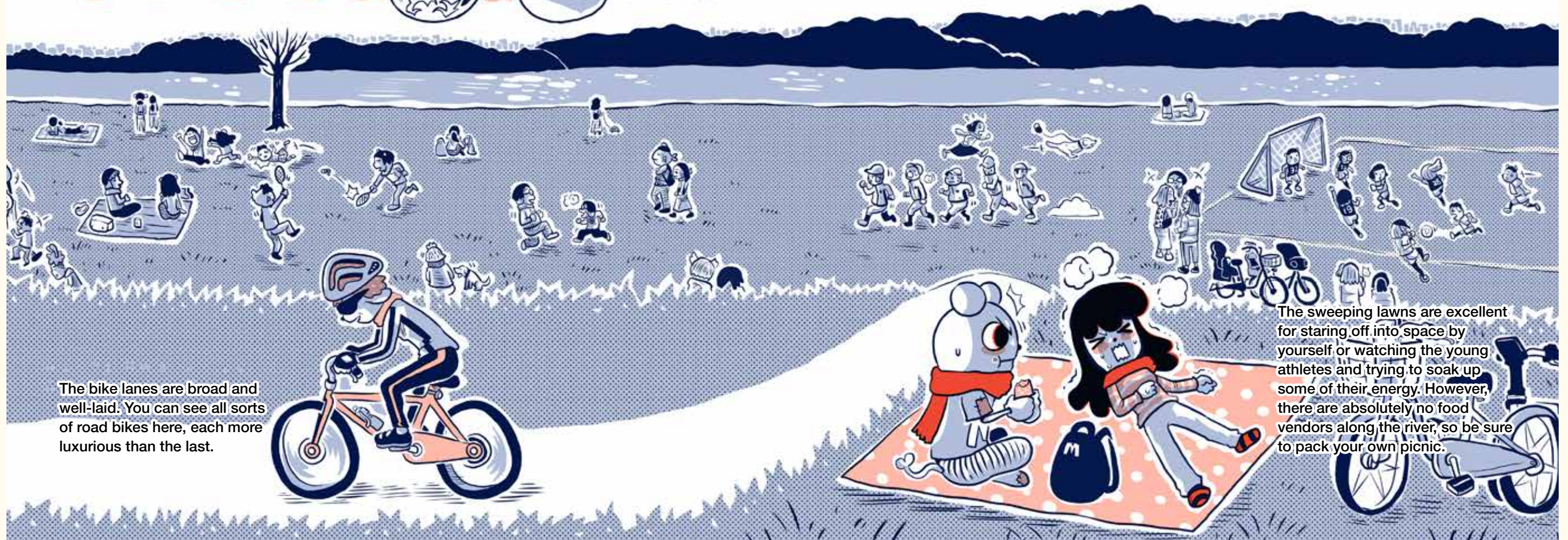
The Tama River runs between Tokyo Metropolis and Shinagawa Prefecture. The riverside parks are spacious and open to the public, making them the perfect spot to hang out all day on a weekend and very popular among parents of small children (free entertainment)! Staking out a spot here gives you a glimpse into a typical Tokyo family's day off. As a bonus, many famous scenes in movies were filmed here! (People in some regions refer to the river as the Futakotama River.)



There's always a row of kid-friendly bikes along the riverside soccer field, meaning bikes with child seats and baskets. Bikes are the only vehicles allowed on the riverbanks. While the kids play soccer, the mothers can be seen chatting, exchanging the latest parenting tips and praising each other and their children. It must be draining to lose half a weekend day to your kids' soccer practice! \*Sobs\*



You'll come across the Japanese Baseball Youth that you see in movies and anime, with their close-shaved heads and uniforms—they really exist! Baseball stresses teamwork and persistent practice, both of which are values Japanese society prioritizes. Aside from the sport itself, the cleaning up of the field and equipment, and learning rules that are slightly more extensive than for soccer, helps children to socialize in groups.



The bike lanes are broad and well-laid. You can see all sorts of road bikes here, each more luxurious than the last.

The sweeping lawns are excellent for staring off into space by yourself or watching the young athletes and trying to soak up some of their energy. However, there are absolutely no food vendors along the river, so be sure to pack your own picnic.



Most of the Tama River is lined with different varieties of cherry trees. Since the riverside parks are farther from metro stations and lesser-known among foreign tourists, so there are relatively few picnickers during sakura season. It's a great spot for going on bikes!



You'll also see many fascinating and sometimes difficult-to-describe activities.

## BBQ

Tokyo has many regulations about barbecuing in the city. Near Tama River Station, there's a designated area under the Maruko Bridge that many young people use for social events. There are businesses that cater you'd need from grill to charcoal to ingredients; the days of going to the supermarket to pick out meat and beverages yourself are ancient history! \*Weeps\*



## 殺陣練習

### "Tate" Combat Performance

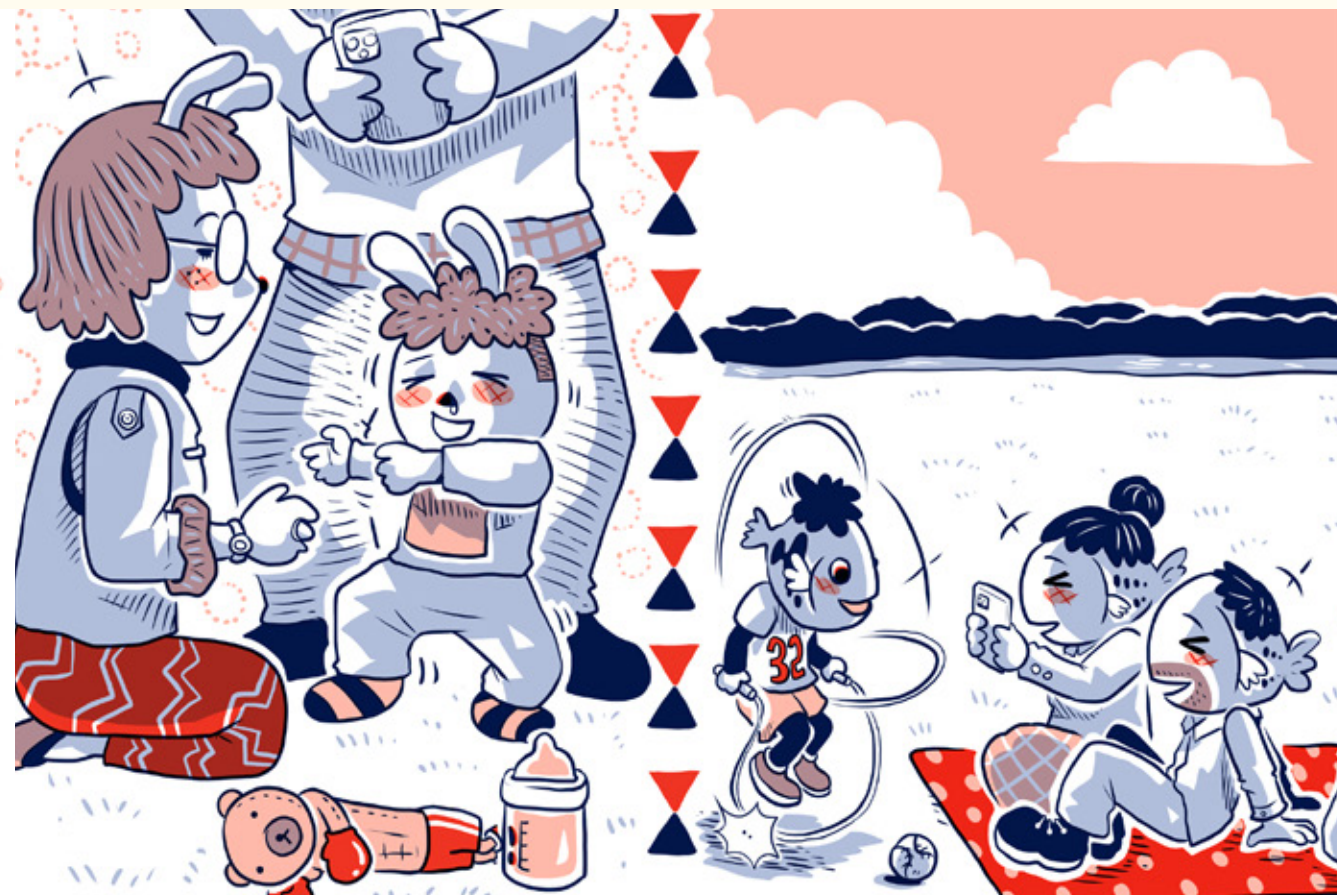
Tate (pronounced tah-teh) is an imposing type of stylized sword fighting that emerged from kabuki and period theater. It usually involves a protagonist defeating many small-fry opponents with a samurai katana. Rehearsals require a lot of space, so you can sometimes spot them on the riverbanks. Watching these spectacles live really gets the blood pumping!



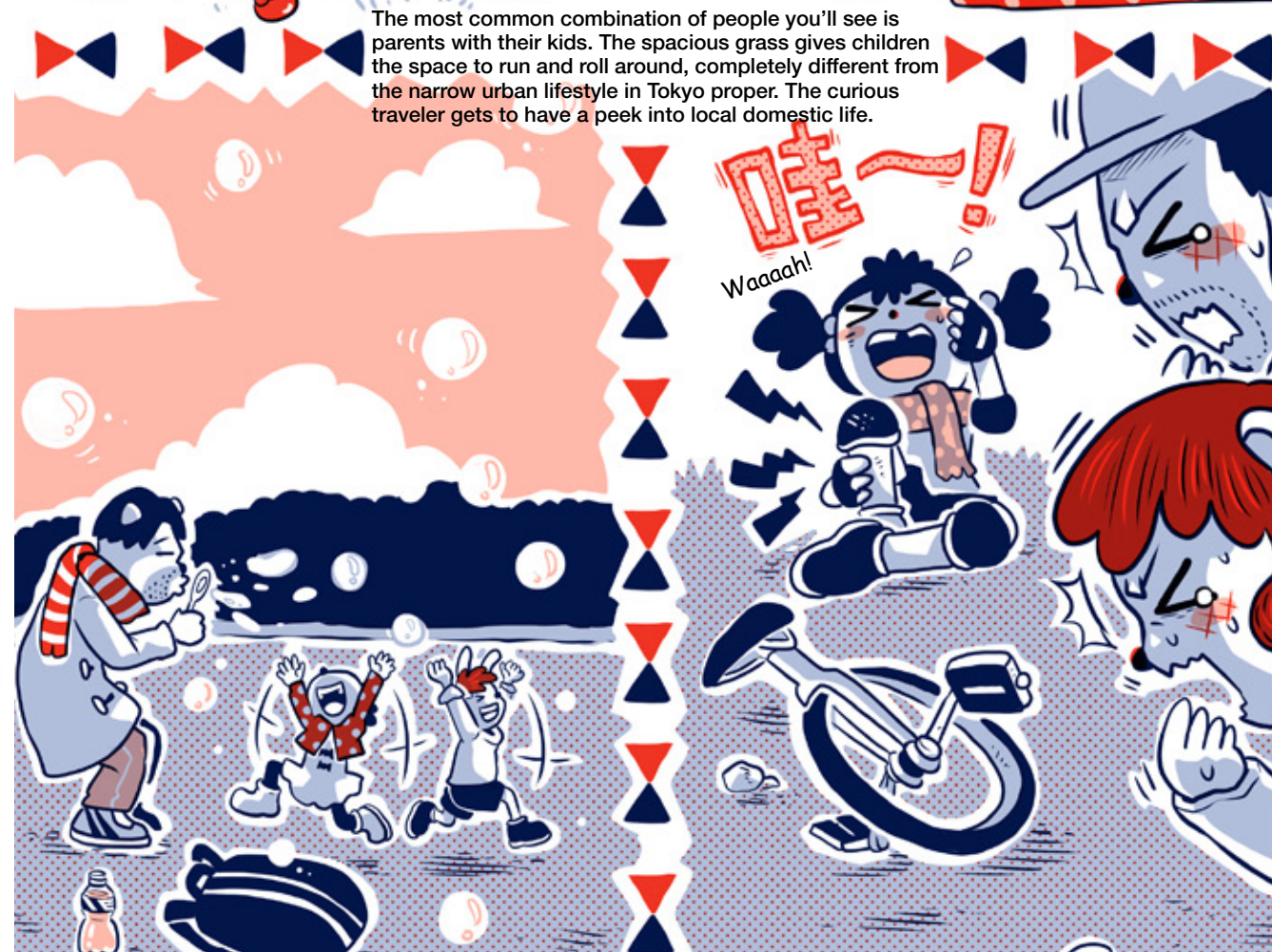
## 袋棍球 LACROSSE

### Lacrosse

A fun sport that was imported to Japan from North America and Europe. You usually see it in the form of two people practicing passing in the park, wearing and carrying a lot of equipment that you don't otherwise often see in East Asia. Based on the amount of protective gear, an actual game must involve a lot of brutal contact! \*Shivers\*



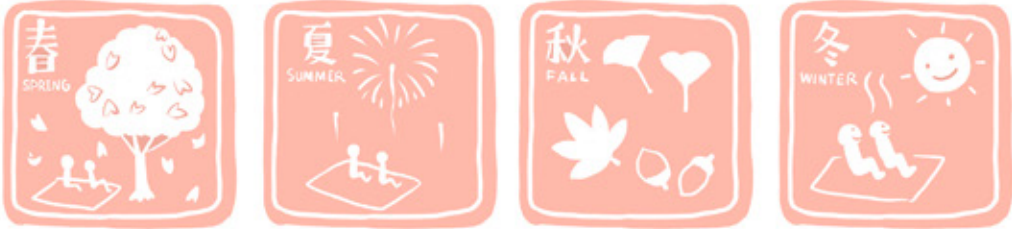
The most common combination of people you'll see is parents with their kids. The spacious grass gives children the space to run and roll around, completely different from the narrow urban lifestyle in Tokyo proper. The curious traveler gets to have a peek into local domestic life.





The best activity for the riverside parks is picnicking! With a beautiful view of nature and well-maintained sites, this is a treasured spot for all who are willing to make the trek! CrystalCherry and I discovered this almost by accident when we went to see the fireworks. As it turns out, food tastes better when eaten outdoors, and it's weirdly nice to drop a crumb on the grass and not have to pick it up! Also, the temperate climate makes most of the year picnic-appropriate.

# PICNIC



There's no place like home! Whenever you venture out to the river, how much and what to pack becomes a tricky question. After all, you'll have to carry it some distance! Let's take a look at some common types:

## 青春嚐鮮

Young and Fresh



## 擺拍夢幻

Photogenic and Dreamy



## 奇鯪流®

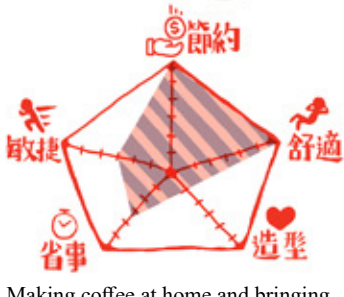
Mickeyman Style



Going on a spontaneous date without any planning or prepping is the prerogative of the young! In their bags, you'll only find lip balm and a portable charger. They usually leave as soon as they finish their fast food.



Woven baskets and gingham cloths are a must, plus a few plushies. The gadgets and food are not only aesthetic but also meticulously arranged. It takes a lot of manpower to transport everything, but the perfectly shot is worth the work!



Making coffee at home and bringing it in a thermos is always best (take it from a veteran)! Picnicking is all about timing! Buying bento and sweets from a nearby supermarket takes less time and offers more variety! Biking means no extra transportation costs!

## What's in Mickeyman's Backpack? Featuring other picnic-related goods!







# Three Unmarried Women

## 三個不結婚的女人

**Author:** Ri Shia Zao **Illustrator:** Ri Shia Zao **Publisher:** Gamania Digital Entertainment

**Date:** 01/2024 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

192 pages | 23 x 14.8cm **Volume:** 1 (On going)

**Adaptations:** Musical, Film **BFT2.0 Translator:** Michelle Kuo

The latest work by popular manga artist Ri Shia Zao, serialized on Instagram and MOJOIN since 2022, challenges the outdated notion that singlehood equates to unhappiness. Upon its release, it immediately sparked enthusiastic discussions across social media.

The story follows three sisters, each with vastly different personalities, living under the same roof: the eldest, a pragmatic and charismatic police officer; the second, a sharp-tongued beauty YouTuber and influencer; and the youngest, a drama student and BL fangirl.

This episodic comedy explores their lives as they juggle careers, hobbies, and family, with romance and marriage notably absent. Featuring razor-sharp dialogue and biting critiques of traditional views on marriage and family, the manga strikes a perfect balance between humor and emotional depth.

It vividly portrays the single life, where love for work, money, hobbies, family, and friends takes center stage—capturing a realistic perspective without being overly sentimental.



Author **Ri Shia Zao**

Ri Shia Zao is a talented manga artist known for crafting relatable life stories through the lens of modern women. Her serialized works on online platforms, such as *Passing but Not*, *Splendid Era*, and *Three Unmarried Women*, have sparked significant discussions across the web. Her published works include *Paper Moon* (2022), *Splendid Era* (2021), *Like the Passing but Not* (2019), *Pili Theatre – The Substitute* (2017), and *The Prime Numbers Under the Roof – NO MORE* (2014–2015). She was nominated for the Best New Talent Award at the 6th Golden Comic Awards in 2014.

# Great! Times Have Really Progressed: Reading *Three Unmarried Women*

by Xiaole Wu  
(originally published on Okapi)

Ri Shia Zao's *Three Unmarried Women* has been a fascinating read for me. The intriguing theme, clean lines, and subtle color tones made it impossible to put down. The three Wang sisters are introduced beautifully: the eldest, Sirong Wang, is a practical grassroots police officer; the second, Sitong Wang, is a straightforward, sharp-tongued beauty YouTuber; and the youngest, Siyu Wang, is a drama student and a big fan of BL (boys' love). No matter how picky a reader is, they'll surely find a character to connect with among these distinct personalities. I couldn't help but wonder: How many versions of myself can I live out in the future?

One thing that stood out to me was how "time" plays a significant role in this work. It's not just one protagonist who isn't interested in marriage—all three of them share this disinterest. What's interesting is that Ri Shia Zao doesn't spend much time explaining their reasons for not wanting to marry. Instead, she presents the vibrant, active lives of the three sisters, occasionally revealing their witty and logical critiques of love and marriage. After reading some chapters, I started to grasp the core idea: Why does society assume everyone wants love, marriage, and children? Especially women—many Taiwanese girls have probably heard the phrase, "Be careful, or

you won't get married." From a young age, girls are often told they can't live solely for themselves—they must live for someone else. If they dare to respond with, "I don't care if I don't marry," the older generation might explode in anger, retorting, "How could you not want to get married?"

It's a bit like eating hotpot. An adult might silently add taro to your bowl, and when you complain, they dismiss it with, "How could anyone not like taro? You just haven't had good taro." In life, there's always some form of egocentrism—whether it's about avoiding taro or skipping cilantro.

Our ideas about life are often cautious and narrow. Some find comfort in this, but for many, it only brings anxiety. In this context, I see Ri Shia Zao's delicate and gentle approach. The three sisters' journey of not marrying is portrayed as calm and joyful. In traditional works where female protagonists aren't interested in love or marriage, they often find themselves in situations where they must repeatedly explain "why," to avoid being seen as strange. These reasons often fall into clichés—bad luck with relationships or witnessing parental discord. Ri Shia Zao doesn't follow this route. The three sisters are confident in understanding themselves and marriage, and naturally, they declare their unwillingness. Even with a harmonious family, they don't feel the need to live the same life.

The theme of "not marrying," once seen as a "crisis," gradually transforms into a "preference." Instead of dwelling

on why they choose not to marry, the story shifts its focus to the question, "So, what's next?" Through the lives of the three sisters, we get a behind-the-scenes look at the daily grind of a police officer, the quirks of a YouTuber, and the everyday moments of a drama student. Even the supporting characters are richly developed, each bringing their own little universes to life. The humor is nonstop—like popping candy—and will keep you laughing throughout. A word of caution: avoid reading this comic while eating noodles; you might laugh so hard that noodles come out of your nose!

Miranda from *Sex and the City* once said, "How did it happen that four such smart women have nothing to talk about but boyfriends?" Midway through this comic, I felt a bit sentimental—how wonderful it is that times have really changed. Women can gather and talk about much more than boyfriends. Their lives are full of stories to share with each other and the readers.

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

*Wu Xiaole, an author based in Taichung, enjoys parrots and is a fan of soul games. She is known for her works such as On Children, The Privileged, and Everything She Fails to Achieve. In 2023, she won First Prize for "Most Popular Author of the Year" at the Readmoo Annual Chinese Language Awards for Everything She Fails to Achieve.*



1



Ever since she was young, my second sister has been pursued endlessly by men.

But she doesn't fall in love. She only has casual sex and no regular partners.



No matter how much you warn them,

they still end up with broken hearts.

To be honest, I think it's a good thing she doesn't fall in love.



.....

She often says outrageous things.

The reason she doesn't want to get married is...

My sister is extremely narcissistic.

Your skin condition is terrible. I'll give you some skincare products I received.



Studies show single people live longer.

I want to live a long life—100 years.

**PURELY FOR HEALTH REASONS**

2



I often wonder,

why do couples have the illusion that their partners are popular?

I used to have a male colleague who was nice to me.

His girlfriend got angry and told me to keep my distance.



I don't understand why she went to you.

She should have dealt with her boyfriend instead.



I wasn't hurt for the reason you think.

Besides, Sitong, you'd never take someone who's already taken.

What makes me mad is that she assumed I liked her boyfriend.

What an insult to my taste!



OK, now you're being a bit much.

**I'M NOT HURT—I'M INSULTED!**



3



HER PERSONALITY IS BASIC AND PRAGMATIC

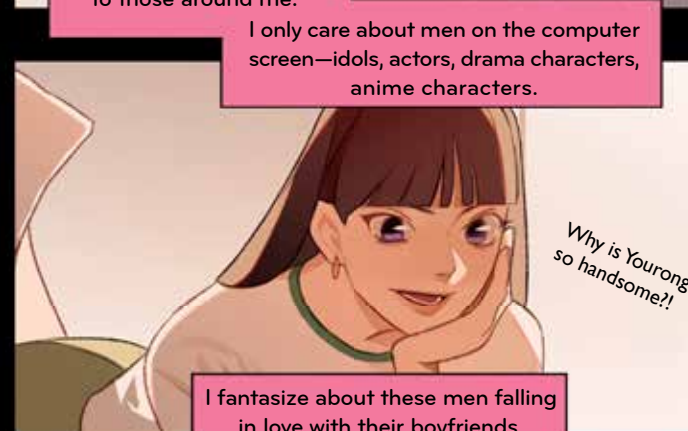
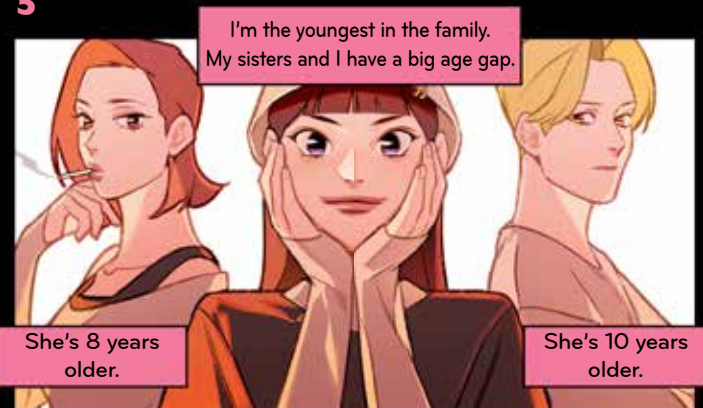
4



IT'S NOT JUST HARD-EARNED MONEY



5

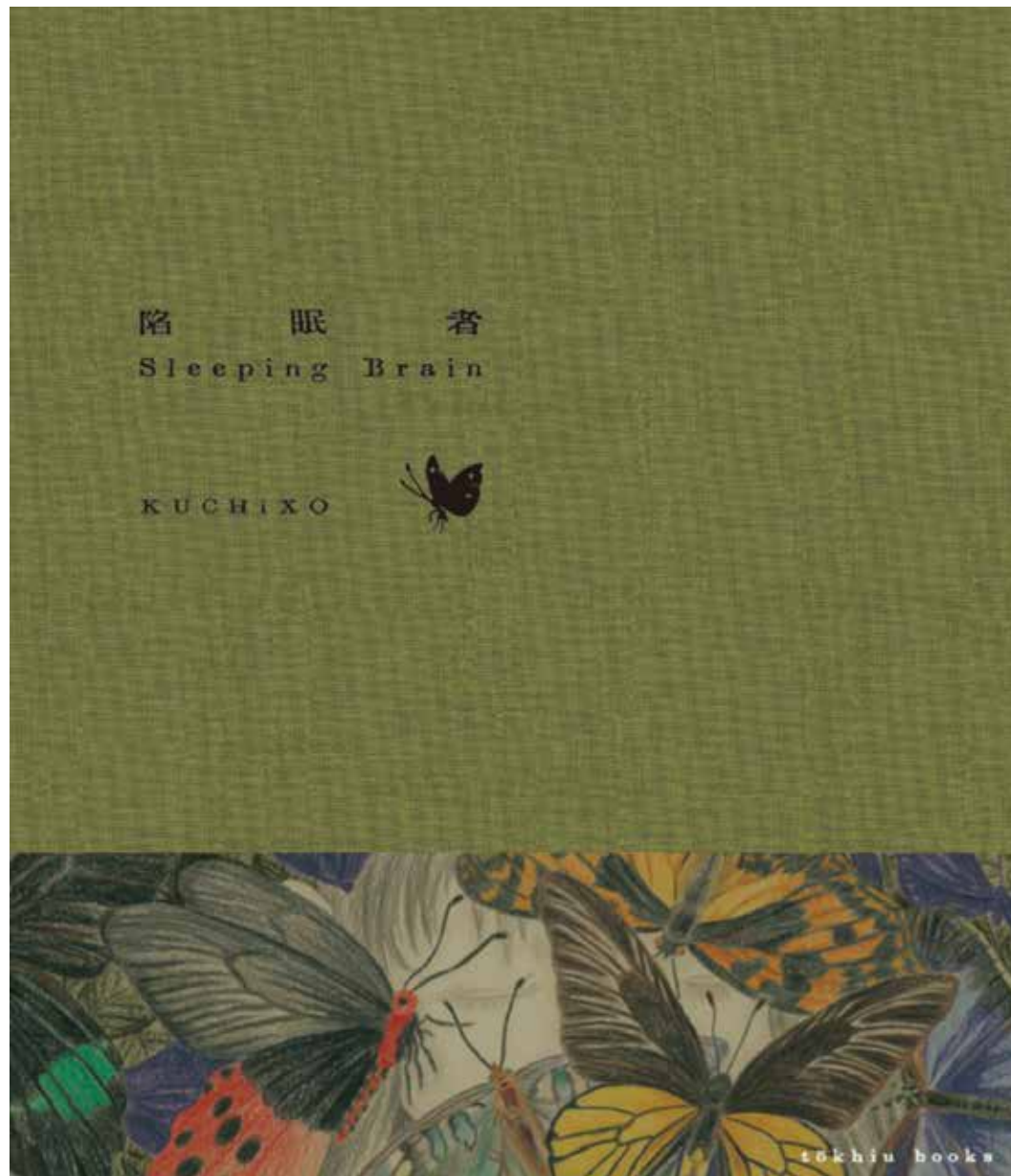


I CAN STAY SINGLE, BUT THE CHARACTERS I LOVE BETTER GET TOGETHER AND STAY TOGETHER!

6



SEE NOTHING, HEAR NOTHING



# Sleeping Brain

## 陷眠者

**Author:** KUCHIXO **Illustrator:** KUCHIXO **Publisher:** Tōkhiu Books

**Date:** 03/2023 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

224 pages | 18 x 21cm **Volume:** 1 (END)

**Awards:** Selected as a Top 32 finalist for the Raymond Leblanc Prize for New Talent at the 2021 Belgian Atomium Comic Strip Awards

**BFT2.0 Translator:** Yichen Hao

This book uses forest butterflies as a powerful symbol of Taiwan's historical past. The artist KUCHIXO's stunning use of colored pencils, childlike sketching, and vibrant silhouettes enhances the story's dreamlike quality.

The narrative follows a Chinese entomologist and a Japanese photographer as they search for butterflies in Taiwan's mountains. Along the way, they become entwined with a mysterious, silent girl who possesses a collection of endangered butterflies. Their journey leads them to confront phantoms from their past, with the story's rich symbolism subtly alluding to Taiwan's White Terror period. The book offers a profound reflection on Taiwan's history.



**Author KUCHIXO**

KUCHIXO, pronounced "Ku-Chi-Ko," is an artist from New Taipei City who splits her time between Taiwan and France. To her, creativity is a process of allowing ideas to linger in the artist's heart, forming a quiet and resonant presence. This slow, organic approach lets concepts take shape naturally over time. Her self-published works include *The Golden Room*, *Do You Realize??* (based on a story by Wei Yu-Hao), and various short stories. She studied comic art in Angoulême and Brussels, and her future projects will explore Taiwanese issues through the lens of fiction.



