



OUR TAIWAN

Sky Lanterns: Lights of hope or a disaster for the environment?

By Staff Our Taiwan writer Luke Ye

A small and quiet town far from noisy cities. Crickets are singing, fireflies are lighting the night, and people are hanging out in the street in this cozy environment. You raise your head to appreciate the clear night sky, dotted with stars. You see that there seem to be other starry lights, but those are not stars—they are Taiwanese sky lanterns (天燈, tiān dēng), which are rising slowly into the sky. This is Pingxi (平溪), in a countryside surrounded by mountains, a famous destination where locals and tourists release sky lanterns. Thousands of people visit every year to watch these beautiful scenes. The Pingxi Sky Lantern Festival takes place starting on the 15th day of the first lunar month, after Chinese New Year, February 8 in 2020. It is an exciting holiday, but there are little-known dark sides to these breathtaking lights.

Legend has it that people who lived in Pingxi were often attacked by bandits during

the Qing dynasty (清朝). Hence, they decided to let the elderly people, women and children hide in the mountains, and men stayed in the village to resist bandits. When the village was safe, men

年度	清潔隊回收兌換數量(個)	天燈小站兌換數量(個)	合計(個)
102	84,447	-	84,447
103	144,430	8,371	152,801
104	167,154	8,943	176,097
105	197,099	3,086	200,185
106	251,602	1,595	253,197
107	289,602	1,349	290,951
合計	1,134,334	23,344	1,157,678

Number of sky lanterns recycled

would release sky lanterns to send the signal for safety. After years of evolution, this tradition has become a popular annual holiday.

In Pingxi, people release approximately 300,000 sky lanterns every year. According to statistics from the Pingxi Branch of the New Taipei City Fire Department, there are on average one or two reports of fires caused

by sky lanterns every month. This not only damages the environment but also impacts safety and can cause property damage. Due to these problems, the New Taipei City Government enacted a law in 2011 which stipulated that the legal scope of sky lanterns in Pingxi should be “within 200 meters along the perimeter of the Keelung River Basin and from Shifen Visitor Center to Shigong Bridge (total length 17.5km).” This policy seeks to prevent forest fires and predict the landing places of sky lanterns. Nevertheless, it has only solved a

part of the problem. Another aspect is the refuse left by lanterns. Over time, the materials used for sky lanterns become iron wire and paint (or rice paper). After being lit, and burning in the sky, the leftover paper and metal

frames became deadly traps for animals. To solve this problem, the New Taipei City Government established a sky lantern recycling station. Cooperating with local stores, they

announced a new mechanism to recycle sky lantern paper, in exchange for groceries. This encouraged people to recycle sky lanterns. Thanks to this process, the number of recycled lanterns rose from 2013 to 2018.

Additionally, an entrepreneurial team composed of young people developed an eco-friendly sky lantern that burns completely without leaving garbage. This new product first appeared in the 2020 Lantern Festival, and symbolized a milestone of preserving culture and protecting the environment. Nonetheless, this product still needs to be improved, because the price is higher than the traditional lanterns, and there are only three stores that sell it. How to collaborate with local stores is still an urgent aim of the creation team.

The development of the Pingxi sky lantern industry is undoubtedly an important cultural advance in Taiwan. In spite of the change of social values, how to find a balance between culture and environment is still a big issue at present. What is certain is that the Pingxi sky lantern culture will create more possibilities in the future.

Art by <https://www.bing.com/>



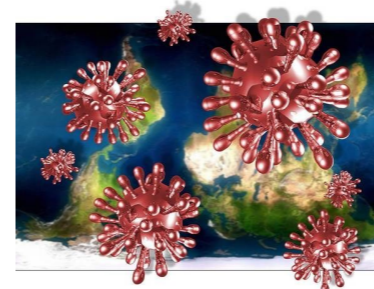
Sky lanterns rise into the sky



Folk medicines preventing and curing COVID-19

By staff writer Teresa Yu

COVID-19...



...stay safe!

INSIDE...

