

# TAIWAN'S BADLANDS: THE CULTURE AND NATURAL HISTORY OF LOW-ELEVATION MOUNTAINS IN TAIWAN

## 臺灣惡地誌：見證臺灣造 山運動與四百年淺山文明 生態史

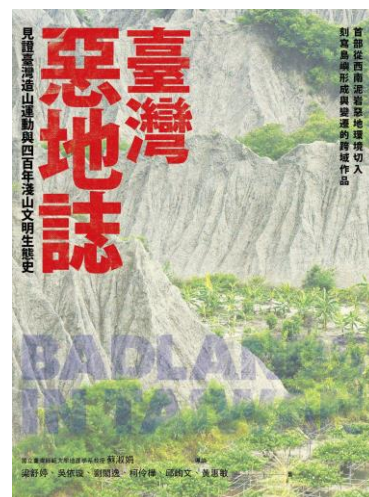
\* 2023 Golden Tripod Award

\* 2023 Taipei Book Fair Award

*Seemingly desolate, Taiwan's badlands are in fact teeming with life. Over hundreds of years, the people who live there have found ways to exist in harmony with the natural environment. Their story has the power to reach beyond Taiwan and inspire the whole world to think about environmental resilience.*

Legend has it that the mudstone badlands in southwestern Taiwan, coated in a thin layer of powdery salt, reflect moonlight. The barren land then turns a silvery white, like the surface of the moon – hence the local name for these places: “moon worlds”. Close to twice the size of Guam in area, the southwest badlands are known for producing guavas and green jujubes, despite a relatively sparse population. How is this agricultural success story possible? The authors of *Taiwan's Badlands* tell readers the story of these mudstone badlands and the people who live there.

Divided into six parts, the book introduces the geological formations and diverse landscapes of the badlands and the area's plant and animal ecologies, examines how human settlements have developed



Category: Science

Publisher: Yeren

Date: 8/2022

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Pages: 288

Length: 102,775 characters

(approx. 66,800 words in English)

in response to environmental constraints over the past four centuries, and then looks at how those same environmental constraints led communities to develop unique agricultural, culinary, and religious cultures – the previously mentioned guavas and green jujubes, for example, are agricultural products farmers grew once they understood the characteristics of the local soil. Finally, the book discusses the local environmental movement and civic science education, the development of geoparks, and the ecological conservation activities initiated by local residents.

Su Shew-Jiuan, one of the book's authors, believes that people living in the badlands aren't trying to conquer nature but instead recognize the land's limits. They then practice sustainable development in the spirit of "land stewardship", an attitude fundamental to environmental resilience in the face of change. Their attitude to life can also help us to think about ways to deal with the vagaries of climate change, and thus inspire us to live in harmony with the natural environment.

### Su Shew-Jiuan 蘇淑娟

Su Shew-Jiuan earned her PhD from the Department of Geography and Anthropology at Louisiana State University in the United States. Currently a professor in the Department of Geography at National Taiwan Normal University, she is deeply committed to discussing and raising awareness of environmental issues and formulating slow and resilient solutions.

### Liang Shu-Ting 梁舒婷

Liang Shu-Ting is a graduate of the Studio for Research and Praxis in Lebenswelt in the Graduate Institute of Architecture at Tainan National University of the Arts and a founding member of Moon World Farmer, a local business specializing in agricultural products and eco-tourism. She hopes this book will introduce people to the natural and cultural landscapes of her hometown.

### Wu Yi-Hsuan 吳依璇

Wu Yi-Hsuan earned a master's degree from the Institute of Oceanography at National Taiwan University. From time to time, she

also writes popular science articles.

### Liu Hong-Yi 劉閔逸

Liu Hong-Yi earned a master's degree in geography at National Taiwan Normal University. His areas of interest are caring for the natural environment and the crucial role badland ponds play in rural ecological development.

### Ke Ling-Hua 柯伶樺

Ke Ling-Hua earned a master's degree in Life Sciences at National Chung Hsing University. An outdoor activities enthusiast since childhood, she now is working hard for ecological conservation as the head of Wildervalley Environmental Consultants.

### Hew Shun-Win 邱峴文

Hew Shun-Win earned a master's degree in wildlife conservation from National Pingtung University of Science and Technology. He is currently an ecologist conducting research in mountain wilderness areas.

### Huang Hui-Min 黃惠敏

Huang Hui-Min is currently president of Kaohsiung City Matoushan Nature and Humanity Association. She is active in environmental social movements and work that protects the natural and human ecologies of badland areas.