# White Terror Told through a Fairytale Journey in Search of Butterflies

by Weng Chi-An  
Translated by Jacqueline Leung  
(originally published on Readmoo)

Comics, often referred to as “the ninth art” in Francophone culture, gained significant attention through the 2003 *BD Louvre* exhibition at the Louvre Museum. This concept was later introduced to Taiwan by Dala Publishing Company and became a key point in discussions about Taiwan comics. The “ninth art” label aims to elevate Taiwan comics, which have historically been undervalued, as seen in the 2018 controversy surrounding *The Legacy of Chen Uen: Art, Life and Philosophy* exhibition. The debate over whether Chen Uen’s work deserves to be showcased alongside national treasures is often a disguise for the prejudice against comics as serious art.

However, labeling comics as art goes beyond a polite retort. It acknowledges comics as part of the “palace of art,” allowing them to be collected and appreciated, and gives artists the freedom to create without commercial constraints. Comics, like other art forms, offer infinite possibilities and should not be limited by genre tropes. Graphic novels, in particular, have emerged as a significant avenue for Taiwan comics, shifting from the influence of Japanese manga to more experimental storytelling.

*Sleeping Brain*, published by Tōkhiu Books, is a prime example of Taiwan’s evolving graphic novel scene. Founded

by comic critic Wu Ping-Lu, Tōkhiu Books prioritizes high-quality design, paper, and printing, making *Sleeping Brain* a work of art in itself. The book is like a fine art catalog, disregarding market expectations in its production.

The story follows Gong Wei-Hua, a Chinese entomologist, and Aramura Kiichi, a Japanese photographer, as they search for butterflies in Taiwan’s mountains. Their journey becomes intertwined with a mysterious, silent girl who holds a collection of endangered butterflies, leading them to encounter phantoms from their pasts. The story, rich in symbolism, subtly alludes to Taiwan’s White Terror period.

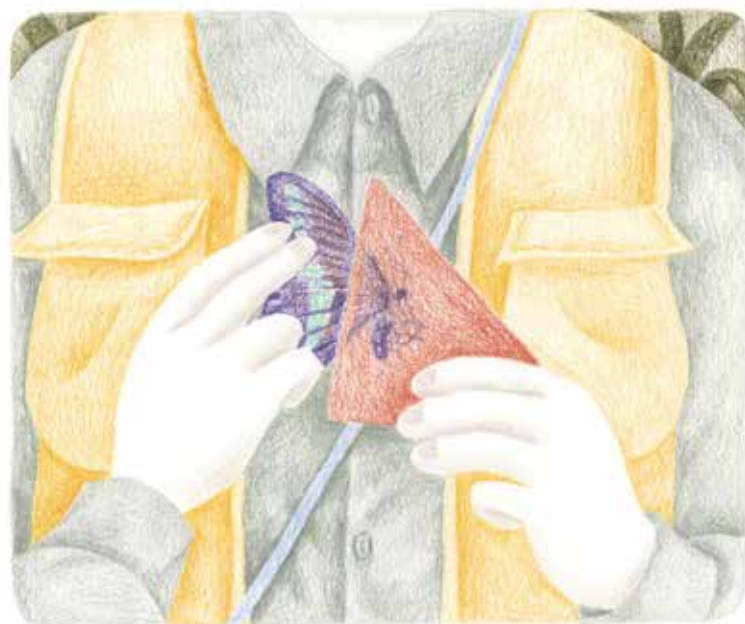
KUCHIXO’s use of color pencils, childlike sketching, and vibrant silhouettes enhances the story’s dreamlike quality. While the book may seem whimsical, it offers a profound reflection on Taiwan’s

history. *Sleeping Brain* challenges readers with its layers of symbolism, providing space for emotional engagement and intellectual reflection, ultimately demonstrating the artistic potential of comics.

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

*Weng Chi-An, as Associate Professor in the Department of History at National Chi Nan University. His expertise lies in the history of modern and contemporary Chinese thought and culture, public history, and digital humanities. Theoretically, he should be focusing on making a living within academia, but most of his time is spent on matters unrelated to his primary field, often followed by regrets for his lack of focus on his main duties.*





But when I look at it,  
I can't help but think ...

... that I won't  
understand what  
true beauty is until  
I touch its wings  
and take possession  
of it.



Minnao,\* Yilan

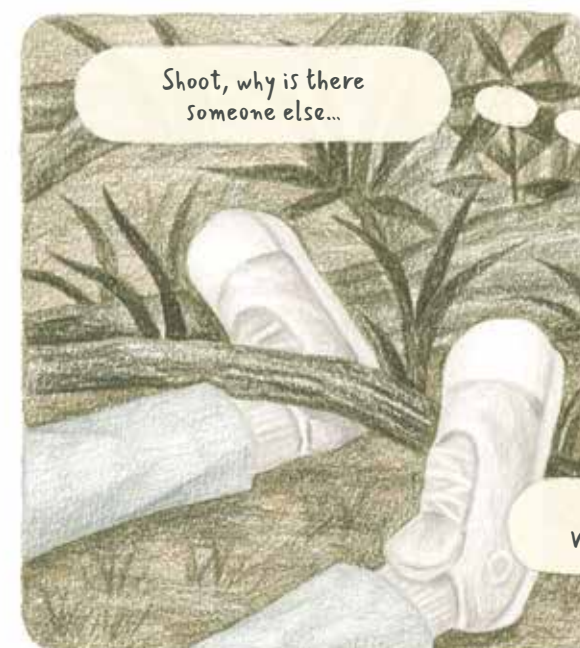
I can't waste any  
more time ...

\*Minnao is the former name of Taiping Mountain, Yilan County.  
It is an Atayal word that means "The forest is lush."

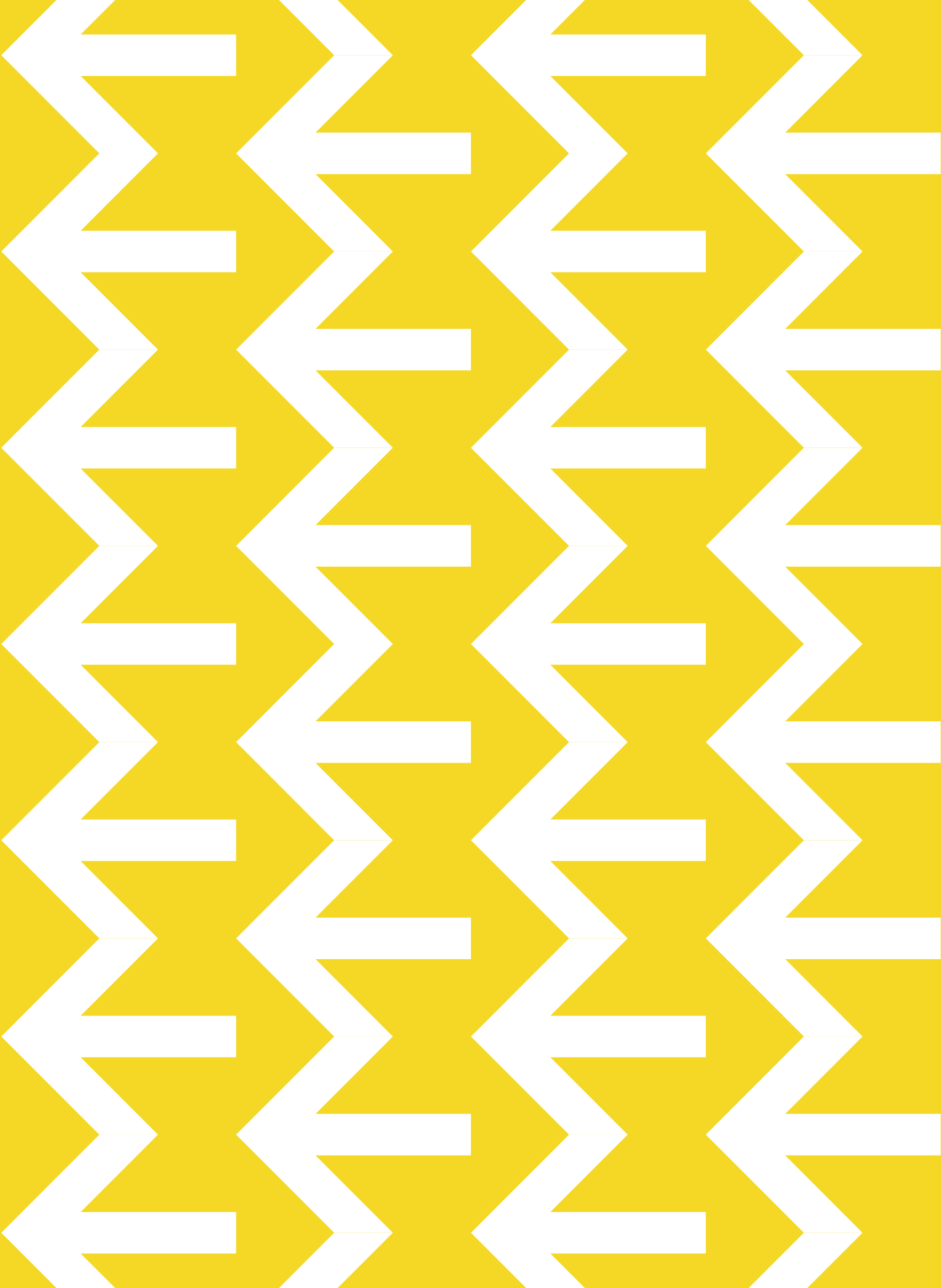








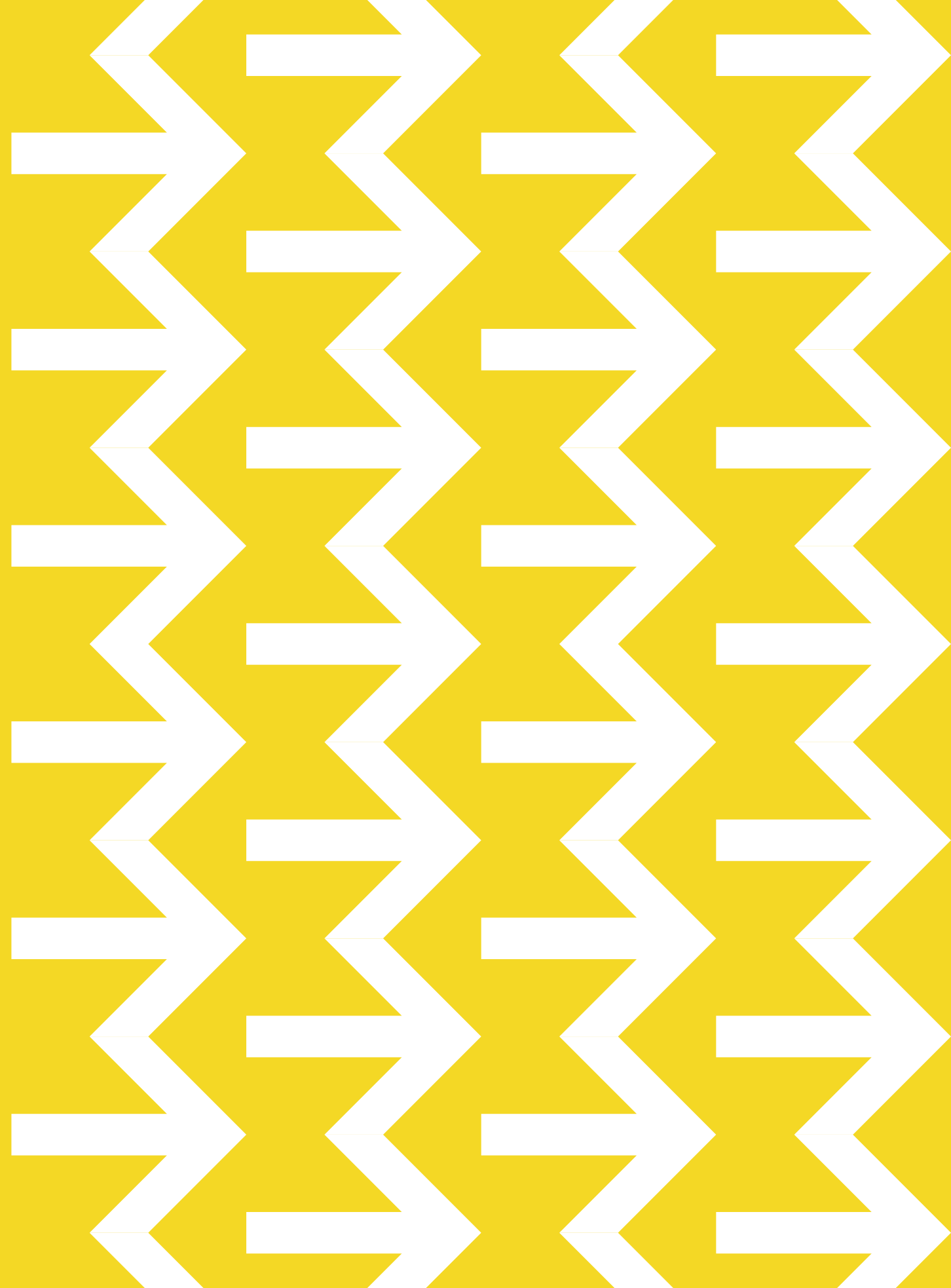




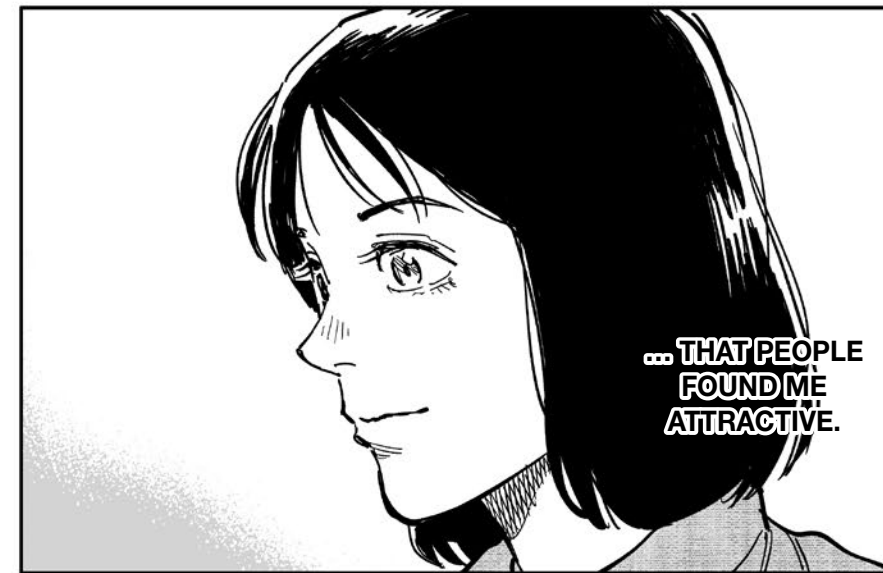
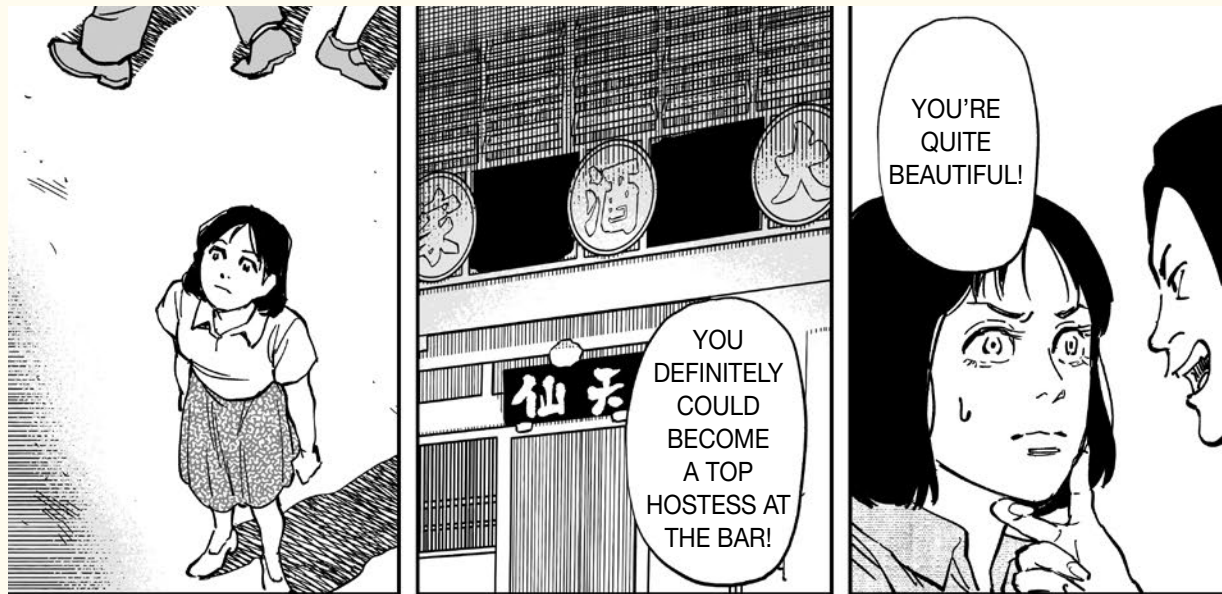
**TO READ THE OTHER  
ARTISTS' WORKS,  
PLEASE GO TO PAGE 168  
AND TURN PAGES  
FROM RIGHT TO LEFT.**

**(THIS IS HOW TAIWANESE COMICS ARE READ.)**

**TO READ THE OTHER  
ARTISTS' WORKS,  
PLEASE GO TO PAGE14  
AND TURN PAGES  
FROM LEFT TO RIGHT.**







ON BOTH MY  
FATHER'S SIDE

AND MY  
MOTHER'S  
SIDE,

I WAS ALWAYS  
A BURDEN.



BUT I STILL  
HADN'T FOUND  
A PLACE WHERE  
I BELONGED.



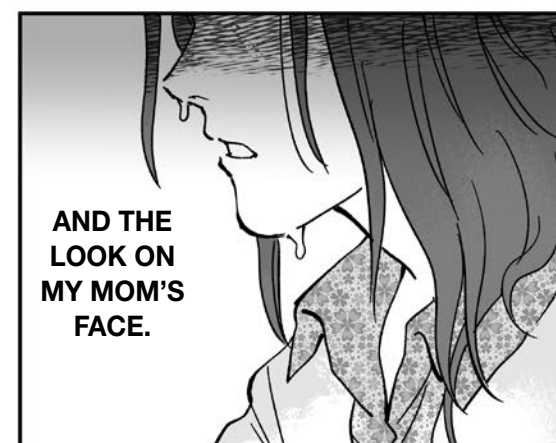




... THAT I WAS  
THE UNWANTED  
ONE.

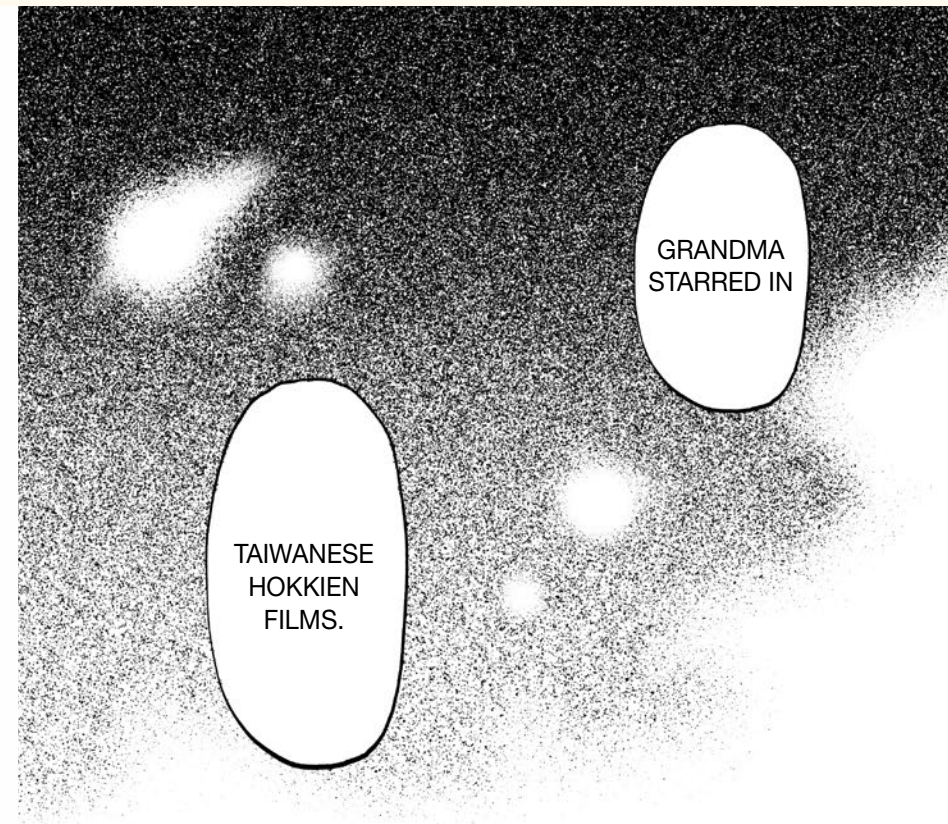
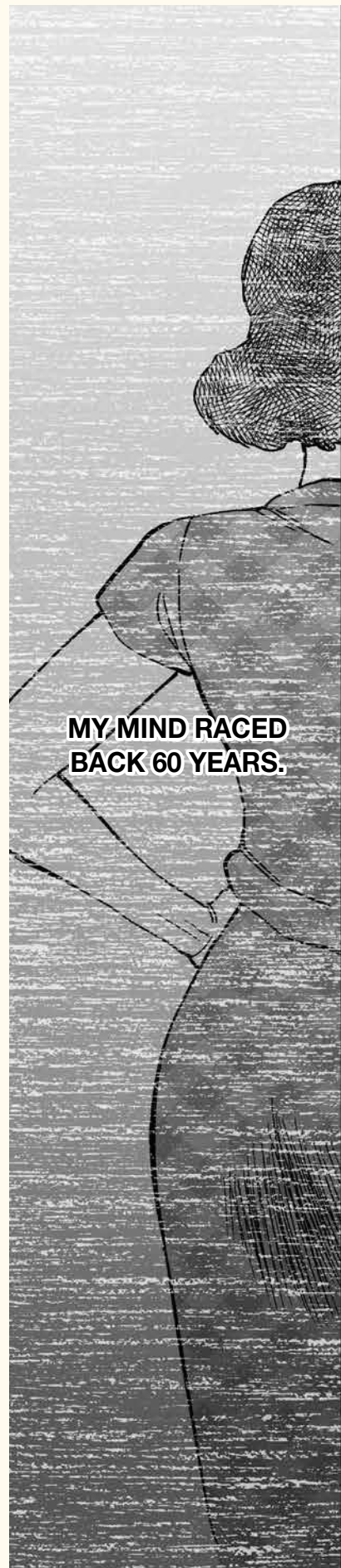


ONLY THEN DID  
I REALIZE...



DON'T  
COME  
NEAR  
OUR  
FAMILY  
AGAIN!







# The Everlasting Beauty: Female Actors and Taiwanese Hokkien Cinema

by Wei Ching Su

In January 1956, Taiwan's first 35mm Hokkien film, *Xue Pinggui and Wang Baochun*, was released. Directed by young returnee director He Jiming, with performances by members of the Mai Liao Gong Le troupe, the film marked the beginning of Taiwan's Hokkien cinema. In line with the tradition of female roles in Taiwanese opera, Liu Meiyang played Xue Pinggui and Wu Biyu played Wang Baochun. These two actresses made the leap from stage to screen, sparking the golden age of Taiwanese Hokkien cinema. Their success highlights the strong connection between Hokkien cinema and Taiwanese opera, with female actors playing a central role.

Later in November 1956, the first Taiwanese Hokkien fashion drama *Rainy Night Flower* was released. This film,

featuring the emerging Zhongsheng troupe, reflected daily life with a focus on realism, as opposed to the stylized movements of traditional opera. Its success led to an influx of talented actors and actresses, who transitioned from stage plays to become film stars, ushering in the first boom of Taiwanese Hokkien cinema.

As the film industry grew, directors and producers sought to develop talent, with notable figures like He Jiming at Huaxing Film Studio recruiting actors like He Yuhua, who became known for her warm and virtuous image. From young girls to elderly women, she appeared in many films. As the Hokkien film industry died, she then transitioned to television.

Lin Boqiu's Yufeng Film Company adopted a distinctive strategy by

integrating film production with actor training, drawing inspiration from Japan's Takarazuka Revue. Their focus was on producing high-quality, culturally rich films, prioritizing fewer releases with greater artistic depth. This approach emphasized women's inner worlds and deepened the portrayal of female characters.

By 1962, Taiwanese Hokkien cinema had overcome early challenges of poor production quality and competition from Japanese imports. The industry transitioned from the traditional studio system to Beitou, embracing a variety of themes and genres. This shift allowed for more diverse and nuanced representations of female characters.

Early Taiwanese Hokkien films often revolved around tragic narratives, with actresses like Bai Lan and Jin Mei portraying rural girls forced to migrate to cities due to family hardships. These stories reflected Taiwan's modernization, juxtaposing rural and urban settings while exploring the transformation of young girls into women.

As the industry evolved, female roles expanded significantly. Strong female protagonists emerged in gangster films, and women spies challenged the traditional male dominance of the spy genre. Even supporting roles gained prominence, with actresses delivering

performances that left lasting impressions on audiences. This evolution showcased the growing depth and complexity of female characters in Taiwanese Hokkien cinema.

If Taiwanese Hokkien cinema were to be revived, it could offer a glimpse into the diversity of female representation in Taiwanese society. Through their identities, relationships, and evolving roles, actresses reflect Taiwan's societal changes, offering new perspectives on the star system and the film industry. The challenge, however, lies in the loss of veteran filmmakers. Preservation and restoration efforts serve as a fight against time, aiming to safeguard the invaluable youth and contributions of these actresses to Taiwanese Hokkien cinema.

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

*Wei Ching Su is a freelance film critic with a Master's degree in Animation Art and Image Aesthetics from Tainan National University of the Arts. She has participated in film festival work, including the Kaohsiung Film Festival and the Cross-Strait Film Festival. Additionally, she has served as a specialized writer and lecturer for the National Center for Film and Audio-Visual Culture.*





# Memories of an Actress

## 女伶回憶錄

**Author:** Chien Chia-Cheng **Illustrator:** Chien Chia-Cheng **Publisher:** Gaea Books

**Date:** 02/2023 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

218 pages | 14.8 x 21cm **Volume:** 1 (END)

**BFT2.0 Translator:** Michael Kearney

In collaboration with the Taiwan Film and Audiovisual Institute, Golden Comic Awards winner Jason Chien brings the vibrant world of 1960s Taiwanese cinema to life through the eyes of actress Bai Hua. With rich detail, the story captures the filming environment, popular culture, and artistry of the era. It highlights both the dazzling heights and the inevitable decline of Taiwanese cinema, intertwined with the triumphs and struggles of Bai Hua's personal journey.



