

INDIGENOUS

SIGHT

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Urban Jungle

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Conquering Physical Distance; Real-time Indigenous Life in Metropolises

Cultural shock is inevitable when indigenous peoples go to cities to live or work. New environments along with different living habits require them some time to adapt. In addition, distance separates them from indigenous cultures. In the past, working in cities meant complete isolation from their communities, making it difficult for them to identify with their ethnic groups and cultures. They do not feel that they belong to their urban environment.

Back in the days when I was grew, society's stereotypes of indigenous peoples still persisted. Indigenous peoples were used to hiding themselves, and did not feel comfortable about saying: "I am an indigenous person" out loud. It was not intentional. We were compelled by the circumstances we were subjected to, which were not very friendly. Insufficient faith in our own cultures also hindered us from taking pride in displaying our own cultural characteristics.

As time progresses, indigenous peoples have become high performers in many fields thanks to education and hence enhanced their overall competitiveness. They have grown more aware of their own identity and built confidence in themselves. This is an extremely crucial turning point. Now few people are afraid of announcing "I am not an indigenous person." On the contrary, being one makes oneself proud.

Unlike the past, nowadays there are more channels for getting connected with the indigenous communities and cultures. The public sector, for instance, sets up organizations relevant to indigenous affairs in each city, and holds cultural or promotional events irregularly. Another illustration is mass media. Information is easily accessible, so it is not difficult to gain access to indigenous cultures.

As to education, the number of schools establishing indigenous art classes has mushroomed, which has brought around two influences. One is to give indigenous

children growing up in cities time to build confidence through this sort of mechanism. The environment in cities is comparably different from that in indigenous communities after all. The other influence is that indigenous cultures and traditions can be passed down through education. Even if indigenous peoples live in cities, they can still learn about their own culture.

Through aid and guidance from these channels, young indigenous peoples living in cities started to identify with their own community, and distance became no longer a barrier. Since they are getting more information, they started to pay attention and value events related to their communities. In order to encourage indigenous people to keep the connection with their cultures, Taiwan's government has legislated laws stipulating how indigenous peoples take leave to participate in indigenous seasonal ceremonies. During the important ceremony seasons, all indigenous peoples can take one day off from company or school and return to their communities to attend the most important annual celebrations.

Compared with the past, the problem of cultural gap has ameliorated greatly. The indigenous peoples in cities have realized that there are many ways to keep in touch with their cultures. All information is now easily and readily accessible. It all depends on whether or not indigenous peoples are willing to open their hearts, and reach out for opportunities to be connected with communities from cities.

As a mass media platform, the responsibility of the Indigenous Peoples Cultural Foundation (ICPF) is to disseminate indigenous cultures and knowledge to all indigenous peoples. The indigenous groups in Taiwan are very diversified, so there is a wide variety of indigenous cultures. I hope that by means of ICPF's television, radio, and magazine, each indigenous culture can be fully presented in front of young people living in cities real time, and that gaps will no longer exist.

Chairman of Indigenous Peoples Cultural Foundation



Indigenous People in Urban Jungle: From Transient to Resident

Over these years, the life and educational issues about urban indigenous people have received constant attention from various sectors of society. In particular, the development of the Taiwanese indigenous languages has been placed in the limelight since the passage of *Indigenous Languages Development Act* in 2017. The promotion of the indigenous language becomes a major task not only for the Council of Indigenous Peoples, but also for schools at all levels.

Figures released by the Council of Indigenous Peoples show that from 1960 to 1987 when Taiwan's martial law was lifted, the number of indigenous people in the cities accounted for only 3% of the overall indigenous population. But to date, the figure has risen to 46%, which means that over 200,000 people, almost half of Taiwan's indigenous population of 560,000, are now residing in the urban areas. This indicates a growing number of urban indigenous residents which is very likely to exceed that of those in indigenous villages in the future.

