

The International Awards for
Livable Communities 2013



Zhuzihu Community, Taiwan

An Idyllic Farm Village in the Heart of a National Park

Whole City Awards Submission



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Zhuzihu Community, Taiwan

An Idyllic Farm Village in the Heart of a National Park

Overview

Under a picture-perfect sky, the flowering camellias, azaleas and cherry blossoms compete for attention in an explosion of greenery. The sea of calla lilies sways in the breeze with the liquidity of an ocean. The small bridge straddles the murmuring brook, bordered by a cobblestoned footpath. The sun, the rain, and the fog each provide the landscape with a different point of view, but all the renditions are equally enchanting.

There are surprises at every turn – this is Zhuzihu, located in the heart of the Yangmingshan National Park – one of Taiwan’s most popular and historic mountainside parklands.

At 16,1595 square kilometers in size, Zhuzihu is a treasure cove of geological, topographical assets, lovely landscapes, plus hydrological, hot spring and wildlife riches that have helped the area sustain the hard blows to come.



History

The aboriginal Ketagalan tribesmen inhabited Zhuzihu more than 20 centuries ago. Their livelihood depended on hunting, gathering, and smoldering the woodland for cultivation purposes.

Zhuzihu consists of Dinghu, Xiahu, and Donghu hamlets and a central woodland area. It is home to a populace of a little over 1,000; annual temperature is a comfortable 18.7°C. The Han Chinese settlers migrated into this fantastic oasis in the mountains in the Qing Dynasty, and opened up the land with a greater diversity of agricultural endeavors, planting bamboos, tea, and oranges.

The community later became the birthplace of Japonica rice, after many trials and errors by the relentless Dr. Iso Eikichi's. The success cultivation of the rice in the 1920's represented a milestone in Taiwan's agricultural development chapter. But that period of glory was short-

lived. Japonica rice cultivation in the flatlands improved dramatically after Taiwan Retrocession in 1945, so Zhuzihu residents moved on to growing cabbages about a decade later, the farming of which supported the community for a while. However, the trend caught on elsewhere and it forced the residents to attempt something else to keep their livelihood going.

In 1969, the farmers tested the growing of calla lilies, but their efforts were thwarted by a cold shoulder from the market. But nearly 20 years later, the lilies found their way to the hearse of the late president Chiang Chin-kuo, and flower aficionados began to warm to these lovely gems. Yet 6 years later, they were blighted by an unknown disease, and marketability suffered. The farmers, now battle-hardened, pressed on with dogged determination, and helped each other in treating the blight, developing and sharing new growing techniques.



Zuzihu, no stranger to setbacks, suffered another frustration at the turn of the 21st century. The torrential rains nearly flattened the community and its agricultural projects. But this time, the residents, farmer's co-op, the national park administration office and the city government joined in on the rebuilding. Together, the community began to diversify their agricultural ventures to horticultural and leisure farming, and concentrate on giving Zhuzihu a personality. The result is an amazing smorgasbord of wildlife sanctuary, rehabilitation, horticultural endeavors, and environmentally-forward initiatives. Zhuzihu is now celebrated as "Taipei's Back Garden," where Taipei citizens visit to lap up the greatest gifts that Mother Nature has to offer.

Zuzihu is a historic mountainside village located in the iconic Yangmingshan National Park. The enchanting flowers will easily lift your spirit above all the worries...

01

Enhancement of the Natural and Built Landscape

Located at a low altitude of 600 meters, Zhuzihu is bounded by small Mt. Guanyin, Mt. Datun, Mt. Qixing, and Mt. Shamao Mountain. Lava from a volcanic eruption blocked off the river to form a barrier lake; an opening began to shape after consistent lake water erosions. The water began to drain from the lake to give rise to a low-lying area.

The volcanic geographical structure and landscape at Zhuzihu has been scientifically proven as a rarity. It is lauded as "a Nature's Showpiece" in Taipei Basin. Xiaoyukeng, at an elevation of 800 meters, contains a host of volcanically-created fumaroles, sulfur crystals, hot springs, and landslides. Sulfur vents noisily spew forth gases, shrouding part of the hills with cloud-like fumes. The volcanic basin at Mt. Datun has provided the area with rich hot spring pools.