## Author **Chien Chia-Cheng**

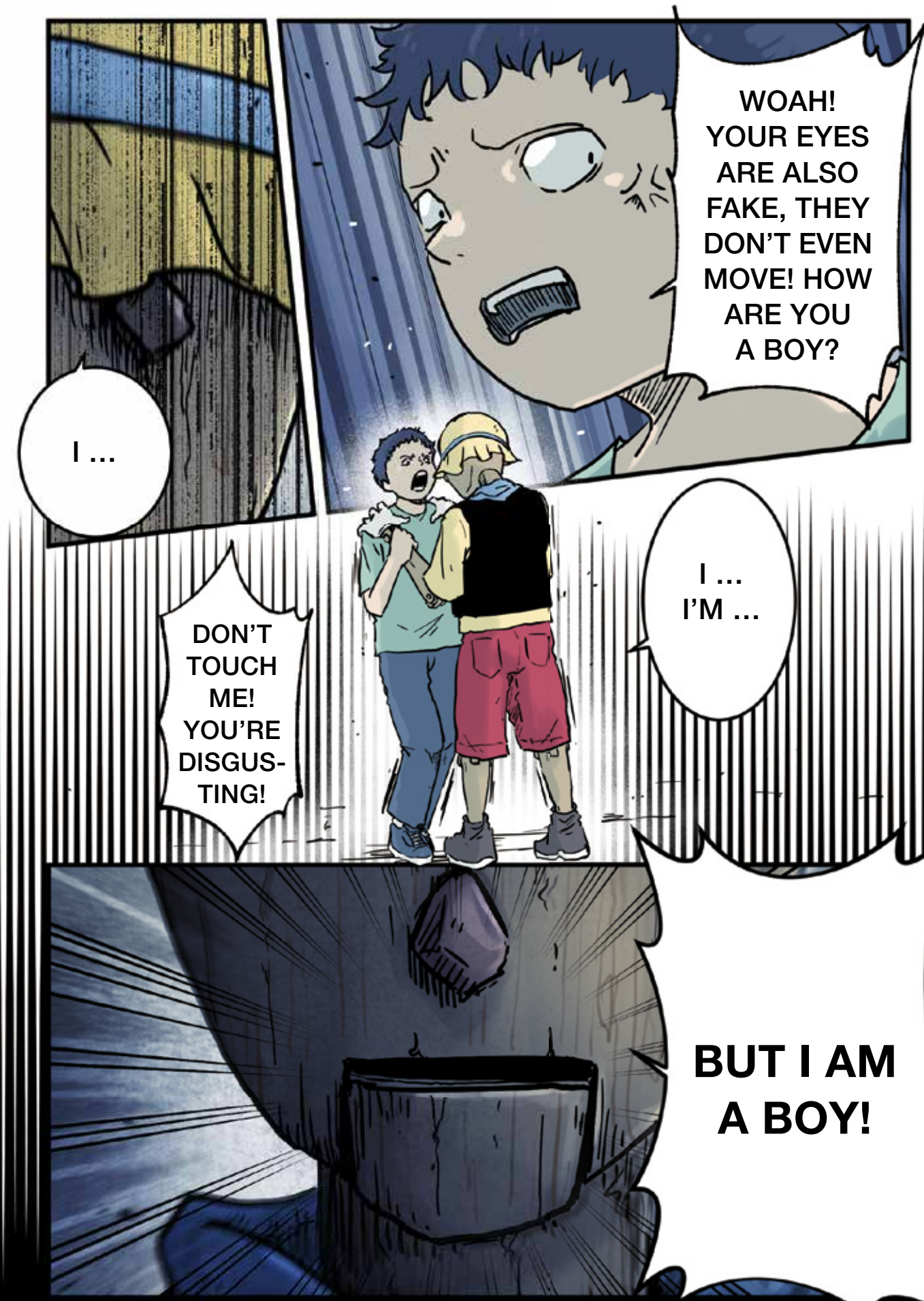
Chien Chia-Cheng's *Wind Chaser Under the Blue Sky* won the Grand Prize at the 17th Japan International Manga Award in 2023. Chien has worked as a lead artist on comics about railways, finance, and World War II, as well as storyboards for advertisements and animation, and novel illustrations. His comic works include *Time Train*, *Alishan Railway Mysteries*, *Ms. Jiang*, *Have You Ever Been in Love?*, *Battlefield Communications*, and *Seven Dreams of the Louvre*. His illustrations for novels include *Howl of the Wolf*, *Other Dreams*, *Fight Chess King: Winning Moves*, and *Fight Chess King: Ghost Moves*. *Time Train* and *Back Street Dusk* sold rights in Arabic, while *The Movie Painter* sold rights in Russian. In 2016, works from *Seven Dreams of the Louvre* were exhibited at the Beijing Normal University Art Museum. In 2013, *Time Train* won the Best General Comic Award at the 4th Golden Comic Awards from the Ministry of Culture.





HE'S A  
MONSTER!!!

AHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!



WOAH!  
YOUR EYES  
ARE ALSO  
FAKE, THEY  
DON'T EVEN  
MOVE! HOW  
ARE YOU  
A BOY?

I ...

DON'T  
TOUCH  
ME!  
YOU'RE  
DISGUS-  
TING!

I ...  
I'M ...

BUT I AM  
A BOY!





BUT YOU  
AREN'T  
HUMAN  
EITHER!

WHAT ...  
WHAT ARE  
YOU TALKING  
ABOUT ...  
HOW AM I A  
MONSTER?



I'M...

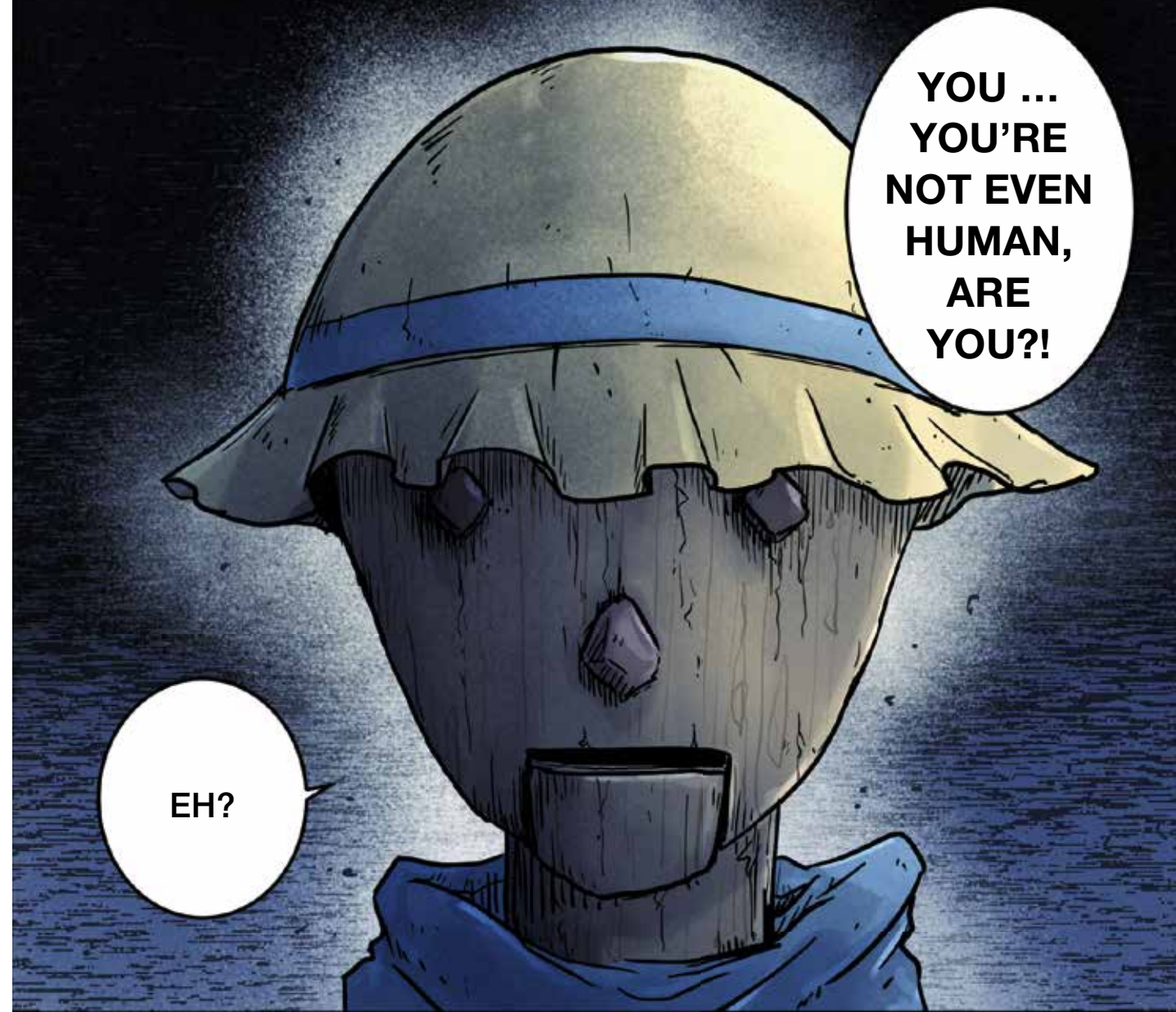
WHY  
DO YOU  
PRETEND  
TO BE  
A BOY?

YOU LOOK  
LIKE A BIG  
BLOCK OF  
WOOD.



I HAVE  
TWO  
HANDS AND  
TWO FEET,  
JUST LIKE  
YOU ALL  
...

LOOK!

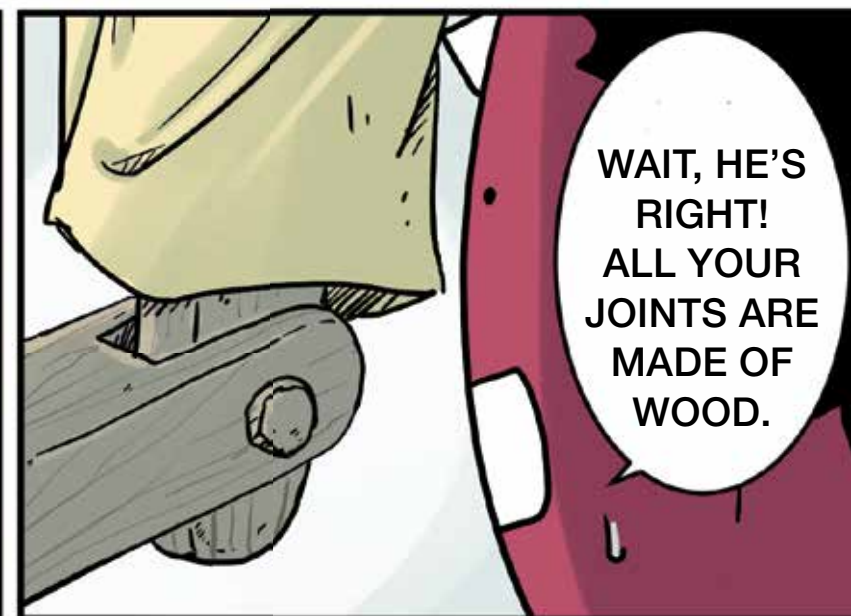


YOU ...  
YOU'RE  
NOT EVEN  
HUMAN,  
ARE  
YOU?!

EH?

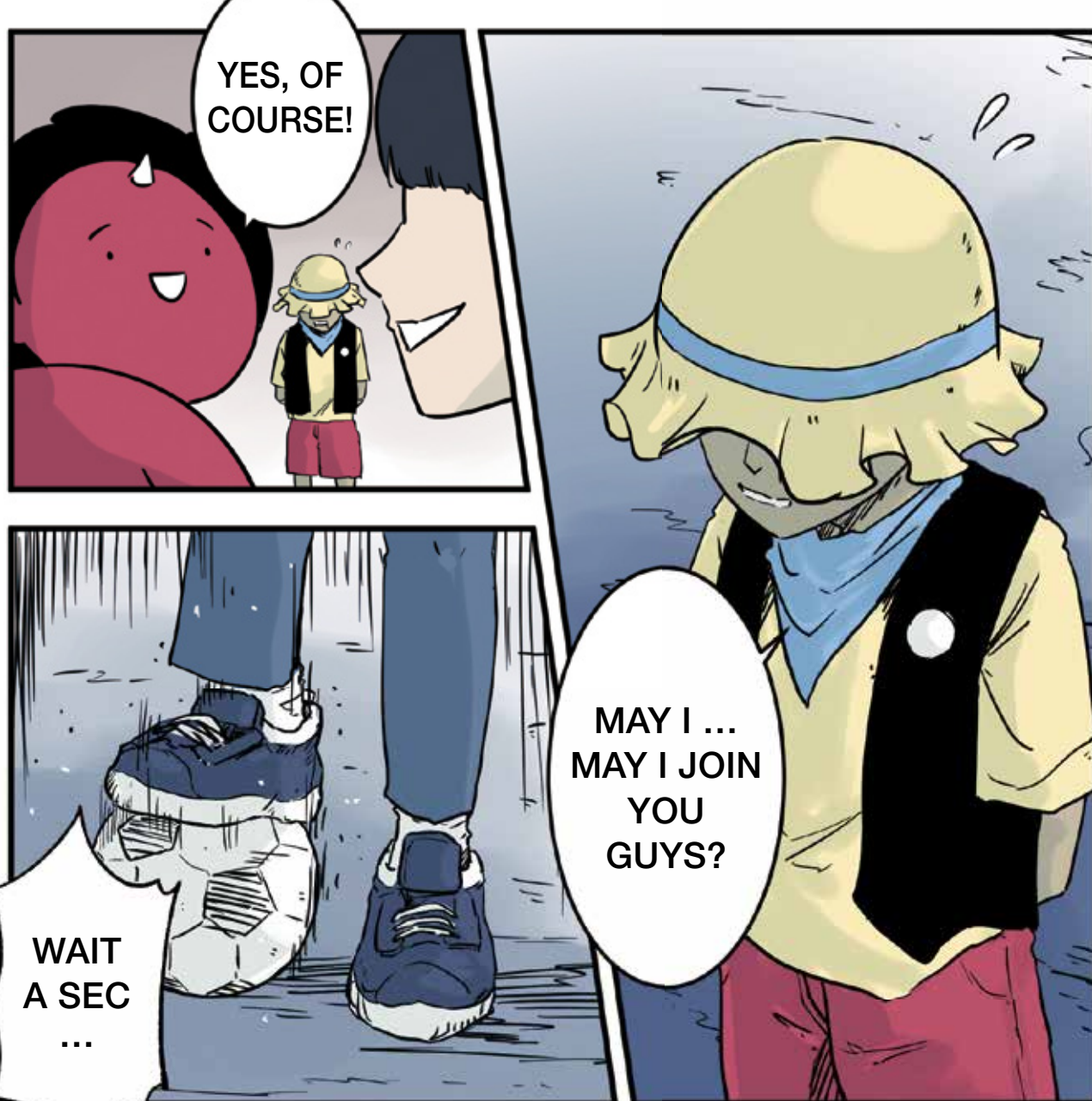


ARE YOU  
A  
MONSTER?



WAIT, HE'S  
RIGHT!  
ALL YOUR  
JOINTS ARE  
MADE OF  
WOOD.







# Shifting Between the Creepy and the Hilarious: A Review of *The Black Comedy: Fairy Tale Edition*

by Tzu Ning Huang

With a red little monster as its main character, *The Black Comedy: Fairy Tale Edition* tells one terrifying story after another. Created by Aman, who calls himself a horror graphic writer, this series started with short graphic stories. Though he's somewhat timid, Aman often gets startled by the smallest sound, and it is precisely this trait that makes his horror tales stand out. His stories are often filled with dramatic and entertaining twists, where a tense and frightening moment is suddenly interrupted by a surprising, humorous turn, causing readers to burst into laughter.

*The Black Comedy: Fairy Tale Edition* is a collection of comics created by Aman, where he reinterprets many

classic tales from both ancient and modern times. These stories include, but are not limited to, various campus ghost stories and legendary myths. The latest installment, *The Black Comedy: Fairy Tale Edition*, draws inspiration from famous fairy tales that are familiar to many, such as *The Frog Prince*, *Rapunzel*, and *Momotaro*. These fairy tales serve as the skeleton of the stories, with Aman adding a touch of horror and humor to flesh them out.

Fairy tales are often sweet and magical, typically with happy endings, but are these stories really suitable for all ages? Could there be elements within these tales that, if examined more closely, would evoke a sense of unease? For

instance, is Momotaro really just a peach, or is he a person? What if the Frog Prince never breaks the curse and remains a frog forever? Aman's stories go beyond simple supernatural thrills or comedic entertainment. They challenge the conventional way of thinking and spark the imagination. Do stories always have to follow one narrative style? How many absurdities are hidden in so-called classic texts? Are the protagonists truly as kind-hearted and pure as they seem?

By using just a few pages, Aman manages to keep the tension in his stories while offering diverse perspectives. His works are easy to read yet remain groundbreaking and full of creative thought. Through this innovative approach, he plays with the boundaries of horror and comedy, blending them in unexpected ways.

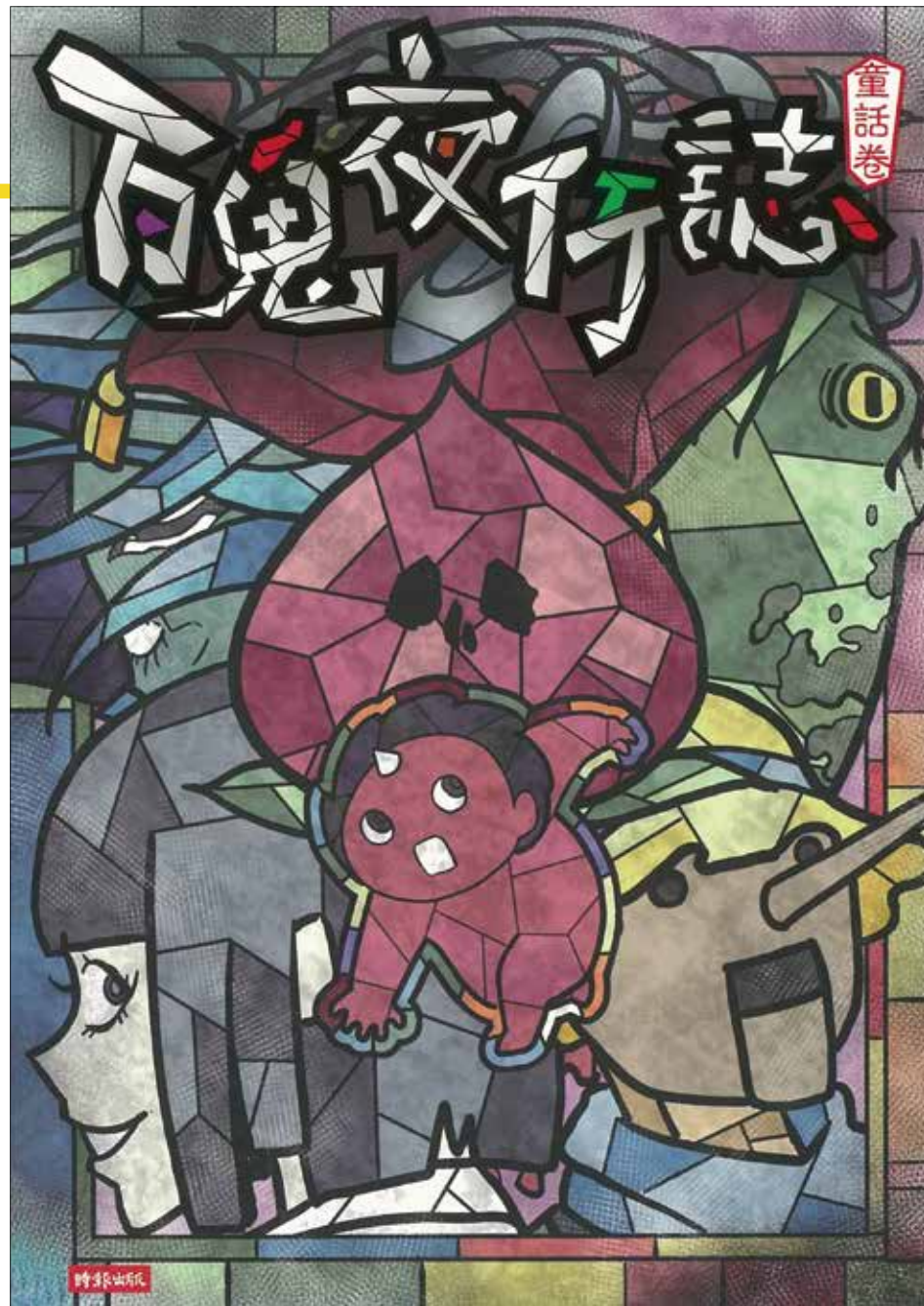
The genius of Aman's work lies in his ability to turn familiar fairy tales into something much more thought-provoking. For example, in *The Frog Prince*, he delves deeper into the consequences of the curse not being broken, asking what would happen if the prince never turned back into a human. In *Momotaro*, he questions the essence of the main character—is he merely a peach, or something more? These twists are not merely for shock value; they serve to poke fun at the way we have been conditioned to view these classic stories, urging

readers to think more critically about them.

What Aman's *The Black Comedy: Fairy Tale Edition* does best is to challenge our assumptions about the stories we know so well. The characters in these tales, usually portrayed as innocent or morally good, are given more depth. Their flaws and the darker sides of their stories are brought to the forefront, making us reconsider what we once accepted as truth. It is a playful yet insightful deconstruction of traditional fairy tales, where horror and humor work together to unveil the hidden complexities of the narratives.

This collection is not just a reimagining of fairy tales—it is a commentary on how we view stories, both old and new. Aman's playful exploration of these tales allows readers to question what we consider to be “classic,” urging us to look deeper and ask more questions. Through his mix of horror and humor, he manages to create an engaging work that remains fresh, creative, and thought-provoking, offering something new in each reading.

*Tzu Ning Huang is an editorial consultant. She loves to listen and tell stories, enjoys conversations and encounters with others, and appreciates time alone. She also loves to use photography and writing to explore the world.*



# The Black Comedy: Fairy Tale Edition

## 百鬼夜行誌【童話卷】

**Author:** Aman **Illustrator:** Aman **Publisher:** China Times

**Date:** 08/2023 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

144 pages | 14.8 x 21cm **Volume:** 1 (END)

**BFT2.0 Translator:** Yichen Hao

This book offers a fresh, eerie twist on classic fairy tales, turning familiar narratives upside down with an air of the uncanny. A half-bodied mermaid, a wooden puppet that moves on its own, a mirror with a human face—each story begins with a sense of unease, drawing readers into Aman's signature blend of horror and humor.

*The Black Comedy: Fairy Tale Edition* is a collection of Aman's comics, reinterpreting well-known tales from both ancient and modern folklore, including campus ghost stories and legendary myths. In this latest installment, Aman draws inspiration from beloved fairy tales such as *Pinocchio*, *The Frog Prince*, *Rapunzel*, and *Momotaro*, using them as the foundation for his darkly humorous and haunting reimaginings.



Author **Aman**

Aman calls himself a "horror graphic writer" but sees himself as gentle at heart. His motto, "Horror and comedy are only a hair's breadth apart," reflects his unique storytelling approach. He believes that with the right balance of text and illustration, even the most lighthearted, humorous drawings can transform into terrifying scenes, while the scariest moments can be delivered in a way that makes readers burst into laughter.





AND SPEAKING OF WHICH, WHAT EXACTLY ARE YOU AND YU-TING...



A MARRIED WOMAN...



!?



HOW DID YOU KNOW THE ADDRESS FOR THIS PLACE?



WHAT...

RIDICULOUS.

IT'S YOU! WHY WOULD YOU JUST SHOW UP HERE? YU-TING ASKED YOU TO COME, DIDN'T SHE!





KUN-FAN!  
HOW ARE  
YOU...

THEN  
WHAT  
DOES THAT  
MAKE ME?  
THE OTHER  
MAN?!

MISS, THIS  
ISN'T A BAR.  
YU-TING  
JUST  
SAID IT...  
ARE THEY  
ACTUALLY  
A MARRIED  
COUPLE?

BOSS, CRACK  
OPEN A BOTTLE OF  
DAIMORE FOR ME!



DIDN'T  
YOU SAY  
YOU HAD  
TO WORK  
OVERTIME...

...KUN-  
FAN?

KUN-  
FAN AND  
YU-TING  
KNOW  
EACH  
OTHER?

HUH?

THAT  
MAKES  
TWO OF  
US.

I'M IN  
SUCH  
A FOUL  
MOOD  
NOW!

UNBELIEVABLE!  
I'M NOT HAVING  
A KID BY  
MYSELF, YOU  
KNOW?



SHE'S  
A MARRIED  
WOMAN,  
YOU GOT  
THAT?

HUH?

HOW  
ARE YOU  
INVOLVED  
WITH HER?



IT CAN'T  
BE...

HE HAD  
TO WORK  
OVERTIME  
ON OUR  
ANNIVERSARY  
...

I HAVE  
TO WORK  
OVERTIME  
THAT  
DAY...

YOU  
DON'T  
SEEM TO  
KNOW  
HIM THAT  
WELL...

WHAT'S  
THIS ABOUT  
GETTING  
P-PREGNANT  
?

I HAVEN'T  
BEEN  
TRICKED,  
HAVE I...

HOW DO  
THEY  
KNOW  
EACH  
OTHER?





WHAT  
A COINCIDENCE,  
DIRECTOR WU.

WHAT  
BRINGS  
YOU HERE?



DON'T...  
DON'T  
COME OVER  
HERE!  
SNAP OUT  
OF IT!

COME ON,  
DON'T BE  
SHY—

ARE YOU  
ALONE? MY  
HUSBAND  
ISN'T HOME  
TODAY!

AIYA,  
HANDSOME  
GUY!

THIS  
SENSE OF  
COERCION  
FEELS  
FAMILIAR...

WEREN'T  
YOU GOING  
TO GIVE UP  
DRINKING  
SO YOU  
COULD GET  
PREGNANT?

I'M BUSY  
DOING  
THAT  
RIGHT  
NOW!

WHAT  
ARE YOU  
DOING  
HERE?

WHO  
DOES HE  
THINK HE  
IS?!



# I Love Watching These People Fall in Love!: *On A Two-Faced Couple*

by Tzu Ning Huang

As someone with an uncontrollable fascination for gossip, I can't help but love watching two people develop feelings for each other—building a sweet and subtle attraction, navigating moments of tension, confessing their emotions, and ultimately finding happiness together. While this type of narrative is delightful, it's rare to encounter such moments in real life. That's why experiencing this joy through reading feels all the more special.

In romance-themed comics, characters are often crafted with distinct personalities that create tension and propel the plot, resulting in a “deliciously” charged atmosphere. A defining feature of BL (Boys' Love) culture is its perspective through the female

gaze, where two attractive men fall in love. Within a self-contained worldview, it challenges conventional notions of gender in romance, softening the harsher realities of life while amplifying the sweetness of character interactions. This approach offers a unique and delightful viewing experience, born entirely from an observational standpoint. *A Two-Faced Couple* embraces this logic, delving deeper into the contrasts between its characters' personalities, making it both engaging and memorable.

The story centers on two main characters, Wu You and Chiang Kun-Fan. Wu You comes across as extroverted and socially adept but is emotionally slow and carries a hint of insecurity.

On the other hand, Chiang Kun-Fan seems introverted and well-mannered but is surprisingly active and assertive in relationships. True to the book's title, both characters are “two-faced,” with personalities that sharply contrast their outward appearances. (One thing is certain: both are handsome.) The book's panel layout and overall design draw inspiration from early Japanese shoujo manga. This influence is evident in the smooth flow of dialogues and the gentle, expressive lines of the artwork, making the reading experience fluid and thoroughly enjoyable.

As a reader, it's hard not to voice my inner thoughts as their romantic journey unfolds. “Hurry up and realize you actually love him!” “The possessiveness is terrifying, but he really does love him!” “I'm going to explode from excitement!” These passionate outbursts arise naturally while reading. The true essence of this book lies in these moments of emotional

release. The unrestrained hopes, blessings, and fervent desire for the characters to find happiness make the reading experience deeply immersive. Rooting for the protagonists to achieve a fulfilling, happy ending is a joy that readers can wholeheartedly embrace.

In short, *A Two-Faced Couple* offers a delightful escape, indulging readers in a love story filled with contrasts and unexpected twists. The sweetness of the characters' interactions and the charm of their evolving relationship create a captivating experience. It's a perfect guilty pleasure, leaving readers fully invested in the characters' happiness.

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





Once the center of attention during his school days, Wu You gradually faded into ordinariness as he grew older. Now, he leads the quiet life of a lonely corporate worker, blending into the crowd. One unremarkable day at work, amid the laughter and banter of his colleagues, the conversation shifts to their partners. On his way home, Wu You sees a young woman joyfully reunited with her family. In that fleeting moment, he realizes it might be time to find someone to share his life with.

Despite a history of romantic experiences, no one comes to mind. As Wu You grapples with this unsettling emptiness, his quiet and polite junior colleague, Jiang Kunfan, unexpectedly confesses his feelings to him. Flustered and thinking it's a joke, Wu You dismisses him with hurtful words. Regret quickly sets in, and just as Wu You prepares to apologize, Kunfan's demeanor takes a shocking turn. Seizing Wu You in a forceful kiss, Kunfan passionately declares his intense love, closing the distance between them.

How will Wu You respond to his junior's sudden and overwhelming confession of love? This engaging BL book explores their relationship with vivid detail.