The increase of urban population, however, also reflects the difficulties that modern indigenous peoples are confronted with. More attention is required to address such problems as children being raised by their grandparents in remote areas and urban indigenous migrants' inability to cope with the highly competitive and fast-paced city life. When viewed in terms of geographical distribution, Taiwan's indigenous population can be divided into two groups: those living in the cities and others in indigenous communities, with the Central Mountain Range being the dividing line. The geographical environment imposes natural restrictions on the overall development of the island, which is the main factor that contributes to the growing divide in the indigenous population between Eastern and Western Taiwan. As far as urban indigenous people are concerned, however, it is worth exploring whether they have a feel as if they are living in an "urban jungle", and what kind of meaning such a concept symbolizes.

After decades of urbanization, many locally born and raised indigenous people seem to be no different from other urban residents in their pursuit of better life quality and the adaptability to the city life. But if we take a close look at the overall situation, we'll find quite a few issues worth exploring. Take the demographic trend for instance. The population of indigenous people in Northern Taiwan has been on the rise over the past few years. Such is the case with Taoyuan City. It has experienced an increase of indigenous residents from 30,000 in 2013 to 75,000 this year, making the city a close rival to Taitung with an indigenous population of 78,000. Of course, this has much to do with the difference in the living environment, while it also points to the poor employment environment of indigenous communities. In the past decade or so, however, Eastern Taiwan has also seen immigration of urban people from cities to indigenous communities. Most of these migrants are retired civil servants or businesspeople from other localities. In addition, thanks to the convenient transportation, the "One-Day Community" lifestyle is taking shape. All these factors make it even harder to give a clear definition of "urban jungle," which to some extent requires more discussions.

Life in the cities, which is fast-paced, is completely different from that in indigenous communities. Even indigenous peoples themselves may hold varying ideas and values about modern life. This is not a question of right or wrong, however, but one that requires the government to pay more attention to the divides between the urban and rural areas in educational resources and levels of economic and cultural development. It is the government's responsibility to achieve balanced regional development by actively implementing its policies to help the indigenous people get rid of the fate of lagging behind.

Looking back at the construction of high-rises in Northern Taiwan 30 to 40 years ago, those buildings represented the advance of modern life, in which many indigenous migrants played an important part and therefore deserved respect and recognition. As we enjoy these achievements, we must not forget to pay constant attention to issues regarding the welfare and interests of urban indigenous people, including education for youths and improvement of the employment environment and living environment.

Acting CEO of Indigenous Peoples Cultural Foundation

Kacaw Fuyan



TAIMAZAMAZAM SIA BANTAN

Urban Jungle





In the 1960s,
indigenous peoples left their beloved mountains and oceans
and entered the urban jungle filled
with tall cement walls and buildings.



Treading on city margins,
carrying with them the memories of their home,
they created new communities in the corners of the cities,
so that the following generations can grow safely and live a good life.

The indigenous youth who grew up in cities,
they are indigenous peoples
yet lack the experience of actually living in an indigenous community.
As the conflict of identity and self-doubt begins to grow in their minds,
they team up and start out on a journey
to find and discover the value and meaning of the self,
and let everyone in the city see the strength of the community.

We who have stumbled into this urban jungle,
we may feel lost,
we may feel out of place.
But let us try to overcome boundaries between peoples
and together create and witness the diverse possibilities of
city development.

N.B.: "taimazavmazav sia bahtan" means "floating city/society" for the Bunun people.





Urban Indigenous Peoples - **their Past, their Present, their Future**

Written by Hafay Nikar; Illustrated by Lin Jia-Dong

Migration is when a group of people leave their original living place and begin a new life in another location. The action itself is neither good nor bad, yet may be triggered by completely different reasons - it could happen because of external issues or the internal collapse of an existing society. We know the culture and traditions of indigenous peoples are closely connected to the land, so why would they leave their original home villages and migrate to the city?



The emergence of modern nations is the key reason for the division between indigenous peoples and the land. The new countries changed the existing structures concerning society, space, and land; and through various regulations and management schemes, new order swiftly and drastically transformed the original tribal society structure. Indigenous peoples were forced to fit into the modern nation mechanism. From minor changes such as local hygiene and medical care systems, modern education and national tax systems, to larger impacts including interfering and controlling community social structure, relocating and gathering villages, imposing mandatory labor systems, and land nationalisation policies, indigenous

peoples were forced to change the way they live and how their community works.

