

台北

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Vol. 11

TAIPEI

Great Taste With Tradition

and Innovation

Old-Time Flavors – New

Heartwarming Touches

With Taipei Fun Pass, Travel Around

Northern Taiwan With No Limits!



**Transforming the Mundane
Into Magic**

**Design Ingenuity Brings Soft
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Creative City Taipei Lights Up!

On these gradually warming days of early spring, one can see that Taipei is indeed a city full of creativity – empowered by wide-ranging specialty industries and the new thinking of the younger generation. In this issue, the cover story introduces the transformation of old traditional eateries, and there are also stories of startups in handmade shoes, creative clothing, cultural and creative products, and floral design.

“Let’s break the mold!” says 2018 Taipei Lantern Festival art coordinator, He Jingyang, who is better known as A-Fu, acoustic guitarist and band leader of Sodagreen. This year’s lantern festival exceeded past participation by inviting more than 200 artists, who brought to the festival more creative energy than ever before with their excellent art works. We see how these young interdisciplinary artists applied their various talents in presenting the beauty of a traditional festival.

This issue of *TAIPEI* also shows you how to use Taipei Fun Pass to travel around northern Taiwan. Within the validation period of this pass, you can take public transportation to see the flower blossoms of Yangmingshan, visit Beitou for the Long Nice Hot Spring, the neighborhood’s oldest existing bathhouse. Moreover, you can wander around the Jodori area along Zhongshan North Road to experience its atmosphere of past and present, and stroll the back alleys of Chifung Street, enjoying the intermingling of old and new. You never need to waste time buying transportation tickets, and thus, you have more time to explore Taipei within the validity of the pass!

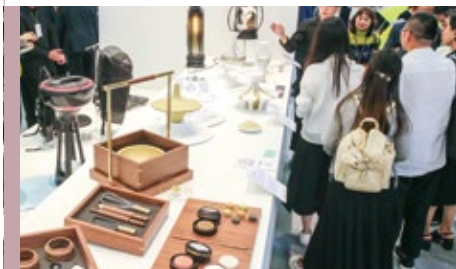
Surely, in senior journalist Nojima Tsuyoshi’s eyes, food is Taiwan’s most attractive feature, especially the soymilk stores, which one can find on almost every corner, and the inexpensive street food. This correlates with the dish Jiao Tong recommends: Taiwanese salty congee, which has a taste that everyday people truly appreciate. Also in this edition, we include in-depth reports on two chefs, who have special ways of pursuing their craft: Jewel Tsai, sharing her homemade banquet tradition, and Vincent Chen, who pays strict attention to his ingredients and shares with us his idea of a natural diet. Enjoy!



CONTENTS

COVER STORY

- 04 Embracing Tradition & Innovation –
Breaking Through to New Horizons
**New Movements in Taipei
Industry**



- 07 Customized Style –
Setting Future Trends
**Creatively Playing With Fashion;
Pioneering New Currents**

- 11 Great Taste With Tradition and
Innovation
**Old-Time Flavors –
New Heartwarming Touches**

- 16 Transforming the Mundane
Into Magic
**Design Ingenuity Brings Soft
Warmth to Daily Living**



WHAT'S NEW

- 20 **With Taipei Fun Pass, Travel
Around Northern Taiwan With
No Limits!**
- 22 Spring, Happiness, Love
2018 Taipei City Azalea Festival

- 27 **Two Cultures United
Through Flowers**



FUN TAIPEI

- 28 Beitou's Old Houses and Local
Celebrities

- 31 Marshal Zen Garden and
Zhang Xueliang



- 34 Long Nice Hot Spring and Japanese
Crown Prince Hirohito

- 36 The Fusion of Old and New
**Jodori Area Along Zhongshan N.
Road & Chifeng Street – The Epitome
of a Hardworking Community**

- 42 Walk, Think and Write
Nojima Tsuyoshi Savors Taipei

- 46 Avid Explorer of Our Globe's Cultures
**Jasmine Huggins, Ambassador of
Saint Christopher and Nevis to the
Republic of China (Taiwan)**



ALL ABOUT CUISINE

- 50 The Perfect Temperature
Jewel Tsai's Elegant Homemade Banquet



- 54 Turning Local Ingredients Into an Amazing Feast
Vincent Chen Pursues Original Flavors