# A Two-Faced Couple

表裡不一與表裡不一

**Artist:** Wu Shi-shan **Illustrator:** Wu Shi-shan **Publisher:** Ever Glory Publishing

**Date:** 02/2024 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

144 pages | 12.7 x 18.2cm **Volume:** 1 (END)

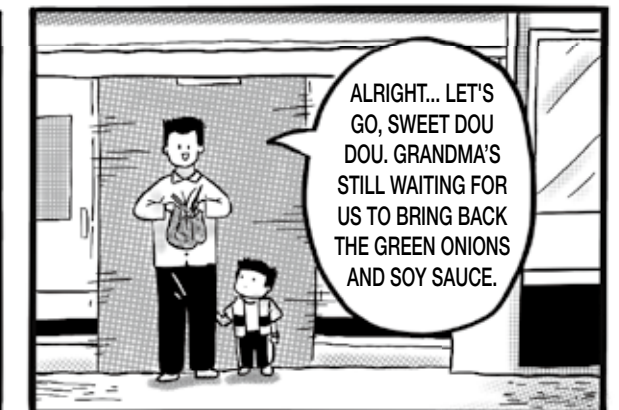
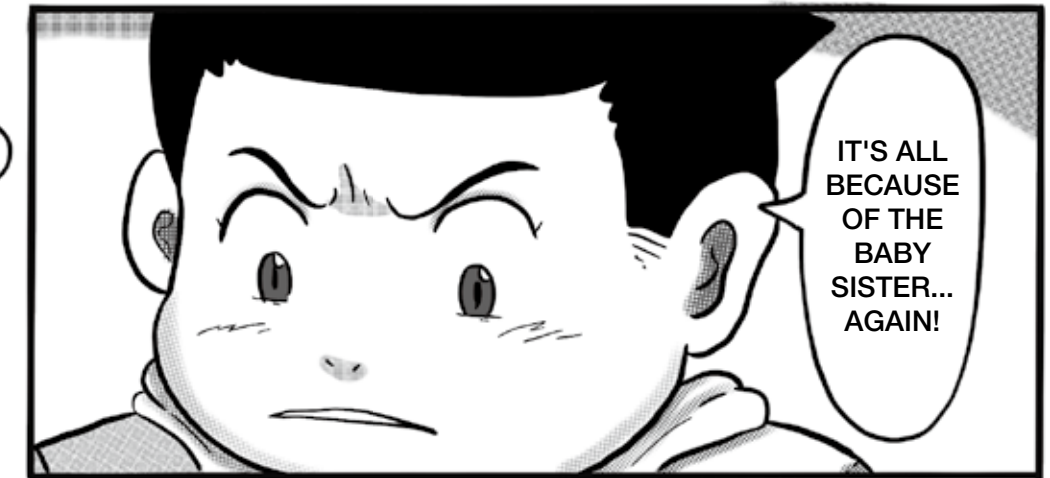
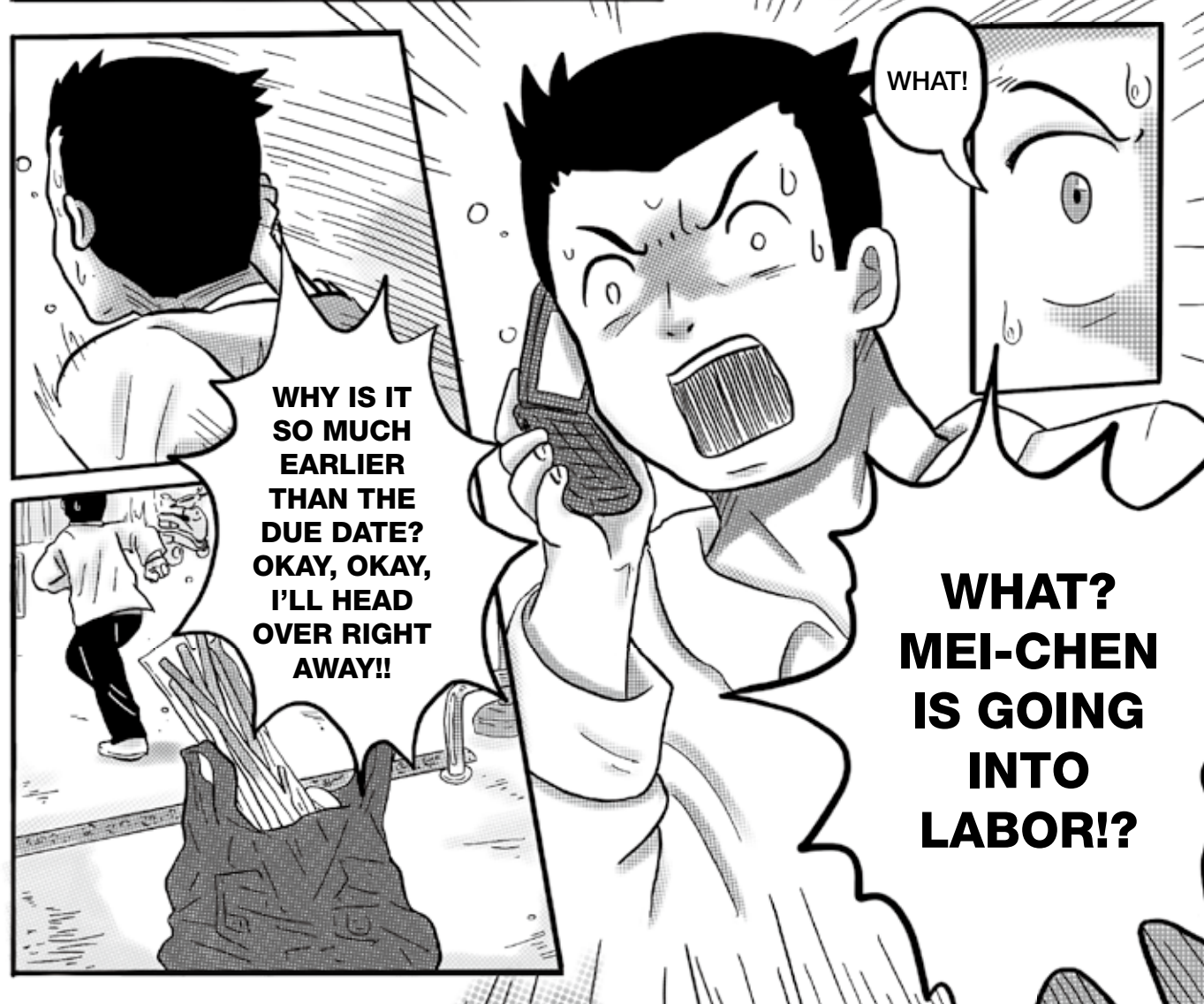
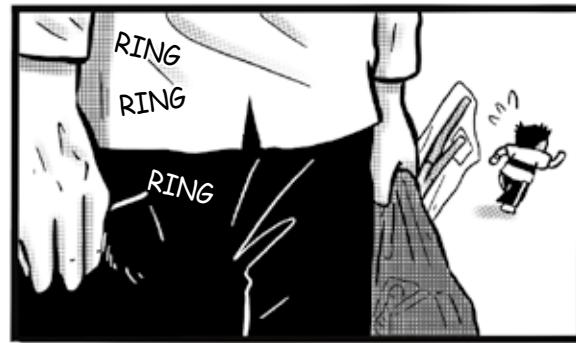
**BFT2.0 Translator:** Mike Fu



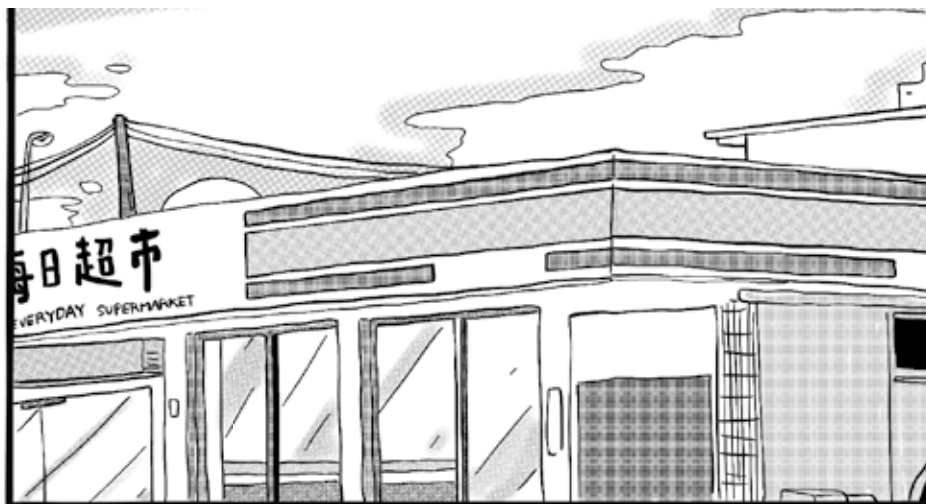
Author **Wu Shi-shan**

Wu Shi-shan, recipient of the Beauty Award in the fourth Ever Glory Original Manga Contest, is renowned for her debut commercial manga. She is celebrated for her ability to craft warm, engaging stories with a precise and expressive art style. Her unique perspective brings depth to character conflicts, contradictions, and emotions, showcasing her exceptional gift for storytelling.









WHAT'S WRONG, DOU DOU? ARE YOU STILL UPSET THAT DADDY DIDN'T TAKE YOU TO THE AMUSEMENT PARK?



WE ALL JUST WANT YOUR LITTLE SISTER TO BE HEALTHY.



COME ON, DON'T BE UPSET. LAST TIME, MOM SUDDENLY DIDN'T FEEL WELL, SO WE COULDN'T GO.



AS PARENTS, YOU BOTH NEED TO SPEND MORE TIME WITH YOUR SON.



MAYBE YOU AND DOU DOU CAN GO BUY THEM TOGETHER AND HAVE A LITTLE CHAT.

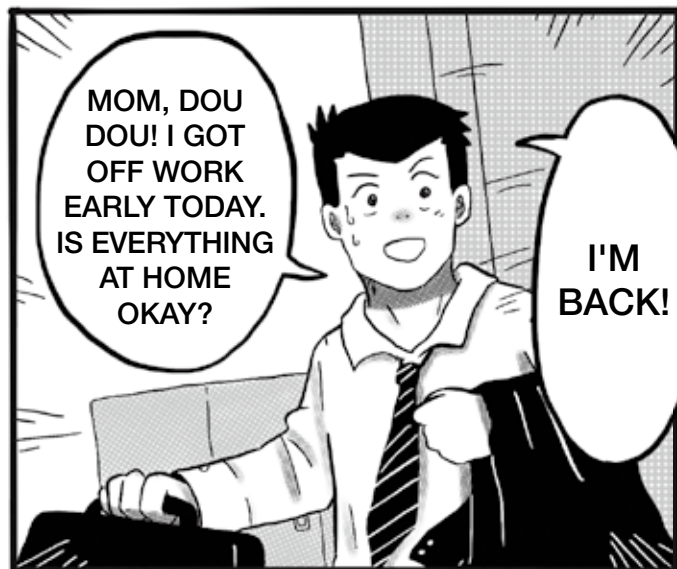
I'M NOT USED TO THAT KIND OF SUPERMARKET!

AH, I JUST REMEMBERED WE'RE OUT OF GREEN ONIONS AND SOY SAUCE IN THE KITCHEN.



I KNOW MEI-CHEN HAS BEEN STRUGGLING WITH HER HEALTH AND THAT YOU'RE BOTH BUSY, BUT DON'T FORGET YOU ALSO NEED TO TAKE CARE OF DOU DOU.





MOM, DOU DOU! I GOT OFF WORK EARLY TODAY. IS EVERYTHING AT HOME OKAY?

I'M BACK!

叩!

HOW ABOUT THIS? NEXT TIME YOU HAVE A HOLIDAY, I'LL TAKE YOU OUT TO HAVE FUN, OR YOU CAN COME TO KEELUNG TO VISIT ME. EITHER WORKS!



IF YOU'RE NOT SURE, YOU CAN ASK DOU DOU...

OH, THESE ARE ALL THINGS MEI-ZHEN USUALLY HANDLES.



ALL THESE THINGS AT HOME ARE TOO COMPLICATED! I DON'T KNOW HOW TO USE THEM!



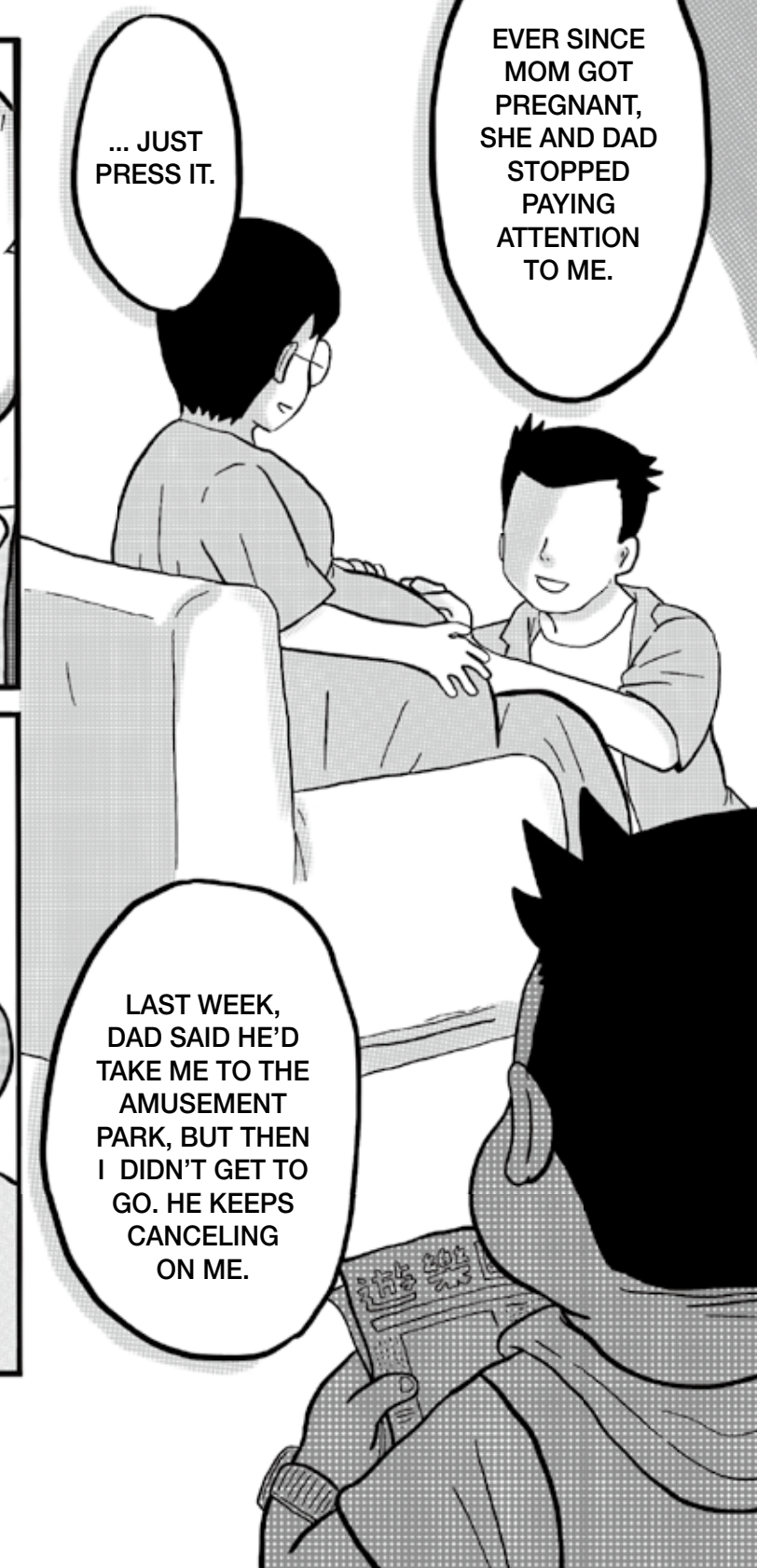
WHY THE POUTY FACE AGAIN?



WOW, DOU DOU, YOU'RE HELPING GRANDMA, WHAT A GOOD BOY!



... JUST PRESS IT.



EVER SINCE MOM GOT PREGNANT, SHE AND DAD STOPPED PAYING ATTENTION TO ME.

LAST WEEK, DAD SAID HE'D TAKE ME TO THE AMUSEMENT PARK, BUT THEN I DIDN'T GET TO GO. HE KEEPS CANCELING ON ME.



# Few Notes on Comic Drawing

by Shau-Di Wang

I stopped enjoying comic books at a much earlier age compared to younger generations. I simply couldn't connect to the effort that goes into deliberately crafting a sense of unfamiliar childishness, which is often the hallmark of many comic books.

However, there was one particular Japanese comic that stood out to me and has stayed in my mind ever since I first read it.

The story begins in a small, cozy Japanese tavern, where an ordinary, slightly drunk office worker joins his colleagues in the usual complaints about wives, work, and all kinds of demeaning trash talk that people often engage in after a few drinks. After sharing his grievances, he decides he's had enough and stands up to open the sliding door, ready to step out into the snowy night. Just as he's about to unzip his pants, preparing to relieve himself outdoors, he

suddenly stops. He looks up, and to his surprise, towering above him is a massive, imposing ice cliff. The scene then shifts to a wide shot, showing him as a tiny figure in front of the immense ice wall. In that moment, he gazes up in awe, his head tilted back, with a small puff of warm breath freezing in the cold night air. The stillness of the moment captures a sense of wonder, a silent admiration for the vastness of nature that completely overshadows the trivial worries he had just shared with his colleagues.

This verse from the comic made me realize something important: I should never lose respect for the sheer capacity and power of comic art to convey emotions, stories, and deep messages through a visual medium.

Not too long ago, I found myself working with a group of children, aged 9 to 14, in an acting class. During the final rehearsal for the presentation, I noticed

one very thin girl sitting alone on the sofa, engrossed in a book, while all the other children went off with their parents to have lunch. I refrained from giving in to my curiosity but passed by her anyway. In that fleeting moment, she looked up at me with those dark, knowing eyes, almost as if she was silently telling me that she understood the unspoken connection between us. When the performance was over, I stood by the door to bid farewell to everyone, and she walked out, carrying her backpack, waving as she left.

"Do you know the way home?" I asked her gently.

She replied, "I'm not going home. I'm taking the bus to my grandma's house."

It occurred to me then that the only person who supported her in coming to this class was her grandmother, who lived far out on the outskirts of the city.

"Won't you have dinner first?" I asked, a bit concerned.

"No, I'll find something on the way," she answered, turning and walking away.

The acting class had focused on the rich stories and themes of Greek

mythology, which often deal with the fantastical and the larger-than-life. Among all the complex emotions I felt watching her walk away, there was also a strange feeling of joy. I was glad that she was carrying something so fantastical, so unrealistic, in her world—a spark of childhood wonder, something beyond the mundane reality that many of us face.

So, I ask that we allow ourselves to indulge in the comic books that share these kinds of stories of childhood, stories that resonate with both children and grandmothers alike, stories that remind us of the wonder and imagination that should never be lost.

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

*Shau-Di Wang is a charismatic director known for his passionate humor and emphasis on social communication through television. Over the past forty years, he has continuously created imaginative and vibrant films, television shows, documentaries, and stage plays.*





# Grandma and Her Ghosts: Dou Dou's Graduation Yearbook

## 魔法阿媽漫畫 1：豆豆的畢業紀念冊

**Original work:** Rice Film International Co., Ltd **Illustrator:** Ning Lo **Publisher:** Dyna Books

**Date:** 02/2024 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

174 pages | 16.7 x 21.7cm **Volume:** 1 (Ongoing)

**Rights Sold:** Japanese, France, Malaysian

**BFT2.0 Translator:** Michelle Kuo

Step into the colorful world of Taiwan's 1990s elementary school life with this heartfelt sequel to the beloved animated classic *Grandma and Her Ghosts*. From becoming an older brother and raising silkworms to going on field trips and sipping Grandma's magical potions, this comic vividly captures the joys and challenges of childhood.

Now ready to graduate from elementary school, Dou Dou from *Grandma and Her Ghosts* returns with new adventures and life lessons. The original film has been a cherished part of countless childhoods, and this continuation brings back its signature warmth and humor. Join Dou Dou as he laughs, worries, and grows—just like we all do.



## Illustrator Ning Lo

Ning Lo, a Taiwanese creator, draws inspiration from everyday life and objects. She enjoys observing streets and recording mundane details, incorporating them into their work to create scenes that tell stories.



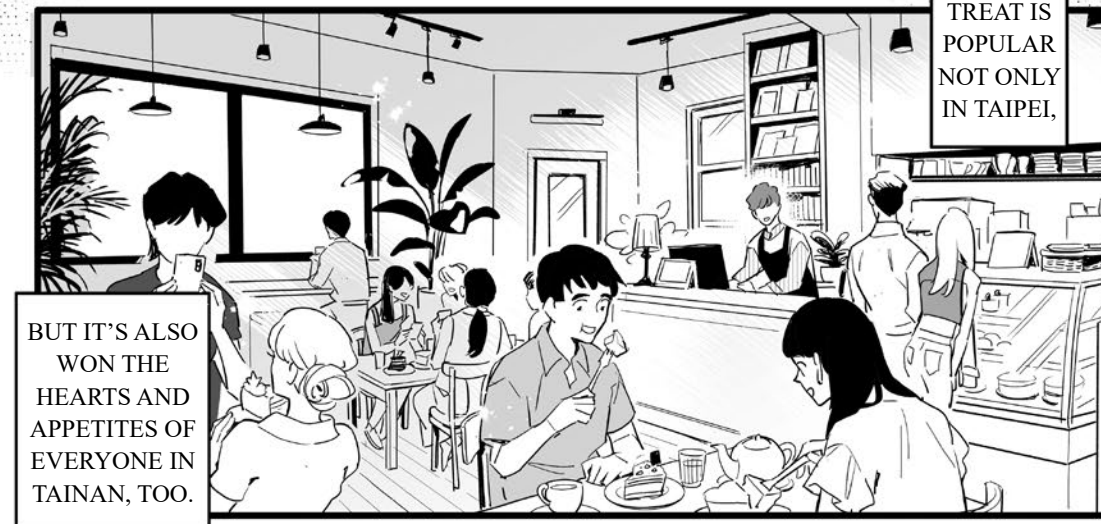
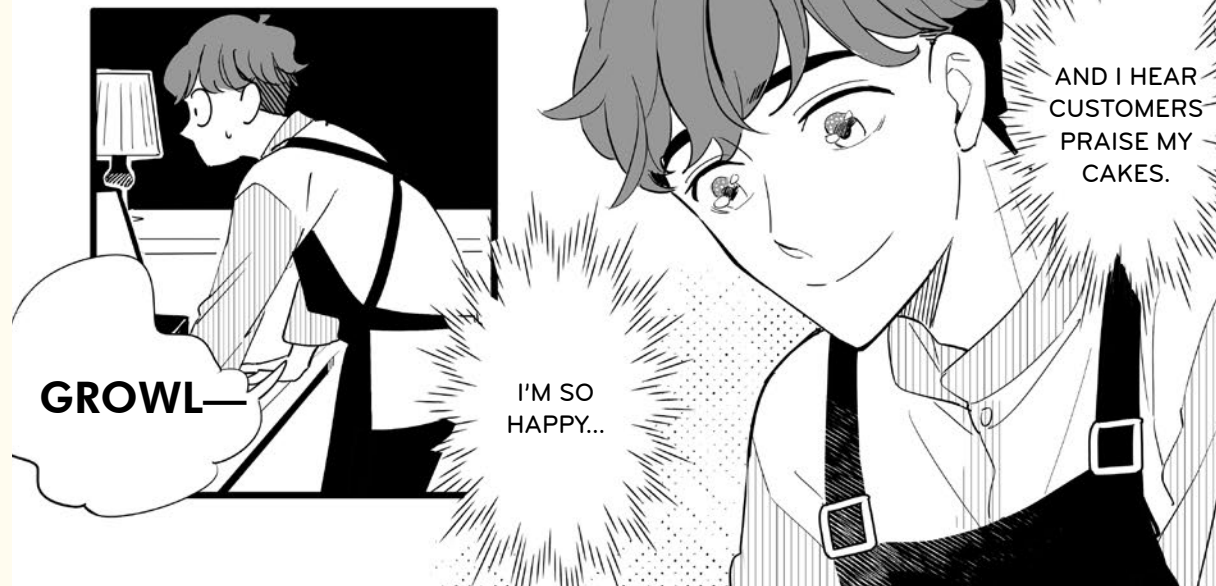
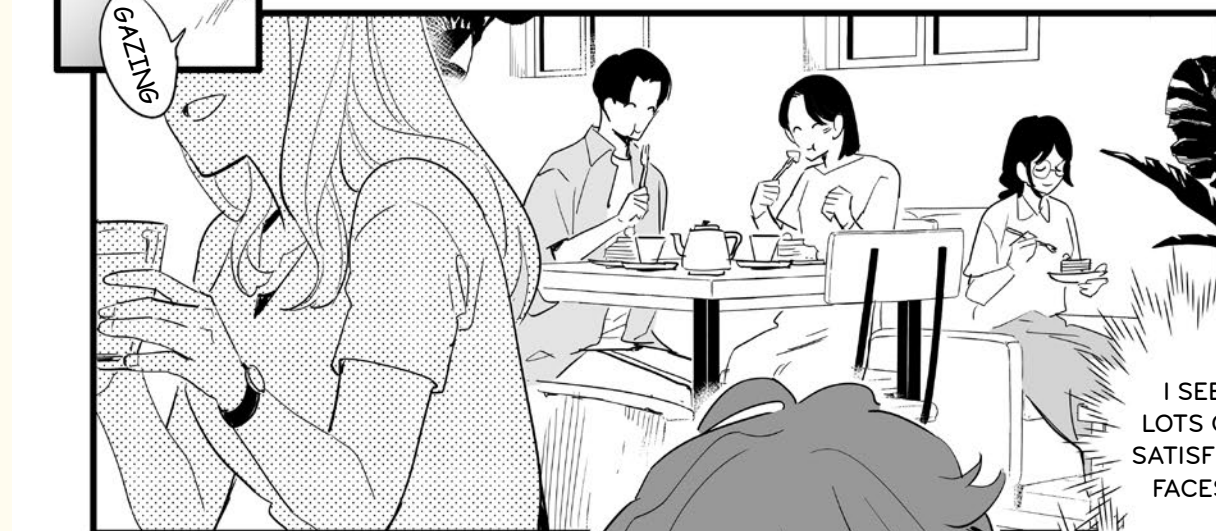
## Original work Rice Film International Co., Ltd

Rice Film International Co., Ltd was founded in Taipei in 1992 by director Shau-Di Wang and producer Li-ming Huang.













.....

I'VE ALREADY  
MADE THE  
FIRST STEP  
TOWARDS  
THAT  
DREAM!

I MUST  
DO MY  
VERY BEST  
FOR THIS  
STORE!

Gulu



I WANT KUN  
YU TO EAT  
HIS FAVORITE  
CAKES WHEN  
HE RETURNS  
TO TAINAN.

鯨舟堂

THE MOST  
BELOVED  
DESSERT  
OF OUR  
LANDLORD...

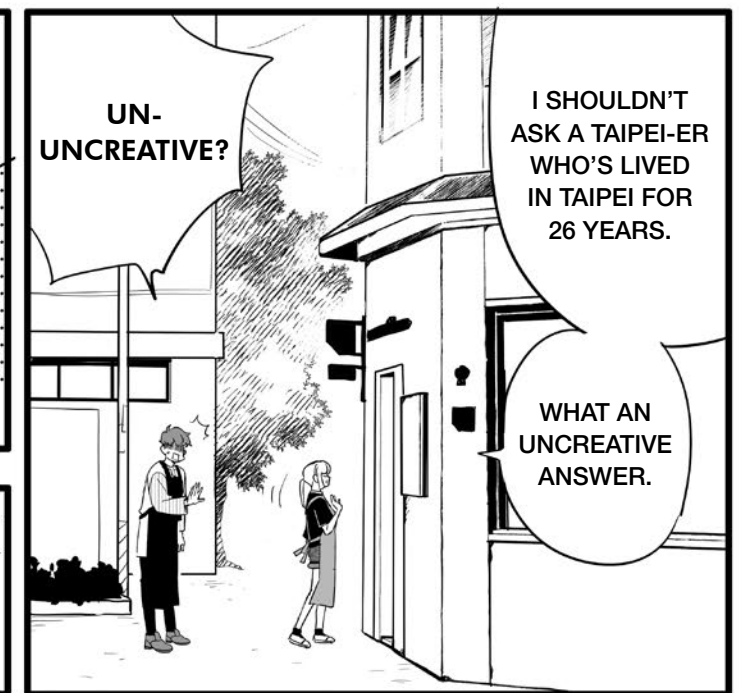


... HAPPENS  
TO BE OUR  
SIGNATURE—  
FRUIT  
MILLE-  
FEUILLE  
CAKE.



NEVER MIND,  
IT'S NOT A BIG  
DEAL. HURRY  
UP, LET'S  
PREP.

OH.....



UN-  
UNCREATIVE?

I SHOULDN'T  
ASK A TAIPEI-ER  
WHO'S LIVED  
IN TAIPEI FOR  
26 YEARS.

WHAT AN  
UNCREATIVE  
ANSWER.



... TO  
ESTABLISH  
THE DESSERT  
PARLOR OF  
MY DREAMS.

I MOVED TO  
TAINAN...





# Dreams Never Rest: Exploring Tainan's History and Life through *Gei Shu Dou's Sweet & Antique Vacation*

by Wen-Chien Hsu

For visitors who have never been to Taiwan or are visiting for the first time, the initial impression of the country is often shaped by Taipei's bustling cityscape and towering skyscrapers, projecting the image of a modernized nation. However, spending more time in Taiwan reveals its true character as a land of cultural diversity and rich fusion.

The story of this book is set in Tainan, a city where summer days are intensely hot, yet winters remain pleasantly warm.

Kevin Zhou, the protagonist, is a typical Taipei native who has never lived beyond the capital city. He envisions Tainan as a city full of leisure and

romance, dreaming of opening a dessert shop and embracing a slower pace of life. However, the harsh realities of running a business soon shatter his idealized vision. The challenges of managing the dessert shop leave him feeling defeated, doubting his decision and capabilities. Ultimately, he decides to suspend operations after the shop's first anniversary.

The protagonist's business partner, a collector and dealer of antiques, invites him to explore Tainan's historic sites and artifacts during the shop's closure. Through this journey, the protagonist gradually rediscovers his initial purpose for moving to Tainan: to pursue a life deeply connected with history and culture

at a slower pace. At the same time, the narrative allows readers to experience Tainan's richly interwoven culture and history through the perspectives of the protagonist and his friend.