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Rhacophorus moltrechti



Taiwan Blue Magpie

Taipei's Back Garden

Zhuzihu did not earn its reputation as Taipei's Back Garden by fluke: it has one of Taiwan's most carefully preserved endemic wildlife and plants sanctuaries. The quietude that the surrounding mountains provides necessary protection against intrusion, and the area is a dream coming true for ornithologists, mammalogists, herpetologists and bird watchers alike. 34 mammal species, 122 bird species, including the Taiwan Blue Magpie – an endemic bird dubbed as the National Bird of Taiwan with its glorious plumage, 21 amphibian varieties – including *Rhacophorus moltrechti*, a delightful tree frog species more valuable than the most precious emerald, plus other regional fish and butterfly genus.

Zhuzihu would not qualify as a haven for endemic flora was it not for its rich reserve of native plant species. An impressive array of rare tree varieties, such as the

endangered *Formosana Hayata* (Taiwan Cow-tail Fir), are grown here. The fir faces threat from illegal loggers because of its highly coveted oily wood. One of the four wonder trees in Taiwan, the fir is categorized as "critically endangered" by the Cabinet-level Council for Cultural Affairs. The other rare trees grown here include another prized, medicinally invaluable *Taxus sumatrana* (Taiwan Yew).

In their own language, Zhuzihu's flora and fauna speak to the naturalists, scientists, and those wild at heart.

Zhuzihu Tourist Center and Economic Production Cultural Center

Japanica rice cultivation also hailed its beginning here in 1923, and enjoyed a 40-year prosperity until new and innovative agricultural ventures in the flatland areas upstaged its popularity. What is left of the Japanica Rice Distribution Center, founded by Dr. Dr. Iso Eikichi at the beginning, is now in the care of the Ministry of National Defense. Recognizing the structure's cultural value, the history-minded residents worked tirelessly for more than a decade to resurrect the building in hopes of drawing attention to Zhuzihu's community brand value. The structure was declared a historic monument by the Taipei City Government in 2009, and inaugurated as a Cultural Exhibition Center to commemorate Zhuzihu's rice-growing beginning.



Tourist Center

Caoshan Water Supply Systems

These ancient water canals were built by the Japanese between 1928 and 1932. The first fountainhead was located in a small tract nearby the western peak of Mt. Qixing and Yulong Valley south of Zhuzihu. The water quality was unimaginably pure and clean, and the system the best tap water supply of the time. This particular setup was Taiwan's first water system installed with an aqueduct AND a hydropower-ready installation.

Several private history organizations have launched tour activities and festivals to better protect this monument and consolidate the integrity of the town's agricultural history.



Hutian Elementary School – a Diminutive Eco-School

At an elevation of 650 meters, this 60-pupil campus sits on the hillside of Mt. Qixing, where it enjoys an unobstructed view of Mt. Datun across the lake. Hutian's education programs center on cultural heritage. The neighborhood farmlands and hillsides serve as the classroom for the youths. With Nature/Biodiversity and ecosystem protection as the backbone of its curriculum, Hutian pioneered a series of courses on agricultural ecology and "fighting invasive species" to rehabilitate japonica rice, minus the use of pesticide and fertilizers. The "back-to-school" ceremony actually commenced with rice cultivation. After six months into the year, the kids could actually taste the fruit of their labor. Hutian's innovative approach to eco-education earned it an alliance with the vaunted Yangmingshan National Park to form "the Yangmingshan Eco-School."

Millennial Terraced Fields and Water Management for Landscaping

The Han Chinese immigrants from 2 centuries ago opened up Zhuzihu with rice terraces that adapted to the sloping of mountains. The rice terraces made smart use of the natural springs to replenish needed water and avert floods. At present, calla lilies and hydrangeas are grown on these beautiful terraces organically. Chemical fertilizers and pesticides are off-limits for the cultivation to ensure sustainability.

The community has voted on the introduction of water from nearby canals to irrigate the terraces – totaling 17.6 hectares in size - when they are left fallow to boost water storage, the capacity of which is estimated to reach 52.80 cubic meters. Carbon dioxide absorption level of this sustainability-driven arrangement equals the carbon emissions of about 560 2.0-liter vehicles.

