

POP

STOP

COMPILED BY NOAH BUCHAN



Rachel Fu and Charles Chen aren't so lovey-dovey any more.

Angsters, gambling, a decade on the lam, a career comeback and now a mystery child: **Chu Ko Liang's** (豬哥亮) life is the stuff of soap opera.

For those who have hibernating, Chu Ko Liang rose to stardom and wealth in the 1980s as a stand-up comedian. Off stage, however, he racked up gambling debts to underworld figures and is said to have owed his boss, **Yang Tang-kuai** (楊登魁), NT\$120 million.

So Chu Ko Liang did what any debtor might do and went into hiding, breaking his contract with Yang.

Fast forward to February of this year, when intrepid *Apple Daily* photographers caught up with Chu Ko Liang in southern Taiwan, where he was reportedly working at a temple. Fellow entertainers **Yu Tien** (余天) and **Kao Ling-feng** (高凌風) called for his return to television so that Chu Ko Liang could wipe the slate clean.

Yu brokered a meeting between Yang and Chu, and according to the *China Times*, the former knocked 80 percent off the total owed, leaving the funnyman with NT\$24 million to pay back.

The deal stipulated that Chu Ko Liang, whose disloyalty seems to have been forgotten, has to give Yang 20 percent of his earnings until he clears the lot. He now receives NT\$300,000 per show for his new program, *Chu Ko Hui She* (豬哥會社).

It remains unclear how Chu Ko Liang will repay his old debts.

This past week, the *Liberty Times* (the *Taipei Times*'s sister newspaper) snapped pictures of Chu Ko Liang's daughter, singer **Jeannie Hsieh** (謝金燕), with a boy, identity unknown.

Hsieh later revealed that the 12-year-old was her son, which means she became pregnant at roughly the time her father disappeared.

And who is the father? The *Liberty Times* speculated that he is

none other than **Yang Chung-hsien** (楊宗憲), Yang Tang-kuai's son, as the pair were rumored to be an item at the time. The elder Yang reportedly objected to the relationship because Chu Ko Liang owed him so much money.

When asked why she kept her son out of the public gaze, Hsieh said that any news about her family would invariably mention debt and gangsters.

Chu Ko Liang, meanwhile, said he couldn't be happier that he is a grandfather and wants to meet the child, and Hsieh, as soon as possible. He also said he hopes that the father is Yang Chung-hsien.

A public reunion is planned. What does it all mean? Increased TV ratings, for one. The added attention was matched by a jump in viewers for Chu Ko Liang's show.

In more mundane news, the public marital problems between singer **Rachel Fu** (傅天穎) and **Charles Chen** (陳子強) reached a crescendo over the weekend when Fu was admitted to hospital after allegedly slashing her wrist.

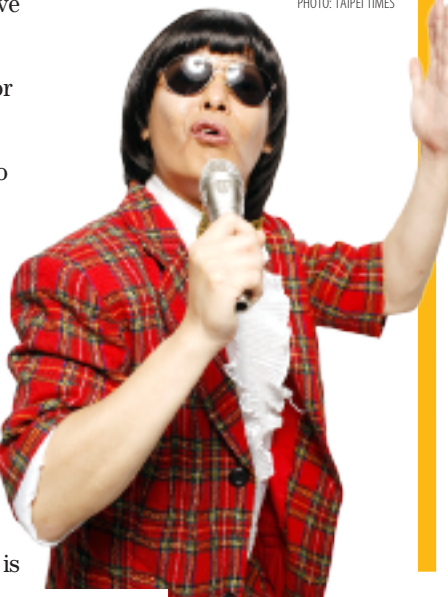
According to *United Daily News*, she showed up at the hospital with a 3cm-long wound on her wrist and smelling of alcohol. Cue innuendo that she tried to take her own life because Chen is rumored to have played away from home.

Fu later denied reports that she had tried to commit suicide, and said she had fallen down and cut herself on broken glass.

When contacted by reporters for comment, Chen said, "She has to be responsible for her own actions," a response that, needless to say, didn't endear him to observers.

Perhaps Chen should have shown the kind of remorse that Chu Ko Liang specializes in and blubbered in front of the camera for forgiveness.

Chu Ko Liang ain't too proud to beg.



