

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 2021

指導教授：李桂芬老師  
Prof. Gretchen Lee

真善美聖

**Exploring the Cafes in the Old Town Dadocheng**

學生：簡好健撰  
Viola, Yu-Jie Jian

Viola Jian 404110110

Chinese Culture Through Foreign Languages

Prof. Gretchen Lee

Learning Outcome Demonstration

<https://sites.google.com/a/gapp.fju.edu.tw/exploring-the-cafes-in-the-old-town-dadaocheng/>



## Outline

### I. Motivation

- A. my enthusiasm of sharing cultural facts and trivia with foreign friends
- B. my identity as an Old Town Taipei citizen
- C. my love for where I grew up

### II. Introduction to the project

- A. Home Page: Old Town Taipei -- Dadaocheng
- B. Nostalgia & Beaneries

### III. Reflection

## Motivation

I am always on the search for something that feeds my soul and there is one thing that has never fallen off the list: my enthusiasm to share cultural facts and trivia about Taiwan with my foreign friends. I keep asking myself how I can represent my country and my hometown. As a Taipei citizen, or to be more specific, an Old Town Taipei citizen, Dadaocheng has become part of my identity since this is the place that nourished me throughout my childhood to this day. I grew up here and my love for Dadaocheng has only grown stronger day by day. Its streets full of history along with its nostalgia vibes in each and every corner belong to a special place in my heart. Therefore, when the professor asked us to choose one thing that can better represent Taiwanese culture as our learning outcome demonstration, Dadaocheng instantly popped up in my head. There is truly no better option.

But how? How are we going to introduce Dadaocheng? Afterall, this is an entire area we are talking about and to be honest it is not huge but it is not that small either. We simply cannot cover every single detail. After a couple times of brainstorming, my partner and I decided to narrow it down to the area around Dihua Street which used to be one of the biggest commercial centers in Taiwan, which is still very active these days. Located just nearby Tamsui River and a port in East Taipei, prosperity was flowing in with a multitude of merchandise like tea, dried goods, incense, traditional medicinal products, fabric, local crafts, and more. More importantly, recently the rising of barista industry and Taipei government's new project on the renaissance of East Taipei, various cafes along with cultural and creative industry (CCI) have set foot in Dadaocheng continuing the legacy our ancestors had left behind.

Therefore, by looking into the history behind some of the cafes that are rooted inside the old buildings in Dadaocheng, we navigate through the streets and stories with the company of roasty aroma and hearty food in the essence of Old Town Taipei.

## Introduction

After several discussions, my partner and I decided to create a blog by using Google site to introduce several renowned cafes in Dadaocheng around Dihua Street. The website consists of a home page with a list of cafes we selected on the side for viewers to navigate through the pages. On the home page is a brief introduction of the website and the history of Dadaocheng for starters. On other individual pages tell the charming stories of the most fascinating cafes in Old Town Taipei with unique and retro architectural styles based on the history behind them. Moreover, some insights on the menus, of course, and directions to the cafes appear at the bottom of each page. After all, we would not want our viewers to starve. With all the interesting historical backgrounds and rich cultures concluded in one website, we hope to help people enjoy a relaxing afternoon and fully immerse themselves in the old-timey atmosphere of the cafés. The following are the cafes we have chosen for our viewers.

Origin Space (老屋咖啡) —— a space where you feel like home, the core value of the owners wish to bring to the visitors whom they treat as friends. Before entering the cafe, you can spot the Baroque style pattern on the outside of the building, which can be dated back to the late 19th century during Japanese colonial period. In fact, Baroque style is quite common around the area and can often be seen on the facade of many buildings along Dihua Street. Zooming in closer to Origin Space, there stands firmly the gate which features the classic wood and glass entryway common throughout Dadaocheng. As you open the door, a room full of antique furniture and comfy chairs fall in sight that you would probably feel as if you are walking into somebody's living room, somebody's home.

Luguo Cafe (爐鍋咖啡) —— a cultural and creative space located on the second floor in Watsons Pharmacy, which used to be the biggest shop selling imported western medicine.

In 1998, it was destroyed in a ruthless fire but was later reconstructed since it was regarded as the national ancient monument. In 2010, the space on the first floor was changed into 小藝埕, a place accommodated for people to appreciate the artworks as well as the Cultural and Creative Industry.