Vietnam Flooding	2
Editorial: My Nation, My Taiwan	3
NTUBilingual: Europe tightens curbs...	4
Art Walk: Colorful Mediterranean Buildings in Zhengbin Fishing Harbor	5
Our Taiwan: Sky Lanterns: Lights of hope or a disaster for the environment?	6

China: Jinhua Qinggan

The Jinhua Qinggan Granule was developed during the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic. It consists of 12 herbal components including honeysuckle, mint and licorice, which can clear heat and detoxify the lungs. Supporters argue that there is no downside to using this medicine, but experts say rigorous scientific tests are needed before they are deemed safe. The US National Institutes of Health said that while it may help with symptom relief, its overall effectiveness against the coronavirus is inconclusive. (from <https://covid-19.chinadaily.com>)

Africa: Herbal Drink

In April, Madagascar's President Andry Rajoelina launched Covid-Organics, saying it was a prevention and remedy. A medicinal drink is produced by the Malagasy Institute of Applied Research using artemisia plant, the source of an ingredient used in a malaria treatment, and other Malagasy plants. The Malagasy are an Austronesian people native to Madagascar. It had been tested on 20 people over a period of three weeks. Rajoelina stands by the herbal drink, despite the island having had 15,925 coronavirus infections and 216 Covid-19 deaths (from [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com)).

India: Cow excrement

In India, most citizens are followers of Hinduism. Due to the beliefs of the religion, they think cows are holy, and killing cows is not permitted. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a spiritual leader of Hinduism held a party to encourage followers to drink bovine urine. What's more, an Indian politician said that eating cows' feces are helpful during recovery from the disease.

Myanmar: Putting black pepper on the tongue or carrying onions

In Myanmar, one monk told people that putting seven black peppercorns on the tongue helps to prevent the disease. In addition, one netizen said that carrying onions helps to stop the spreading of COVID-19. A post from China reads, “Everybody should bring onions with you, the more the better.”

Ethiopia: Vanilla tea, ginger or garlic in the nose, taking a salt water steam bath

Some citizens in Ethiopia drink vanilla tea with lemon and ginger juice to aid in prevention during the pandemic (continued on page 4).



Managing Editor: David Pendery

Design: David Pendery, Gigi Chen

Staff writers: Teresa Yu, Jolie Li, Sophia Chen

Staff NTUBilingual translators: Gigi Chen, David Pendery

Staff Editorial writer: David Pendery

Staff Art Walk writer: Gigi Chen

Staff Our Taiwan writer: Luke Ye

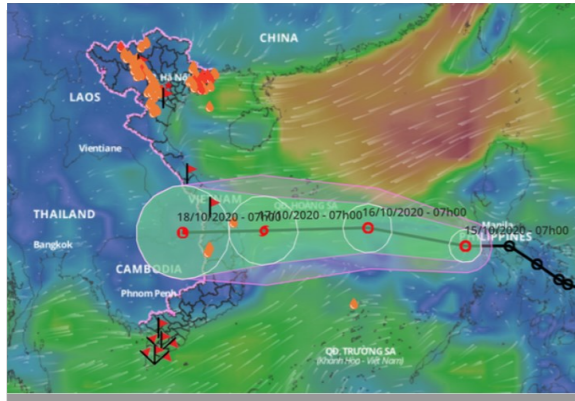
Flooding in Vietnam

By staff writers Jolie Li and Sophia Chen

Vietnam suffers every year from many types of natural disasters, especially floods and storms. The country has been strongly impacted by climate change, and natural disasters are increasingly more intense, frequent and unpredictable. This poses greater risks to citizens, communities, and businesses.

There are many reasons for flooding in Vietnam, including natural factors and human factors. Rainfall, the influence of tides, storms and tropical depressions are natural factors. Because Vietnam has an average annual rainfall from 1,500 to 2,000 mm, heavy rains often causes floods in cities which have poor drainage systems. The influence of monsoons is also a factor, with Vietnam affected by storms and tropical depressions. In 2013, 14 hurricanes, five tropical depressions and three major storms

struck Vietnam, with storms with heavy rains causing serious flooding, leading to enormous damage. Annual tides are also a natural factor, especially with melting ice at the poles leading to a rise in sea levels. Rising sea levels impact lowland areas.



