

First Words: About Our Emblem

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Taiwanese Writing Forum (Tâi-bûn Sîp-chok-hōe) started out as a handful of compatriots with a sense of mission for spreading the written form of Taioanese. Each meeting was better attended than the last. By the sixth meeting we were 17 strong. More than the swelling of our ranks, though, it was the ardent engagement of those who had come that truly gladdened the heart. Entering our fourth month, someone suggested a forum newsletter. This drew a spirited response....

Some believed the Taioanese language to be in danger of extinction. A newsletter could be as live embers, to keep the fires lit for our language.

Some believed it would take effort from all fields of endeavor — especially from education, from politics, from communications, from commerce and industry, from computing, from academia, from religion, from literature, and from linguistics, among others — to grow written Taioanese. Given the immensity of the task and the very modest capabilities of the Forum, a newsletter could be as a match, struck to kindle the candles and torches of the willing, that there may be new light for our sullied, darkening society, and that the creeping sludge of oppression and molestation that stalks our heritage may burn and be gone.

Some said that those who toil for the Taioanese language are lamentably isolated and mutually incommunicado. A newsletter could be as bridges, that those who toil may exchange encouragement and ideas and coordinate their efforts.

Some said as well that if Chinese Nationalist Party-owned media outlets give the Taioanese language short shrift, nor do native-minded magazines and periodicals pay it much heed. Thus writers who write in our language find few outlets for their work, and the creative impulse is dampened. A newsletter could be as gardens of creativity, or stages freeing expression.

The emblem of Taiwanese Writing Forum emerged from this heady discussion. It is like dying embers; or a lit match, soon to be ashes; or a bridge waiting to be crossed; or a field lying unworked; or a stage, perhaps without spectators. We shall set out like this. We have nothing, save hearts that beat for Formosa, and a tightly held conviction: *Should we today give this up, there will be no tomorrows.*

Language and script are things of society. Whether Tâi-bûn will spread and standardize, and whether Taioanese will remain lingua franca on Formosan shores — these will depend on broad engagement from all who love Tâi-oân and call her their own. But we believe that when this little match of ours expires, many candles will have been lit to carry this flame on.