

KH Style



Delivering Culinary Spectaculars at Roadside Banquets

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Delivering Culinary Magic at Roadside Banquets: Catering Chef Tang Cin-lu

©English translation: Hou Ya-ting

©Photos by YJ Chen

On a typical Saturday, the atmosphere at Nanhai Tzi-chu Temple in Kaohsiung's Neimen District is relaxed. Tonight, however, caterer Chef Mr. Tang Cin-lu is serving a roadside wedding banquet at the temple. The bride's father is chairman of the temple management committee, and there is undisguised anticipation for tonight's culinary spectacular. Chef Tang and his team are operating at full steam for tonight's 30-table celebration, and have been working under tarpaulins beside the temple's visitors' lodge since 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

Neimen's most striking geographical feature is its barren badlands, and these have influenced the occupations residents have entered. An impressive number of Neimen natives have gone into the catering industry; the district has won a reputation as the "home of master catering chefs," and organizing a banquet is still the most popular way in which locals celebrate.

Chef Tang followed in his father's footsteps, becoming a catering chef at the age of 20. He has been a key member of his family's catering business ever since, and took charge when his father, Mr. Tang Sih-fu, retired. However, Chef Tang says his son has no intention of carrying on the family business. Nevertheless, Chef Tang's wife remains a steadfast partner. Chef Tang says his father started the catering business in the 1960s with another chef, Mr. Tang Jhu-jiao, and a vegetable vendor, Mr. Guo Jhang-ci. The trio catered events throughout Taiwan, providing the tables and chairs, as well as the ingredients. They cooked on site for weddings, funerals and all kinds of occasions. At that time, providing the furniture and catering equipment, in addition to doing the cooking on site, was a relatively new service model. Chef Tang says that of his father's two partners, one has retired, but the children of the other are continuing the business.

A caterer's kitchen is always full of activity. Chef Tang may fry seafood on four stoves at the same time. Puffs of steam and aroma rush upward. Chef Tang also pays attention to his team, issuing commands while laying plates, cooking vegetables, scooping up meatballs and slicing them while at the same time answering interview questions.

For tonight's banquet, Chef Tang's team consists of 10 veterans, among them chefs, waitstaff and dishwashers. Some of them previously worked with Chef Tang's father, and they have forged a formidable partnership. Mrs. Tang



recalls once catering for 200 tables. As the banquet consisted of 10 courses plus fruit and a dessert, 2,400 portions had to be cooked, plated and delivered. When asked about the crucial requirement when cooking for a banquet, Chef Tang says it is ensuring each dish is served at an appropriate temperature. Teamwork and experience enhances on-site efficiency.

Mrs. Tang is concerned that traditional banquet dishes may not excite guests, so she and her husband constantly update their menu. Mrs. Tang revels that Chef Tang sometimes draws inspiration from restaurants he has visited, scrutinizing their cooking methods and perhaps utilizing them in a new dish. Among his newest creations are fried pork baozi meatballs and shabu-shabu hotpot featuring giant grouper, kimchi and tofu. According to Mrs. Tang, the fried pork baozi meatballs are coated in crispy batter, and stuffed with pork, scallion, garlic, shrimp, dried shrimp and fish paste. A salted egg yolk is added to the center of the stuffing. This dish offers multiple textures and flavors. The shabu-shabu hotpot marries local grouper and tofu with Korean kimchi to enhance the savory flavors. Chef Tang's way of interpreting diverse cuisines means his roadside banquets are warmly received by customers.

"Even though I keep developing the menu, my catering business has suffered serious setbacks," laments Chef Tang. In the heyday of his catering business, he was preparing banquets every day. Now, he only receives banquet requests on weekends. Chef Tang is not the only caterer who has experienced stagnant business. The

catering industry has faced a surge in the number of restaurants, and unrelenting competition. In addition, a lack of physical space for roadside banquets in urban areas has hurt the industry. According to Mrs. Tang, for caterers the worst season is the fifth, sixth and seventh months on the lunar calendar, due to various traditions as well as hot weather. During that period, they may receive as few as three requests per month. The severe challenges and poor outlook discourage Chef Tang's children from carrying on the family-run catering business. For tonight's banquet, the chef and his wife got up at 4 o'clock in the morning to begin preparations. Mrs. Tang says they will devote themselves to catering as long as their physical strength holds out.

