

## **Jiantan Township, Taiwan**

### **A Small Town with a Big Heart**

Great things come in small packages, and that is exactly what Jiantan Township is all about.

Jiantan Township, a community of about 4,000, is endowed with a wealth of historic monuments, well-preserved natural sceneries, and culturally diverse destinations. And right now, this small township is making great strides into the future with an ambitious, yet entirely actionable, environmentally-forward vision: to achieve a net zero carbon footprint in the next few years.



Seated in the north of Zhongshan District in Taipei City, Jiantan Township is bordered by Keelung River to abut on Shilin District. The town is defined by a richness of architectural monuments representing different cultures.

Completed in 1973, the Grand Hotel is the beautiful embodiment of a Chinese-style structure. The vermilion columns and the ornate roof make the hotel a veritable showplace of Chinese architecture and culture. The hotel itself contains numerous objets d'art, wall panels, paintings, carvings, and gourmet restaurants.

The other notable Chinese-style architecture and a popular tourist destination is the National Revolutionary Martyrs' Shrine. It evokes the architecture of the Hall of Supreme Harmony in Beijing's Forbidden City.

In addition to the architectural wonderments, Jiantan Township is also situated within a comfortable distance away from some of Taipei's most popular hiking trails. The community has also created a wildlife refuge in the area for the animals and birds to nest, hunt, and reproduce.

Many landscape upgrades projects have also been set into motion by a united community. They brought discarded building materials back to life with thoughtful repairs, and hosted easy-to-do environmental protection workshops, where residents join in to shoot the breeze while fixing up broken furniture and equipment pieces.



Usable building materials from crumbling, old houses were used to beautify community gardens and increase CO<sub>2</sub> capture and storage. In addition to heat insulation and temperature reduction, the building pieces have acted as excellent landscaping materials for quite a few community parks in Jiantan.

Heat- and drought-tolerant plants with fleshy, succulent leaves are grown on the roof of the community's aging Activity Center to add more greenery to the landscape, and help the building insulate summer heat. The Activity Center, now a green building, plays host to many enrichment classes for children, youths, and senior citizens.

Club activities are organized in succession – and the number is steadily increasing – to instill a sense of unity among community residents. Club participants are hard-pressed to raise environmental awareness through handicraft activities and education workshops to spearhead a series of eco-friendly projects.

We earnestly hope to tell the world about some of the eco-projects hosted at Jiantan Township. The Doggie Toilet, for one, has been a centerpiece program here in our community. We have also installed many CO<sub>2</sub>-reducing, water-saving, and rainwater harvesting equipments to minimize our imprint on the environment. Solar panels have also been installed to make the most use of sunlight. This fantastic, renewable energy has been smartly transformed to power some of our buildings in the community.



We want to show everyone that working in favor of the environment will yield results for the good of every community; and we want to thank International Awards for Liveable Communities 2013 for giving Jiantan Township a voice to be heard, and a stage to be seen.

