



Haluton is the Fengyuan's "mother river", bringing an abundance of water from Dajia River to the land.

A walk along the water

Exploring the riverbanks of the Haluton

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Photos by Reflection Photography

"Haluton" is the old name for Fengyuan, the county seat for Taichung County prior to the merging of Taichung city and county and a key central Taiwan economic center. Han Chinese settled this area about 200 years ago, when it was known as "Fuchun Township" (富春鄉) or "Little Suzhou" (小蘇州) because of its prosperity and beautiful scenery. With increasing urbanization, Haluton's waterways were covered over to make way for new roads. Today, Taichung City Government is once again making Fengyuan a green city filled with riverbanks and gardens as part of efforts to draw more visitors to the area. Let's take a stroll along the waterways of Haluton for a closer look at this Taichung district.

Fengyuan (Haluton), located in north-central Taichung on the southern bank of the Dajia River, was a verdant, broad plain filled with deer centuries ago. At the start of the 18th century, the Haluton name gradually disappeared as the Japanese governor of Taiwan in 1920 changed its designation to "Toyo-hara", whose jurisdiction included Fengyuan Street, Neipu, Shenggang, Daya and Tanzi. After World War II, administrative districts once again changed, resulting in the modern-day name of Fengyuan.

The roots of Fengyuan: 'The green mound'

There are several interesting stories behind the name "Haluton", partly related to the local geography. According to some, Fengyuan was formed around three mounds created by Dajia River sands with the name "Haluton" being given to the biggest mound, which had the shape of a "halu", or gourd. While the full gourd shape no longer exists, the base of this mound is located behind Dajeiwei Fude Temple on ZhongZheng Road's Lane 277. In 1958, in the wake of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis and "823" Bombardment, the government settled 40 Kinmen Island residents at the bottom of the mound. When these residents moved in 2014, this location was transformed into a "green mound" to reestablish Haluton's original characteristics. An iron memorial arch was also constructed while a stone-carved guardian dog and lanterns belonging to the Fengyuan Shrine (now Nan Yang Elementary School)--witness to many historic eras and moments--were cleaned and moved to the village temple.

Fengyuan is famous for high-quality rice, cultivated by its waterways, that was enjoyed by even Japanese emperors before 1953. Although these waterways are now covered by roads and parking spaces, we can travel through time and explore their history.

Chan Da-jing's role in early development

The history of Han Chinese immigrants settling of Taiwan's land is well-known. However, Fengyuan's story begins about 300 years ago with Chan Da-jing, a Hakka explorer from mainland China's Chaozhou.

Chan (1690-1773) immigrated to Taiwan in 1711 by himself. Arriving on the Taichung plains near Dajia River, he befriended aborigines living along Houli's riverbanks and married first-level chief Ahmu's daughter. Eventually, he married a total of six Taiwanese plains aborigine women at different times and earned the nickname of "Aborigine Chief's Son-In-Law". With this official standing,



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Mr. Tsai is a well-known Taichung cultural expert and historian. His parents worked as fish vendors in a traditional market, where a pork vendor served as his childhood napping place. His academic research includes cultural economics and social studies, and he has a special interest in socially-marginalized groups of people. Among his special interests are professional mourners, Chinese veterans, traditional markets, betel nut businesses, and other religious events.



Dajeiwei Fude Temple's stone-carved guardian dog was originally located at Fengyuan Shrine



A visit to the once-flourishing Wansyuan Mansion.

he developed the land west of Lahodoboo and cooperated with Lahodoboo third-level chief Pan Ah-dun by exchanging water access for land. Chan then worked with land developers Chan Cheng-wan and the "Liuguan Company" to cultivate the area. Later descendants erected sculptures of Chan and Pan at Fengjun Park and worshiped Chan at Sheko Wanhsin Temple in honor and gratitude for his achievements.

A walk by Chan's Wansyuan family mansion

Chan Da-jing was the wealthiest man in central Taiwan and the prosperity of his family can still be witnessed with a visit to Chan's Wansyuan Mansion, built in Wengshe Village in 1873. This Hakka-style building was designated a Taichung historic landmark in 2003. According to Chan Guan-qian, from the 19th generation of the Chan family and early Taiwan settlers, Chan Wan-chun of the 15th generation built this 3967-square-meter structure. He notes that its most unique aspect are gate pillars depicting heroic stories about the family's early ancestors.