This may seem like a mere societal change, yet it deprived indigenous peoples of their rights to the land and destroyed their existing societal structure. Furthermore, now they needed “money” to pay taxes and tuition fees. The role of money slowly gained importance and started the modern day rat race for a salary.

As a result, indigenous peoples had no choice but to leave their home communities and migrate to cities to earn a living. National policies also spurred on the move, including the Kōminka movement during the Japanese Occupation Period and the relocating and assimilating policies of the R.O.C. government. As the nation morphed into a modern society, indigenous peoples were compelled to leave their ancestral lands and homes.



One By One, We Move to the City

“Moving to the cities” is a direction, but how did we arrive at the city? What was the process of this migration? The processes and directions of respective journeys also showcased distinctive characteristics and cultures of different indigenous peoples. For example, the Pangcah gather together according to their community organization, the Bunun assemble according to their clans, and the Atayal connect through blood family and coalitions. By living in a community, members can form a closely-connected and trusted internal network in which information flows freely.

When one person in the community moves to the city, news and information pass through the internal network and kick off a “one by one” migration pattern. In Pangcah communities, they call it “pulling (people) to Taipei”, meaning that a large number of young people are moving to Taipei. This phrase not only brought about a new social class, but also marked a major movement during that period in history.

In addition to the “one by one” chain reaction migration pattern, community members also tend to flock together when it comes to living arrangements. Indigenous peoples in the city leveraged the house-building skills they learnt back home and built a cluster of houses in the suburbs. Step by step, indigenous communities began to pop up around the city. Community members also brought along crops and plants from their home villages, a reminder of their old living style and culture, to their new city dwellings. Just as they would do when they moved to a new community, they planted food crops next to their new homes - the only difference being the appearance of the land.

When indigenous peoples move to cities to seek new living space, they also bring along their traditional lifestyles and culture. The trend gradually gave birth to the concept of “urban indigenous peoples”.

From Work to Daily Life: the Emergence of Urban Indigenous Communities

Indigenous peoples who have moved to the cities not only have strong connections within their living communities, but also take care of each other at work since most of them take on similar laboring jobs in offshore fishing, mining, construction work, or factory operations.

In some areas, urban indigenous communities appear because of nearby employment opportunities. For example, offshore fishermen formed Urban indigenous community at Bachimen in Keelung; Ruifang and Tucheng are mining areas, therefore many indigenous communities are formed by indigenous miners. Neighboring construction sites generated communities such as Shanguang Community in Xizhi District, Sanying Community in Sanxia District, and Xizhou Community in Xindian District; and the rapid development of industrial and commercial industries brought forth new communities such as Bade and Linkou in Taoyuan City. Urban indigenous peoples form these communities for members to take care of one another, very much like the way they did back home. They are no longer strangers in a new city for they have a space to work and live together.

Nevertheless, indigenous peoples come to the cities with mixed emotions. They have left behind the home they are familiar with