- 56 The Ideal Taiwanese Breakfast:
Authentic Salty Congee

LOOKING FOR ART

- 59 A-Fu Uses Musician's Sensation to Give Tradition a New Look
Add Creation to the Lantern Festival and Pass on Happiness



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Embracing Tradition & Innovation – Breaking Through to New Horizons

New Movements in Taipei Industry

Article | Wang Ruifen

Photos | Taipei City Government Department of Economic Development, UDndata

In 2016, the city of Taipei was a large-scale exhibition venue, serving as the 2016 World Design Capital (2016台北世界設計之都). As host, it was a showcase for international trends and fashions, with global warming, environmental issues, and LOHAS themes interacting dynamically to spark design concepts for a new century. This was in concert with Taipei City Government's promotion of four major areas of economic industry: "Innovation and Entrepreneurship," "Food & Agriculture Symbiosis," "Life Industries," and "Energy Savings & Sustainability." Highlighting aesthetics ranging from diet and dress to life practice, Taipei's various industries are being given encouragement and guidance in developing this city's unique metropolitan characteristics.

Innovation and Creativity – Driving the New Industrial Revolution

Taipei City is both Taiwan's capital and its leading



Only products with both solid design and quality can go international. (Photo: Department of Economic Development, Taipei City Government)

city for talent and resources, and possesses a rich cultural heritage. While striking a balance between tradition and new prospects, it showcases the soft power of innovation and reformation. Taipei City Government's Department of Economic Development (產業發展局) plays a leading role to assist players from different industries in embracing bold initiatives. Lin Chung-chieh (林崇傑), Commissioner of the Department of Economic Development, believes that the City's historical





Taipei stages exhibitions that bring together talent and resources to develop a more distinctive economic culture. (Photo: UDNdata, *Taipei Pictorial* No. 600)

ebbs and flows have left it with a particularly rich and diversified accumulation of cultural components. Add to this, the local spirit of maverick determination, and the result is a stimulus of wave upon wave of bright cultural creativity!

Not only creativity is required in creating a product, subjecting it to market trials, proceeding to brand creation, marching onto the international stage, and formulating a sustainable business model are also needed. Even more important are professional marketing considerations. Chairman of the Taipei Young Entrepreneurs Association (台北市青年創業協會), Song Jingda (宋京達) uses his own career in the bridal wear sector to point out how innovation and creativity are indispensable in today's industry. Even more necessary than packaging design are solidification of product image and quality, and a promise-to-self to step onto the international stage.



(Photo: Department of Economic Development, Taipei City Government)

Convergence of Innovative Talent – Creating New Economic Impetus


In the past, most industries had been focusing on land, labor, and capital. Lin thinks that what is most crucial today is how talent flows internationally. Through talent exchange and cooperation, creative energies are stimulated, and in a global environment



Taipei has a rich diversity of cultural elements, demonstrating the soft power of demand for newness and change. (Photo: UDNdata, *Taipei Pictorial* No. 600)

human resources represent competitiveness. Creating an environment that lures talent, and forming a field of healthy competition and mutual stimulation are the directives that Taipei is resolutely focused on. When a city successfully fosters the clustering of diverse new creative industries, a unique lifestyle will emerge in accordance with time and conditions. A distinct city personality and allure takes form, talent is attracted, and capital pours in. Excellence and diversified development is promoted in all domains, crafting a new atmosphere for Taipei industry.

In the Taipei fashion, culinary, and cultural-creative industries, beyond giving free rein to

innovation, traditional culture and global outlook have also been integrated, creating a style and character uniquely its own. Many common elements of life that we've taken for granted have been given creative added-value, thus showcasing the vibrant originality and industrial dynamism at work here. The international audience has been continually bedazzled, and "Taipei" has become synonymous with fashion, cuisine, and cultural creativity. Whether its handmade shoes and unique apparel from the fashion industry, the transformation of old eateries, the beautification of life through floral design, or the infusion of concrete into everyday articles, all these inject vitality into the city. This has become a key force in Taipei's transformation. 