Well-known historical landmarks such as Anping Fort and Chihkan Tower may already be familiar to many Taiwanese. Yet, this book surprises readers with lesser-known facts: Chihkan Tower once overlooked the vast Taijiang Inland Sea; some of today's temples may have originally been churches; and even an ordinary-looking manhole cover might conceal a centuries-old well beneath it. The author skillfully uses these details to remind us that history is not just something from the past—it lives and breathes alongside us on this land.

One particularly touching episode in the book features a Dutch-Taiwanese young man who arrives in Taiwan with fragments of an ancient pottery bottle left by his grandmother, hoping to connect with her memory. Ultimately, he discovers that the fragments belong to an artifact of Taiwan's Indigenous Siraya people. This moving narrative underscores that Tainan—and Taiwan as a whole—carries the stories of Indigenous peoples

alongside the dominant Han culture. Despite the pressures of mainstream cultural dominance, these narratives persist resiliently.

Through a gentle yet evocative storytelling approach, this book immerses readers in the essence of Tainan's city life and spirit, even inspiring a desire to visit this enchanting city. Whether for Taiwanese readers or an international audience, this book serves as an excellent introduction to Taiwan. It delves into the intricate tapestry of Taiwan's local and colonial history while illustrating how this island nation, surrounded by oceans, has documented and adapted to the ever-changing coastlines.

It is my hope that every reader of this book will follow its footsteps to Tainan, experiencing the unique charm and profound depth of this extraordinary city.

*Wen-Chien Hsu possesses a free-spirited soul. She has worked at LGBTQ+ organizations, and the 113 Domestic Violence Hotline, and currently works as an editor of Books from Taiwan 2.0. She is dedicated to bringing Taiwanese comics and picture books to a global audience.*





# Gei Shu Dou's Sweet & Antique Vacation

鯨舟堂休業中

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

**Date:** 02/2024 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

212 pages | 14.8 x 21cm **Volume:** 1 (END)

**BFT2.0 Translator:** Kenny Yim

Kevin Zhou, a Taipei native with a passion for pastries, relocates to Tainan at the invitation of his friend Kunyu Lee. Together, they open Gei Shu Dou—a charming shop featuring desserts on the first floor and antiques on the second. However, Kunyu's work as an antique collector soon takes him abroad for an extended period, leaving Kevin to manage the shop alone. Sensitive and perfectionistic, Kevin pours his heart into the business for over a year, but a single negative online review pushes him to close the shop indefinitely.

This beautifully crafted story is brought to life under the professional guidance of the Tainan Municipal Administration of Culture Heritage. The manga artist seamlessly weaves together the region's rich history and local charm, drawing inspiration from artifacts unearthed in Tainan, such as Siraya pottery jars, Dutch-era porcelain, Qing Dynasty glass bottles, and Japanese colonial city crest cups. Each of these treasures is paired with Tainan's signature sweetness—a layered cake symbolizing the city's century-old heritage.

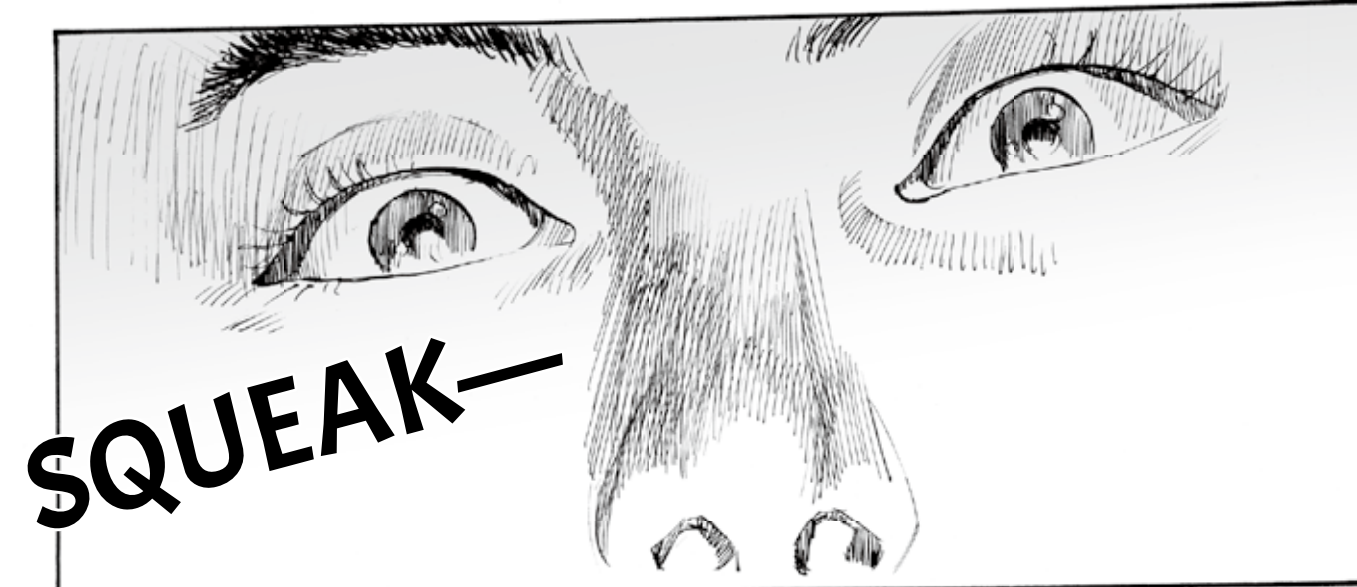
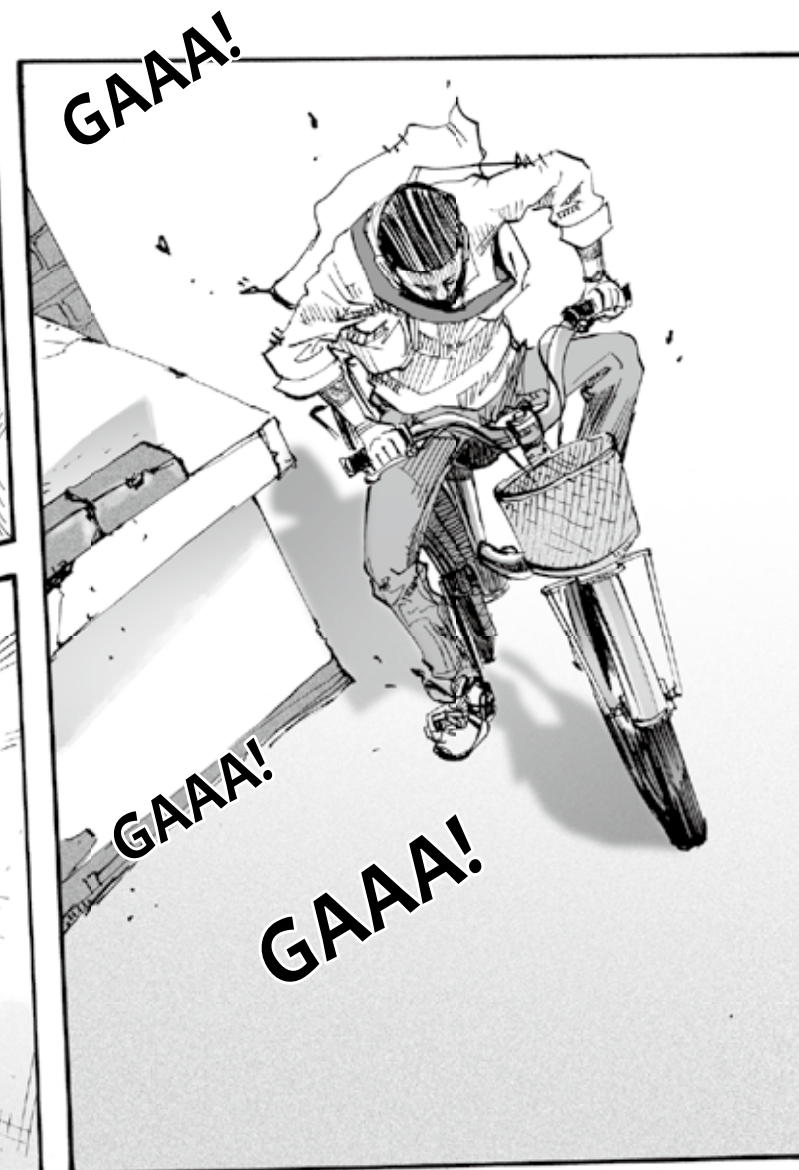
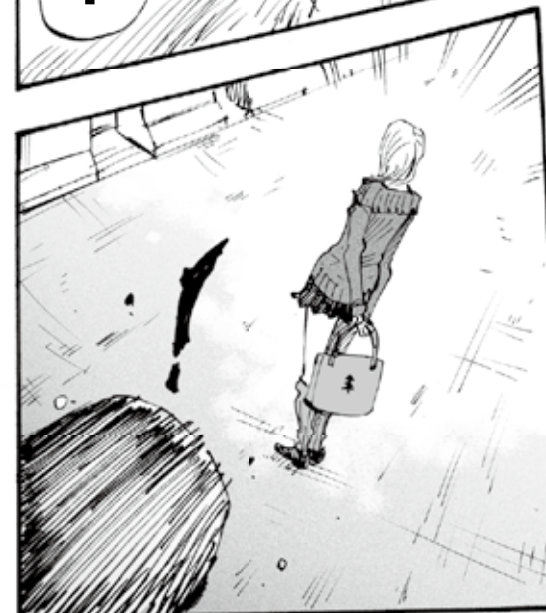
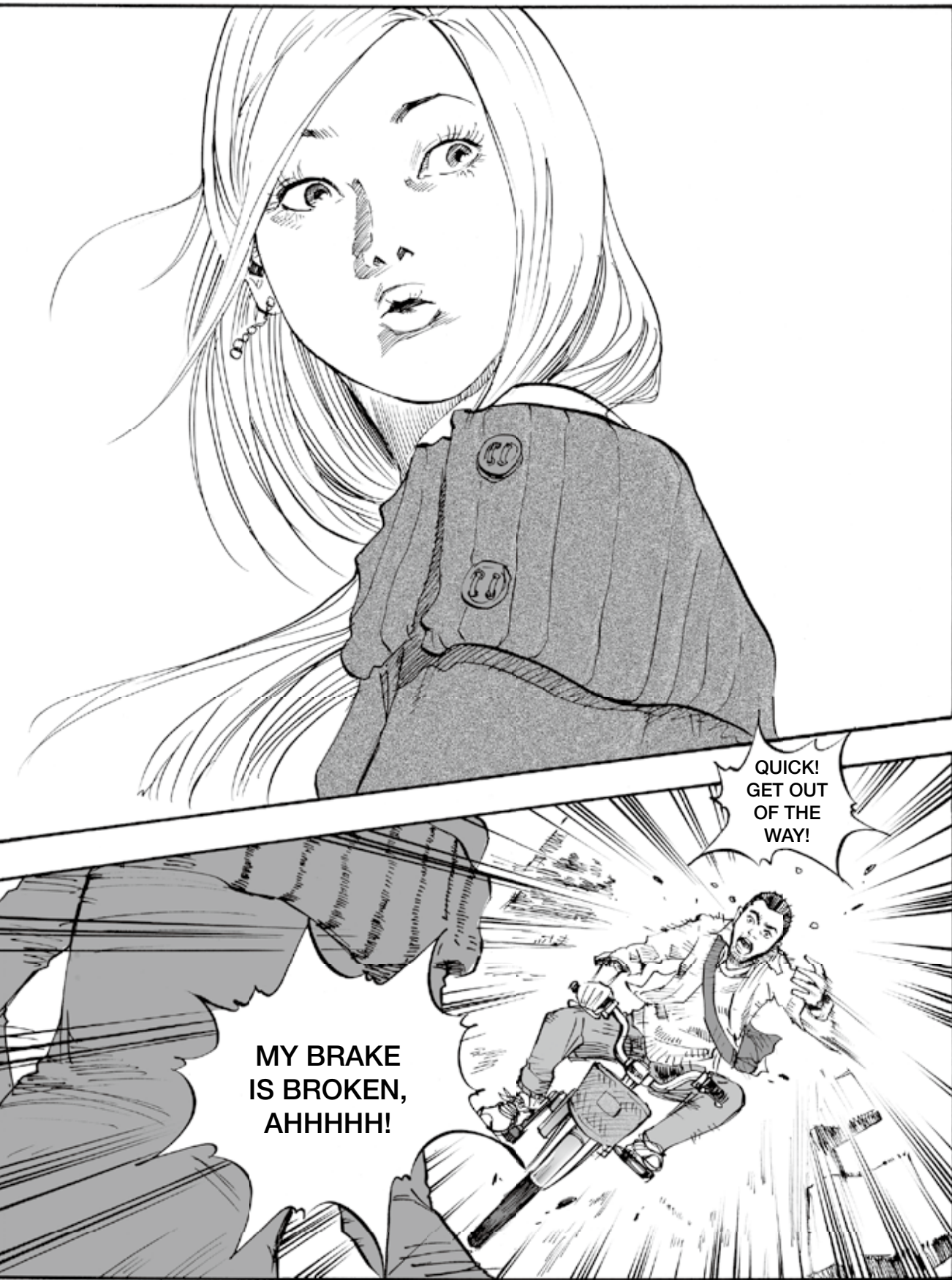
With its delicate storytelling and vivid illustrations, this manga offers readers a heartfelt depiction of local life, inviting them on a journey through Tainan's cultural and culinary history. A feast for the senses and the soul, it's both a celebration of tradition and a tribute to the enduring sweetness of Tainan.



**Author** **Kiya Chang**

Kiya Chang, originally from a tea farming family in Chiayi, Taiwan, now resides in Taipei. Since 2010, she has been serializing stories that chronicle Taiwan's Formosa tea history through the perspectives of British merchant John Dodd and Chinese merchant Li Chunsheng. From 2013 to 2023, she published *Formosa Oolong Tea* and *Take Me Out to the Ball Game*. The fifth volume of *Formosa Oolong Tea* won the 14th Golden Comic Award for Best Comic. Her work has earned accolades, including the Japan International Manga Award Bronze in 2022. It has been adapted into a mystery-solving app and board game, showcased at major events like Angoulême and Frankfurt.

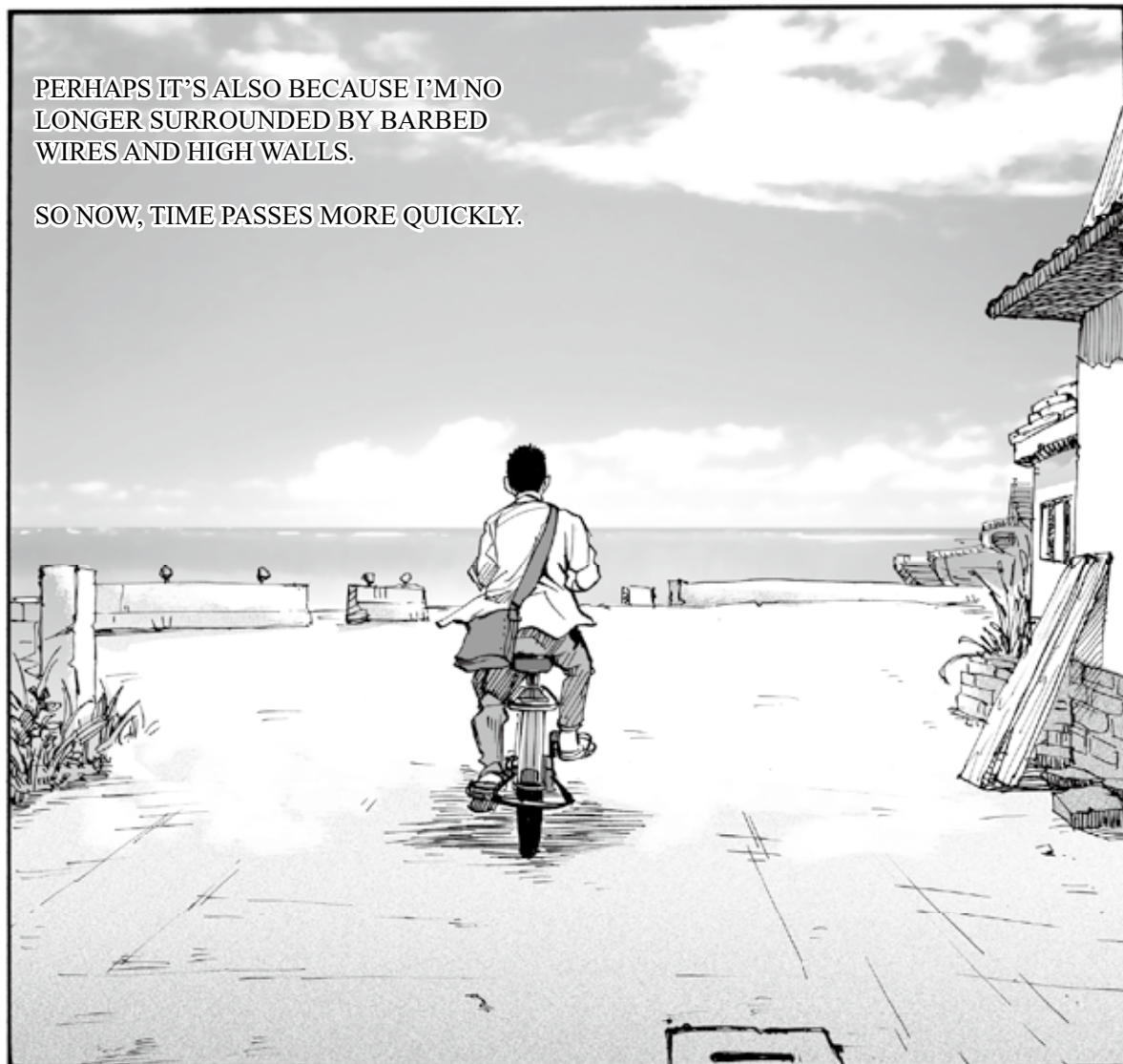






PERHAPS IT'S ALSO BECAUSE I'M NO LONGER SURROUNDED BY BARBED WIRES AND HIGH WALLS.

SO NOW, TIME PASSES MORE QUICKLY.

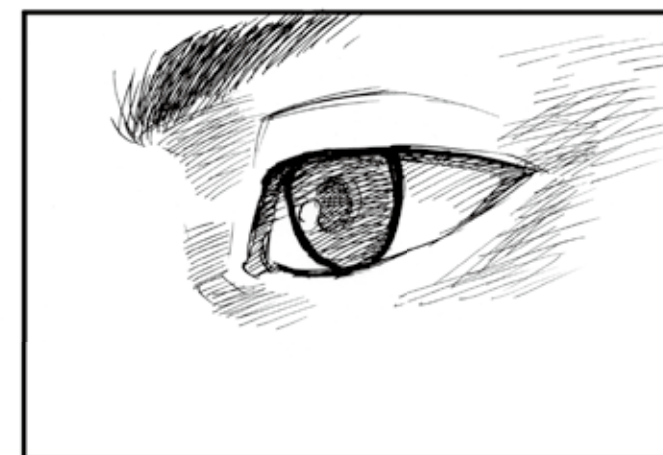
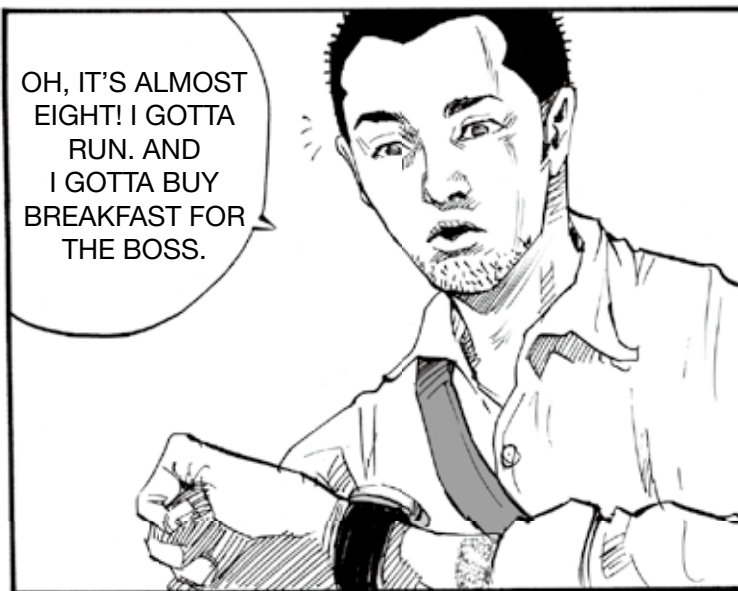


I'M STILL NOT VERY USED TO HAVING FREEDOM LIKE THIS.

PERHAPS THAT'S BECAUSE I FEEL SUCH A SENSE OF DISBELIEF AT THIS FREEDOM.



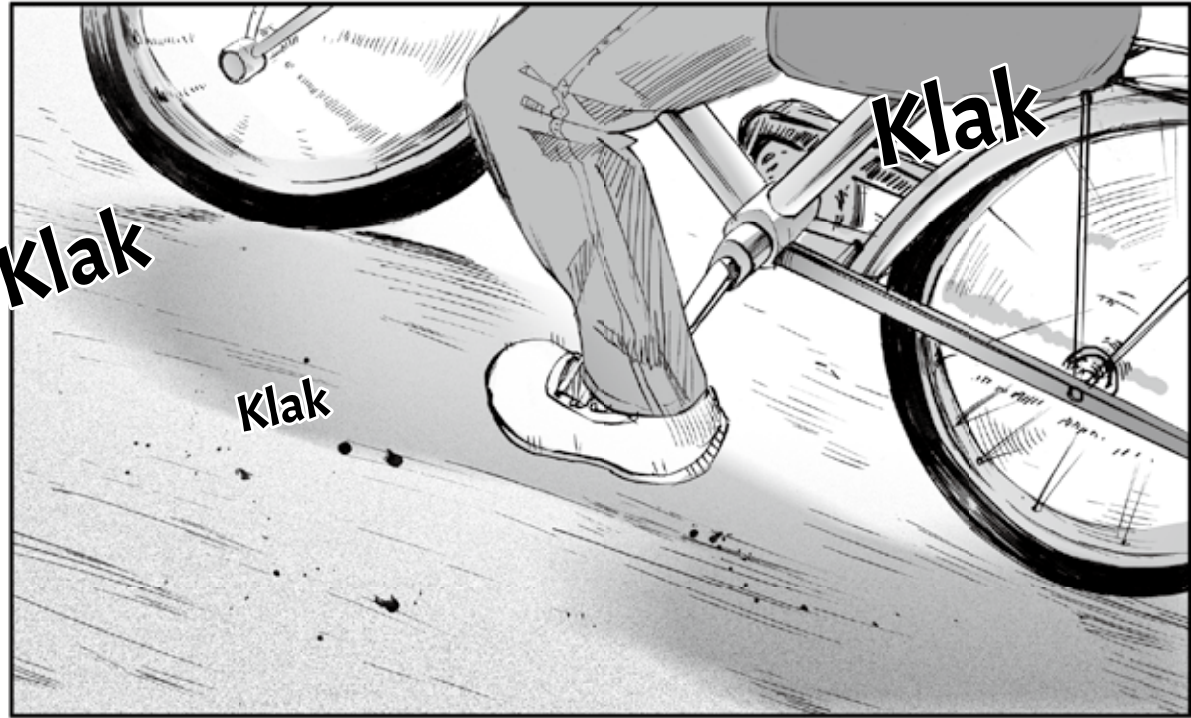
OH, IT'S ALMOST EIGHT! I GOTTA RUN. AND I GOTTA BUY BREAKFAST FOR THE BOSS.



TIME REALLY FLIES! IT'S ALREADY BEEN THREE MONTHS.

BEFORE I REALIZED IT, TIME HAD JUMPED FROM ONE SEASON TO THE NEXT.





Chapter. 1  
**The Paper Slip**



# The Seasonal Changes of *Dong Hua Chun Barbershop*: A Note from Author

by Ruan Guang-Min  
Translated by Joshua Dyer

The bus slowed as it turned the corner into the alleyway, giving me more than a few seconds to notice the store front of the *Dong Hua Chun Barbershop*. Standing in a row of three-story townhomes with commercial storefronts on the first floor, it caught my eye not only for its name, but also for the way the sea foam green lintel and frame contrasted with its dreary metal roll up door.

It all began with just a few scattered plot points, but as the images in my mind accumulated day by day, the outline of a story took shape. I can still remember the excitement that overtook me when, still seated on the bus, I imagined that the name of the shop was created by combining elements of each family member's name. From then on, I

thought about that family's story day in and day out. Three years later, that story became the *Dong Hua Chun Barbershop* graphic novel. In the end, this made-up family exerted a remarkable influence over the way I told stories. With the printed graphic novel in hand, I went back to the barbershop to thank the proprietor, but the roll up door was pulled shut. I lifted the mail flap to peak inside, but the barbershop chairs and the wooden towel rack were no longer there. Two doors down there was a hair salon. The owner said the family now lived up on the hillside, and only occasionally came into town to do shopping and visit with old neighbors. I wrote a small thank-you note inside the cover and left the book with the salon owner.

This graphic novel has given me many wonderful gifts. I was cheeky enough to suggest to my editor that he invite renowned director Wu Nien-jen to write a blurb to promote it, Wu made a call of his own, and suddenly a television adaptation was in the works. After further midwifing from A-Mo, I ended up drawing the graphic novel adaptation of Wu's stage play, *Human Conditions 4*. Precisely because I so deeply cherish all of the gifts of *Dong Hua Chun Barbershop*, I've avoided working on the many follow-up stories I have in mind. Far too often readers are disappointed by a much-anticipated sequel, and I would be disappointed as well. Nonetheless, I've felt this unresolved tension in my heart ever since the book's publication in 2010, much like the knot of tension that formed

in Hua's heart on his tenth birthday, when his father left him without so much as a goodbye.

The television adaptation was released in 2012, giving the characters the warmth of flesh and blood, and giving readers new experiences not found in the book, owing to the addition of new characters and storylines. Common sense might dictate that I strike while the iron was hot by re-issuing the original graphic novel and following up with a sequel. But common sense issued opposing counsel: to let the fields lie fallow and allow something else to grow there.

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





# Dong Hua Chun Barbershop

東華春理髮廳

**Author:** Ruan Guang-Min **Illustrator:** Ruan Guang-Min **Publisher:** Yuan-Liou Publishing

**Date:** 05/2021 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

220 pages | 14.8 x 21cm **Volume:** 3 (END)

**Rights Sold:** French, German

**BFT2.0 Translator:** Jenna Tang and Michelle Kuo

*Dong Hua Chun Barbershop* invites readers into a poignant journey where lives collide, memories resurface, and wounds find the chance to heal. In this small-town barbershop, unchanged for thirty years, three seemingly unrelated individuals cross paths. Through the intertwining of their “memories,” they confront past pains, regrets, and attachments, ultimately discovering reconciliation and hope.

The barbershop itself is a time capsule. From the vintage hairdryers and barber chairs to the nostalgic decorations and timeless music, it holds the stories and memories of the townspeople, a silent witness to the passage of life.

Ruan Guang-Min masterfully weaves together stories rich in Taiwanese cultural flavor while tapping into universal themes of family, love, and belonging. This series stands out as one of his most significant works, exploring the essence of human connection and family relationships through the lens of a quaint, unassuming barbershop.

Already gaining international recognition, the French rights have been acquired by Kana, the publisher behind beloved Japanese manga such as *Slam Dunk* and *Naruto*. With its powerful storytelling, *Dong Hua Chun Barbershop* is a story that promises to stay with readers long after the final page.



Author **Ruan Guang-Min**

Ruan Guang-Min is a Taiwanese mid-career manga artist, known for a fresh style, humor, and a strong sense of humanity. The artist excels at depicting Taiwanese everyday life, with a focus on delicate family, parent-child, and human emotional entanglements. In addition to manga creation, recent years have seen involvement in literary and stage adaptations. The artist's works have received recognition from major manga awards, including the 8th Golden Comic Awards for both “Youth Manga Award” and “Manga of the Year,” the 11th Golden Comic Awards for “Cross-Domain Application Award” and “Manga of the Year,” and the 14th Japan International Manga Award Silver Prize organized by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Notable works include the *The Corner Store* series, the *Dong Hua Chun Barbershop* series, the *Heavenly Restaurant* series, the *Police and Thieves: Light and Dark* series, *Railway Sonata*, *The Seasoning of Happiness*, *The Illusionis on the Skywalk*, and *A Lever Scale*. Rights have been sold in multiple languages, including Japanese, French, German, Italian, Turkish, and Arabic. Both *Dong Hua Chun Barbershop* and *The Corner Store* have also been adapted into television series.