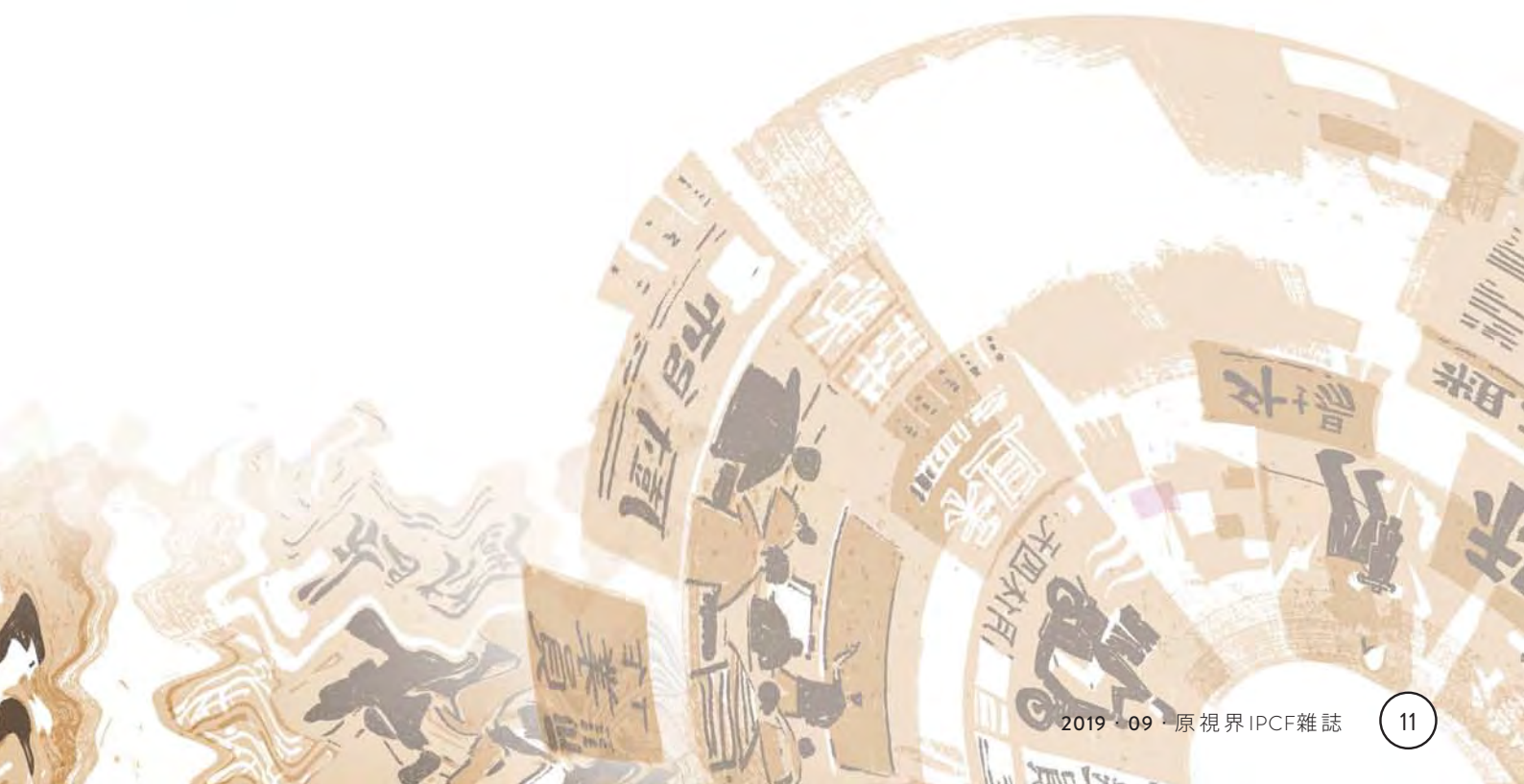


and entered a new place that is vastly different to their original living environments. Community members who come to make a living expect to make enough money to support themselves and improve the living standards of family back home. Those who leave home for the first time excitedly shake off restrictions from home and try to figure out a new lifestyle in this new world. And then there is a significant number of people who have no alternative but to leave home and work in the city so that their family will not go hungry. These mixed emotions flow through the minds of trailblazing urban indigenous peoples: all have different expectations of their new destination and go on to lead completely different lives.

The Journey into the Cities: Disappear or Fit In

However, society has long been unfriendly towards minority groups, leading to misunderstandings and discrimination towards indigenous peoples. Unfamiliar with the customs and culture of the community members, the overall society do not understand these new comers and is quick to put stereotypical labels on them, alienating the indigenous identity. In the early years, indigenous peoples were viewed by part of the society as “poor, dirty, and belonging to the lower social class” because most of them worked as laborers and were distinctively different from the non-indigenous people in their appearances, skin tone, and accents. Some people even stigmatize the indigenous drinking culture and religious ceremonies as alcoholism and hedonism. Due to the endless discrimination and conflicts, many indigenous peoples chose to hide their ethnic background or even refuse to admit they are indigenous after they come to the city. Hiding their past and identity, they force themselves to blend into the urban society.

Even if they live in an urban indigenous community, they still have to deal with all sorts of questions, curious attitudes, and discrimination. The city is completely different to their home communities, and indigenous peoples have to learn to go with the flow in the new society and fit into mainstream society trends. Gradually, they depart from their original community lifestyles.