When asked what he learned from his father, Chef Tang mulls the question, yet does not have a quick answer. He checks the time, rolls up his sleeves and starts to slice dried mullet roes, scoop out braised pig knuckles, check the temperatures of the steamer baskets, taste the seasoning for the thickened pork soup and shabu-shabu hotpots, and lay steam crabs with glutinous rice out on plates. By 6:30 p.m., the catering team is ready to present the first course, serving five appetizers, while taking out sashimi courses. Chef Tang is now decorating plates with flowers. Being a catering chef means handling a million different things at once, and keeping it all in sync.



Catering chefs need excellent culinary skills, precise time control, swift dispatch of personnel, and flawless arrangement of procedures. Chef Tang embodies these qualities, displaying a smooth culinary fluidity each time he organizes a roadside banquet.

Contact Caterer Chef Mr. Tang Cin-lu for banquet reservations:

☎ 0917671051

☎ (07)6671051



Traveler's Lab: Zeng Shang-juan Realizes her Stationery Dream

©English translation: Hou Ya-ting

©Photos by CHSG STUDIO

Traveler's Lab is an online stationery store, and an official retailer for the complete line of TRAVELER'S notebooks produced by MIDORI, a Japanese stationery company. To better serve its clientele, in addition to its e-commerce operations, each month Traveler's Lab opens its store to the public for a few days. Customers can find the opening dates on Traveler's Lab's Facebook page. As one of very few shops to carry the complete range of TRAVELER'S notebooks, it draws clients from all over Taiwan, and even some from overseas.

Traveler's Lab Manager Ms. Zeng Shang-juan describes herself as a zealous stationery fan. This trait has manifested itself since she was a little girl, when she made a list of the stationery shops in Taipei she wished to visit. She would ask her father, Mr. Zeng Sin-you, to take her to these stores during family trips to Taipei. Ms. Zeng recalls her stationery binges, during which scrutinizing every single item brought her the utmost joy. Her childhood memories have given her an

unwavering enthusiasm for stationery, and spurred her to open her own stationery business, Traveler's Lab, in 2012.

While surveying Traveler's Lab, Ms. Zeng explains how each TRAVELER'S notebook has a leather cover, blank notebook refills, and a rubber band binding the leather cover. She points out that the renowned quality of a TRAVELER'S notebook is obvious by the elegance of the leather cover and the blank notebook refills made of various refined papers. Ms. Zeng says she has an ingrained habit of using a TRAVELER'S notebook, and this has made her a steadfast fan of the brand. Last year, Traveler's Lab held a celebratory exhibition for the 10th anniversary of TRAVELER'S notebooks. Traveler's Lab has become a platform which allows Ms. Zeng to introduce her favorite stationery items. Among them is Shiny's Premium Ink, which can be applied to glass, leather and other materials. During these open days, Ms. Zeng cherishes opportunities to communicate with her customers.





Six years after establishing Traveler's Lab, Ms. Zeng expresses profound gratitude for her father's unrelenting support, as well as for his being a reliable partner in her stationery business. Ms. Zeng says that she handles ordering and supply inquiries, while her father is in charge of delivery tasks. Ms. Zeng says that since her father retired from conventional industry, he has devoted himself to learning about stationery. His full commitment stems from his wish to share his daughter's workload. Ms. Zeng proudly says her father plays an indispensable role in her business, contributing computer, stock-management and business-negotiation skills. Her father now can deliver a smooth product presentation. A cypress table, moved to the shop from Mr. Zeng Sin-you's house, is used to display items of stationery. The table's presence signifies that Ms. Zeng has the full support of every member of her family.

Ms. Zeng reveals that she was invited to establish a

Traveler's Lab shop at a department store, but turned the offer down. She declined the offer not because she did not foresee prosperous sales. Rather, she worried expanding her business would make logistics more complex, and she would have to spend a lot of time dealing with orders, imports and distribution. "Appreciating fine stationery enriches my life," she says. She is thus unwilling to sacrifice her passion for stationery to an overwhelming workload. She expresses satisfaction with her store's current operations model, which combines e-commerce with a few public open days per month.