Walkingbook (行冊咖啡廳) —— a space with distinctive modern design inside the original Da-An Hospital established by Mr. Chiang Wei-shui, which was also the distribution headquarters of the Taiwan People's Journal during Japanese colonial period. As a former institution and incubator of freedom of speech back in the days, Walkingbook infuses our ancestor's spirit in free minds into the modern interior presenting a safe space for visitors to explore their new ideas.

Dadaocheng Starbucks (大稻埕星巴克) —— a beautiful combination of Chinese and Western style reconstructed from the previous “葉金塗 ancient house” and later “金泰亨 company” built by 葉金塗, who became one of the most wealthy business people by producing pineapple cans and was even called "King of Pineapple" in the 1920s. On top of the red bricks there is a big letter “泰” held up high by two pineapples, which stands for the family business kingdom. On the inside, you can find paintings and pictures on the walls depicting Dadaocheng in its different shades during different times. It is certainly beyond your regular Starbucks visits.

Doorway Cafe (兜味) —— located in a corner less ventured with its peculiar style of decoration featuring mismatched antique items. The café's name actually comes from a complicated play on words in three languages. Its English name “Doorway” sounds like the pronunciation of its Chinese name 兜味 (dou wei). This Chinese name also sounds like the Taiwanese pronunciation of “Where?”, which was what the owners called their mobile café while looking for a permanent place. Behind the wooden door lies a cozy and humble space where furry friends are also welcomed.

Whoever finds their way to Doorway Cafe will surely find a special and relaxing place of their own.

Sancoffee (森高砂咖啡館) —— once a representative of Western-style leisure space at that time, reflecting the elegant life of the early Taiwanese. After the war, it was changed to the Wanli Red Wine House and changed to the Black Beauty Restaurant until 1996. The cafe's mission is "to turn Taiwan coffee into a specialty coffee." Sancoffee cooperates with farmers and uses the most scientific methods to enhance the quality of Taiwanese coffee, supplemented by fashionable boutique packaging and customized services to enable consumers to recognize the varieties and production characteristics of Taiwan coffee. In the spirit of fair trade, provide the best and freshest Taiwanese coffee in the industry.

Boan84 (保安捌肆) —— a cafe built inside the former Shuntien Surgical Hospital (順天外科醫院) on the former "Doctor Street(醫生街)" of Dadoacheng. It is a comfortable "healing" space, which cleverly integrates exhibits, music, books, finger food and other light meals. As you take a few steps further to explore Boan 84, its innovative decoration with the theme of surgical hospital creates a quirky, maybe a little bit intimidating, yet interesting atmosphere. However, there are plenty more to discover than a scary skeleton. Visitors shall grab their prescriptions and go find out what's the catch.

Frog Cafe (蛙咖啡) —— a cafe in a classic old storefront houses, which are famous for being extremely narrow and deep. Behind each storefront is a factory or a warehouse, lending an air of distinction to this cluster of old-fashioned housing complexes. Also, in the middle of the house is usually a patio for better ventilation, lighting, and other purposes such as improving work efficiency by using pulley suspended on a beam to transport goods between floors. Without destroying the original structure, the first floor is planned as an area displaying merchandise in the

front with a rear kitchen that has a more open space than most restaurants, and the main seating area is on the second floor.

### Reflection

To be honest, as someone who has lived here my entire life, I did not realize there is so much more to explore behind these fascinating buildings. It has truly been an amazing journey around Dadaocheng with old and new discoveries one after another. The most surprising part is that through this experience, I have learnt way more than what I used to read in history textbooks. It turns out that history is very much alive existing right around us. As cliché as it is, I have to admit, just as Auguste Rodin once said: “Beauty is everywhere. It is not that she is lacking to our eye, but our eyes which fail to perceive her.”

What’s more, being able to pass on the stories of these legacies our ancestors have left behind is such an honor. To me, especially, since I was born and raised in this rich and fertile ground with incredible cultures hidden in every little corner waiting to be discovered. After walking through the streets and into the cafes getting to understand the history behind the doors, I sincerely feel more connected to my roots. I am glad that we have chosen this as the topic of our learning outcome demonstration.