Settling Down: the Division and Connection between City and Home Village

If we look back in history, Taiwan's economy began to take off rapidly around the 1950s and 1960s, a drastic change which generated urbanization. It has been three generations since the first generation of indigenous peoples settled in the cities. Yet unlike the trailblazing first generation, the second and third generations have to deal with completely different situations. Most of them have no experience living in their home villages, and some do not even have any older family members living in the communities. They also lack enough understanding of their own community culture to let them identify themselves as “indigenous”, resulting in a generation of “doubly marginalized” urban indigenous youths.

Being doubly marginalized means the indigenous youth are labeled as “indigenous” in the city, yet considered “an outsider from the city” when they return to their communities. These urban indigenous youth cannot identify with either side, and consequently form a sense of social disassociation and double marginalization. This feeling of alienation makes it even more difficult for this young generation to establish their self-identity and identify with their own ethnic group.



The move from home village to city symbolizes the gradual passing of traditional community culture and the alienation of its residents. However, in modern society, the severed link between home village and city seems to have been reattached and connected again. Historical events led to the loss of land and collapse of traditional societal structure, but with the perseverance of community members, the homecoming of indigenous youth, and the support of society and the nation, the connections between cities and home villages have been reestablished. Innovations and traditions continue to interact, as indigenous cultures continue to change, reinvent, and reshape themselves.

Modern urban indigenous peoples still struggle to find their self-identity while treading the ambiguous line between city and home village. Nevertheless, through active promotions of indigenous culture, our society is gradually becoming friendlier towards indigenous peoples, and both parties are learning to respect each other. As for how the face of urban indigenous peoples will evolve and be interpreted in the following years depends on the actions of the next generation of urban indigenous youth.



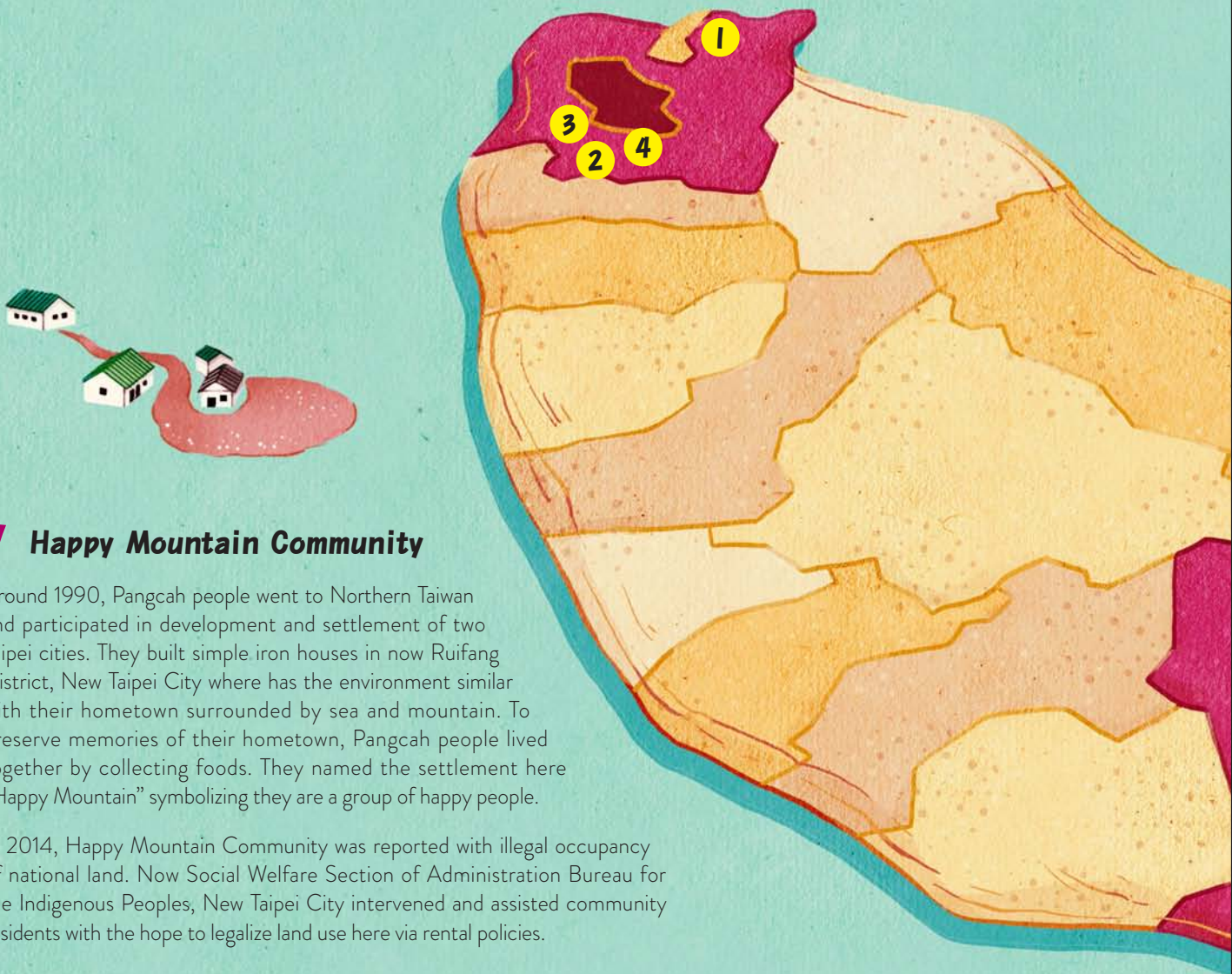
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The Indigenous Peoples Living in Cities