Soil water conservation is the most effective when nature is left to navigate her own course; and local residents understand the wisdom of such to protect their homestead.



rice terraces

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02

Arts, Culture and Heritage

Land God Worship

The land god is revered and worshipped extensively in the community. 6 humbly built, stream-facing land god temples are set up across the community and cared for routinely by different clans. A communal land god statue is designated as the center of 2 land god festivals, held in spring and autumn, when residents get together to snack and make merriment. The family assigned to organize the festivals is said to be the year's luckiest clan of the community.

This homecoming helps to solidify the Zhuzihu's religious tradition, and different clansmen to catch up with each other.



Land God Temples

Mazu Worship

The earliest Han settlers in Zhuzihu came from Fujian Province and retained their Mazu worship traditions. But in the absence of Mazu Temple, the residents made do with visiting the goddess statue enshrined in Guandu Temple once every 3 years and moving her up the mountain for a circuit ceremony.

The worship evolved to be a vital folk and religious activity, and a time when out-of-town kinsmen and family members of the residents return to Zhuzihu for a huge reunion gala that is filled with laughter, hearty food and fond chitchat of a nostalgic past.

These reunions help preserve the longstanding legacy of the Mazu faith.



Mazu Worship

Japonica Rice Found a New Lease on Life

The growing of Japonica rice was terminated in response to agricultural restructuring and upgrades in 1976; 35 years later, Hutian Elementary School partnered with the Beitou Farmer's Co-op to rehabilitate one of the Japonica rice subspecies on a small tract of land to resurrect the community's agricultural beginning.

20 revered elders of the community were chosen to set up a co-op to supervise the organic plantation in accordance with the 24 solar terms dictated by the Farmer's Almanac. Pests and blights are managed organically to nurture ensure cultivability and fertility. This small tract of farming haven is open now to students from Hutian and Wego Mountain Program for a hands-on farming curriculum.

In a top-down fashion, the community seeks to imbue their young with the importance of respecting their homestead, and protecting the land from which they build their livelihood.





Zhuzihu in a Burst of Colors

If anything, the Zhuzihu residents are known for their tenacity and resilience. The storms, the floods, and the blight have not stopped them from coming back strong. In the wake of the devastating blight in 2002, residents came together and hosted a festival, with calla lilies, the beautiful backdrop of their town, live concerts, art and crafts as the centerpiece.



The “Festival Revival” signified Zhuzihu’s resurrection from a disaster-scarred past, and has become one of the most talked-about festivities of the country.

Year	Event Period	Number of Visitors	Earning from Output		
			Production Area	Number of Flowers Grown	Total Earnings (including profit from other leisure events)
2002	03/28 - 03/31	120,000	10 Hectare	2,000,000	60,000,000TWD
2003	03/07 - 04/30	150,000	11 Hectare	2,200,000	80,000,000TWD
2004	03/16 - 04/18	500,000	12 Hectare	2,400,000	110,000,000 TWD
2005	03/25 - 05/01	450,000	12 Hectare	2,500,000	94,500,000TWD
2006	03/03 - 04/16	550,000	13 Hectare	3,000,000	120,000,000 TWD
2007	03/23 - 04/29	700,000	13 Hectare	3,000,000	147,000,000 TWD
2008	03/25 - 04/30	700,000	13 Hectare	3,000,000	150,000,000 TWD
2009	03/18 - 04/26	500,000	13 Hectare	3,000,000	156,000,000 TWD
2010	03/12 - 04/25	500,000	13 Hectare	2,000,000	130,600,000 TWD
2011	03/11 - 04/24	60,000	13 Hectare	2,000,000	116,800,000 TWD
2012	03/23 - 04/29	70,000	13 Hectare	2,500,000	154,000,000 TWD

Event Period and Profit Earned during Calla Lily Festival Over the Years



Hydrangeas

Calla lilies' enchanting beauty and graceful silhouette have won them many hearts and marketing opportunities overseas. They are now the most vital economic crops for Zhuzihu; the community is also the largest calla lily plantation area in Southeast Asia.

Zhuzihu is more than just calla lilies: maple leaves grace the community in spring. Stars-of-Bethlehem (wonder-flowers) bloom in April. Lilies-of-the-Nile overtake the area with their bewitching blue in May. In summer, hydrangeas demand everyone's attention in the summer with their vibrant colors. Sunflowers take the center stage in summer, while camellias usher in the colder months in November and April. Zhuzihu, a community of colors and imaginations.

