

City Dwellers Hooked on Shrimp Fishing

Urban shrimp fishing is now all the rage in Taiwan. This Taiwanese home-grown activity is rapidly gaining in popularity. For a small fee of around NT\$300-500, people wanting to catch shrimp can rent a rod, get some bait, and enjoy two hours of solid fishing time. Rods in hand, fishers set up shop in open chairs, drop their lines in the shrimp pool, and wait for a bite. Shrimping isn't easy, as novices may only catch one shrimp in an hour, while pros can usually catch ten in the same amount of time. The secret is in the type of bait they bring – the tastier the better.

Outdoor shrimp pools have been around for nearly two decades in southern Taiwan. Since Taiwanese people tend to avoid intemperate weather and stick to the cities, the outdoor activity of shrimp fishing had to move indoors to make it appealing to busy city folk. In just three short years, the number of shrimp fisheries has increased by 40 percent.

The appeal of shrimp fishing is in the meal at the end. If a person has a successful two hours, they can take their loaded net of shrimp to the cleaning stations, where dirt is removed from the bodies under running water. Next, the shrimp are skewered with wooden stakes, seasoned with salt, and then grilled. You do everything yourself, which makes the meal more enjoyable. Don't worry if you don't catch a lot of shrimp, many places offer a full menu of shrimp-based dishes that are too good to pass up.

(source:實用空中美語 2013 4 月)

Dancing to Nobody's Tune

“Where there is a will, there is a way.” Those who believe in this saying usually have a better chance to succeed than others. One such person is Lin Hwai-min, the founder of Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan, a dance company that has played an important role in the development of modern dance in Taiwan. Without a doubt, Lin's determination to pursue his dream has greatly inspired many people.

For Lin Hwai-min, the road to success was not easy, especially because his parents were never serious about his dream. Lin's strong interest in dancing began at a young age. As a child, he often moved his body like a ballet dancer. However, Lin's parents would prefer their son to do well on his school exams, have a successful career, and enjoy high social status. In their eyes, dancing could be a hobby at most; it could never be a career choice.

Although his parents didn't agree with what he had chosen, Lin's love of dancing never faded. He held on to his dream of becoming a dancer, and finally started taking modern dance lessons in the U.S.A.

The training was much harder than he had expected, though. At that time, Lin was already twenty-three years old. Thus, it was more difficult than usual for him to learn dancing skills at that “old” age. “I couldn't even get up in the morning. I just wanted to quit,” Lin once said. In the beginning, his teacher was not satisfied with his performance. Yet, Lin kept on dancing—not to the teacher's tune, but to his own tune. This determined young man refused to let any challenges stop him.

Eventually, Lin not only successfully started his career as a great dancer, but also, in 1973, founded Cloud Gate in his homeland, Taiwan. For years, Cloud Gate's performances have been earning shiny praise around the world for the perfect fusion of Chinese and Western dancing spirits and skills.

Because he believed in what he loved, and always strove to be his best, Lin Hwai-min succeeded in realizing his own dream.

(by)

The Slow Death of the Newspaper

Do you pay for the newspapers you read, or do you get them free on the Internet? There's trouble ahead for newspapers because more and more of us are going online and taking advantage of free access to news. The fall in circulations is accelerating - down by another 2.5% last year - and advertising revenues are dropping, down a massive 7.5% in the same period.

Traditionally, newspapers make their money from advertising, and charge a low price to cover the costs of printing and distribution. Despite the much lower costs of distribution on the Internet, the electronic versions are not profitable because advertising revenues are much lower. As the websites are losing money, the print editions have to pay for them. In other words, the print editions are paying for the websites which are taking away their customers. How long can this go on?

Newspapers are responding in different ways. While the New York Times offers everything in the print version free online, The Economist website offers content that can't be found in the magazine. Visitors to the online edition can only see a small part of the content unless they subscribe for an annual fee.

However, what works for a specialist magazine may not be effective with a daily newspaper. If a single newspaper starts to charge for access to its site, readers are likely to switch to another that is still free. As a result, visitor numbers will go down and advertising revenue will fall further. So unless all the newspapers are willing to act together, which is unlikely, charging for access is not a solution to the problem.

(From Active Reading)

Line App Grows in Popularity Worldwide

You're waiting for the MRT or standing on a street corner and glimpse over unintentionally at someone's smartphone. They're using an app, one that you see over and over, with wacky drawings, a cloud backdrop and lime green text bubbles. What is it though? It's called LINE, which is quickly becoming one of the most popular apps in the world for people to text, call, and share photos.

LINE was born out of tragedy though: after the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami in Japan during 2011, many power lines and cell towers were down. People who had used their cellphones to get in touch were now cut off from each other. This caused people to line up to use public phones, which inspired the app's name. Employees at the Internet service provider NHN Japan developed LINE and the app debuted in June 2011.

Line continues to be popular for several reasons: first, it lets people call and text someone who also has LINE without any charge. Second, it features a cast of colorful characters in oversized emoticons called "stickers" These cute characters have even jumped off phone screens into the physical world. Case in point: An entire MRT train in Taipei was recently covered in images of LINE's many characters to drum up interest for the app. Stuffed toy versions of the characters are sold in stores and hang off many a student's backpack. Most recently, LINE added a social media timeline, photo sharing and games, further drawing users into its world of green bubbles and goofy stickers.