Path of Tropical Storm Linfa in Vietnam, Oct. 2020.



Flooded homes in Vietnam

Contribute to the community

A 2020 flood event caused serious damage in central Vietnam, and communities in neighboring regions contributed aid, including money and food. In the complicated flood situations, individuals and organizations have

made great contributions to charity activities. The family of famed singer Thuy Tien made one great contribution. During the disaster, Thuy Tien called for donations to people in the floodplain and he brought food to support people.

Although flooding has brought much destruction to Vietnam, we can prevent and reduce the damages in many ways. To prevent floods, we should protect the forests. Protective and headwater forests have an important role, because they

not only control water flow, preventing floods, but also limit the greenhouse effect

and protect the environment. Strengthening irrigation, and reinforcing dikes and dams are also good solutions to prevent floods in deltas and lowlands. Ensuring the effective operation of the drainage system is a good way to reduce floods in cities. As well, the government should take positive measures such as creating a plan to deal with floods, exercising rescue plans, evacuating people from dangerous areas, providing people with food and medicine when flooding strikes. Residents also have many solutions. People in lowland areas often build their house higher than other areas. They should have reasonable harvest plans to reduce the

damage. At the time when floods occur, they must store food and essential products to make sure that they have enough food for the long term. These are the human factors that can prevent floods and make a

difference.

As you see, floods have negative effects in Vietnam. However, thanks to modern technology and careful preparation we can predict and reduce the destruction. The more you prepare the less damage you may face.

Data taken from Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC). Art by <https://asiafoundation.org/resources/>, <https://tuotire.vn>, <http://www.vnbaolut.com>, <https://khoahoc.tv>, <http://floodlist.com/>



Singer Thuy Tien distributing food to the people of Central Viet Nam.



By staff Art Walk writer Gigi Chen

Located in Zhengbin Village (正濱村), Zhongzheng District, Keelung

City (基隆市). Zhengbin fishing harbor (正濱港口), was constructed by the Japanese during the Japanese colonization period in 1934, and was the largest harbor in Taiwan at the time. It was a prosperous commercial harbor that drove the expansion of fishing ports in Keelung, and became an important base for distant water fishery trawlers from

northern Taiwan. There was once a vessel *Folk Art* berthed in the harbor, which became the first maritime art museum in Taiwan. However, the Zhengbin harbor gradually declined after 1979, as the tonnage of fishing vessels was increasing, which the harbor was not able to handle.

In order to improve the harbor, the Keelung City Government (基隆市政府) began to promote a chromatic scheme, called the "The Zhengbin Fishing Harbor Nostalgia Quay Color Project" (正濱港口懷舊碼頭色彩項目). Fundraising by the Keelung City Urban Development Association (基隆市城市發展協會),

cooperated with students and teachers of Chinese Culture University (中國文化大學) and Chung Yuan Christian University (中原大學)



in an environmental color survey. Using professional instruments, they conducted the survey, and 55 colors considered exclusive and



Zhengbin Harbor

unique to the Zhengbin fishing harbor were selected, creating a harmonious arrangement. Buildings sporting the colors were constructed

from April 2018 to March 2019, and these structures were given Community Creation Awards of Excellence in the LA AWARDS of the International Federation of Landscape

Architects in 2019. This old shipyard, has now become a fairy tale harbor in Taiwan. Some even call the fishing harbor "the colorful harbor of Venice in Taiwan" or a "Mediterranean town in northern Taiwan."

With these developments on the northern Taiwan coast, Zhengbin fishing harbor has

become a popular tourist attraction that makes people feel as if they are in a foreign capital. The colorful buildings and the reflections on the water compose a breathtaking picture,

attracting locals and tourists to stop and admire. Along with the beautiful buildings, visitors can explore the history and development of Zhengbin fishing harbor, and also get to know more about the maritime development history in Keelung and Taiwan—which is of course a major world fishing center. Coloring the old buildings has given

Zhengbin fishing harbor a brand new look and style, and a new lease on an old lifestyle in Taiwan. Art by <https://bunnynn.com/> bunnynn82/