RESTAURANTS

Kao-Chi 高記

Address: 5 Yongkang St, Taipei City (台北市永康街5號); 152, Fuxing 5 Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市復興南路一段152號)
Telephone: (02) 2341-9984 (Yongkang); (02) 2751-9393 (Fuxing)
Average meal: Most dishes are NT\$120 to NT\$420
On the Net: www.kao-chi.com

Overshadowed by competitor Din Tai Fung (鼎泰豐), Kao-Chi (高記) is simultaneously one of Taipei's best-known restaurant chains — and one of its better-kept secrets. Kao-Chi's three-story flagship location on Yongkang Street (永康街) is located just around the corner from Din Tai Fung and serves many of the same Shanghai-style favorites. Kao-Chi lacks the waiting crowd of tourists that usually jams the sidewalk in front of Din Tai Fung, but unless you consider standing outside in the heat next to idling tour buses appetizing, that's hardly a loss.

Kao-Chi, which opened eight years before Din Tai Fung in 1950, started out as a snack stand selling treats from Shanghai, where its founder lived before the Chinese Civil War. The front of the restaurant still features a take-out case with some of Kao-Chi's desserts. Like its more famous rival, Kao-Chi is also known for xiaolongbao (小籠包), or juicy soup dumplings, and its version is just as tasty as those served at Din Tai Fung, but don't cost as much.

Xiaolongbao, or "steamed buns" as they are called on Kao-Chi's menu, stuffed with just pork

(元籠小籠包) are NT\$180 for 10, but the crab egg and pork version (蟹黃小籠包, NT\$280) is worth the extra NT\$100 for the boost of flavor that the crab roe and "mustard" add to each dumpling.

For the uninitiated, xiaolongbao are best eaten by nibbling off a tiny bit of the wrapper near the bottom and letting the rich broth inside spill into a soup spoon to sip after the dumpling is finished. The broth inside Kao-Chi's xiaolongbao was wonderfully rich and ample (there's nothing more dissatisfying than a dry soup dumpling).

The restaurant's xiaolongbao overshadows other dumplings on Kao-Chi's menu, but most are also very good. A good complement to the soup dumplings is Kao-Chi's *zhaopai* (招牌), or signature, special giant shrimp steamed dumplings (高記蝦餃皇, NT\$120). Try rounding out your meal with yummy amaranth and tofu soup (苺菜豆腐羹, NT\$220), which is filling but still light enough for summer. The Kao-Chi special spicy and sour soup (高式酸辣湯, NT\$120) is also satisfying.

The only disappointment on a recent meal there was the shrimp and leek sprouts wrap (韭黃蝦仁



Kao-Chi's soup dumplings are comparable to those of its better-known rival around the corner.

腸粉, NT\$120), which is part of Kao-Chi's Hong Kong-style dim sum menu. The rice wrapper was tender and the shrimps and leeks were both excellent, but the sauce the wraps were drizzled in was so bland and watery that it cancelled out the dish's appeal.

Kao-Chi's selection of desserts is worth checking out if you aren't planning a trip to the neighboring Ice Monster (冰龍) for some shaved ice. The egg yolk and cream bun (極品流沙包, NT\$120), a variation on the classic Hong Kong liushabao, is soft mantou bread wrapped around golden, runny custard. Devotees of the classic liushabao made with sweet sesame seeds might be disappointed by the egg yolk and cream's relative lack of texture and more subtle flavor, but the freshness of the mantou and the richness of the custard make up for it.

BY CATHERINE SHU

BY DAVID CHEN

Monsters of rock, coming through

Linkin Park. Those two words alone are probably enough to attract swarms of young, mosh-hungry rock fans to Banciao Stadium (台北縣立板橋體育館) in Taipei County on Thursday, when the group makes its second appearance in Taiwan.

The chart-topping American nu-metal band headlines next week's Summer Rock Summit (夏日搖滾高峰會), a set of concerts that also features Vamps of Japan, and Hoobastank and The All-American Rejects of the US.

On its first visit to Taiwan in 2007, Linkin Park played a sold-out show for 40,000 people at Taipei's Zhongshan Football Stadium (中山足球場), which organizers say was Taiwan's highest-selling concert since Michael Jackson.

This time the group is joined by two opening bands that are enjoying modest mainstream chart success in the US: The All-American Rejects have an emo-pop sound; Hoobastank plays grungy but polished hard rock and is best known for its hit ballad, *The Reason*. Both bands match the whiny, angst-ridden temperament of Linkin Park's music, which melds together heavy metal and hip-hop.

Vamps, who appear on Tuesday and Wednesday at Huashan Culture Park (華山文化園區), play a high-energy mix of epic hard rock, glam metal and pop, with songs written from the point of view of vampires. The band was founded by Hyde, the charismatic singer and guitarist for the popular Japanese rock band L'Arc-en-Ciel. He and guitarist and co-founder K.A.Z. cite King Crimson and Motley Crue as influences.



Vamps, a J-rock glam metal band, appears at the Summer Rock Summit at Huashan Culture Park on Tuesday and Wednesday nights.