Customized Style – Setting Future Trends

Creatively Playing With Fashion; Pioneering New Currents

Article | Huang Xingruo
Photos | Huang Jianbin



In this era of mass-produced goods, exclusive personally-designed footwear is gradually establishing itself. (Photo: Huang Jianbin)

Leafing through the pages of fashion history, one quickly discovers that trends are often hot for just a moment. Those still standing after undergoing their “baptism of fire” are often dubbed, “classics.” The biggest challenge for the industry is thus how to avoid being submerged in the ever-rushing flow of changing styles. In Taipei, in the midst of the myriad of famous international brands and fast fashions, another wave, fueled by strong design energy and the aid of markets and the Internet, has quietly appeared. These offerings, unique in style and bursting with personality, have been gradually capturing the hearts of ever more Taipei consumers, and of international buyers as well. A new fashion force has been formed that deserves attention.

AIKA Handmade Shoes – Exclusively Custom-Made Finery for the Feet

Shoes are a crucial element in the fashion industry. Nowadays, they are generally mass-produced in large factories. This keeps prices low, but results in a lack of uniqueness. As a result, a demand for customized hand-crafted shoe ware is slowly growing.

The story behind AIKA Handmade Shoes (愛花製作所) is a fashion-industry love story. To reveal his feelings of affection for the “female lead,” the “male lead” designs a pair of Mary Jane shoes on his own. He wins her heart, and at the same moment the idea of making handmade customized shoes is born. The heroine becomes the hero’s partner in both life and business, and because she is a florist, their shop is christened “Love of Flowers” (愛花), translated as AIKA.





At AIKA Handmade Shoes, Chen Yongchang personally crafts high-quality footwear that is comfortable and distinctive. (Photo: Huang Jianbin)

From their beginnings in a small market beside a café, male protagonist Chen Yongchang (陳永昌) and female protagonist Xiuhan (琇涵) traveled all around Taipei, setting up pop-up stores in all sorts of locations, including markets big and small, Eslite (誠品) outlets, and Huashan 1914 Creative Park (華山1914文化創意產業園區). Their reputation slowly spread via word-of-mouth and the Internet, and a solid base of loyal customers was built, including buyers coming from Hong Kong, Europe, and North America.

For Chen Yongchang, handmade shoes have a “true” character that machine-made ones cannot match. From designing, to cutting fabric, to cutting leather, lasting, polishing, sewing, and gluing, Chen brings to life each pair of his shoes exactly in accordance with his clients’ specifications. Each customer picks his or her own materials, colors, and patterns, giving each pair its one-of-a-kind style.

Though rapid change is a fashion industry norm, the confidence that the Chen husband-wife team has in making custom handmade-shoes is constant. “The types that people like may change,” Chen Yongchang says, while adding that price is not always the sole consideration when people purchase. Today one segment may consider brand, while another prioritizes functionality, and another values uniqueness. Makers of custom handmade footwear stand ready to fulfill all such demands.

Chen describes his creations as elegant articles of attire that are comfortable, affordable, and like none other. This enterprise, in which the “AI” in “AIKA” means “love,” is guided by the precise foot measurements taken from each customer. This represents a new and distinct direction in the Taipei footwear industry.



Handmade customized shoes allow each customer to choose his/her own materials, colors, and patterns, giving each pair a distinctive style. (Photo: Huang Jianbin)



LOOPY's Lin Guagua injects unbridled creativity into her fashionable attire. (Photo: Huang Jianbin)

LOOPY – Funny Ideas You Can Wear!

“Too many people nowadays call themselves ‘Gaga’ (嘎嘎), so from this moment forth I shall be called Lin Guagua (林呱呱).” (Note: “Guagua” means a duck’s quack in Chinese.) This was the first statement out of the mouth of LOOPY owner, Lin, when we sat down for an interview. The very definite loopiness of the statement, obviously intended for its shock value, was indeed appropriate considering the surroundings; for the merchandise in this store is all of the same character.

The slang word “loopy” means “silly or goofy,” and at the LOOPY store, nonsense humor is on

display everywhere. People can’t help but break out in smiles and chuckles. The two owners, a male/female team, are strikingly young-looking, and in fact opened their shop when still university juniors.