World-class Eco-tours

Oriental cherries, azaleas and calla lilies vie for tourist attention in springtime Zhuzihu. As the weather warms, large swarms of blue tiger butterflies begin to move toward Mt. Datun, traveling at a leisurely speed, occasionally stopping for nectar on endemic flower

bushes. Their passage is marked by the singing of crickets that signify spring.

Fern brooms here are in full bloom in Xiaoyukeng and Mt. Datun at the beginning of autumn. Rather than the commonly seen white variety, the fern brooms here are in bright red, a variation made possible by the nearby sulfur vents.

The hot spring resorts and volcanic activities make Zhuzihu a wonderful getaway.



03

Environmental Best Practices

Safe Passages for Wildlife

Taiwan's first traveling passage for wildlife was built here in 2004. In hopes of reducing the number of roadkill caused by moving traffic, the community reached a consensus to create a passage way that allows wild animals to move across roadways safely. A network of 5 passages has been built and an extensive of monitoring indicates that at least 20 species of wildlife have taken advantage of the underpasses for their comings and goings. The amount of roadkill has been reduced by 35%.



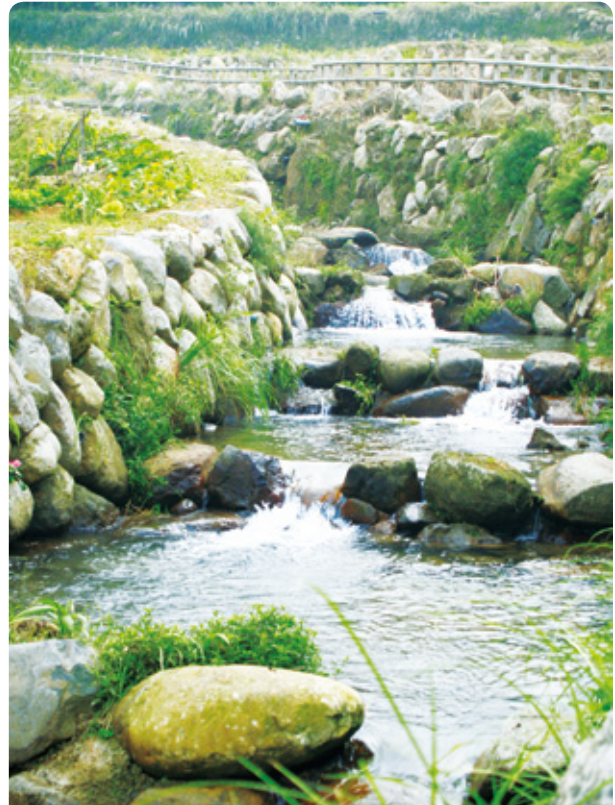
A Network of Blue Canals and Gulleys

The flashfloods and typhoons in 2000 and 2001 have crippled Zhuzihu's agricultural activities. The storms destroyed the riverbanks and washed away life-giving soil, damaged the drainage systems, and razed the ditches.

Rather than seeing the disaster as a form of annihilation, Zhuzihu residents came together and provided their land to the Farmer's Coop for free; with the help of the Coop and the City Government, they rebuilt gulleys and ditches at about 1,700 meters in length. The areas that run along these new watercourses act to protect the riverbanks through special eco-engineering methods, create safe wildlife habitats, and adapt to the water's circuitous traveling passages.

Over time, a beautiful, blue eco-network was created, and the project won a nod from the FIABCI – Chinese Taiwan branch for its soil-water-preservation excellence in 2006. More accolades followed in the years to come, both from the Council for Agriculture and FIABCI.

The project attests to Zhuzihu's community commitment to protecting their natural assets and ensuring sustainability.



Kitchen Waste Recycling

A number of leisure farms and specialty restaurants stand in the community; the heavy traffic of patrons also leads to a considerable amount of kitchen waste. Livestock breeders have stepped up to take care of the kitchen waste, and provide incentivization allowances to the community for repairing out-of-service public facilities. The allowances also support free, fresh milk to schoolchildren and festivities.