"Despite the dominance of technology," says Ms. Zeng, "I have a lovely feeling when I inscribe strings of words on paper." For this reason, she promotes traditional penmanship, recording tangible marks instead of mere clicks on social media.



Traveler's Lab

Website: <http://www.travelers-lab.com/>

[f](http://www.facebook.com/tnintw) <http://www.facebook.com/tnintw>

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Mr. Cai Cing-zai Brings Back the Fountain Pen Trend

©English translation: Hou Ya-ting
©Photos courtesy of CHSG STUDIO



Established in 1955 and situated in Yancheng District, Parker Fountain Pens is known for its high quality products and excellent customer service. Mr. Cai Cing-zai is the second-generation proprietor to be running his family's business. He enjoys making presentations about all the brands that the store offers, including Parker, Montblanc, Cross, Waterman, Sheaffer, Pelikan, Lamy, Kaweco, Platinum and TWSBI, etc.

Mr. Cai grew up in the Yacheng District, and over the years he has observed how local businesses have had to change with technology. This has had a tremendous impact on the fountain pen business. He reminisces on how the fountain



pen business was once an important part of the local economy. Thirty years ago, Parker Fountain Pens was built on reclaimed land in the Yanchengpu area, which was near what in those days was a prosperous port. Taiwan's economy was booming, and people of middle to high incomes often enjoyed spending money on imports. This created a lot of opportunity for stores in the area. The flourishing economy also created a surge in property prices, and many affluent residents became landowners in Yanchengpu. The largest department store in southern Taiwan, the Dasin was also located there. Back in those days, people would dress up to go shopping and line up to get into the mall.

Yanchengpu's prosperity lasted for about 30 years, until the commercial center shifted. Mr. Cai points out there had once been more than 100 stores in Taiwan with each carrying more than 100 variations of fountain pens. At that time Parker Fountain Pens also suffered from the slowing economy. As the industry hit rock-bottom, Parker Fountain Pens was only one of ten lucky fountain pen stores to survive.

Three years ago, there was resurgence in creative industries. With this came a new found passion for penmanship, a surge in fountain pens sales and greater variety of products. Fountain pens became fashionable again, especially with the younger generation. Bookstores and e-shopping sites also began to carry them.

In his store, Mr. Cai works hard to create a customer-friendly environment. He offers extensive knowledge about the various pens and even offers a pen repairing service. He also maintains a file in which he has used his products to scribe all the basic information about them. He has been practicing his penmanship every day for the past 35 years, and his beautiful skill always wins him much applause with his clientele.

Today, most high-end fountain pens are dominated by western brands. Mr. Cai believes the his most trusted pens, Parker, come from American brands, which continue to be popular amongst the older generation. There is also Montblanc from Germany, which has also established itself as a popular premium brand. The Montblanc's Art Edition Louis XIV is Mr.