Laughing, Lin Guagua talks about one item she created while in university. “I studied industrial design,” she says, “and a teacher asked everyone to design a toaster. I drew mine as one of those crocodile-tooth games – finish the game and the mouth would snap shut with a ‘Bang’ and the toasting would begin!” The team’s beyond-the-norm talents, were clearly on display in their college days – but their whimsical ideas were time and again rejected by the instructors. “One factor in finally deciding to open a store was our refusal to submit, and another was our desire to show off the work we were producing; so we started with the Internet, and then just started hustling around to markets.” Voila – LOOPY was born!

In addition to studying merchandise design, the two students were busy learning how to run a shop in their junior year. After working at a loss in the beginning, the shop’s revenue is, at last, positive now. The many setbacks they have faced along the way can be seen as the “high cost of tuition” in their entrepreneurship education, but fortunately through this process they have been able to keep working towards their original goals. As before, they continue to take the “fantasies” inside their heads and turn them into real designs, passing on the joy and mirth they both exude.



LOOPY attire and ornaments display the rich creativity of the designers. (Photo: Huang Jianbin)

With today's emphasis on low price and fast fashion, conditions in the Taiwan apparel industry are very challenging. However, Guagua thinks that MIT (Made In Taiwan) is now synonymous with high quality, and thus they pay great attention to details, from the selection of quality cotton and other fabric, to lathe work and examinations on whether dyes are eco-friendly or not. In these areas and in all other matters, anything less than precision is not an option. Perhaps this is why LOOPY has seen steady

growth at a time when the overall economy has been stagnant.

Refusing to blindly pursue the trends of the day and sticking to their own path, LOOPY is forging a new direction in the Taipei fashion industry. Bolstered by such things as high-quality fabric and irresistible designs that are humorous and healing, their shop is proof positive of the unlimited possibilities open to young entrepreneurs! 📍

Great Taste With Tradition and Innovation **Old-Time Flavors – New Heartwarming Touches**

Article | Zhang Wenxin
Photos | Huang Jianbin



(Photo: Huang Jianbin)



Honoring their legacy while effecting a transformation, Ren Jialun and her husband have ensured the survival of the 70-plus year-old Hoshing Rice Cake Shop brand. (Photo: Huang Jianbin)

The taking of food is not merely to fill the stomach. It is much more, a veritable “regional embodiment and cultural showcase.” Taipei City is a magnificent grand bazaar of many delicacies, heritage businesses, and innovative cuisine. Taipei “food culture” is an all-encompassing bazaar, extending from major streets down to lanes and alleys. In recent years, the city government has energetically provided guidance to Taipei’s unique industries and enterprises during this transformation. For example, food emporia have been assisted in such initiatives as brand reengineering, marketing, and the building of a convenient and secure payment system. This has enhanced not only the quality of the food and reinvigorated brand value, but also the value of Taipei’s tourism. The innate power of such endeavors cannot be underestimated.

Hoshing 1947 – Every Morsel Crafted With a Sense of Responsibility

Shanghai Hoshing Rice Cake Shop (上海合興糕粿店) opened way back in 1947. Over its 70-plus year history, it had always stood tall as the leading shop of its type at Nanmen Market (南門市場). In recent times, however, it had not been able to appeal to the younger generation’s eating habits, and its consumer base was in decline. Taipei youth seemed to know almost nothing of the wonderful tastes of traditional cakes and pastries.

Second-generation proprietor, Ren Taixing (任台興) knew that his brand must undergo change. But he did not know how to proceed. Later, when his daughter, Ren Jialun (任佳倫) and son-in-



Flavorful cakes and pastries, part of Hoshing 1947's new offerings, retain the old-time tastes and traditions. (Photo: Huang Jianbin)

law, Zheng Kuangyou (鄭匡佑) returned from the UK after completing design studies, they began presenting younger ideas. The decision was made to search for new pathways while upholding old-time taste traditions, so they launched an all-new business in Taipei's old Dadaocheng (大稻埕) neighborhood. Hoshing 1947 (合興壹玖肆柒) is very different from the old family shop in Nanmen Market. The space is intended as a stage on which to tell the story of the family brand. It is not large, but offers a wide selection of snacks around the front door, most of them original items from the old shop. Thus, long-time customers can find familiar tastes in a new space.

