

天主教輔仁大學英國語文學系學士班畢業成果
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT, FU JEN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
GRADUATION PROJECT 2018

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Follow Me to Tainan guidebook and reflection

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LOD project individual report

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LOD: Follow Me to Tainan guidebook

Motivation

Tainan is considered to be “the most Taiwanese” place and the essence of Taiwan, for it is the first cultivated land back when the Dutch first approached Formosa. After being under the reigns of the Dutch, the Ming dynasty, the Ching dynasty, and the Japanese colonial, Tainan has indeed possessed a rich cultural influence on the local architecture and the food. It is said that Tainan is the second after Taipei city having the most historic sites, but Tainan is the first in terms of the number of level one ancient monuments. Moreover, local cuisines like beef soup, fish skin soup, fruit ice, congee, Satay Sauce Hot Pot... etc. are all well-known must-eat in Tainan that represent Taiwanese style food better than food that can be eaten in any places in Taiwan. With all those reasons above, Tainan would definitely be the place where I would recommend foreigners to take a trip to.

I do not have much experience in traveling to Tainan since it is pretty far from Taipei. Hearing all the compliments about Tainan like how great the food is and how nice the people are, I have always wanted to go to Tainan in person. It was until February that I finally had the chance of going to Tainan for a few days. I was more than excited to taste all the delicacies and go sightseeing around Tainan. However, every site I went required lining up for at least 15 minutes and this certainly disappointed me because I had limited time. I did not go to Tainan just to line up endlessly. As a consequence, even though my first trip to Tainan was fun, my first impression on Tainan is the endless lining up and waiting.

When we were discussing about what to do for the Learning Outcome Demonstration, we thought of making an English version of Tainan guidebook that

includes a lining-up rate for foreign tourists. Not only were we motivated to do this project because of the Ping-dong tourist guidebook professor Gretchen displayed but we were also inspired by the long waiting line in most Tainan tourist spots. Making an English version Tainan guidebook might be useful especially if we include the line-up rate so that readers can make good use of their time and arrange their traveling plan beforehand. Since there are so many to see, to eat, and to feel in Tainan, we felt that it is necessary to let more people from overseas to recognize Tainan, the starting point of Taiwanese culture.

Introduction

Thirty-one tourist spots were included in our Tainan guidebook. Among all the sites, sixteen of them are monuments and attractions while fourteen of them are local food stands/shops. To make it clearer for the readers to look for information, we categorized the locations of the thirty-one spots into their belonging districts: West Central district, Anping district, East district, South district, and Rende district. We tried our best to cover all the districts in Tainan but eventually decided to put the focus on West Central district and Anping district since they are the two most widely known areas that many historic sites are located in.

The West Central district consists of ten attractions: Taiwan Confucian Temple, Old Tainan Martial Arts Academy, Hayashi Department Store, Land Bank of Taiwan, National Museum of Taiwan Literature, Tainan District Court, Fort Provintia, Guan Gong Temple, Tainan Koxinga Shrine, and Tainan Catholic Lady Chapel while the other ten sites including Zheng Ji Rice Pudding, Shuen-Tian Popsicle, Two-Dollar Taiwanese Tempura, Guang-Tsai Milkfish Balls, Brother Bao's Tempura, Lily's Fruit Shop, Yi-Fong White Gourd Drink, Yamane Sushi, Tai-Cheng Fruit Shop, Furong

Repasts, and Xiao-Hao-Zhou Satay Sauce Hot Pot are in the snacks section. As for historic sites in Anping, we selected the three most important remains of Taiwanese history— Old Tait & Co. Merchant House, Fort Zeelandia, and Eternal Golden Castle with an extra interesting bonus that is worth exploring just beside the merchant house: Anping Tree House; snacks like Chycutayshing Preserved Fruits and Quanwei' s Ice Cream Shop are also included.

Detailed information of the sites is provided in the book. The readers can check the map, charge, opening hours, telephone number, address, and GPS on the pages. With a QR code on the last page of each sites, videos and foreigners' reviews on the certain attraction can be viewed on the website we set. The most important feature of our guidebook is the line-up rate meant to be the reference of readers and I personally think this is what would make our guidebook stand out from other Tainan books. At the end of the book, we added the section of writers' words and tour-planning to enrich the content.

Reflection

As we are more used to writing in a subjective perspective while articles in a guidebook should consist of objective statements, the articles were not easy to write. Switching our composition style to 'guidebook mode' and give useful information with detailed explanations on each included tourist sites took us some time. Originally, we thought the historic architecture would be the hardest while the reviews on local food would be easier to cover but in fact it's the other way around. Although we did a lot of observations during the four-day trip in Tainan, we still had to look up some historical background of the sites so as to make the articles rich in meaning and useful for the readers. My way of composing the articles was to first talk about the history

background and then move on to the building description, then lastly what tourists can do upon visiting. For example, I wrote about the Old Tainan Magistrate Residences from its Japanese colonial period history to the specially-designed clock-shaped structure and to the newly open café shop inside. It is like writing a short evolution of the site rather than a review.

After struggling for a few days, we finally finished writing all 31 Tainan sites and moved on to doing the typesetting and cover-making, which Cherry and I were responsible for. We had pictures with high pixels so it was rather time-consuming for me to insert all the photos into Illustrator software. No matter how long I had to wait, the work must be done. The cover was made of Illustrator but the pages inside were completed with the MAC slides-making software, Keynote, owing to the reason that I was not familiar with the operation of the Illustrator and it would be a bit inefficient if I browse through every tutorial video first. Although Keynote is not meant for typesetting, I found it really easy to operate. Cherry was in charge of the map drawing; Travis had to set up a website that contains every clip we took during the trip and the reviews of foreigners. Jean served as the photo editor while Rick took part in the article editing. The five of us did our job separately but did the final examination together in the end. It was great working with them for this LOD project because I could really feel everyone's desperation in passing the graduating qualification with this project.

Things did not come out successfully as planned. The clerk told us that we would have to make some adjustments when we went to the printing shop to get our guidebook published. He said, "You have to leave more spaces for each side of the

pages.” We had to revise all 120 pages for this adjustment made a big difference. Because I spent several nights without sleeping just to print the book out in time, I was especially discouraged. Now that we had to do the typesetting again, it seems as if my effort vanished. We only had one more night to finish fixing all the mistakes. The time pressure was indeed stressful to all of us but we tried to get to work right away instead of complaining. Thanks to Jean and Cherry’s help, we were able to revise everything and print out a book on time in the end.

I had such a surreal feeling mixed with a sense of accomplishment as I hold the printed book in my hands. Without this experience, I would never recognize the hard work of book writers and publishers. The tiring degree could equal to the tiredness of completing a research paper. The circumspect put in the project is just like that of the research paper; every detail should be taken seriously. Our little Tainan guidebook was eventually offered for everyone’s reference in front of the department office and I felt as proud as a mom seeing many people appreciating it. Even though the process of producing this book was tough, I have really learned so much from this project and will treasure this memorable experience.