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"river-cleaning" activities

The Living Water Project

Zhuzihu residents are devoted to safeguarding their fragile river systems. A "no-fishing" policy has been rigorously enforced in rivers in the communities. A local junior high school, the community as a whole, and the Taipei City Government also join hands to host the routine "river-cleaning" activities to weed out overgrowths and river-clogging mud. Chemical fertilizers are off-limits and replaced by natural, organic fungi for nurturing their farmlands.

Garbage Disposal

Zhuzihu's garbage policy is arguably one of the best on the island. Garbage is collected at a designated time using designated, paid-for bags. Recycling is the popular thing to do so as to reduce landfill and burning.

04

Community Participation and Empowerment

Having weathered a long history of challenges, people in Zhuzihu embrace a "taking charge" attitude to get things done; instead of sitting back and waiting for the government to intervene, they choose to take the lead and find resources for meeting the needs of the community.

Examples of active community engagement include:

- Hutian Borough Office serves as a go-between and liaison for supervising government agencies and the people of Zhuzihu. The Office is run by both appointed officials and residents to integrate suggestions of both parties, and reflect these opinions to the agencies. It also helps communicate government's policymaking

and resolutions to the residents, and acts to extend municipal services to the residents.

- Hutian Community Development Council, which consists of 76 resident members, is in charge of consolidating the sense of belonging for the people in the community. They work toward one goal to promote community development and train community-based tour guides so that Zhuzihu's rich history and natural landscape can be more extensively known.
- Zhuzihu Tourism Association is a community-based business group made up primarily of restaurateurs, horticulturists and farm owners. It was inaugurated in hopes of promoting Zhuzihu tourism and business activities that upgrade the quality of leisure farming. The Association has also inaugurated "Friendly Shop" to provide tourists a clean bathroom space. Tourists can also enjoy a cup of tea while getting tourism advices. Schoolchildren whose parents are not yet home from work, who need afterschool supervision and companion, can also take care of their homework in the comfort and safety of the shops.





Friendly Shop

— Beitou Farmers Co-op acts as a longstanding consultation service center to promote the government's leisure farming policies, help farmers reinvent their homesteads into tourism-worthy projects, beautify their farmlands and train tour guides. The Co-op also organizes many horticultural classes and vegetable growing classes to assist farmers in diversifying their agricultural endeavors. Zhuzihu also took part in the Beitou Area Farmland Landscaping Project to revamp Zhuzihu's leisure farming venture, making it a preferred tourist destination, giving the area a landscaping cohesion, and helping farmers of different agricultural products develop their "agri-businesses" to attract different groups of customers. The community provides an integrated marketing backup to sell these agricultural products and boost economic vitality.

The venture is innovative and immensely successful in solidifying a sense of unity.

05

Healthy Lifestyle

Zhuzihu's mountainous terrain has made readily available health care a challenge; but their "we can do it" mindset has made the impossible a reality.

Care for the Disadvantaged

The people of Zhuzihu have worked consistently with the government to upgrade health care services for their aging population, the live-alone elderly, and the socially disadvantaged.

A "distance care service network" has also been established that allows physicians to keep tabs on the health status of their patients living in Zhuzihu. The system will notify the physicians right away in the event of a medical emergency.

An Elderly-Friendly Community

Senior citizens over 65 years of age account for 11.82% of the Zhuzihu population. The people of Zhuzihu have integrated medical resources available, built an outreach network, set up a continuing education program for the elderly, and opened health promotion courses to enrich the lives of their graying population.

Entertainment and enrichment courses – such as chess contests, karaoke lessons and theater performances have also been organized to keep the elderly residents in Zhuzihu actively engaged.

Community-based Health Checkups

Health management is at the foremost of the community's administrative concerns. Physical checkups and screening that cover oral cancers, cervical cancers and breast cancers are available to the people of Zhuzihu. Flu shots at free of charge are also provided to senior citizens over 65 years old.

The residents of Zhuzihu are well-informed of the importance of keeping their community clean. They regularly host mountain-cleaning and river-cleaning drives as a way of maintaining the cleanliness of the community, getting a hearty workout, and consolidating a sense of belonging.



