

Lukang—once prosperous as one of Taiwan's great port towns, alongside Tainan and Monga—thrived on its waterways and later quieted as its harbor silted up. Within its lanes and alleys, red-brick houses and intricate latticework whisper stories of time, while temple incense and the bustle of daily life weave together a distinctive cultural landscape. It was in this environment that Hsu Tsang-tse (1930–2006), who spent his entire life rooted in his hometown, used his camera to document half a century of change, transforming the ordinary and extraordinary moments of Lukang into 250,000 images—a visual diary of a lifetime.

Rather than approaching Lukang from the perspective of grand historical narratives, Hsu Tsang-tse photographed with quiet sincerity: children at play, artisans absorbed in their craft, women busy with daily chores, and elders whose eyes carried the vicissitudes of life. Through these everyday observations, he preserved the streets and alleys, rites of passage and seasonal rituals of Lukang. These images are not only the memory of a family, but also a vital index for Lukang local studies.

In 2007, the Hsu family donated this vast collection of photographs and manuscripts to the National Museum of Natural Science (NMNS), where it was incorporated into the national collection. In 2009, the museum presented “The Good Old Times of Lukang,” an exhibition that revealed the depth and richness of Hsu Tsang-tse's photographic work to the public. Yet the vast number of images, the need to connect manuscripts with photographic materials, and the ongoing transition of digital archiving systems have required continuous organization and reinterpretation.

At the end of 2024, MNMS proposed the project “Lukang through the lens of Hsu Tsang-tse: local perspectives, image interpretation, collaborative fieldwork, accessible collections, and exhibition planning” to the Ministry of Culture. The goal is to systematically catalog, conserve, and interpret this collection, fulfilling two key missions: making the

Eternal Gaze upon the Beloved Lukang

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許蒼澤的鹿城拾影
The Good Old Times of Lukang



Each photograph in this brochure is labeled with its collection number. By entering the number in the search bar of the Ministry of Culture Collections, you can access the detailed descriptive metadata for that photograph.

Ministry of Culture Collections

collection accessible and bringing it into public view. Working together with Changyuan Hospital Lukang Historical Image Museum and local historians, we have returned to Lukang's streets and stories, re-examining this body of work so that these precious images may once again enter the public eye and inspire participatory, community-rooted interpretation and exhibition practices.

What we undertake is more than the interpretation of an archival collection—it is a dialogue across time and generations. “Days, Years, Lifetimes: The Good Old Times of Lukang” traces a cultural map of Lukang through Hsu Tsang-tse's lens: from the rhythms of daily life “Days”, to festivals and traditions “Years”, to the full arc of existence “Lifetimes”, the significance of this historic town amid Taiwan's social transformations.

May this initiative of visual revitalization breathe new life into Lukang's cultural memory and leave a lasting visual chapter in the local history of Taiwan.

8 Comics: Childhood Memories

Lukang in the 1960s was far from the dazzling neon lights, without flashy electronic games. Toys were often improvised from scavenged branches or tires, while popular pastimes included hopscotch, jump rope, and shuttlecock kicking. Children were captivated by comic book rental shops, storybooks, the candy and biscuit jars in the local traditional grocery store, and the candied fruit skewers and ice pops sold in temple squares. The wildly popular Jhuge Shiro comic series, a sensation of that era, remains a resonant childhood memory for an entire generation of Taiwanese.



Entering the world of comics
Tongxiao, Miaoli
1965.07.27
Nikon F 28mm f3.5

指導單位 | 教育部 文化部 NSTC 國家科學及技術委員會

主辦單位 | 國立自然科學博物館

合辦單位 | 長安醫院 協辦單位 | 財團法人國立自然科學博物館文教基金會

2 Days: Daily Lives and People

From barefoot schoolchildren to laborers at work, Hsu Tsang-tse captured Lukang's everyday life from the 1950s to the 1990s. His photographs portray childhood, fishing, markets, brickmaking, handicrafts, and cottage industries, while intimate moments of community life reveal the town's warmth and changing social, industrial, and economic landscape.



MS2007005160
彰化鹿港
1960-1962
Leica M2 50mm f1.4

1 Changyuan Was the Place We Called Home

Hsu Tsang-tse's extensive and well-preserved collection of cameras forms an important body of material evidence for the progression of modern photographic equipment in Taiwan. The Hsu family's engagement with photography dates back to the Japanese colonial period. Their first glass-plate camera was purchased in 1919 by Dr. Hsu Du. Because early cameras were heavy and cumbersome to transport, they were used primarily for family portraits. Influenced by his father from a young age, Hsu Tsang-tse began learning photography at sixteen. At the age of twenty-eight, he purchased his own Nikon S2 and devoted himself to documentary photography.