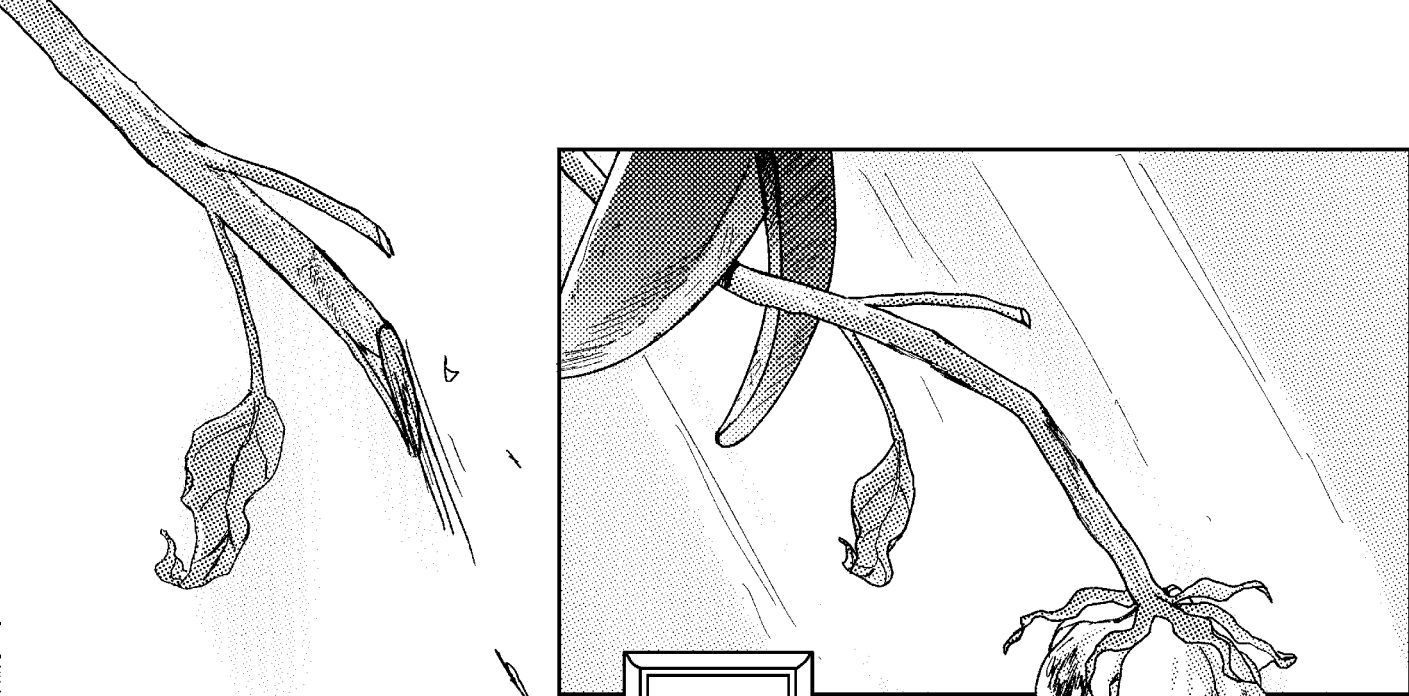


YOU'RE  
BACK,



TZU-YIN.

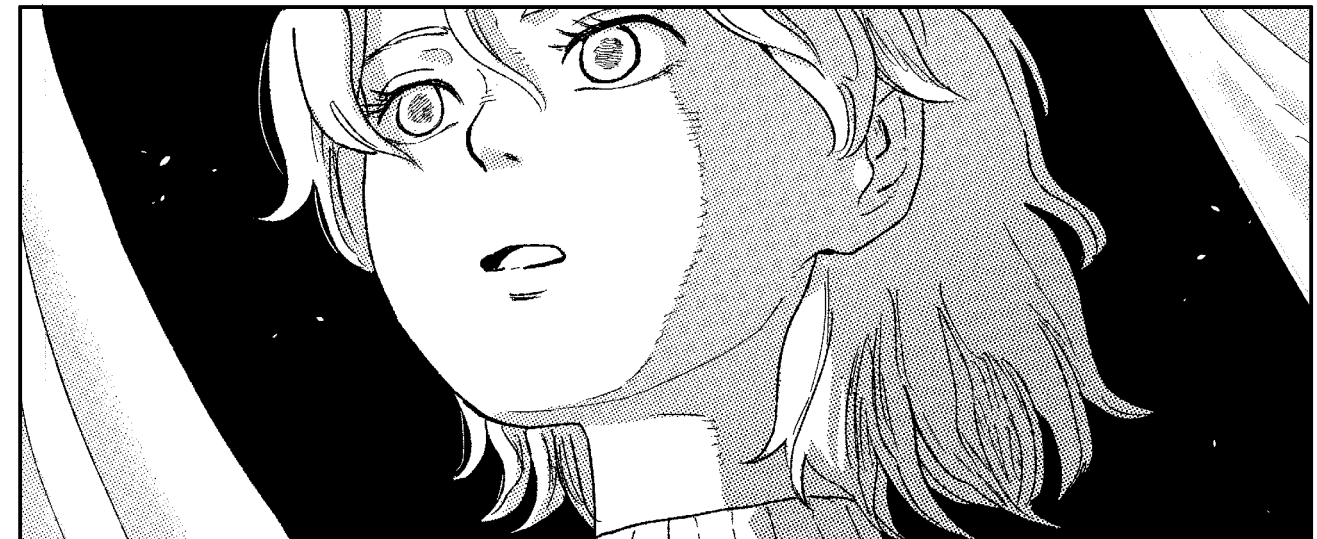
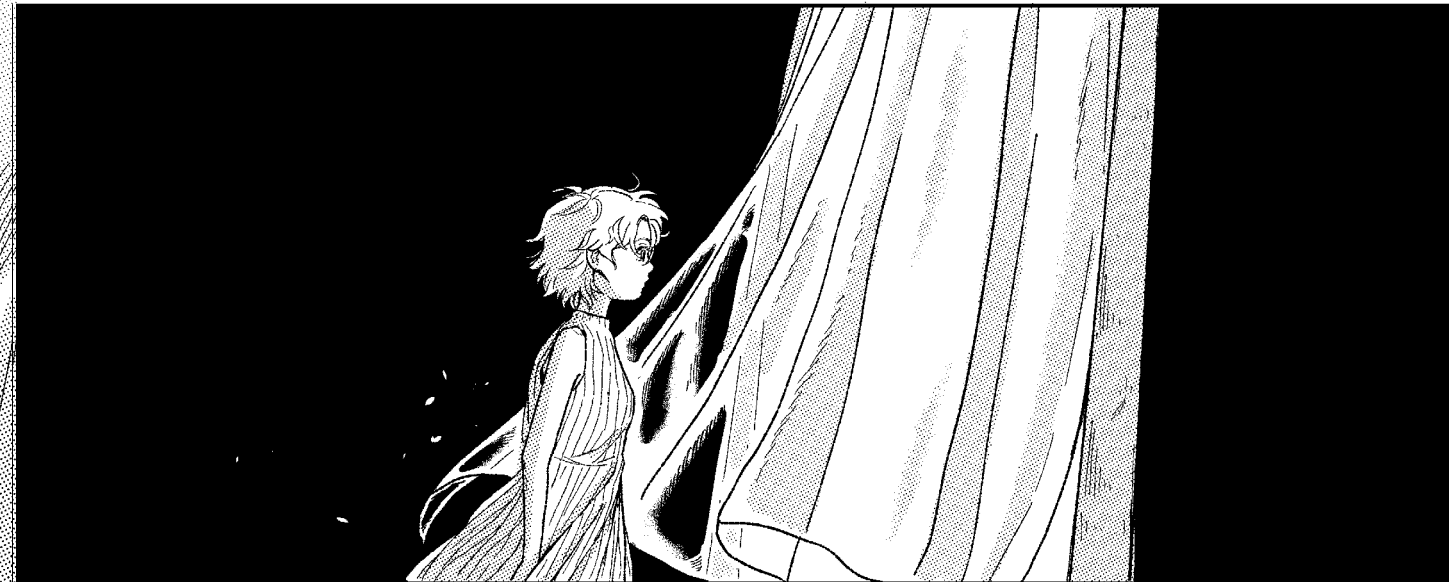
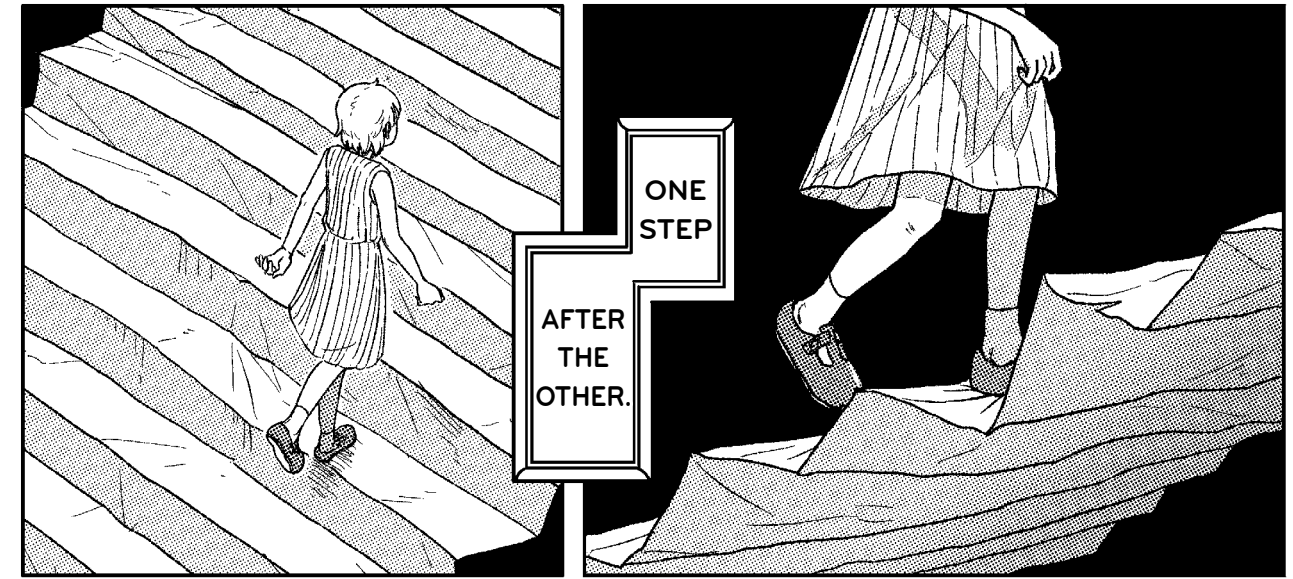
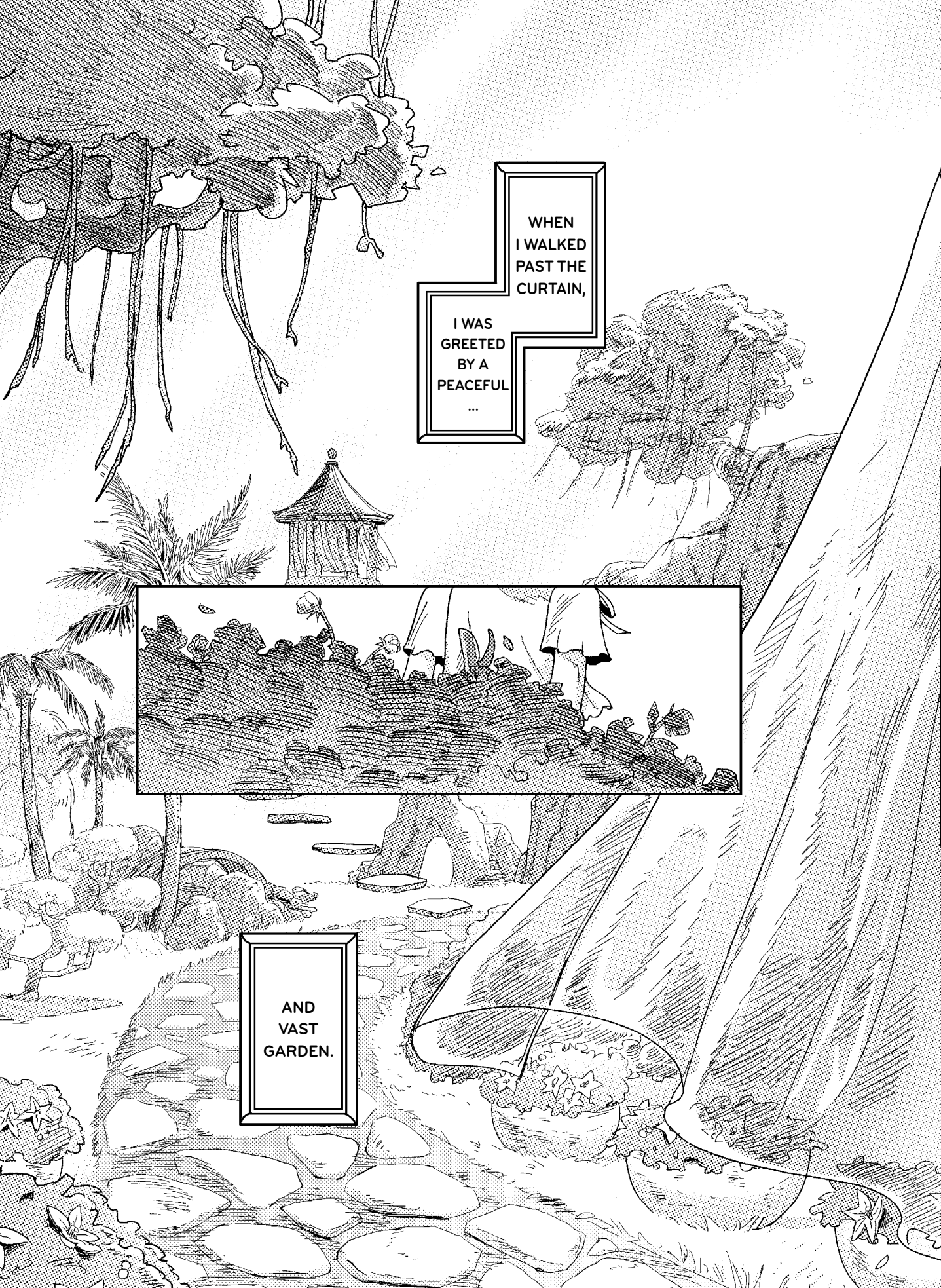
YET  
A SENSE  
OF  
LONGING  
WASHED  
OVER ME.



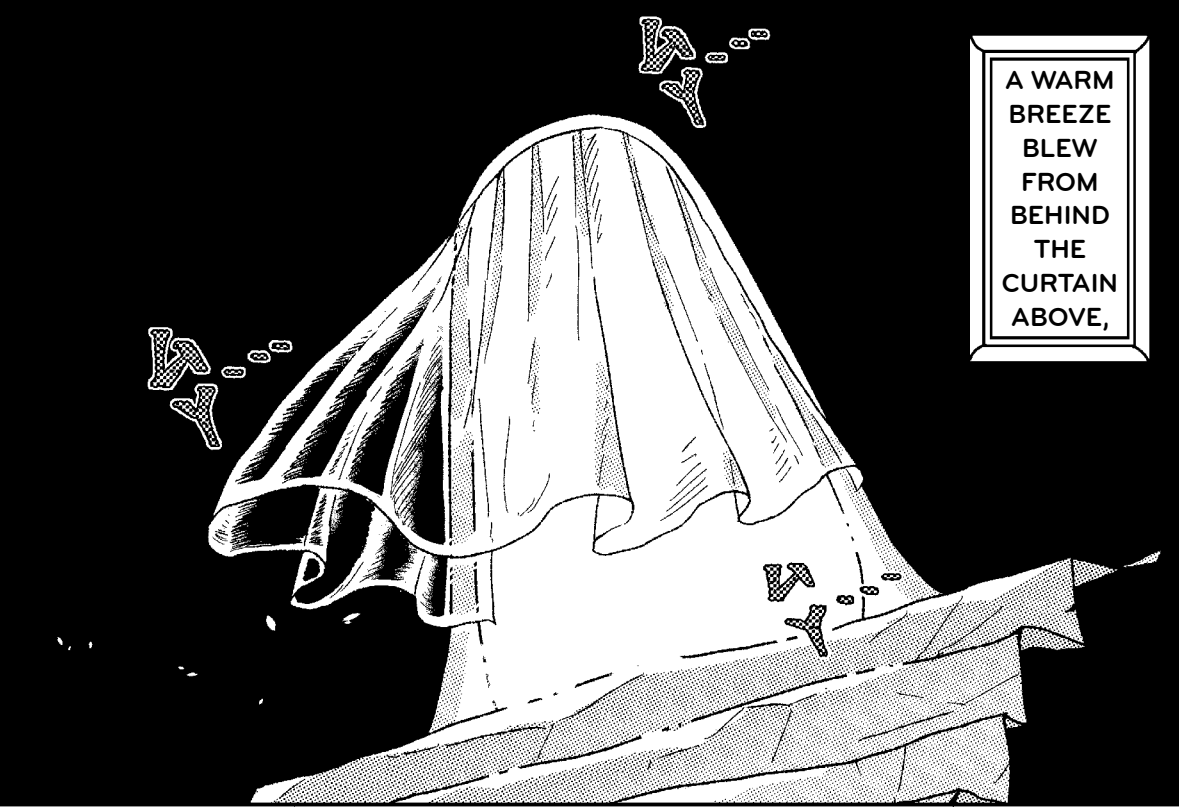
I HAD  
NEVER  
SEEN  
THAT  
PLACE,



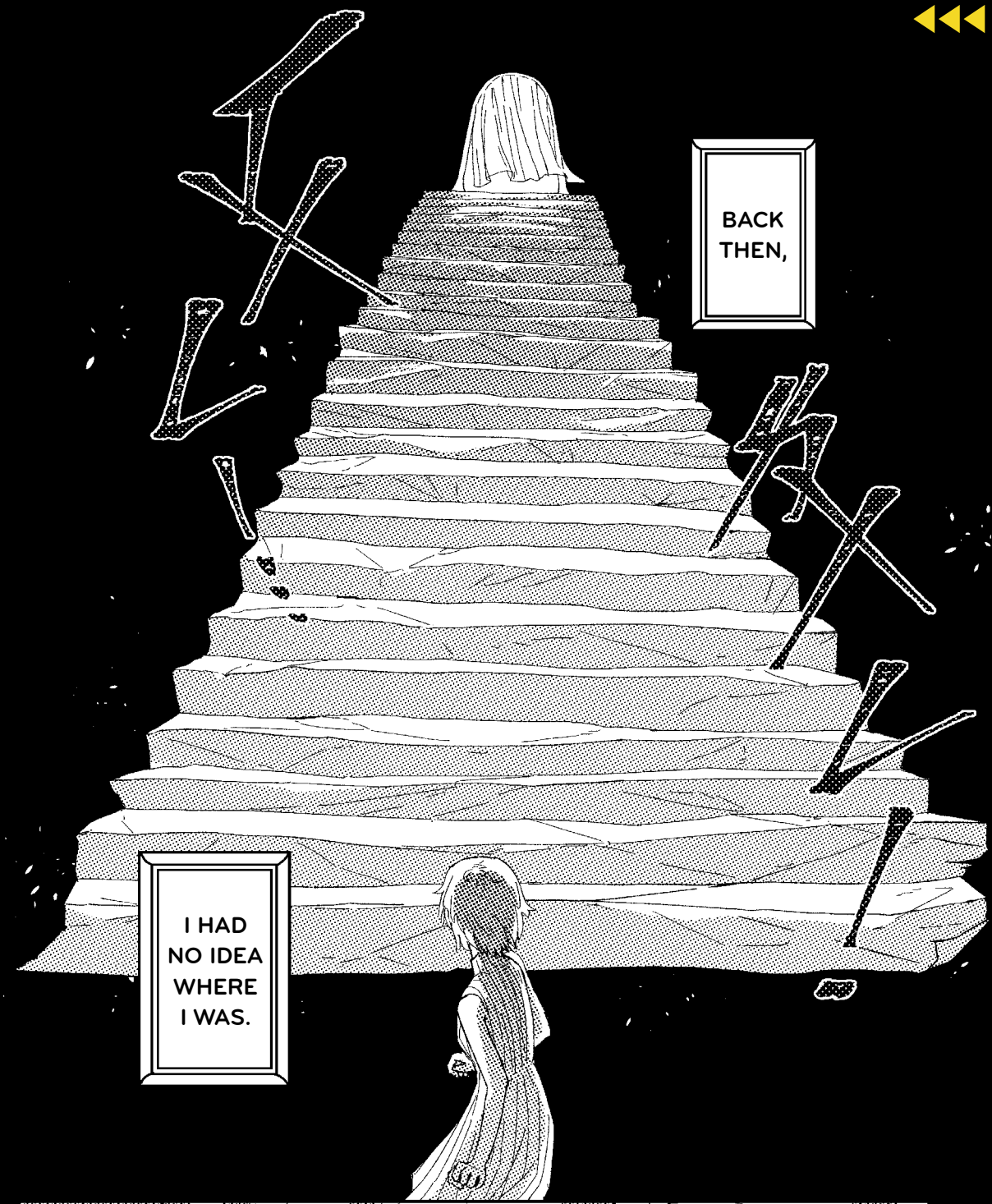








A WARM  
BREEZE  
BLEW  
FROM  
BEHIND  
THE  
CURTAIN  
ABOVE,

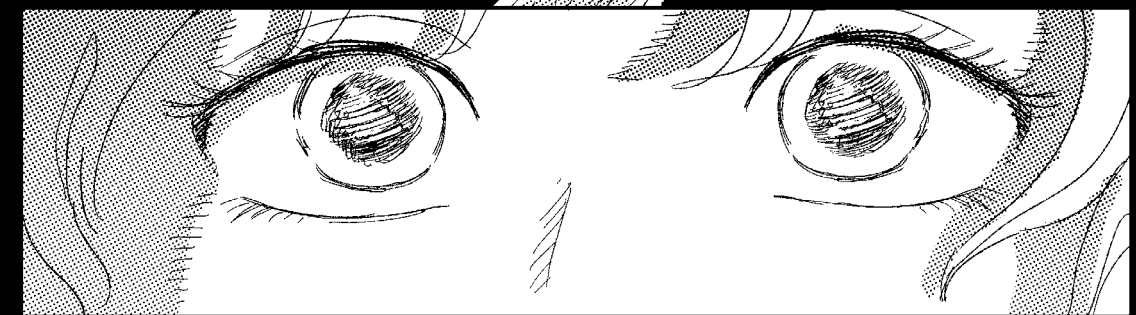


BACK  
THEN,

I HAD  
NO IDEA  
WHERE  
I WAS.



AND  
BEFORE  
I KNEW  
IT, I WAS  
WALKING  
TOWARD  
IT.





# The Road to Self-Healing: Nurturing the Garden of the Soul

by Yuni

*The Gardener of Verses* unfolds with poetic language and delicate, beautiful prose, gradually revealing themes of adolescence, youth, and growth.

The protagonist, Tzu-Yin Chin, has always been passionate about reading and writing. In pursuit of her dream of becoming a writer, she decides to quit her job and dedicate herself fully to her creative work. Despite her severe allergy to flowers—so severe that a mere touch can cause her to faint—Tzu-Yin accidentally touches a flower at a classmate's wedding, leading her to fall into a tranquil, expansive, and strange

garden.

This dreamlike garden symbolizes Tzu-Yin's inner world. In the garden, the sprawling plants reflect her mind and body, where every flower and tree represents her thoughts, forming a clever connection between the person, her body, and the plants. "The matters of the heart are never small. Healing the heart is the greatest task," says the gardener, Chien-Jan, to Tzu-Yin.

Through the guidance of fortune-telling poems, Tzu-Yin gradually uncovers the emotional knots and fears she had long avoided. These concerns—tied to

family, friendship, and aspirations—compel her to face them one by one. As she resolves these issues, she transforms her inner garden from a withered, broken space into a vibrant sanctuary, filled with bravery and free from pain.

*The Gardener of Verses* intricately portrays the personalities of its characters, using the plot and imaginative scenes to explore the subtle relationships formed during childhood, school, and life's encounters. The story illuminates the journey of self-growth, resonating deeply with readers on every page. The first book introduces compelling

foreshadowing, leaving readers eager to follow the continuation of the story and the development of its characters and plot.

*Yuni, born in 1998, she loves photography, reading, and writing. Recently, she's developed a keen interest in comics, enjoying the detailed analysis of panels, lines, and shadows. She is improving her skills in visual storytelling and has published a few articles on her blog and online media. Currently, she's working on a project that blends text and comics, set for release in 2025.*





# The Gardener of Verses

## 籤的朗誦者

**Author:** Tonn Hsu **Illustrator:** Tonn Hsu **Publisher:** Dyna Books

**Date:** 02/2024 **Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

250 pages | 14.8 x 21cm **Volume:** 1 (Ongoing)

**BFT2.0 Translator:** Lorena Rivas Kuang

Tzu-Yin Chin has spent her life suppressing her emotions, hiding behind a polite smile every day. One night, she has a strange dream and meets a gardener tending to a neglected garden. The gardener, troubled by the state of the garden—now overrun with decaying and withered plants—shares their concerns with her.

The gardener offers Tzu-Yin a magical fortune-telling cylinder, which reveals her true emotions each time she draws a fortune. Slowly, forgotten feelings and memories resurface, prompting her to confront what she has long ignored.

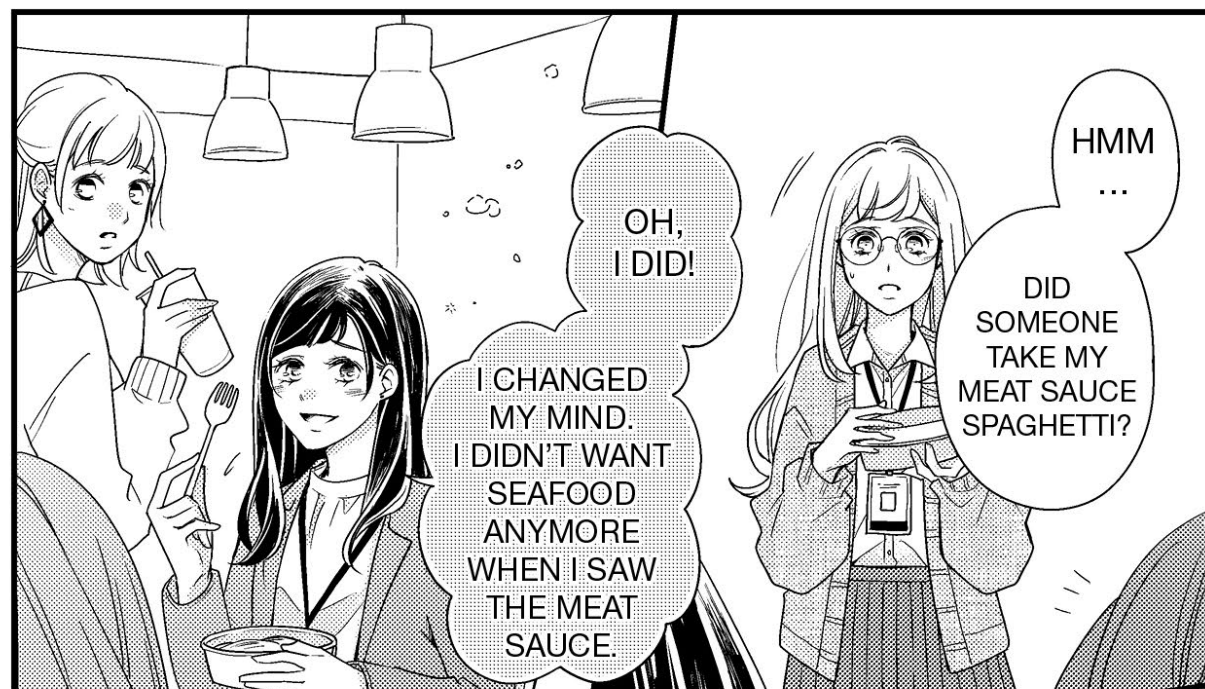
With intricate artwork, poetic dialogue, and characters navigating confusion and growth, graphic artist Tonn Hsu crafts a stunning comic that is rich in wisdom and emotion. This visually captivating story invites readers to reflect on self-discovery and the importance of tending to the gardens of their own hearts.



Author **Tonn Hsu**

Tonn Hsu, a Taipei-based illustrator and comic artist, graduated from the Sculpture Department of National Taiwan University of Arts and is rarely without a beverage while drawing. In 2017, Hsu won the Rookie Award at the 6th LINE WEBTOON Newcomer Contest for the comic *A Piece of Me*.









JIAN SHEN-RAN IS A STUDENT INTERN IN THE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM.

HE'S QUITE BRIGHT AND FRIENDLY...  
...BUT WE'RE NOT THAT CLOSE.



AH!



HSU  
YANG?!  
WHERE DID YOU  
GO? WHERE IS  
OUR FOOD?

HELLO—

S... S...  
SORRY!!  
I'LL BE  
RIGHT  
BACK!



YOU...  
HAVE  
ANOTHER  
JOB?