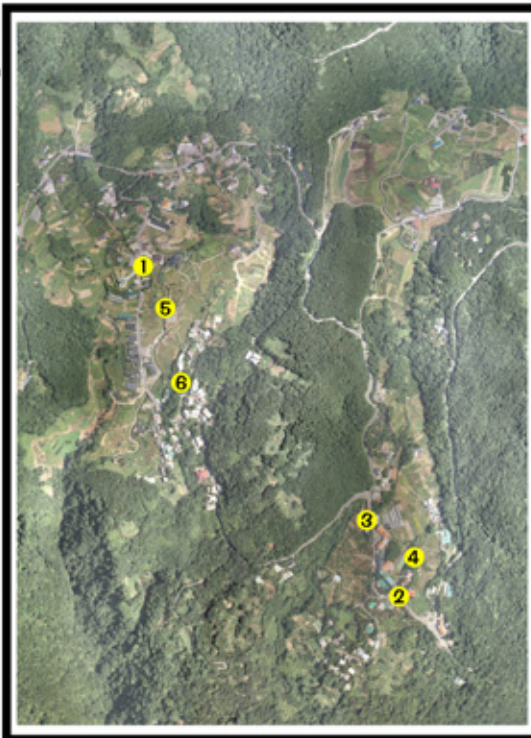
Natural Resources

- 1 The conservation of endemic flora and eco-education program.
- 2 The development of community-based "Zuzihu Eco-Tours" in the national park that combines the input of the residents and park authorities.
- 3 The woodland in the central area is developed into a forest eco-classroom.
- 4 The cooing andsinging of the insects and fireflies is the most magnificent choir. It is perfect for eco-education programs and nightscape tours.
- 5 Revitalizing the century-old terraced fields to upgrade the landscapes.



Cultural Resources

- 1 Plum Blossoms and Lilies Research Center was renovated into a Zhuzihu Tourist Service Center and Cultural Exhibition Hall
- 2 Local religious rituals, Mazu's pilgrimage and "Let's Feast".
- 3 Caoshan Waterway, the onsite location of "Exploring the Stories behind Local Folk Tales".



Facility Renovation

- 1 Hutian Primary School offers a multipurpose space use option. It is important for passing on the legacy of community-specific education programs.
- 2 A public restroom with an artistic splash.
- 3 A centralized wastewater processing project.



Environmental Renovation

- 1 Waterfront walkways that complement brooks, streams, and the dredging of dams.
- 2 Creating exquisite "mini-landscapes" to accentuate the area's personality.
- 3 The rehabilitation of manmade wetlands.
- 4 Creating various "experience yourself" facilities that blend into the topography, the terrain and the panorama.



Transportation

- 1 Privately-owned lands are vacated as a temporary, makeshift parking lot.
- 2 Shuttling visitors to-and-fro the community on holidays



06 Strategic Planning

Situated in the heart of the Yangmingshan National Park, the natural landscape and cultural monuments in the community are well-protected by the Park administration. Wanting to be more actively engaged in the planning of community development, the people of Zhuzihu began a more active dialog with the Park administration to address challenges facing this historically and culturally significant tract of land.

A community planning task force was formed that comprised residents, the borough office, and experts. They organized workshops to hammer out projects to undertake, outline and feasible visions.

- The greening of the community would be carried out in 3 phases: cleaning, environmental improvement, and environmental reconstruction. The project was divided into small, manageable chunks to inspire residents in thinking, "hey, I can do this for the community!"

- Traveling hubs and unique economically-vital spaces are integrated to achieve environmental cohesion.
- The resurrection of the cultural legacy of Japonica rice.
- A better-planned tour guide service that helps visitors better enjoy the footpaths crisscrossing Zhuzihu.
- The promotion of eco-tours that involves the engagement of residents, the community, and schools.
- Effective reuse of the existing cultural heritage exhibition centers to incorporate tourist services.
- An upgraded, cohesive development plan for the local terraced fields to beautify the landscape.
- Giving Zhuzihu a "brand value." This is carried out through a community co-op mechanism, with the National Park Administration as a campaign platform to heighten Zhuzihu's "brand" as a quality, world-class tourist destination.

A brandscape has been outlined for Zhuzihu to heighten its community-centered, tourist marketability.

Acknowledgements

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Zhuzihu Community, Taiwan

An Idyllic Farm Village in the Heart of a National Park