Hsu Tsang-tse did not limit himself to still imagery. Beginning in 1963, he used an 8 mm movie camera to produce 27 reels of moving images, including “Island Tour” and “Happy Summer Vacation”. The latter, approximately fifteen minutes long, was filmed at the family residence that also housed Dr. Hsu Du's Changyuan Hospital in Lukang. In the film, ten grandchildren return to Lukang, filling the house with lively scenes—running, playing hide-and-seek, tug-of-war, conga line, spinning in circles, mock sword fights, balloon blowing, guitar playing, and more. At a time when home movies were far from commonplace in Taiwan, “Happy Summer Vacation” not only captures intimate family life but also reflects the historical context, clothing, and everyday environment of the 1960s, preserving some of the most authentic moving-image records of Taiwan's past.

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6 The National Museum of Natural Science: Collection & Management

In 2007, the National Museum of Natural Science received a donation from the Hsu family, comprising 250,000 negatives photographed by Hsu Tsang-tse, 4,500 slides, 178 glass plate negatives, 27 rolls of motion-picture film, as well as four scrapbooks, three notebooks, and old newspapers.

The museum first conducted an inventory and classified the negatives into two categories—those affected by vinegar syndrome and those unaffected—for separate storage and preservation. With support from the National Digital Archives Program, more than 110,000 items were digitally scanned and catalogued.

Due to the vast quantity of Hsu Tsang-tse's photographic collection, continued organization and interpretation are required in accordance with the museum's commitment to public access to collections. In 2025, with support from the Ministry of Culture, the museum launched the project “Lukang through the Lens of Hsu Tsang-tse: Local Perspectives, Image Interpretation, Collaborative Fieldwork, Collection Accessibility, and Exhibition Planning.” The project aims to further enrich the Ministry of Culture's digital collections database and provide public access for research and inquiry, while incorporating local knowledge perspectives from Lukang to strengthen the museum's public engagement and collaborative connections with the community.

7 Rock 'n' Roll Lukang Since 1960

“Rock 'n' Roll Lukang” creates an immersive audiovisual experience, pairing Hsu Tsang-tse's photographs of streets, temples, alleys, and local life with iconic songs rooted in Lukang. The soundtrack features Lo Ta-yu's “Lukang, the Little Town” and “Childhood,” tracks from the Lukang Tianhou Temple album, Shih Kuo-hsiung's “The Song of Lukang Pudu,” and an original composition, “Lukang,” by Hsu Tsang-tse's son, Dr. Hsu Jeng-yuan. Together, images and music evoke Lukang's stories, memories, and cultural rhythms across generations.



MP2007013490
彰化鹿港米市街
1986.04.20
Fujica HD-S 38mm F2.8

4 Lifetimes: Passages and Rituals

the town's enduring seasonal traditions and ritual culture. As the solar terms progress, the people of Lukang plant seedlings after Chushu, cultivate and weed the fields, then harvest crops, dry grain, and burn rice straw, embodying an agricultural wisdom rooted in harmony with nature and the cycle of giving back to the land. Through his photographic works documenting Lukang across the four seasons, Hsu Tsang-tse captured the traditional philosophy of reverence for heaven and care for all living things, preserving the collective memory shaped by the land and human relationships.



MP2007041729
彰化鹿港
1989.11.05
Olympus XA-4 28mm f3.5

“Lifetimes” traces the human life cycle across generations, from birth and childhood to marriage, old age, and funeral rites. These rituals embody Lukang's collective rhythms and cultural traditions. Rather than staging his subjects, Hsu Tsang-tse documented these moments with a candid eye, preserving authentic expressions, emotions, and memories.

MP2007025170
彰化鹿港
1959.02.18
Nikon S2 50mm f1.4



Lukang's unique character is shaped by seasonal festivals and the rhythms of the 24 Solar Terms. The year begins with the arrival of spring and the celebration of Lunar New Year, followed by the Lantern Festival, dragon boat races during Qingming, dragon boat races during the Duanwu Festival, Zhongyuan rituals for wandering spirits, and Mid-Autumn reunions, all reflecting

3 Years: Seasonal Rituals and Rhythms

Born in Lukang, Hsu Tsang-tse devoted his life to photography, documenting everyday life, rituals, and religious practices. Because the Hsu family jointly operated the Asia Cinema and Xingnan Cinema with local residents of Lukang, Hsu Tsang-tse frequently traveled throughout Lukang aboard movie advertising vehicles, photographing scenes along the way. These experiences cultivated a documentary perspective grounded in close engagement with local communities and a deep concern for human life and culture.

Hsu Tsang-tse was passionate about recording what he saw and heard through a realistic lens, insisting that the people he photographed appeared objective and natural. Between 1957 and 1965, he received numerous domestic and international photography awards, and his works were published in photography magazines, newspapers, and books. Throughout his life, he collected over six hundred cameras and maintained complete records of both equipment and shooting; these were regarded as essential resources in the history of local photography in Taiwan.