Taiwan has seen a relatively large number of big-name rock acts this summer, thanks in part to Summer Sonic, which alongside Fuji Rock is one of Japan's major summer festivals.

Local promoters have been taking advantage of the festival's timing and proximity. With the exception of Vamps, all of the major acts that have appeared in Taiwan this summer are also appearing at Summer Sonic in Osaka and Tokyo this weekend: UK alt-rock band Placebo, trip-hop artist Tricky, post-rock band Mew and Nine Inch Nails, which performs in Taipei

at Nangang 101 (南港101) on Wednesday.

Linkin Park, Hoobastank and All American Rejects are no exception, and will arrive in Taipei fresh from their own sets at Summer Sonic.

Organizers say Linkin Park does not plan to cut its show short even though other bands are sharing the bill, so audience members can expect a show lasting nearly four hours.

For more on Linkin Park, see our interview with lead singer Chester Bennington in the July 8, 2009, edition of the *Taipei Times*.

SUMMIT NOTES:

WHAT: 2009 Summer Rock Summit (夏日搖滾高峰會) featuring Japanese group Vamps, Linkin Park, Hoobastank and All American Rejects

WHEN AND WHERE:

► **VAMPS:** 8pm, Tuesday and Wednesday at Huashan Culture Park (華山文化園區), 1, Bade Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市八德路一段1號); closest MRT station is Zhongxiao Xingsheng, Exit 1 (忠孝新生捷運站1號出口)

► **LINKIN PARK, HOOBASTANK AND THE ALL-AMERICAN REJECTS:** 6pm, Thursday, at Banciao Stadium (台北縣立板橋體育館) in Taipei County; closest MRT station is Banciao Station, Exit 2 (板橋捷運站2號出口)

TICKETS: Tickets for Vamps concerts are NT\$1,200, NT\$2,400 and NT\$3,600; tickets for Linkin Park concert are NT\$1,600 to NT\$4,500. Tickets are available through ERA ticketing outlets, online at www.ticket.com.tw, or at 7-Eleven ibon kiosks

MUSIC

Real Taiwan

For beach getaways, Taitung can't be beat, says reggae musician Red-I. "You'd think you were in Tahiti, ya know?"

Red-I, aka Patrick Chen, is among a handful of artists performing at the Taitung Music Festival (東海岸音樂季), which starts tonight and features live reggae, Aboriginal and jazz music at a scenic beachside area in Taitung County.

The festival, now in its third year, presents some of Taiwan's most prominent Aboriginal musicians along with accomplished music groups from Japan and the Philippines.

Performers include Japanese musician Oki, who plays the *tonkori*, a traditional stringed instrument of the Ainu, an aboriginal group of northern Japan.

Oki, who plays the *tonkori* backed by a reggae and dub band, tours internationally and has participated in major world music festivals such as Peter Gabriel's WOMAD.

Other international acts include United Creation, a jazz group from Okinawa; female singer Machaco, a pioneering figure in Japan's reggae

scene; Stoned Rockerz, which Red-I describes as one of Japan's top backing reggae bands; Filipina singer Phatty Maria, who was the 2008 Japan Dancehall Queen Champion; and Papa U-gee, another veteran singer in the Japanese scene.

The lineup of international performers was organized by Red-I, who grew up in Canada and honed his musical skills as a young adult in Belize and Mexico.

He says the event is a rare chance to catch some top-notch bands from the Pan-Asian reggae scene. "I don't care where you go in Taiwan, but you're not [normally] going to get to see half of these bands for free."

Even though Caribbean sounds dominate the evening program, it's "not a reggae festival per se," said Red-I.

Almost all of the local performers in the lineup are Golden Melody Award winners from the Aboriginal music scene: Atayal singer Inka Mbing (張力恩), singer-songwriter Pau-Dull (陳建年), the Nanwang Sisters (南王三姊妹), and folk legend Kimbo Hu (胡德夫). There's new, young talent, too.

Matka and De Hot, which won the battle of the bands at this year's Ho-Hai-Yan Rock Festival, performs a blend of reggae, rock and Paiwan music tomorrow night.

Red-I's previous group, the Riddim Outlawz, disbanded, and he now spends much of his time touring the reggae circuit in Japan and the Philippines. But he promises a spirited show on Sunday. "I got a lot of tricks to pop out the hat, man," he said.

Last year the festival attracted 25,000 visitors over nine days, according to the Taitung County Government, which sponsors the event. Red-I estimated that the crowd on Saturday night last year was 5,000-strong.

He says the event's location is reason alone to go, being one of the few places in Taiwan that doesn't resemble a "Chinatown."