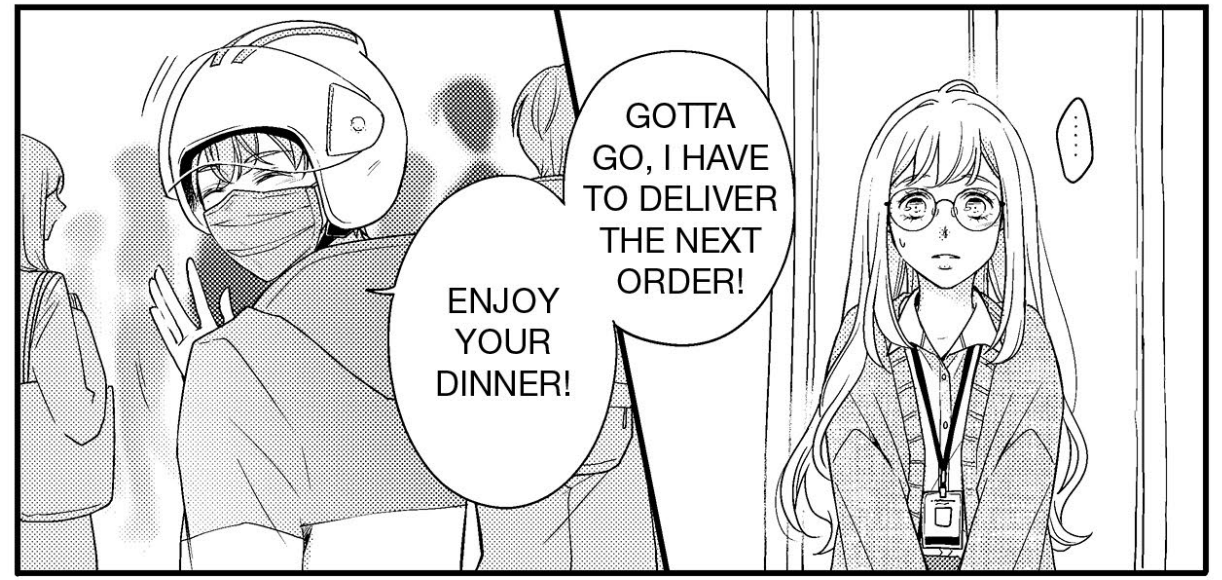
I'M JIAN  
SHEN-  
RAN!

YOU DO  
DELIVERIES  
AFTER  
WORK...?

YEAH,  
I WON'T  
SAY NO  
TO SOME  
EXTRA  
CASH!

YOU GUYS  
ARE STAYING  
LATE AGAIN?  
IT'S ALREADY  
7PM!

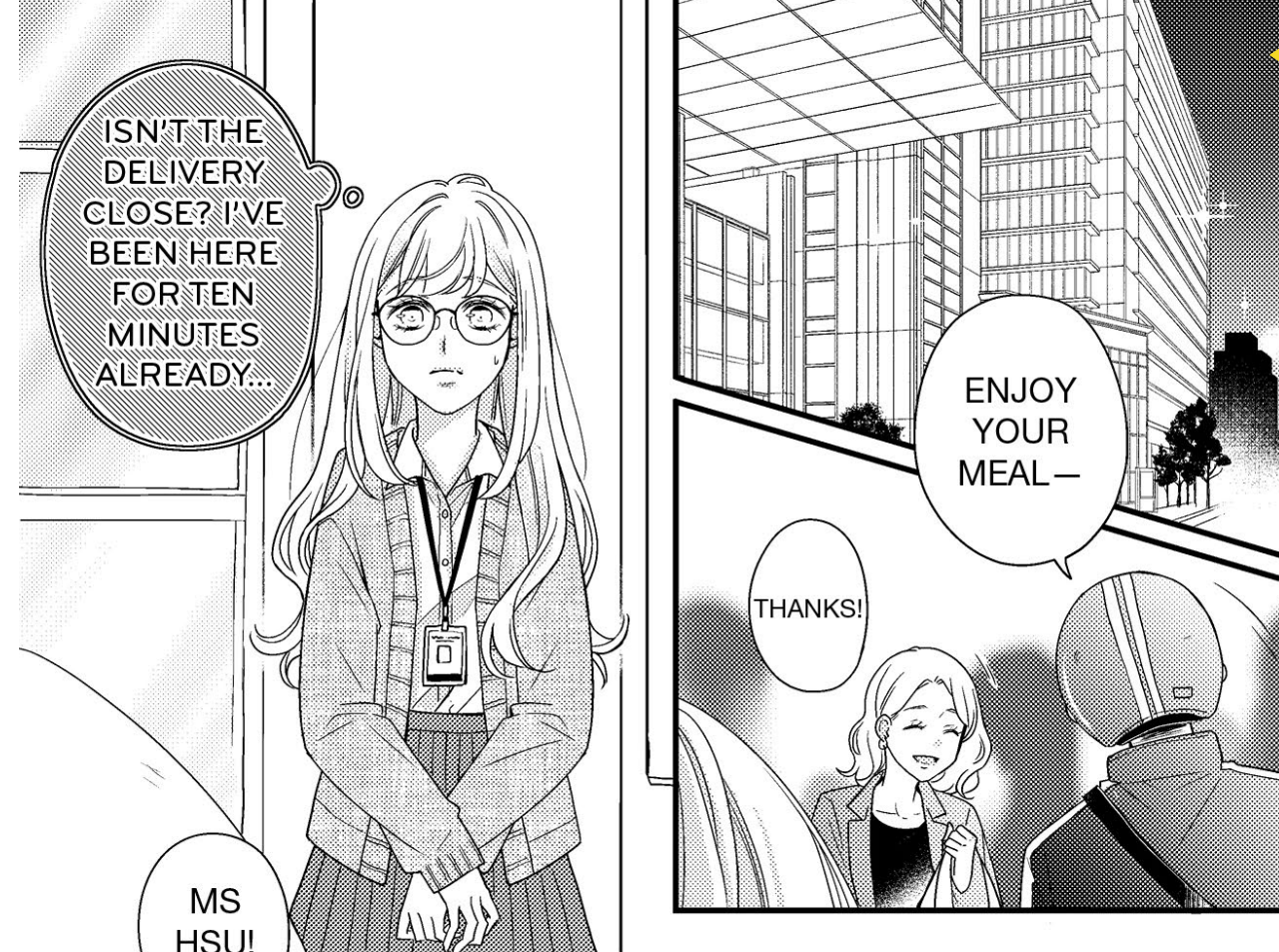
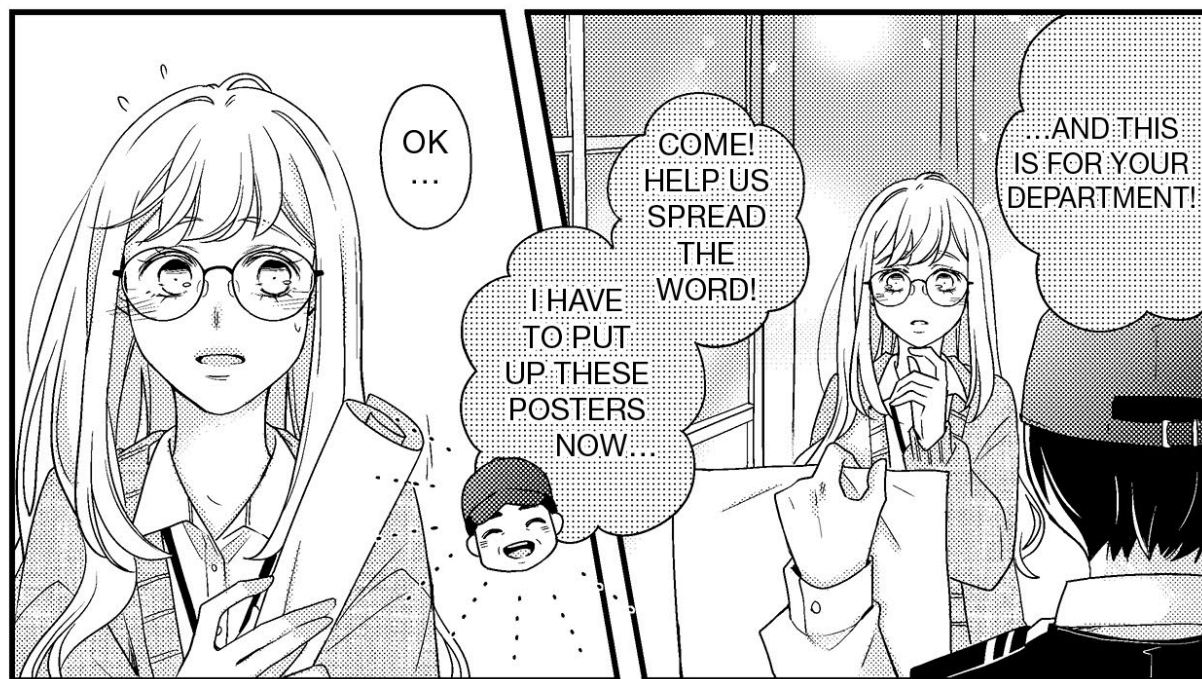
WORKING  
HARD



GOTTA  
GO, I HAVE  
TO DELIVER  
THE NEXT  
ORDER!

ENJOY  
YOUR  
DINNER!







# The New Meaning of “Gift”

by Una Tsao

*The Gift* is a heartwarming and thought-provoking work. Through the story of 29-year-old Hsu Yang, author Ebi vividly portrays the growth of a modern individual navigating the pressures and inner conflicts of contemporary urban life.

Hsu Yang is a soft-hearted and introverted individual who is often overlooked at work, even experiencing bullying. Her relationship with her family is distant, and she struggles to express herself, leaving many words unspoken. In this way, Hsu Yang reflects the experiences of many living in fast-paced urban environments, where introverted individuals often feel silenced, even within their own families. Ebi captures this dynamic with precision, crafting relatable

characters and moments that resonate deeply with readers, evoking a strong sense of empathy.

The story begins with Hsu Yang feeling the pressure of her parents’ demands to return home for the New Year. Desperate to save face, she hires the company’s infamous money-driven intern, Jian Shenran, to pose as her boyfriend. As the narrative unfolds, readers discover the hidden layers behind Jian Shenran’s “money-loving” facade. Outgoing, confident, and assertive, Jian Shenran appears to be Hsu Yang’s complete opposite. Yet, as the story progresses, it becomes clear that his strength is born out of necessity.

Beneath Jian Shenran’s confident

exterior lies a tender, fragile side shaped by a heart-wrenching past—one that connects deeply with Hsu Yang’s own struggles. Their interactions reveal the complexity of strength and vulnerability, offering a poignant exploration of personal growth, connection, and self-discovery.

At the start, the relationship between the two protagonists is based purely on a monetary arrangement. However, it is this very arrangement that allows them to form a unique and meaningful bond. As their journey home progresses, they gradually understand each other’s hardships. Through their companionship, they begin to rediscover the happiness they had long lost. The

true meaning of the book’s title, *The Gift*, is revealed: a gift is not merely about meeting someone rare among countless others, but about the connection with that person that helps you rediscover and fully embrace the parts of yourself that are worth cherishing and loving.

*Una Tsao is from Pingtung, Taiwan. She is a cross-media craft artist and currently the founder of the jewelry brand Semicolon Weaving. She won the Jury Award in the 17th Dawu Mountain Literary Award, and she enjoys drawing and writing.*





# The Gift

禮物

**Author:** Ebi **Illustrator:** Ebi **Publisher:** Ever Glory Publishing

**Date:** 01/2024

**Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

176 pages | 11.2 x 17cm

**Volume:** 1 (On going)

**Award:** 112th Annual Ministry of Culture Comic Creation and Publishing Promotion Award

**BFT2.0 Translator:** Evian Pan and Michelle Kuo

Meet Hsu Yang: A 29-year-old wallflower, often overlooked at work and rarely one to make bold moves.

Her most daring act to date? Breaking up with her cheating boyfriend.

Now, with the holiday season around the corner, her parents—blissfully unaware of the breakup—insist she bring her boyfriend home to celebrate. Panicked and out of ideas, Hsu Yang enlists the help of the company's infamous part-timer, Jian Shenran, a charming opportunist with a love for money, to pose as her boyfriend.

But what begins as a desperate holiday plan spirals into something far more complicated. Back in her hometown, Hsu Yang faces unexpected events and confrontations that shake her already fragile confidence, forcing her to question her future, her worth, and what she truly wants in life.



## Ebi

Ebi specializes in romantic comedy, starting her career with short four-panel comics that received acclaim. She has since transitioned to creating shojo manga with a focus on healing themes. Ebi's manga often features iconic Taiwanese objects, adding a local touch to her work. She has also collaborated with LINE Official to create a series of original stickers and themes. Ebi received the 112th Annual Ministry of Culture Comic Creation and Publishing Promotion Award. Volume 1 of this series has been published, with plans to release a total of 3 volumes.



Wait a minute!!

DON'T  
COME NEAR  
ME! I'M NOT  
WHO YOU  
ARE LOOKING  
FOR!

WHAT  
SHOULD  
I DO?

THE GHOST  
OPENED HIS  
MOUTH TO TALK?  
TO TALK TO ME?

WHO, WHO'S  
HE? HE'S  
WHITE?! IS HE  
AN ALLY OR  
AN ENEMY?

I'M USED TO  
SEEING GHOSTS  
ALRIGHT. BUT  
HE'S YELLING AT  
ME! OH MY GOD.

I'M DONE  
FOR. WHAT  
SHOULD  
I DO?

Hi!

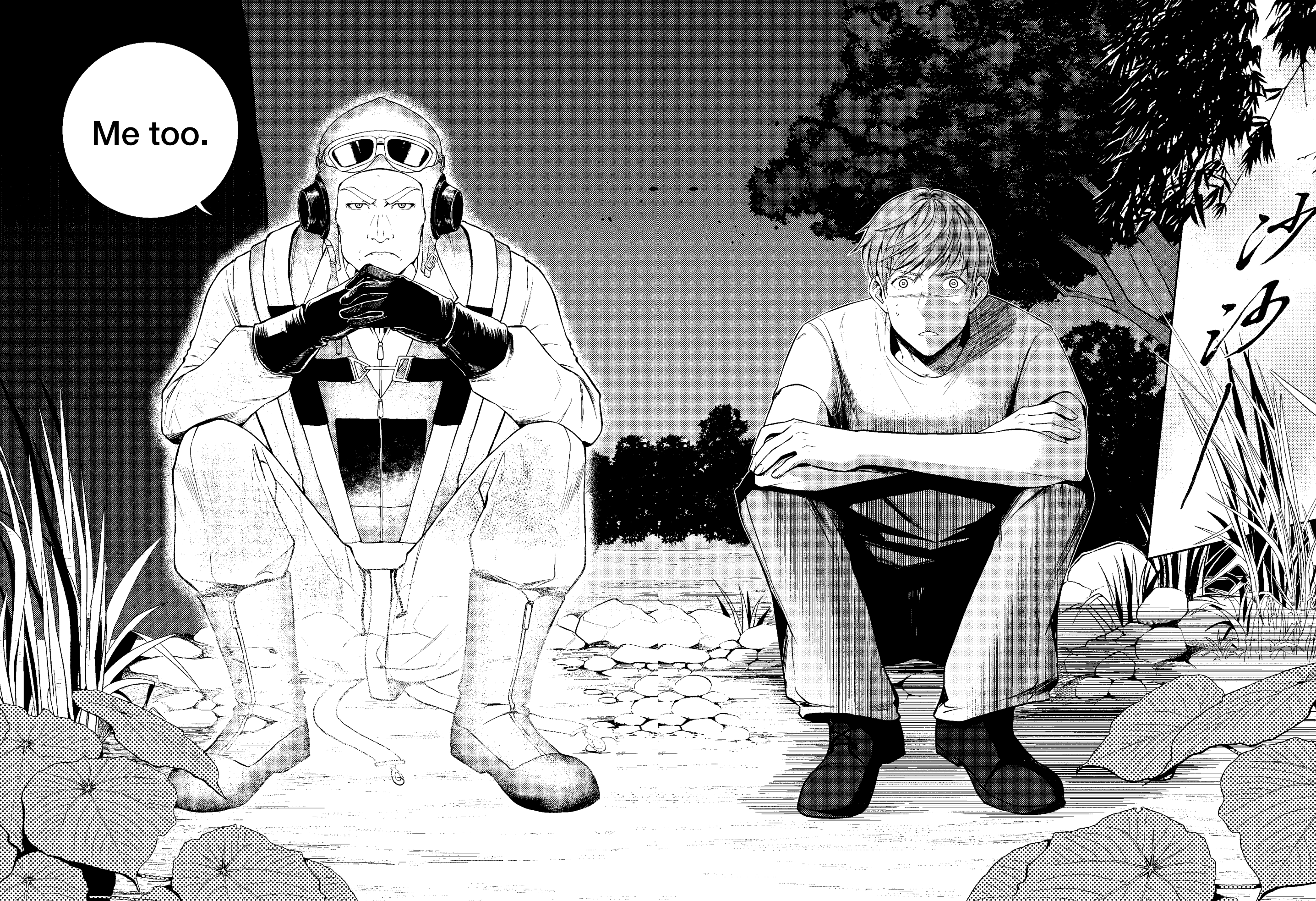


HE'S SO  
LOUD.  
DID HE SEE  
A GHOST OR  
SOMETHING?

IS  
TSUNG-  
LIANG  
HAVING A  
NIGHTMARE  
AGAIN?



Me too.







GIVE ME  
BACK MY  
HOME!

SPLASH.  
DAMN IT!

おは!



IT'S SO  
UNBEARABLE  
...



I SHOULD  
QUICKLY  
CLEAR MY  
MIND AND  
START WORK  
EARLIER.



おは  
I DON'T  
WANT TO  
BE HERE!  
I WANT TO  
GO HOME!

DAMN!



NOT EVEN  
ONE OF MY  
BROTHERS  
FROM MY  
HOMETOWN  
COULD BE  
SAVED...



WOULDN'T  
ANY ONE  
OF YOU IN  
THIS PLACE  
LEAVE?

BUT  
WHY...



# Documenting Place, Understanding History

by Lee Yi-Ni

Translated by Joshua Dyer

## Home: A Common Ground for People of Different Backgrounds and Viewpoints

“Home” intertwines multiple historical viewpoints, using Taiwan as a common setting to explore the lives of an American pilot, Japanese soldiers, ROC personnel, and a Taiwanese woman and her son. These characters’ stories are based on historical figures with added elements from local folk-tales.

The American pilot character is inspired by Charles V. August, a WWII POW at the Huwei military airfield. On January 4, 1945, August was shot down while strafing the airfield, and his plane was later studied by the Japanese. The Taiwanese woman in Japanese clothing is based on local comfort women employed by the Japanese soldiers. The chambers they used are said to remain in the barracks, though this is likely legend. Meanwhile, the ROC airman character

is based on soldiers responsible for maintaining equipment at Huwei airfield post-surrender, including the story of an ROC soldier who had to camp in a Japanese-built water tower due to overcrowding.

## Final Entry: The Life of a Japanese Pilot Stationed in Taiwan

Fuji Takahashi, a character modeled on Japanese naval airmen stationed at Huwei, is inspired by veterans’ memories in *A Squadron of Joy and Pain: Youth at 17*. It highlights the pilots’ love for Taiwan, local snacks, tropical fruits, and the joy of eating rice and meat. Huwei airfield was used for basic flight training, with many recruits’ first flying experiences there. Pilots recalled the thrill of breaking through the clouds, with one exclaiming, “Is this what Heaven is like?”

## Class Dismissed: Interactions Between Local Taiwanese and Recently Arrived Mainlanders

The chapter titled “Class Dismissed” examines post-1949 ROC migration, focusing on a military family housing settlement near the airfield. The children attended the Huwei Air Force Dependents School, later renamed Zheng-Min Elementary. The story depicts the local children being fined for speaking Taiwanese, reflecting the 1960s National Language Movement, which deeply impacted local memories.

## Handkerchief in Hand: Marital Relations Through Rootless Times

The chapter titled “Handkerchief in Hand” explores the anxieties of military families during Taiwan’s ROC retreat. Air force and naval personnel had advantages in securing resources for family relocation, while many army personnel came alone. The story reflects the struggles of these families, uprooted like colonies of duckweed, moving repeatedly due to changing circumstances. This sense of rootlessness and broken promises became part of Taiwan’s military settlement history.

## Summary: Documenting Place, Understanding History, and Wishing for a Peaceful Future

These four stories explore the ethnic tensions and conflicts of Jianguo First Village, using the land as a common denominator to show how each character’s story is part of WWII history. Despite their differing worldviews, mutual understanding ultimately resolves their suffering. *Four Clear Days in Early Summer* not only preserves place memory but also wishes for a deeper understanding of history and a peaceful future free from war.

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

*Lee Yi-Ni, a native of Huwei, Yunlin, and a graduate of the Department of Cultural Heritage Conservation at National Yunlin University of Science and Technology, is dedicated to serving as a bridge between creators and history. She advocates for preserving cultural memory, promoting cultural heritage education, and studying local history. Lee has been actively involved in the cultural preservation of Jianguo Military Dependents’ Village in Huwei.*





# Four Clear Days In Early Summer

## 四個初夏的藍天

**Author:** Chen Xiao-Ya **Illustrator:** Chen Xiao-Ya **Publisher:** Halftone Press

**Date:** 10/2021

**Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

208 pages | 14.8 x 21cm

**Volume:** 1 (END)

**BFT2.0 Translator:** Christina Ng

This book, a decade in the making, focuses on reconciliation and coexistence among different communities. Through poignant supernatural tales, it bridges conversations and memories across time, reflecting the deep historical imprints left on Taiwan over the past century.

It explores the history of Huwei Military Dependents' Village across three distinct periods: the Qing Dynasty, the Japanese colonial era, and the Kuomintang government. Among its stories is that of Air Force officer Tsung-Liang, who followed the Kuomintang government in its retreat to Taiwan after World War II. Settling in a military base left behind by Japan, Tsung-Liang, already haunted by the traumas of war, never expected to face even more terrifying supernatural events—ones that would take him on an extraordinary journey.



## Chen Xiao-Ya

Chen Xiao-Ya is a Taiwanese manga artist known for crafting stories that focus deeply on human emotions. After graduating from university, she founded The Bridge Studio, aiming to connect compelling narratives with readers. Her work has earned her accolades such as First Prize in the 2016 New Taipei City Manga Competition and an Honorable Mention in the 2012 Golden Comic Awards for New Talent. Some of her notable works include *Four Clear Days In Early Summer*, *KANO*, *Black Nightshade on the Wind*, *Xiao Wu Learns Martial Arts*, and *The Secret of Chakra*. Her work has also been featured in publications like CCC Creative Collection, Future Youth, and Future Children. *Four Clear Days In Early Summer* has been selected for the 2022 Books from Taiwan and the Recommended Books Section at the 2023 Angoulême International Comics Festival Taiwan Pavilion.



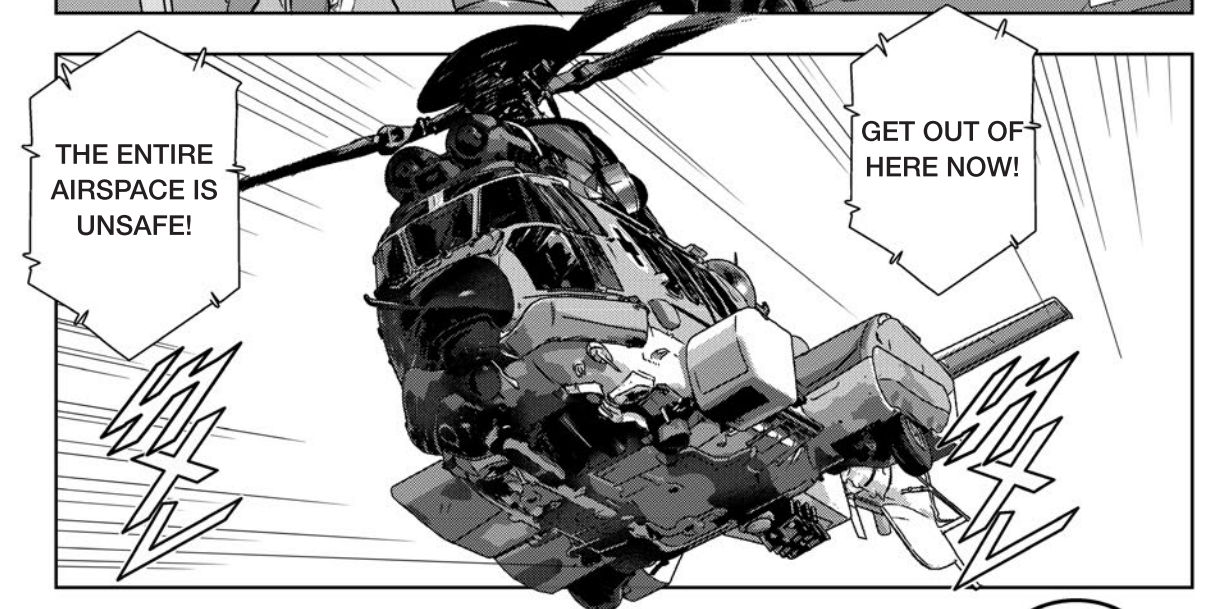
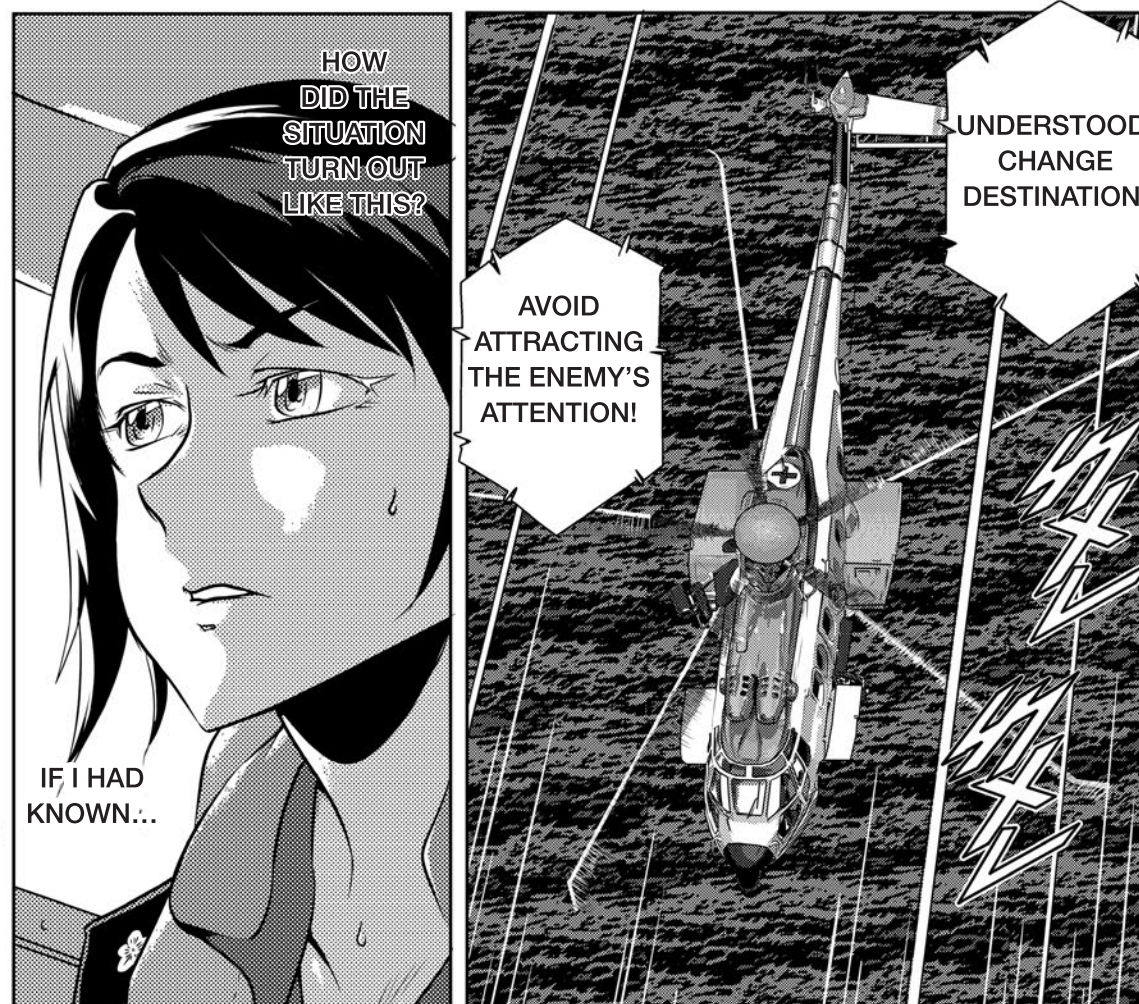
... THE SITUATION  
WOULDN'T HAVE  
ESCALATED TO THIS  
DEGREE.

IF I COULD HAVE  
STOPPED IT BACK  
THEN...