MS2007001270
彰化鹿港長源醫院
1957

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5 Becoming a Photographer: Hsu Tsang-tse's Gaze upon Lukang



Lukang Folk Arts Museum

Formerly the Koo family estate, this venue consists of two buildings: the Baroque-style “Yamato House” in the front, and the 200-year-old Minnan shophouse “Gufeng House” in the back. The Koo family donated their ancestral home and private collection in 1973. Now safeguarding over 6,000 cultural artifacts, it has become an essential museum for exploring the culture of Lukang.



Changyuan Hospital

Built in 1925 during the Japanese colonial era, Changyuan Hospital is the former residence of photographer Hsu Tsang-tse and the clinic of his father, Dr. Hsu Tu. Fusing traditional Han shophouse design with Japanese colonial architecture, it once stood as Lukang's tallest building a century ago. Following a 7-year restoration, it was reborn as the “Changyuan Hospital - Lukang Historical Image Museum” in 2023 and named one of the “Top 100 Cultural Bases” in 2025.



Tianhou Temple

Established in 1591, Lukang Tianhou Temple holds the unique distinction of being Taiwan's only temple to house the original founding Mazu statue from the Meizhou Ancestral Temple. The temple's current layout took shape during a comprehensive renovation from 1927 to 1936, adopting a three-hall, two-courtyard design that includes the Sanchuan (Front) Hall, the Main Hall, and the Rear Hall. In 2019, it was officially designated a National Historic Site, remaining the largest and best-preserved Mazu temple complex in Lukang.



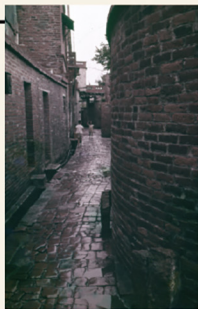
Zhongshan Road

Serving as Lukang’s most prosperous commercial thoroughfare, this road features a vibrant row of historic arcades and shophouses. Between 1830 and 1850, continuous roofs were constructed above the street using timber frameworks and covered with tiles to protect merchants and residents from sun, wind, and rain. These roofs blocked out the sky, creating the so-called “Bu-Jian-Tian Street” (Roofed Street) appearance. In 1934, the structure was dismantled due to urban street-widening implemented under city planning reforms.



Longshan Temple

As one of the best-preserved Qing Dynasty temple buildings in Taiwan, it was built in 1786 with funds raised by immigrants from the seven counties of Quanzhou, inhaling incense (fenxiang) from the Anhai Longshan Temple in Fujian. Its current scale was finalized during a major reconstruction between 1829 and 1858, adopting a traditional “three-hall, two-courtyard” layout arranged in the shape of the Han character “日”. The complex comprises the Shanmen (Mountain Gate), the Wumen (Five-Gate) Hall, the Main Hall, and the Rear Hall in sequential order. The temple was officially designated a National Historic Site in 1983.



Jiuqu Lane (Nine-Turns Lane)

Describing Lukang’s many winding alleys, the zigzag design helps block the harsh winter winds while providing home security and warding off evil spirits. A local ballad famously mentions that “the wind never reaches the Nine Turns Lane,” perfectly captured the cleverness of this wind-defying architecture.



Lukang Old Street

Formed by Dayou, Yaolin, and Putou streets, Lukang Old Street was a vital Qing Dynasty trading hub. Its historic shophouses feature deep layouts combining storefronts with rear living quarters. Today, visitors can still admire red-brick lanes, gray-tiled roofs, and iconic urn walls, interspersed with century-old shops and artisan studios. As these restored historic houses find new life as vibrant cultural spaces, they beautifully demonstrate how the old neighborhood's rich history is both preserved and reborn.

9 Walking Through Lukang

The “Walking Through Lukang” section is presented as an interactive tabletop game, inviting visitors to become time-travelers, choosing to explore the town on foot, by rickshaw, or by bicycle. Upon arriving at any of the seven locations—Lukang Tianhou Temple, Longshan Temple, Old Street, Chang-Yuan Hospital, the Folk Arts Museum, Zhongshan Road and Jiuqu Lane—the screen displays a comparison between Hsu Tsang-tse’s historical photographs and contemporary scenes in a carousel format. Through these juxtapositions of past and present, visitors can experience Lukang’s transformations and the layers of memory accumulated over time.

Operating Instructions

Mission A “A one-day tour of Lukang”	Mission B “A year of seasonal memories in Lukang”	Mission C “A Local’s Lifetime in Retrospect”
Role A traveler who loves exploring local culture.	Role A young person returning home who spends a year rediscovering everyday life in the town’s alleys.	Role A local resident, taking a walk through Lukang’s town center.
Tip Use “the rickshaw” to enjoy this leisurely one-day cultural tour.	Tip Use “the bicycle” to experience the slow rhythm of a year in Lukang.	Tip Use “walking” to revisit the memories of a lifetime.