"It's the last piece of real Taiwan ... Taitung is the last piece," said Red-I. "People that don't know this place, man, you're missing out."

Papa U-gee appears at the Taitung Music Festival this weekend. PHOTO COURTESY OF RED-I



FESTIVAL NOTES:

WHAT: Taitung Music Festival (東海岸音樂季)
WHERE: Jialulan Recreation Area (加路蘭遊憩區), located off Highway 11 (台11線公路), south of Dulan (都蘭), Taitung County and north of Taitung City, near the 157.5km marker
WHEN: Tonight, tomorrow and Sunday from 4pm to 10pm
GETTING THERE: Scooter and bikes can be rented across the street from Taitung Train Station. By scooter it's only a few minutes away, and on a bicycle it's about a 30-minute ride. Take Highway 11 heading north to Jialulan. The festival site is just after Fugang Harbor (富岡港). A free shuttle bus runs from the train station to the venue

SCHEDULE OF PERFORMERS: International bands appear all three nights. Inka Mbing and Kimbo Hu appear today; Siyu Sitar, Pau-dull and Matka and De Hot appear tomorrow; The Nanwang Sisters, Red-I and Panai and Message appear on Sunday. Music performances run from 6pm to 10pm

ON THE NET: tmf.cc.tct.edu.tw
NOTE: Organizers say they will post updates on the festival Web site of any changes made because of Typhoon Morakot

BY NOAH BUCHAN

Palace seems to suffer from an identity crisis — at least in its design. The restaurant, located in the series of back alleys near the intersection of Dunhua South (敦化南) and Zhongxiao East (忠孝東) roads, has the decor and ambience of a lounge bar.

Cushioned hot pink couches and chairs are ensconced in front of sleek black laminate walls lined with mirrors — this latter flourish ensuring that those who sit facing them spend as much time looking at themselves as they do their dining companions. Transparent icicle-like ornaments hang from the ceiling and are accentuated by spotlighting. The sounds of such jazz greats as Chet Baker and Ella Fitzgerald round out the lounge bar vibe.

With decor like this, one could be forgiven for expecting to be passed a whiskey menu, rather than the lunch and dinner menu consisting of French, American and Italian-style dishes that we received. There are two basic ways of ordering your meal: the large set meal, which I chose, or the small set meal, which my companion picked. Both came with bread, soup and a drink, with the addition of two salads and dessert for mine. We ordered the sirloin steak (NT\$420) and rosemary lamb

with mint sauce (NT\$370).

The coil of smoked salmon lightly drizzled with honey vinaigrette and garnished with capers and asparagus that showed up to the table was a pleasant beginning. The sweet dressing and tangy capers complemented the salmon's smokiness. The Caesar salad was also surprising with its homemade dressing that had strong hints of anchovy. The somewhat tasteless homemade bread, however, was disappointing. It wasn't improved by the butter, which tasted as though it was made of coconut oil. I ended up dipping the bread into the creamy vegetable and bacon soup.

As Palace's prices are similar to, say, Sizzler, I was expecting the cut of sirloin and its presentation to be equally mediocre. I was wrong. The

6-ounce (it looked more like an 8-ounce) steak was served with the standard garnish of broccoli, cauliflower, baby corn, fries and a tangy passion fruit and tomato salad. The meat was moist, slightly marbled and came with a robust pepper sauce (on the side). My companion, between bites of his lamb, told me it was the best he'd tried in Taipei.

Stuffed from a delicious meal, I was half hoping that the brownie I chose for dessert wouldn't be worth eating. After one bite I changed my mind. It arrived crowned with a scoop of vanilla ice cream and smothered in rich chocolate sauce that was topped with chopped almonds.

Although Palace's atmosphere is somewhat bizarre for the food it serves, the restaurant offers good food for great value.



Save room for dessert.

Palace

Address: 19, Alley 19, Ln 216, Zhongxiao E Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市忠孝東路四段216巷19弄19號)
Telephone: (02) 2778-3200
Open: Daily from 11:30am to 10pm
Details: English and Chinese menu; credit cards accepted
Average meal: NT\$440

All change

The Features Section

now sports a new look.

The pastel shades have gone and in their place bold, bright colors present content in a more approachable format. We've rearranged the daily sections to form a more logical sequence, with art stories and art exhibition listings, for example, being published together on Wednesdays. The CD, technology, book and DVD reviews will run on Sundays rather than Wednesdays. There will be new puzzles and new cartoons.

Starting next Friday, a new food column called Tidbits will run in this space.

If you have any comments or queries, either send an e-mail to [features\[at\]taipeitimes.com](mailto:features[at]taipeitimes.com) or find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/taipeitimes and leave a message.