Chuang Shu-ru is the 20th-generation daughter-in-law of the Chan family as well an organizer of the Haluton Book Club. Although Wansyuan Mansion has been classified as three-house courtyard complex with two sets of wings, Chuang insists on identifying the mansion as a traditional Hakka house with an ancestral hall, deity hall, residential space, and livestock pens. With a wealth of knowledge regarding pottery and painting, she notes that any painting featuring Chinese cabbages and cats symbolizes longevity. Looking at the mansion's walls, she points out the concepts behind two Yuchiaokendu (漁樵耕讀: a willful living style) paintings from different times, as well as wall dents left from the Japanese colonial period. Witness to the past, the building comes back to life again as Chuang explains its culture and history.

A song remembering Wengzi Village

When visiting Wansyuan Mansion, it's essential to learn

about the story of Wengzi Village, which was founded by Han Cantonese settlers. Known today as Wengzi Township, it was one of nine villages in Lahodoboo during the 18th century. Besides the Chan family residence, several other Hakka mansions were built by the Yu, Chiu, Hsu and Lien families, who were early immigrants to this area.

The mansions were constructed along flourishing streets and Wengzi Village is located between Dongshi hill, Halotun Market and Shigang hill. Why would early immigrants settle in an area without access to water resources? Wengzi Village was at the intersection of Han Chinese and aboriginal settlements. Puziko Village to the north had water resources and there were often serious feuds over access to this in early times, resulting in a military garrison's occupation of the village during the Taiping Period. Therefore Wengzi Village's desirable location played an important role in Taiwan's history.

The 'fatal waterway'

Puziko Village (today's Puzi Township) has an abandoned water access point (where ancestors obtained water) on the Haluton Canal, yet the earlier water access point was changed several times.



Fude Temple stands along Dayuanyanbian Waterway at a point where waters head both east and west.

In 1732, the Qing emperor dispatched Chan Da-jing to work on a one-mile underground project from the south bank of Dajia River and along Haluton Waterway, diverting river water into the village (behind Wanshun Temple). Later, the Japanese created the "Fengrong Water Resource Monument" to remember the work of these ancestors.

During the Japanese colonial era, the water access point was removed beneath the old railway bridge because of maintenance issues. Fengrong Water Resource Association was established in 1939 and the water access point was then changed to a gated dam. When Shihgang Dam was completed in 1977, water was diverted to Haluton Waterway from the dam. However, serious damage to the dam during the Sept. 21, 1999 earthquake forced residents to retrieve water from the old water inlet beneath the old railway until repairs could be made.

As you head south along Haluton Canal, you will come to "Wandingbian" (萬定汴) which literally means "the fatal water" and used to be the head of Wufu Waterway branch (today's Xiaixzhou Waterway's water irrigation valve).

While Han Chinese immigrants to central Taiwan improved the quality of water access and their living environment, several serious feuds also took place. During the Qing Dynasty, farmers from upper Dongbao (today's Fengyuan) placed barriers in the river during droughts, denying water resources to Xibao (today's Qingshui, Wuqi and Shalu). In April, 1767, farmers from Xibao went to Wandingbian to confront Dongbao farmers, resulting in three deaths. Government officials later solved this issue by demanding that Dongbao farmers divert one-third of their water resources to Xibao at the beginning of every February.


Ruanbeizi River and Dongbian Route



As you continue along the waterway on JiaoTang Road, it heads west upon reaching the second water irrigation valve of Dinjiaotang (頂角潭). While Ruanbeizi River does not go through Fengyuan, it does pass through several parks. In 2018, one of the three main exhibition areas for the Taichung World Flora Exposition will be the 18-hectare Haluton Park on the bank of Ruanbeizi River. The "River Bank and Garden Project" will feature carefully-arranged ecological settings and construction will be done by March, 2018 with a public opening scheduled for August of that year.

Fengyuan District has not experienced any droughts, thanks to the beautified Ruanbeizi River, which provides sufficient amounts of water via the Haluton Waterway.

Continuing toward the lower end of JiaoTang Road along the waterway, you will see Jiaotang Fude Temple. The road above the waterway separates into two routes at Dayuanyanbian (大鴛鴦汴) where the waters also flow to the east and west. The Dongbian Waterway travels east and turn south toward Fengyuan District's urbanized area. This 1.8-kilometer waterway was covered with a concrete road to prevent water pollution and create more parking spaces for residents. The water flows beneath the road, passes the downtown area and turns to the south, passing BoAi Road and becoming visible again at ShuangLong Road.

Dongbian Waterway passing Yuanhua East Road, travels along TianXin Road and continues south to Sizhangli and Beitun District. The story of these beautiful waterways continues and can be enjoyed today as you walk along their routes. 



1. Chan Da-jing and Pan's sculptures at Fengjun Park recall the history of past ancestral settlers.
2. Dongbian Waterway travels along TianXin Road and continues south to Sizhangli and Beitun District.