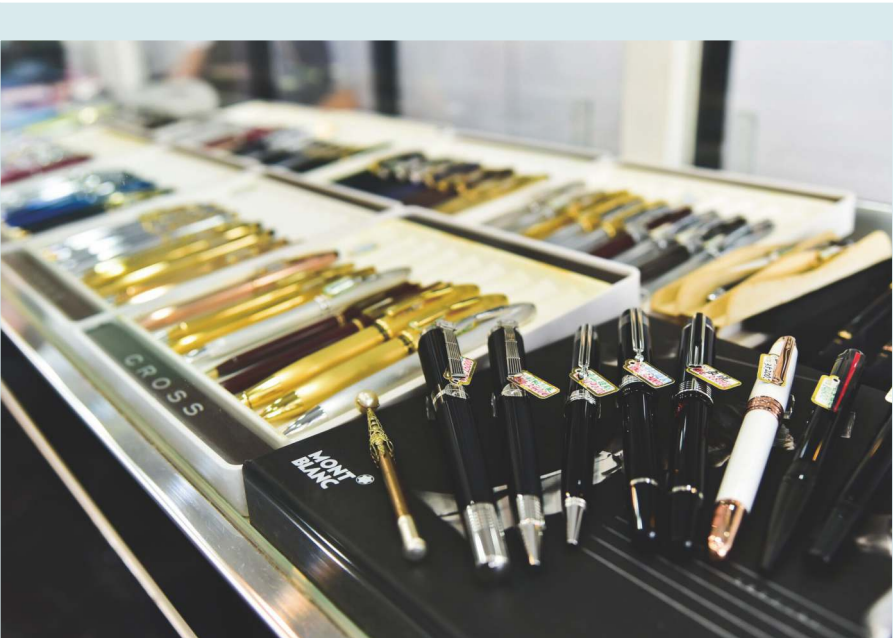


Cai's top of the line fountain pen, which costs NT\$ 500,000 to purchase. However, Japan's Platinum and Taiwan's TWSBI have also emerged and are doing well internationally. These have become well known for their high quality and fine craftsmanship. Mr. Cai keeps several of these local brands in stock.

Mr. Cai has been in the fountain pen business for thirty-five years. He believes his pens have made their mark both in history and within the local culture. He points out that in Europe fountain pens are given as a coming-of-age gift. With this as an inspiration, he hopes to promote the concept of fountain pens being a thing of heritage that should be passed down from one generation to the next.

Parker Fountain Pens Company

📍 No.105, Wufu 4th Rd., Yancheng Dist., Kaohsiung City
☎ (07)5513165
Operation hours: 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.



Iron Brush Artist Huang Sheng-ren

© English translation: Hou Ya-ting

© Photos by Jheng Nai-hua

Iron brush painter, Mr. Huang Sheng-ren embraces an unconventional style of visual art. Instead of using paint brushes, he uses iron brushes and mossy concrete walls as canvases. He points out that he doesn't even need to use paints and meticulously creates light forms by scratching out dark colored moss. This artistic form is much like a charcoal drawing, with a three-dimensional effect. Each artistic piece comes to life by presenting a differentiation between light and dark.

Mr. Huang started iron brush painting seven years ago, when he retired from his job as a mailman. His inspiration had been the sketched cinema advertisements that he had seen at the movies when he was sixteen. At that time, cinema advertisements were created by painters, who would depict the stars in the movies that were playing. The vivid portraits had captivated him and he became a habitual collector of Dongya Theater's movie star portraits. He



too then began creating his own paintings of his favorite movie stars, such as Mr. Jiang Da-wei, a famous 70's Hong Kong actor and other martial arts stars.

Even after he began his mailman career, Mr. Huang continued sketching. He even took classes from a portrait painter, at a studio in the Sanmin District and then opened his own portrait studio. However, with the rise of photo studios, he found there was no longer a need for hand drawn portraits. His studio unfortunately did not survive the changing trend.

Mr. Huang's colorful paintings manifest his zealous artistic passion. One of his favorite pieces is the landscape that he



has painted on the second floor concrete wall of the house opposite to his. In fact, his art work completely surrounds his house, which is located on 336 Lane off Zihyou Road in Fongshan District's Jhonghe Village. Two sides of a concrete wall behold a 200-meter mural of his interpretation of Vincent van Gogh's *Starry Night* and portraits of various ethnic groups, along with German Shepherd Dogs. Even the people who own the wall he has painted on enjoy giving tours of Mr. Huang's artwork.

Mr. Huang's unique iron brush paintings can be seen all over Kaohsiung. One of the best places to see Mr. Huang's iron brush painting is at the park behind Kaohsiung Rapid Transit's Fongshan Station. Several of the walls are decorated with his artwork. He is also willing to teach the art form to anyone who is interested. When he is about to begin work on a new piece, he purchases various sized iron brushes from local hardware stores. He will then take the iron brushes out with him, in search of another perfect concrete wall. Mr. Huang's love for his art form is unwavering, and he feels he contributes to the beautification of his beloved Kaohsiung. He hopes that in the future he will be able to expand his paintings on concrete walls in other cities, all across Taiwan.



