

GENERAL STORE BLUES: STORIES OF TAIWAN'S MOM AND POP SHOPS

老雜時代：看見台灣老雜貨 店的人情、風土與物產

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Their shelves were stocked with candied fruit, cigarettes, booze, snacks, rice, and salt – everything the typical Taiwanese family needed. In words and images, the stories of 32 general stores from across Taiwan are fondly recounted, honoring these important sites of local history before they are lost to a tide of glitzy malls and chain-store convenience.

The shelves may be piled willy-nilly with all manner of goods, but the shopkeeper always knows the price and location of every item by heart. Old-fashioned general stores like these are more than just a place to buy things – they are sites of community interaction and an anchor for the collective memories of multiple generations of Taiwanese. Yet with the rise of the convenience store and the supermarket, these mom-and-pop shops have become an increasingly rare sight. Covering Taiwan from end to end and coast to coast, this book guides readers through 32 old-style general stores to explore their dusty corners and unearth their varied pasts.

In lively prose, former journalist Lin Hsin-Yi records the stories of the proprietors and their families. From lean times to local gossip, from hardships to friendships, colorful lives unfold between the stock room and the cash register. The lens of photographer Tseng Kuo-Shiang transports readers into these intimate spaces, evoking nostalgia for a fading commercial era.



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Covering general stores from mountain villages to farming towns, from downtown streets to military housing communities and native villages, this volume reflects the diversity of multi-ethnic Taiwan; its collected stories form a microcosm of over one hundred years of economic and social development. Along the way readers will discover snippets of period documents and images of popular culture which enrich the historical context, bringing the vicissitudes of Taiwan's general stores to life in loving detail.

Text by Lin Hsin-Yi 林欣誼

A former arts and culture journalist and graduate of National Taiwan University's foreign languages and literatures department, Lin Hsin-Yi maintains a passion for local history and culture.

Photo by Tseng Kuo-Shiang 曾國祥

A commercial photographer and graduate of National Chengchi University's advertising department, Tseng Kuo-Shiang enjoys recording the world through vintage lenses.