

SMALL STATIONS, BIG HORIZONS

小站也有遠方

In this off-the-beaten-path travel writing, Liu Ka-Shiang visits 52 small train stations over the course of 10 separate rail journeys around Taiwan. This warm and intimate travelog reminds us that the essence of travel lies in slowing our pace and making room for chance encounters.

In contrast to airplanes and bullet trains, Taiwan's old railway system offers a humble mode of transportation well-suited to slow travel. Each of the small stations along the way make an ideal launching pad for off-the-beaten-path discoveries. In order to record the charms of 52 small train stations and their environs, author Liu Ka-Shiang devised ten separate rail itineraries. He took the South Link Line, Taiwan's last diesel train service, riding the tracks between tropical mango groves and the blue waters of the Taiwan Strait. At a traditional market near a station in the north he discovered a delicious taro porridge at a stall run by a mother-daughter duo. At another stop he met a young woman distributing flyers who offered to show him a hundred-year-old hotel near the station. In the end, the two spent hours discussing everything from her family to the history of her small town. When you slow down, you'll find even the smallest places can offer up memorable experiences in the form of chance meetings, undiscovered sights, and mouth-watering meals.

Building on the framework of his small station itinerary, Liu Ka-Shiang records Taiwan's natural scenery, local foods, culture, and history in amiably earnest prose. His recollections of each stop are complemented by primitivist colored-pencil sketches from octogenarian illustrator Chen Hsian-Hsian. Whether you are a lover of railroads, or a fan of slow travel, *Small Stations, Big Horizons* will charm you with its intimate portraits of Taiwan's local scenery and culture.



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From an early age, Liu Ka-Shiang has channeled the spirit of the 19th century natural historian in his explorations of the world around him. He brings a poet's eye and a historian's attention to detail to bear on Taiwan's diverse flora, fauna, and its people. He has published over forty books to date, including poetry, essays, and novels, as well as travel writing, earning him a slew of domestic literary awards.