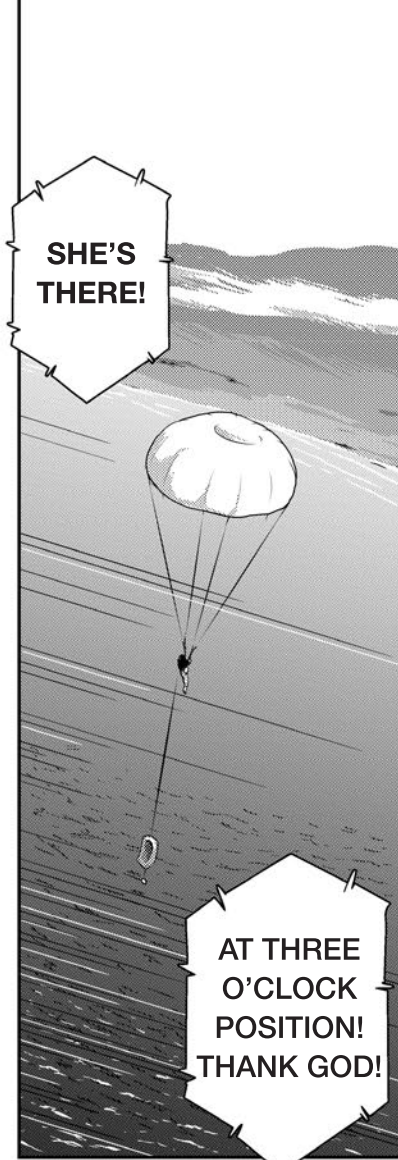
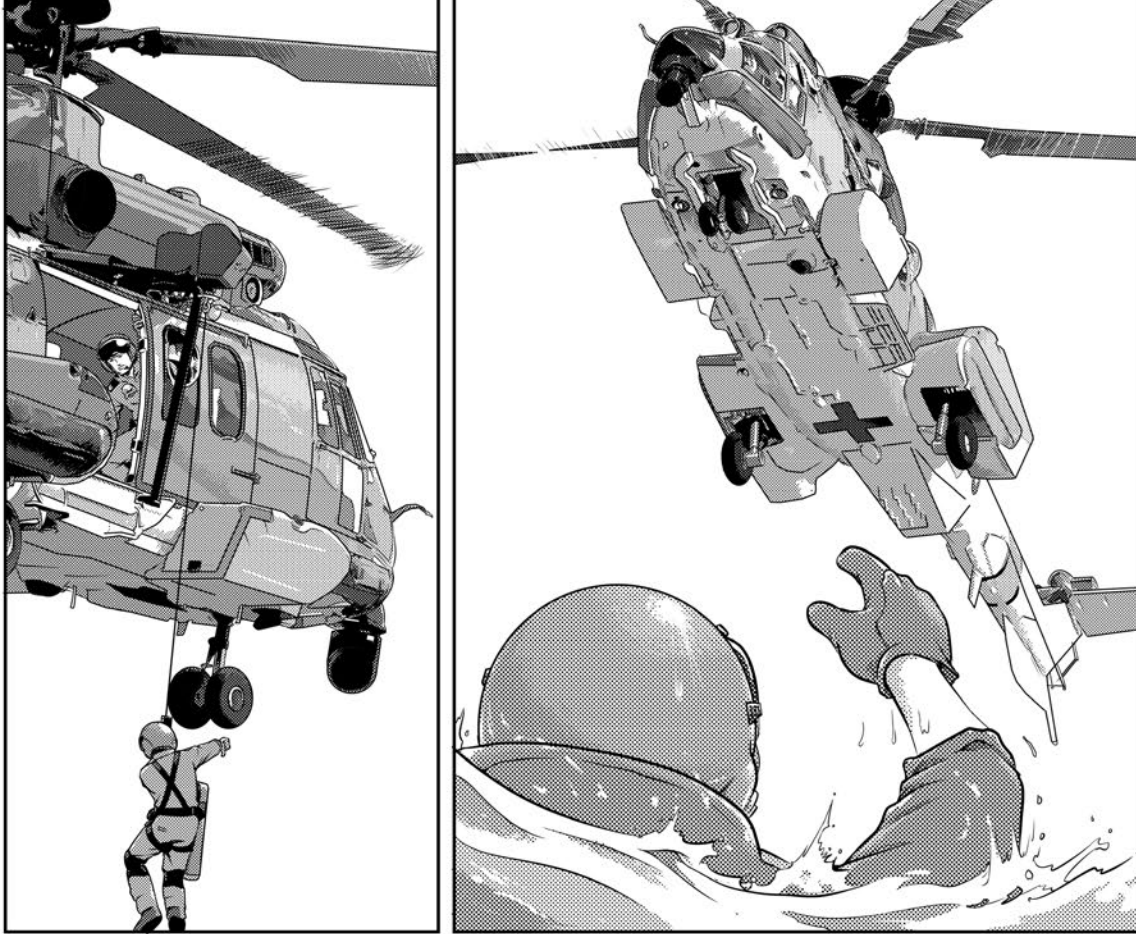
## ACT-1 THE THUCYDIDES TRAP













# If War Breaks Out Between China and Taiwan: An Interview with the Author

## What was the most difficult part of production?

The most challenging aspect was data collection. Although information is readily available online, much of it is riddled with errors or even deliberately misleading content. Additionally, production time was extremely limited, as readers closely followed the latest plot developments, meaning each chapter had to be completed under significant time pressure.

Another difficulty was balancing realism with imagination. Depicting battlefield decisions with complete realism would have made the scenes quite dull. In actual combat, communication is filled with code words and technical jargon. Screens display stacking symbols, changing colors, and fluctuating numbers, leaving operators uncertain if a target was hit or missed without extensive waiting and confirmation. The battlefield essentially becomes mathematical formulas and

abstract symbols on a screen. Not only would this be hard for readers to follow, but it would also be difficult for the author to illustrate effectively.

## Is there a message this manga wants to convey to readers?

This question is quite challenging to answer, as the manga delves into many themes. On a surface level, the military aspects provide a form of military science education or logical reasoning, albeit with some exaggerated elements typical of manga.

On a deeper level, the story examines the relationships between groups and individuals, essentially exploring values. For example, Yuan Chang's conversation with Guangzhi at the end of the first chapter may seem like a simple concern about things spiraling out of control. However, it reflects a deeper discussion about the conflict between collective and individual values—the relationship between

the country and the individual.

When leaders aim to cement their historical legacy through grand goals like national rejuvenation or supremacy, and such progress demands sacrifices from the people, is it justified? Is it worth trading broken families and lost lives for the pursuit of a so-called golden age like those of the Han or Tang dynasties? Historical accounts of figures like Emperor Taizong or Emperor Qianlong often highlight their achievements and military victories, but the stories of soldiers who never returned or the common people crushed by taxes are left untold.

This exploration of values also appears in the street interviews in chapter two. Some characters hope for liberation by the motherland, others dream of independence but want it without effort, while some just want to enjoy life without concern. These are not presented as right or wrong but as reflections of diverse personal value systems.

A similar theme is present in the diplomatic dialogue between Li Jinhua and former U.S. military between Li Jinhua and Myer, a former U.S. military general. Their conversation shows that being devoted to things worth protecting is also a profound expression of values.

## I heard that many events in the manga later happened in real life. Is that true?

Those were just coincidental predictions

and judgments. War itself is never a good thing. The most moving and compelling war narratives are those that depict both the light and dark sides of human nature during conflict, showcasing war's cruelty and futility.

When attempting to create a quality war story, it's natural to lean toward an anti-war perspective, but this approach comes with its own challenges. Taiwan is in a relatively passive position, often portrayed as being on the receiving end of conflict. Since most readers are raised in Taiwan, promoting anti-war messages could be misconstrued as advocating for surrender or weakness. Combined with differences in ethnic and national identity, any depiction of such sensitive issues, no matter how rational, is bound to displease extremists on both sides.

However, this complexity actually enhances creativity. When crafting a story, there's no need to appease these extremes. Instead, imagination can be used to speculate on what might happen if war broke out in a parallel world. Taiwan's relatively free creative environment allows bold predictions and simulations of various scenarios. It's true that some events from the manga have indeed mirrored real-world occurrences, but these are purely coincidental.

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





# Western Pacific War: The Invasion of Taiwan

## 燃燒的西太平洋

**Author:** Shao-Hsien Liang **Illustrator:** Shao-Hsien Liang **Publisher:** Sparks Publishing

**Date:** 12/2023

**Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

256 pages | 18.5 x 26cm **Volume:** 3 (Ongoing)

**BFT2.0 Translator:** Yiyi and Michelle Kuo

The first graphic novel in Taiwan set against the backdrop of the Taiwan Strait Crisis, this work presents a fictional story rooted in real-world scenarios. The author's military background lends authenticity to the narrative, making it both compelling and highly relevant. *Western Pacific War: The Invasion of Taiwan* provides insights from multiple perspectives on Taiwan's current challenges, including facing a formidable adversary and navigating shifting geopolitical dynamics.

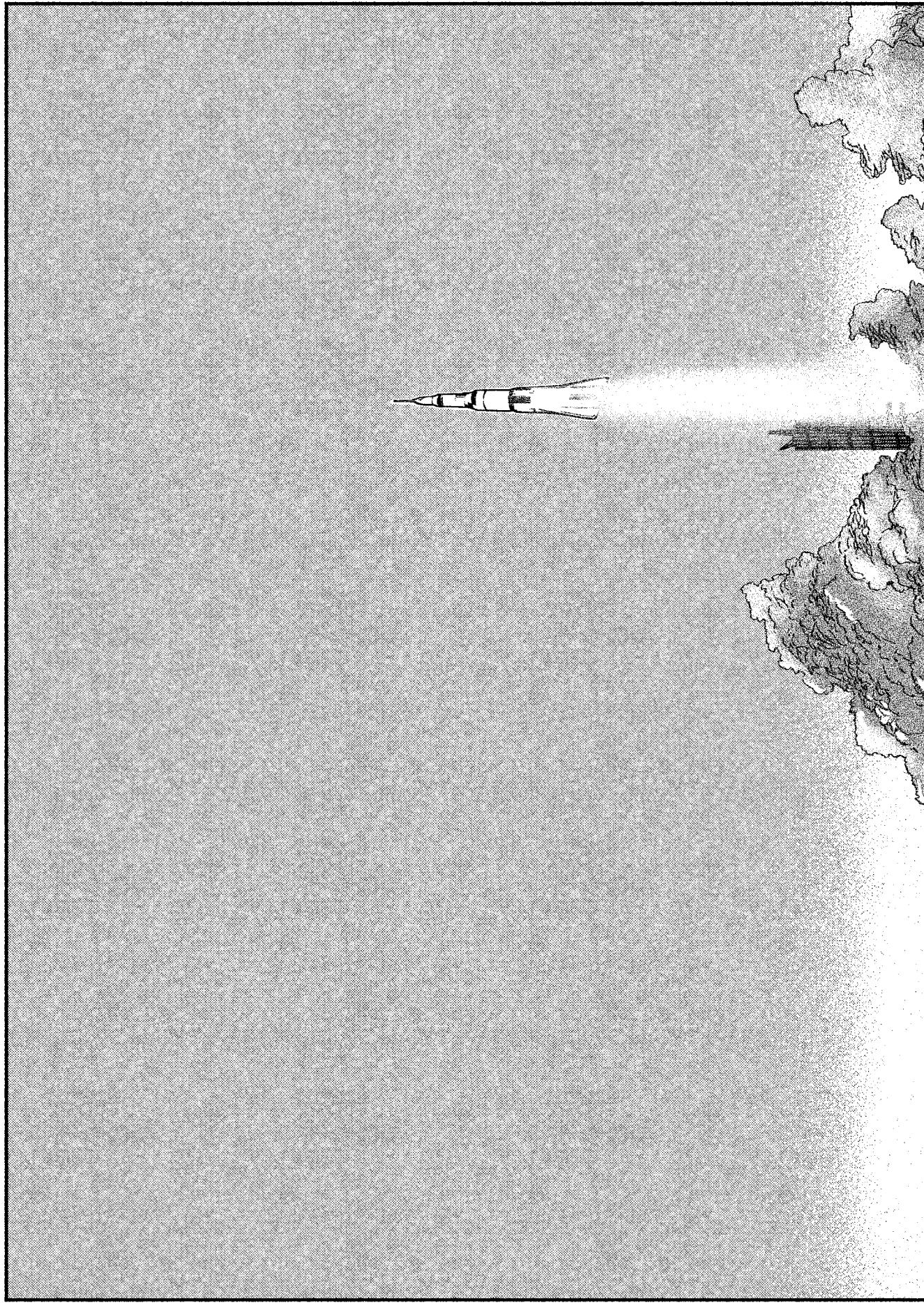
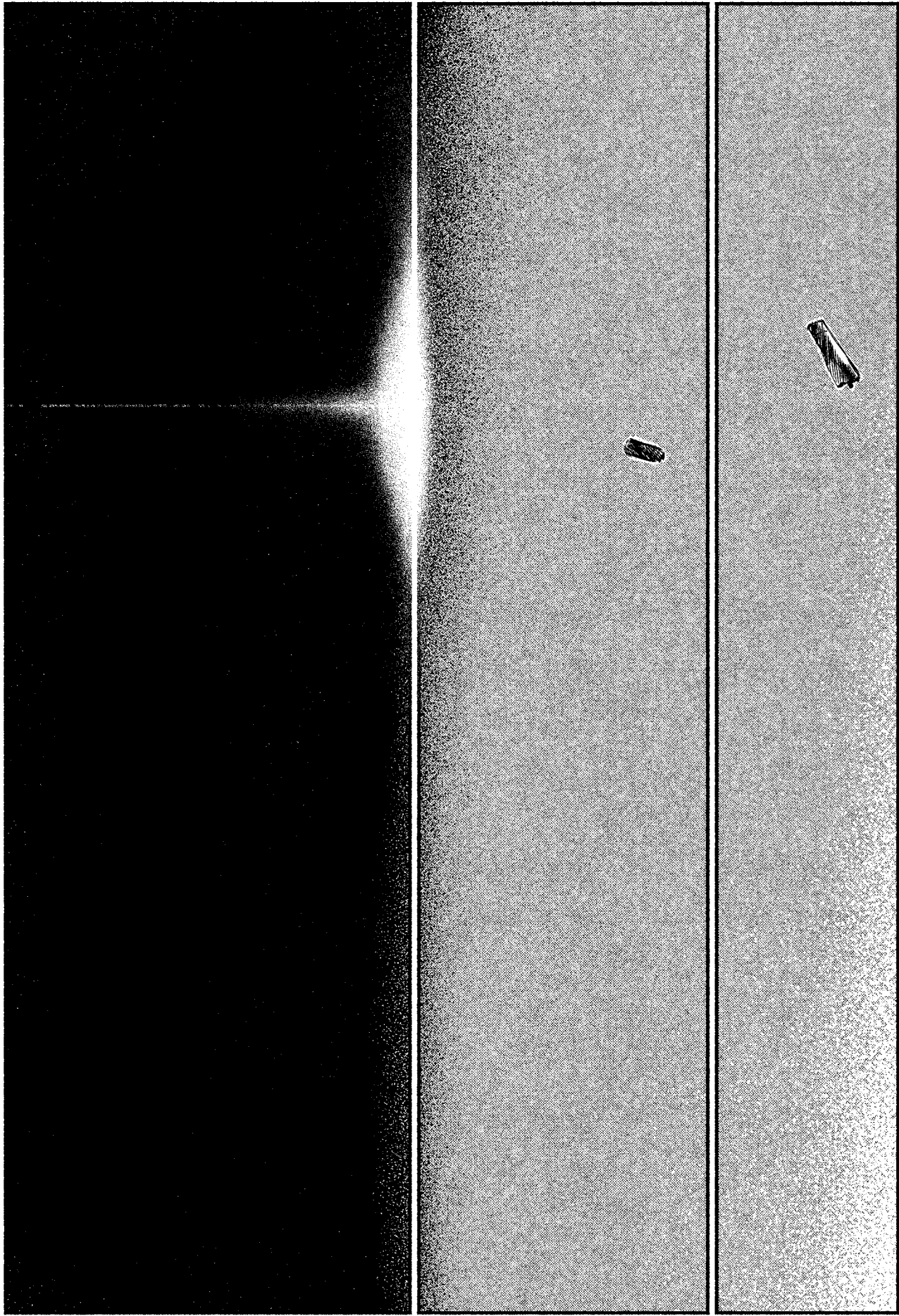
Since its release on December 20, 2023, it has topped sales charts for nearly two months, sparking widespread discussions and curiosity among readers. Its appeal extends to a diverse audience, attracting not only manga and military enthusiasts but also a significant number of female readers, all captivated by its engaging content.



## Shao-Hsien Liang

Shao-Hsien Liang's *Gate of Heaven* was selected for the Taiwan Pavilion's Featured Books Section at both the 2019 Frankfurt Book Fair and the Guadalajara International Book Fair. This series has a planned total of six volumes, with three volumes already published.

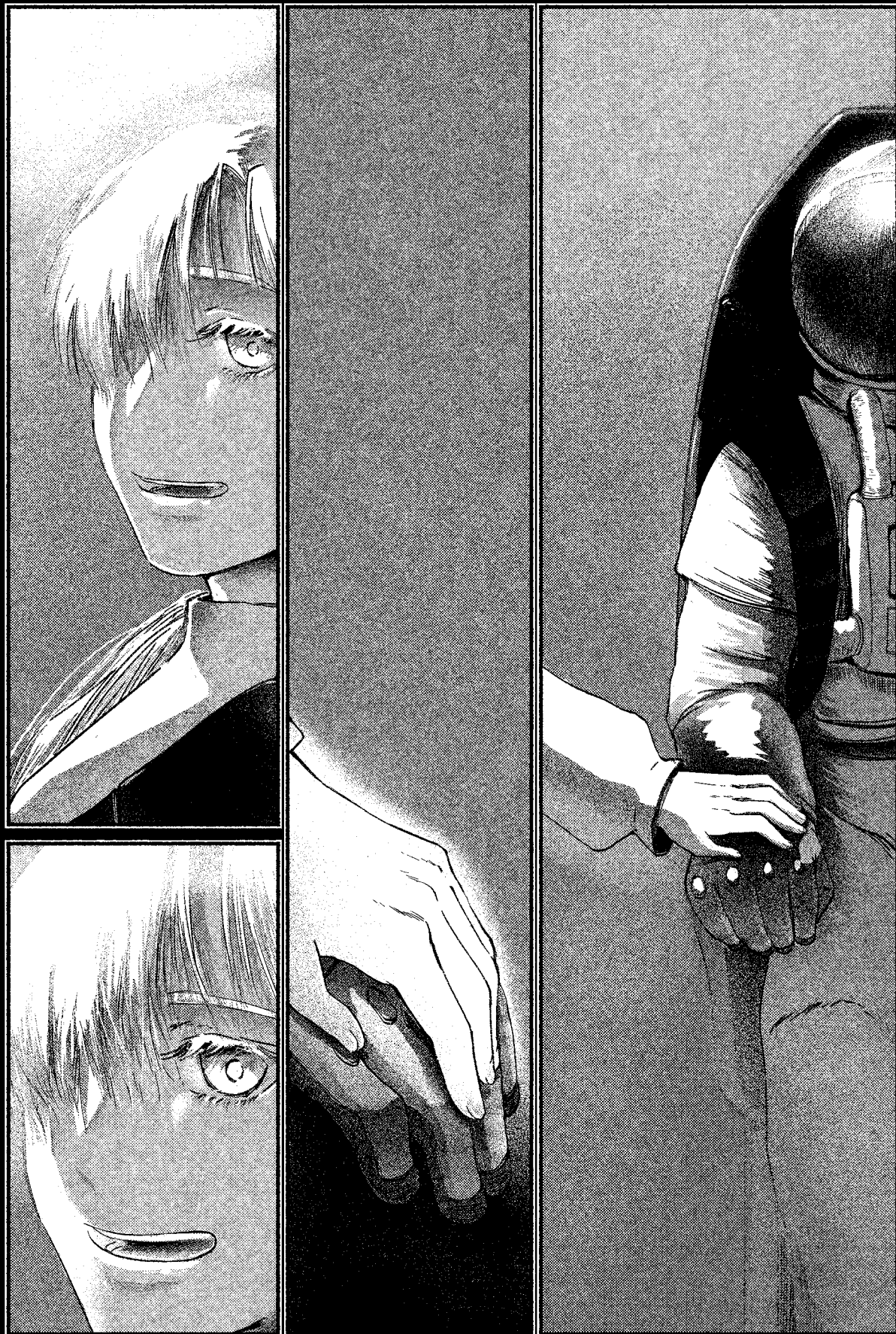




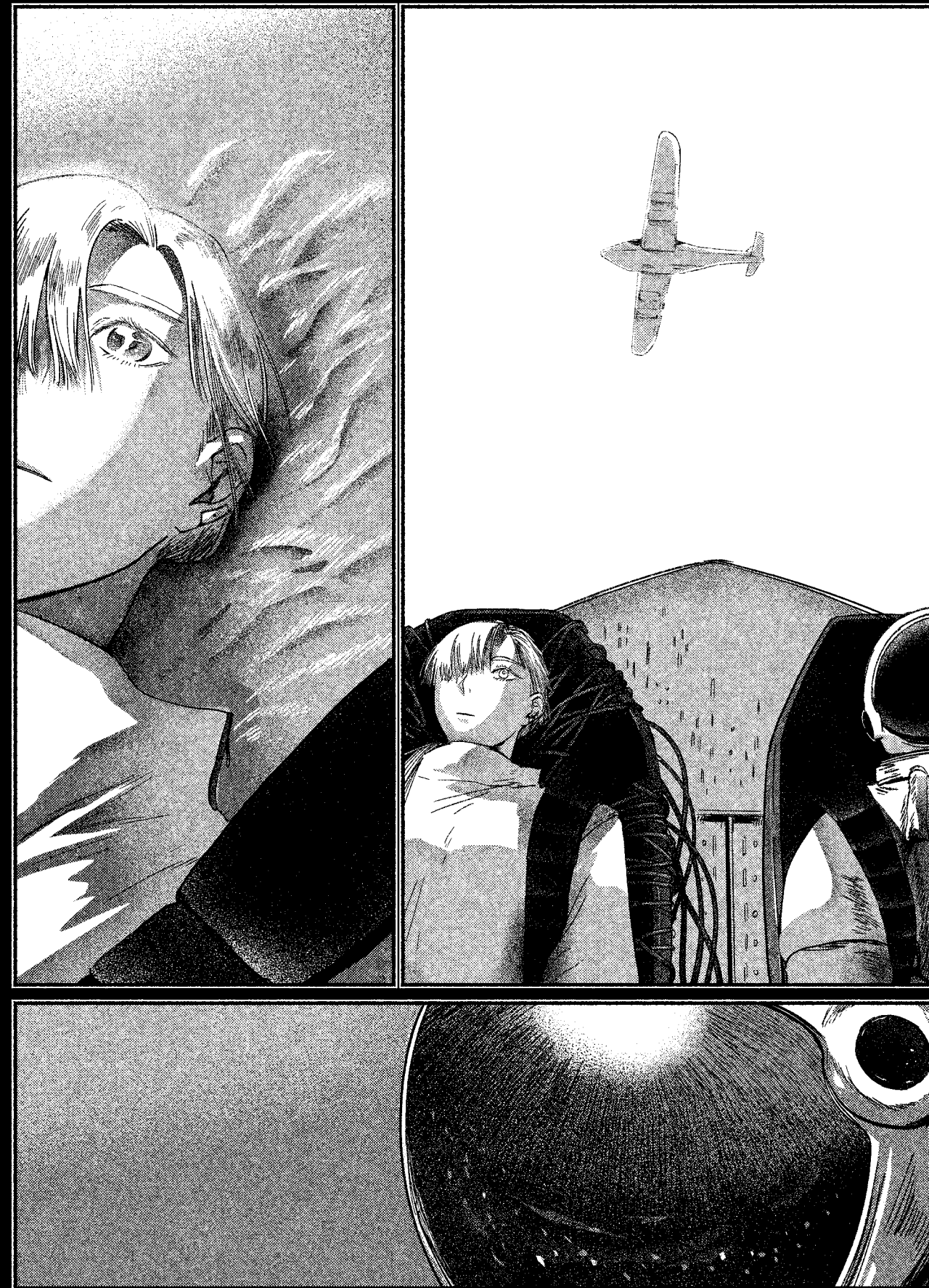








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# Home Is Far Away: Science Fiction Manga *Op.9 The Swan* and Its Creator Greamo

by Li Hua  
(originally published on Okapi)

During her research, artist Greamo realized that while “sci-fi” might seem far removed from reality, it must be firmly grounded in real-world theories—perfectly aligning with the theme she had chosen. The unique traits and irresistible charm of sci-fi captivated her, becoming an effective tool in her quest for answers.

The name “Chiyo” originates from the Italian word Ciao, meaning both “hello” and “goodbye.” Similarly, the robot caretaker “Anders” derives from the Icelandic word *endurfæðingu*, meaning “rebirth.” These names reflect the story’s theme of achieving “eternal companionship.”

Why does Anders, a robot designed to facilitate the “ideal ending,” resemble

a household appliance rather than a humanoid? Greamo explained, “Because its primary function is surveillance and baby care, this design is practical. If it were humanoid, it would be significantly more expensive and might even incur entertainment taxes. Considering the social structure, a simple-shaped robot is something most middle-class families could afford.”

In keeping with this logical design, Anders lacks facial expressions to convey emotions. Greamo explained that this absence forced her to explore more subtle, indirect ways for the robot to express feelings. This approach deepened the chemistry between Anders and Chiyo, allowing their bond to grow in unexpected

ways.

Fans often ask, “Are Chiyo and Anders lovers?” particularly since the term mechanical love is prominently featured on the book’s cover.

In reply, Greamo says that such a term is “beautiful.” “It elevates inanimate objects to the same level as humans, making them ‘encounterable.’ This gives us the choice to meet or not meet a robot. It reduces anthropocentric bias. To me, respect, empathy, and love are the most beautiful things.”

From a short story to a full-length novel, Greamo explained that along the way, she consulted many friends for their opinions, and those around her gave various concrete and insightful feedback. She carefully considered their ideas, which became key in making the work more balanced and complete. “My editor and I both had a lot of empathy for the characters. We did a lot of research to understand the motivations behind their behaviors,” Greamo shared. They aimed to maintain control over the rhythm and structure of each page while ensuring the visuals didn’t become overly complex or emotional. As she explained, “It’s like a conductor being careful not to focus on the trumpet when the string section should be quiet.”

At the same time, she allowed the characters to move naturally within the story, observing and analyzing their

psychological dynamics. This approach let the characters develop their own chemistry.

In her effort to “respond to the reader’s emotions,” Greamo welcomed multifaceted feedback, allowing the characters to evolve organically. The result was *Op. 9 The Swan*, a story she intended to share as a work for the public.

This seemingly delicate comic artist, who approaches everything with great care, may have learned to “let go” of fixed ideas. By moving forward along the river of opportunity, she inevitably “leaves something behind”—like *Op. 9 The Swan*.

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

*Li Hua has worked as a web and animation designer at an advertising company and as an associate editor for a newspaper supplement. She has contributed columns and illustrations to newspapers and magazines and has taught creative courses and delivered lectures on reading and writing. With many years of experience as editor-in-chief at a publishing house, Li Hua specializes in designing and editing art books, picture books, and comics. She has overseen the publication of more than 100 books.*





# Op.9 The Swan

九號天鵝

**Author:** Greamo **Illustrator:** Greamo **Publisher:** Kadokawa Taiwan Corporation

**Date:** 02/2024

**Rights contact:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

334 pages | 14.7 x 21cm

**Volume:** 1 (END)

**BFT2.0 Translator:** Chris MacDonald

Chiyo, a baby boy cloned from the genes of a once-renowned astronaut, was born on a cold winter night, carrying high hopes for one day flying into the cosmos. By his side since childhood has been his caretaker robot, Anders, a constant presence and source of guidance. However, as Chiyo grows older, Anders begins to age, facing the inevitable need for an upgrade.

Aware of his unique origins, Chiyo often gazes at the sky, his favorite sight, grappling with the realization that he isn't truly "special." Yet, he remains steadfast, unwilling to compromise on the dreams he holds close to his heart. In this vast universe, is there a place where he and Anders can truly belong?

Set against a steampunk backdrop featuring clones and robots as protagonists, the story delves into the essence of "self-affirmation" and explores the many forms of "love." It provokes deep reflection while engaging readers with the emotional decisions faced by the characters. With its accessible sci-fi setting and universal themes, the book appeals to readers of all ages worldwide.



**Author Greamo**

Greamo is a Taiwanese manga artist. *Op. 9 The Swan* was initially serialized on the Creative Comic Collection platform and later published as a standalone volume by Taiwan Kadokawa. Greamo has garnered a devoted following for this work. Selected for the 2024 Bangkok Book Fair, *Op. 9 The Swan* remains Greamo's most recognized work.



**Right to Left**

- 166 **Op.9 The Swan**  
by Greamo • translated by Chris MacDonald • published by Kadokawa Taiwan Corporation
- 156 **Western Pacific War: The Invasion of Taiwan**  
by Shao-Hsien Liang • translated by Yiyi and Michelle Kuo • published by Sparks Publishing
- 146 **Four Clear Days in Early Summer**  
by Chen Xiao-Ya • translated by Christina Ng • published by Halftone Press
- 136 **The Gift**  
by Ebi • translated by Evian Pan and Michelle Kuo • published by Ever Glory Publishing
- 126 **The Gardener of Verses**  
by Tonn Hsu • translated by Lorena Rivas Kuang • published by Dyna Books
- 116 **Dong Hua Chun Barbershop**  
by Ruan Guang-Min • translated by Jenna Tang and Michelle Kuo • published by Yuan-Liou Publishing
- 106 **Gei Shu Dou's Sweet & Antique Vacation**  
by Kiya Chang • translated by Kenny Yim • published by Gaea Books
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**Left to Right**

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by KUCHIXO • translated by Yichen Hao • published by Tōkhiu Books
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by Ri Shia Zao • translated by Michelle Kuo • published by Gamania Digital Entertainment
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