Treading a fine line between tradition and innovation, the two generations' ideas are, of course, different, and must be reconciled and polished.



Looking back at the early days of the enterprise, Jialun and husband Kuangyou remember how family members had to be persuaded to adopt the new way of thinking about the brand. This included developing new pastries and creating a new storefront, while safeguarding the family's traditional flavors. Amidst the many trade-offs and challenges they faced, full family support was a constant, and while new-style cakes and pastries were being developed, Jialun's father was there to pass on his baking experience, assuring retention of the original family taste within the new products.

"I'd really like to see our customers' expressions when they taste our fresh-made pastries," he says. Originally said casually as a wish of the owner, this has since become Hoshing 1947's business mantra. Sponge rice cake tastes best when first out of a steamer; but changes when it gets cold or is reheated. To ensure premium taste for patrons, the steamers are kept hot throughout the day from the moment of opening, and items will be specially steamed if any purchaser asks for it. Thus, the fragrant, soft sponge rice cake can be enjoyed while one is still in the store! The master bakers knock the full, plump sponges out of their molds one after another. The full traditional process may be more time-consuming and tiring, but



Healing Herbar innovates while maintaining the traditional beverage and herbal culture.
(Photo: Huang Jianbin)

the delicate taste and dense texture is only possible with the handmade process.

The young husband and wife team has accepted the mission to carry on this heritage shop's legacy, making decisions on what may be changed and what may not. "Our ingredients are all simple and natural. Grandfather passed on these timeless practices. With each morsel, each mouthful, comes great responsibility." They are well aware of the current trend in transforming traditional old shops, and that innovative spatial design and product packaging can dazzle the eye. But to ensure a brand's continuance, "product" is the foundation. Rejecting easy compromise is the path to survival for a vintage brand.

Healing Herbar – Drink a Bowl of Tea for Body and Soul

Healing Herbar (老濟安青草店), a Chinese medicinal-herb shop, is located on Herb Lane (青草巷) in Wanhua District. The family has been in the medicinal-herb trade for three generations, with business steady throughout the years. Nevertheless, proprietor Wang Ronggui (王榮貴) is deeply conscious of the decline in traditional "herbal culture." Consumers just don't know the pros and cons when it comes to distinguishing quality. Therefore, the idea of transformation arise in accordance with the "Rejuvenate Old Shops Project" promoted by the Department of Economic Development, Taipei City Government.

Wang Baiyan (王柏諺) has, since childhood, been at the side of his father learning all he can about herbs, absorbing deep knowledge on different medicines. Leaving his job to run the family business, he worked with his father and a team of professional consultants to change the original inventory area in the rear of the shop into an herbal-culture education space, creating an enterprise and a new brand into the bargain.

As for the attitude that herbal medicine is a sunset industry, Wang feels that this stems from the public's imperfect understanding. Since transforming the place into a tea shop, the old long bar has become more intimate, with customers enjoying a full-set tea-making experience there, while smell-sampling wormwood and learning the virtues of herbs to sight, taste, and touch. Whether it's the office worker crowd looking to boost mood and attitude with a "spirit refreshing tea" (神清氣爽茶), or the people wanting to enhance health and fitness with the "humifuse euphorbia herb and isatis root tea" (地錦板藍茶), consumers learn how to heal internally through external application. Offerings such as those mentioned transform medicinal herbs into tea drinks consumers can more easily accept. And in addition to beverages served on-site, takeaway bottles and teabags are also offered.

Healing Herbar has transformed itself into an herbal-tea bar, and provides patrons with fun DIY tea-drink experience.
(Photo: Huang Jianbin)



Healing Herbar has recast itself into a new-style space attracting young people to learn about herbal culture.
(Photo: Huang Jianbin)

Only by marrying innovation and precedent can there be herbal culture survival. Transformation of sales space and packaging can indeed attract a more diversified customer demographic. Healing Herbar also cooperates with community groups in staging promotional events, and hopes that the utilization of cultural guides will help people know the medicinal-herb trade better, while preserving the knowledge and old-time beverage traditions passed on by ancestral generations. 📌



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