(by 實用空中美語 2013 4 月)

Taiwanese Foods we Can't Live Without

Small eats, and a lot of them, are the big things in Taiwan. The culinary philosophy here is eat often and eat well. Sure, there's the internationally accepted three-meals-a-day dining format, but why be so limited when you can make like the Taiwanese and indulge in gourmet snacking at any time of the day? The Taiwanese capital, Taipei, has around 20 streets dedicated to snacking. Every time you think you've found the best streetside shop, the most incredible stinky tofu or mind-blowing beef noodle soup, there's always another Taiwanese food shop that surpasses it. The island's food is a mash-up of the cuisine of the Min Nan, Teochew and Hokkien Chinese communities, along with Japanese cooking. It's a culinary love-in with diversely delicious offspring.

Beef noodle

You know a food is an obsession when it gets its own festival. Beef noodle soup inspires competitiveness and innovation in chefs. Everyone wants to claim the title of beef noodle king. From visiting Niu Ba Ba for one of the most expensive bowls of beef noodle soup in the world to a serendipitous foray into the first makeshift noodle shack you spot, it's almost impossible to have a bad beef noodle experience in Taiwan.

Bubble tea

Bubble tea represents the "QQ" food texture that Taiwanese love. The phrase refers to something that is especially chewy, like the tapioca balls forming the "bubbles" in bubble tea. It's said this unusual drink was invented out of boredom. Liu Han-Chieh threw some sweetened tapioca pudding into her iced Assam tea on one fateful day in 1988, and a great Taiwanese culinary export was born. Variations on the theme include taro-flavored tea, jasmine tea and coffee, served cold or hot.

(this article is written by Hiufu Wong from *CNN Travel*.)

The Titanic from a Lifeboat

The “unsinkable” Titanic had only 1,178 lifeboat spaces for 2,224 people on board. A total of 1,513 lives were lost.

We did not begin to understand the situation till we were perhaps a mile or more away from the Titanic. Then we could see the rows of lights along the decks begin to slant gradually upward from the bow. Very slowly these lines of light began to point downward at a greater and greater angle. The slant seemed to be greater about every quarter of an hour.

In a couple of hours, though, she began to go down more rapidly. Then the fearful sight began. The people in the ship were just beginning to realize how great their danger was. When the forward part of the ship dropped suddenly, there was a sudden rush of passengers on all the decks towards the stern. It was like a wave. We could see the great black mass of people in the steerage sweeping to the rear part of the boat. We could make out the increasing excitement on board as the people, rushing to and fro, caused the deck lights to disappear and reappear as they passed in front of them.

This panic went on for an hour. Then suddenly the ship seemed to shoot up out of the water and stand there perpendicularly. It stood upright in the water for four full minutes, then it began to slide gently downwards. Its speed increased as it went down head first, so that the stern shot down with a rush. The lights continued to burn until it sank. We could see the people packed densely in the stern till it was gone and we could hear their screaming a mile away. Gradually this became fainter and fainter and died away. Some of the lifeboats that had room for more might have gone to their rescue, but it would have meant that those who were in the water would have swarmed aboard and sunk her.

(by Mrs. D.H.Bishop- American Headway)

The Wizard of OZ

“There’s no place like home!” This famous line from *The Wizard of Oz* touched hearts worldwide as moviegoers journeyed into a world of enchantment. The film opened in 1939, a year movie buffs consider Hollywood’s “Golden Year” since many memorable films played that year. Perhaps no other movie, though has had the impact of *Oz* with its story of friendship, adventure and love. Generations have enjoyed the film’s great songs, lively dances and heartwarming story.

Early in the movie, young Dorothy Gale resents her drab existence on a Kansas farm. As she sings “Somewhere Over the Rainbow,” she longs for a different life. When a tornado blows through, Dorothy is hit on the head and awakens in a strange, new land-Oz! There, she meets three new friends, and they set off to find the Wizard of Oz. They believe the wizard can solve all of their problems. However, he helps them realize they have the solutions within themselves.

While in Oz, Dorothy has many remarkable encounters but comes to realize there is “no place like home.”

In 1899, writer L. Frank Baum wrote the book *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. It quickly became the most popular children’s book of the day, and Baum followed it with a series of “Oz” books. He and others produced stage shows and silent film versions of the story. But when movie studio MGM released *The Wizard of Oz* in 1939, all previous versions were basically forgotten.

The talented 17-year-old Judy Garland brought Dorothy Gale to life, and Garland would forever be associated with the role. Audiences related to young Dorothy, who dreamed about a place beyond the rainbow where troubles were far, far away. America was in the midst of the Great Depression, and moviegoers were like Dorothy. They wanted to escape and forget their problems, if only for a little while.

The film has appeared on American TV almost every year since 1959. Many families have made it an annual tradition to watch the film together.

Once the movie begins, the magic never fades, and viewers are transported once again to the wonderful Land of Oz!

(by Studio Classroom 2014 8 月)