



2021 CREATIVE FILM PROJECT VIDEO II STUDY IN TAIWAN AND IMMERSE IN DADAOCHENG (大稻埕)

BY EDUCATION DIVISION
TECO IN AUSTRALIA

There's no better way to learn Mandarin than to immerse yourself in local life and customs, Dadaocheng offers a wealth of learning opportunities.

As a foreign national encounters a new place, many can find themselves lacking a sense of belonging and isolated in native culture and languages. This film aims to break the barrier through the eyes of an Australian studying in Taiwan to take you into the daily life of a community.

It is a Taiwan-Australian collaborative work through Taipei's Islander Design Studio and young director Jian Jun-Cheng to include all parties taking place in one film.

Dadaocheng is one of the first places Ben Fisher visited in Taiwan, and he has been back many times since. Traditional manufacturing and century-old temples sit alongside modern cafes and independent art spaces, it's a melting pot of old and new Taipei. Dadaocheng is constantly changing and evolving, he learnt something new on each of his visits.

As one of the oldest "living" historic districts with one of the best preserved main streets, Dadaocheng has a lot to offer. Wandering through the streets and alleyways of Dadaocheng, you will encounter a mix of tradition and modernity. At its heart is Dihua Street, with historical buildings occupied by century-old businesses selling dried goods and herbal medicines, as well as cultural and creative spaces, and many teashops.

Chic cafés and creative spaces occupy architecture of the southern Fujian, Baroque revival, and early Modernist styles. The atmospheric street's many identities provide for a whole day of exploration.

Among the thousands of ways to learn about our world, its' cultures and traditions, the observation of the street as a social space provides a useful starting point. In the past as well as today, the streets of a place can tell us a great deal about its people, culture and its tradition.

With the opening of Tamsui Harbour during late Qing Dynasy, Dadaocheng became the new trade capital of northern Taiwan. There are creative spaces and studios, aiming to preserve the streets' historical traces, while exploring a modern identity.

Through Ben's English introduction alongside with Jian's cinematography, viewers have a glimpse of what Dadaocheng is like today. Behind the scene, it is these century old businesses that gradually open their doors to young creativity. Historians on site design tours, walks, set up websites to repackaging the old town with a fresh look.

To name a few, it's worth noting that Sukilane and Shang Hsin tea room two Dadaocheng based entities shown in the film work hand in hand with young graduate designers to enhance their products and services. After all, it is this intangible heritage of innovation through generations that crafts a city's good soul.

Overall we would recommend to anybody who is interested in retro Taiwanese culture to explore Dadaocheng. When you as foreign nationals are lost in town, come to visit Dadaocheng tasting tea, chatting with locals, joining a guided tour to feel a sense of belonging.

A list of partnerships of Dadaocheng's locals:

- 舒喜巷文史工作室 Sukilane [website](#)
- 尚欣茶行 Shang Hsin tea room [Youtube](#)
- 嶼生設計 Islander Design Studio [website](#)
- 簡峻成 Director Jian Jun-Cheng [YouTube](#)

There's no better way to learn Mandarin than to immerse yourself in local life and customs, Dadaocheng offers a wealth of learning opportunities. "Dadaocheng is constantly changing and evolving, I learnt something new on each visit," said Ben Fisher. Ben has been awarded 2021 MOE Taiwan scholarship and studies a M.A in Chinese Literature at National Taiwan University.