Exploring Linyuan District

©English translation: Hou Ya-ting

©Photos by MUJI Do, Pao Chung-hui, Yu Jia-rong

©Photo courtesy of Liou Yu-sin

My friend Ting-jhang invited me join an excursion to Linyuan District, where his grandparents live. Neither of us reside in Linyuan, but exploring the area around my friend's grandparents' house immersed us in local heritage. We heard many stories about the place, putting Ting-jhang in a mood to reminisce.

Our historical excursion kicked off at Ting-jhang's grandparents' house on Linyuan North Road, parallel with Fusing Street. Ting-jhang pointed out that Fusing

Street runs north-south, is a one-way street 500m long, and has two places of worship: Dadaogong Temple in the north, and Fude Temple in the south. Nowadays, the street does not look so impressive, but in the past it was an important place.

During the Cing Dynasty, which ruled Taiwan until 1895, Fusing Street was known as Dinglinzihbian Street. A century ago, Dinglinzihbian Street was close to Midianzhigou Pier, where local agriculture produce and others goods could be shipped out via Gusi River and its lagoon. As a result, the street was a commercial center.

During the Japanese colonial period from 1895 to 1945, Dinglinzihbian Street could not accommodate the needs of commerce, so what is now Linyuan North Road was constructed. A decade later, Ting-jhang's grandfather moved to that road.

The gradual silting up of the lagoon inevitably ended Gusi River's transportation role. The area became reclaimed land in the southern part of Linyuan District, and the lagoon's disappearance caused many businesses to relocate.

In Linyuan's heyday during the Japanese era, it boasted three movie theaters: the Linyuan, Dawutai and Yushan theaters. The first to be established was Linyuan Theater, situated in the bustling downtown between Linyuan North Road and Fusing Street. Beside the theater was Anle Restaurant, a two-floor brick building built in 1930 and the most extravagant nightclub in the area at that time. After World War II, it was remodeled as a cabaret and a hotel. The currently-abandoned Anle Restaurant now sits among residential



buildings. It has been featured in the TV show *A Touch of Green*. It is also popular with photographers, and we met several visitors taking pictures. The restaurant no longer lives up to its former glory, yet the original layout, stone stairs, baroque-style columns, patterned drain covers, dark red tiles, and the barely readable Anle Restaurant plaque are tangible evidence of local history.

Chatting with a local lady, we discovered that she used to be a frequent visitor to a charming pocket garden within the old wooden post office near Linyuan Theater and Anle Restaurant. Unfortunately, the post office was demolished long ago. She suggested we visit the Former Dinglinzihbian Police Station, a cultural landmark built in 1898.

Heading southwest, we found the remaining back part of Yushan Theater at the end of Kainan Road. We met a grocery-store proprietor who told us the story of the theater, which was known as Kainan Theater during its glamorous 1970s heyday. He said that whenever Yushan Theater was showing films, crowds and a night market would paralyze the entire road. However, the vendors blocked ambulances trying to reach a nearby hospital, so the hospital complained to the authorities. The night market was forced to relocate, and gradually the hustle and bustle shifted to Mengjyun Community. According to the proprietor, the neighborhood used to have more than 30 grocery stores, but his is the only one still operating.

Our curiosity about Yushan Theater propelled us toward Wunhua Street, where the theater's back door is to be found. However, our efforts were in vain as the door was locked. The site is now occupied by an indoor shrimp-fishing pool and a karaoke parlor. Heading toward Mengjyun Community to experience the vibrancy of modern Linyuan District, we stepped into Mengjyun Market. This is an afternoon market where local residents shop for daily supplies, and is usually crowded



around 4 to 5 p.m.

Our final destination was a favorite local eatery, Hechun Rice-flour Ball Desert. This must-eat is on Fusing Street, behind Fude Temple. While waiting for our mountain of shaved ice, Ting-jhang pointed out the key ingredient: chewy, handmade rice-flour balls. Servings include various sweet ingredients and a topping of golden syrup on the ice. For Ting-jhang, it is taste of his hometown.

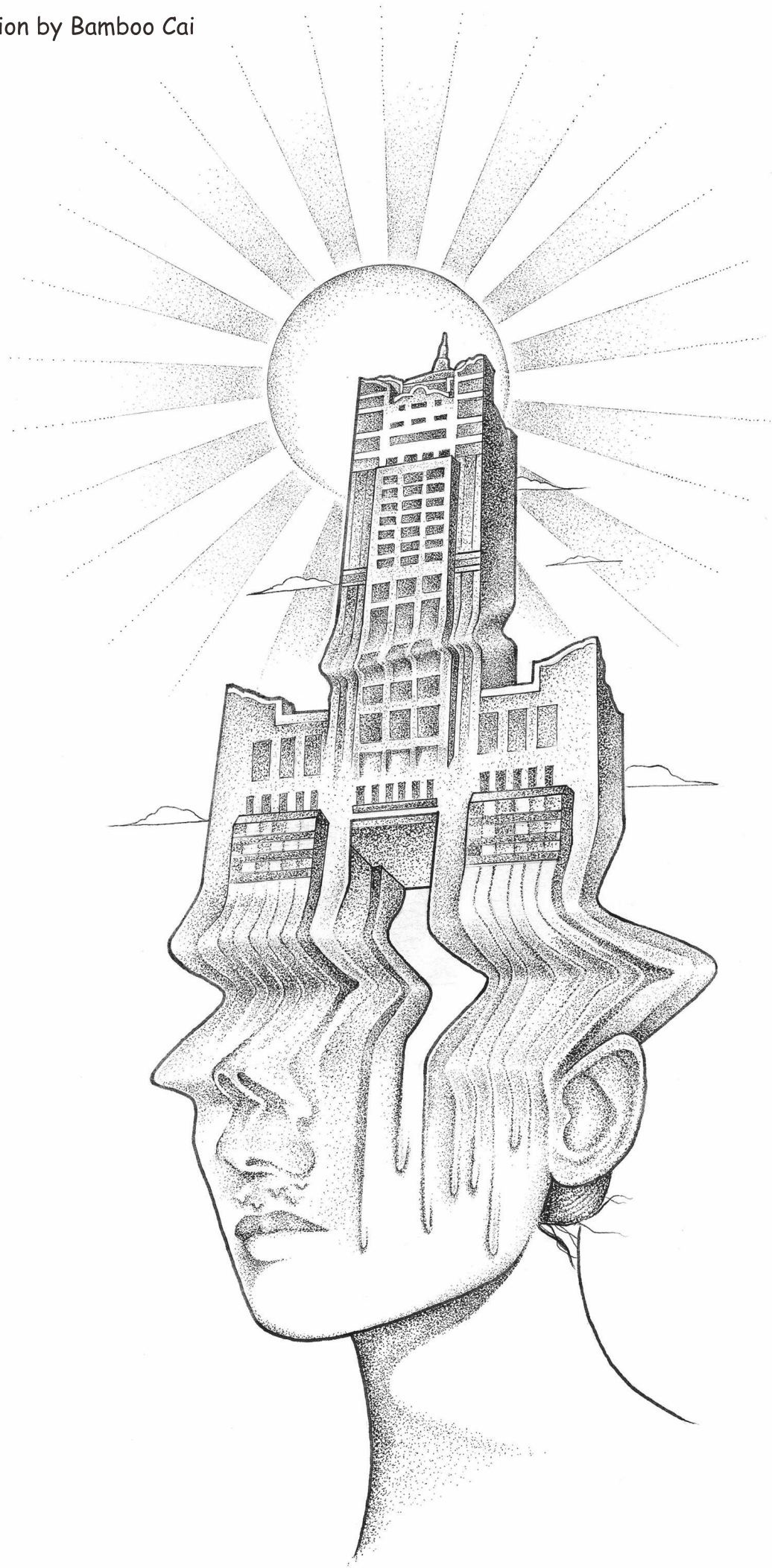
A visit to Linyuan allows one to enjoy the sunshine and linger between Linyuan North Road and Fusing Street while meeting hospitable residents. Those in search of the extraordinary in Linyuan should not miss Fongyun Temple's Matsu sea processions. These are held every four years. The processions are the largest events of their kind in Taiwan, and kick off at Jhongyun Fishing Port. This unique event has been recognized as part of Kaohsiung's cultural heritage.





Kaohsiung's Iconic Sunshine

■ Illustration by Bamboo Cai



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