Written by Kuo Po-Jiun; Illustrated by Julia Yellow

In Taiwan, there are about 560,000 indigenous peoples. According to a survey done by Council of Indigenous Peoples, 47.53% indigenous peoples live in cities around Taiwan while 23.38% and 29.09% live respectively in plain and mountain communities. Pushed by the wave of economic structural transition, indigenous people live and work in cities and settle down to build their homes. After several generations, various types of living manners have been developed that enrich city life. Although there have been migration and struggling, indigenous peoples are tightly connected to their home communities and living in cities, they quietly witness historical development of cities.



/ Happy Mountain Community

Around 1990, Pangcah people went to Northern Taiwan and participated in development and settlement of two Taipei cities. They built simple iron houses in now Ruifang District, New Taipei City where has the environment similar with their hometown surrounded by sea and mountain. To preserve memories of their hometown, Pangcah people lived together by collecting foods. They named the settlement here “Happy Mountain” symbolizing they are a group of happy people.

In 2014, Happy Mountain Community was reported with illegal occupancy of national land. Now Social Welfare Section of Administration Bureau for the Indigenous Peoples, New Taipei City intervened and assisted community residents with the hope to legalize land use here via rental policies.

2 Saowac Community

In the 1980s, Pangcah people from Xiuguluan River Area, Hualien, settled down at the river terrace in north side of Daxi, Taoyuan. They named this place in Pangcah language, Saowac meaning “the river side.” Residents of Saowac Community have made the best use of land and cultivate crops with natural agricultural method. They live in self-sufficient life.

In 2009, Taoyuan City Government planned to build bike lanes at Riverside Park by forcibly dismantling houses. Pangcah People thus held a harvest festival to respond to the Government with unified objection.



3 Sanying Community

Around 1970, Pangcah People settled down in Yingge nearby Dahan River building the mixed urban community for others from their hometown in Hualien and Taitung. Most indigenous residents here were labors of Haishan Mine. In 1994, Taipei City Government requested illegal house residents along Dahan River to move away with the reason of flooding treatment. Some residents received relocation arrangement and others who stayed began their long-time struggling with the government.

Afterwards, the Government admitted the police failure due to lack of consideration of indigenous cultural preservation. Few residents that stayed returned to their original place of settlement and built new Sanying Community where has about 40 house units.



4 Xizhou Community

In the 1970s, Pangcah People came to the Xindian River Area nearby Bitan to settle and build their houses. In 1997, a big fire destroyed the community. With outside donation and assistance, concrete construction material was used to build the community in the original site.

In 2007, Taipei City Government enacted the “Great Bitan Reconstruction Project” and continuously dismantled community houses. When appealing, the Presidential Candidate, Ma Ying-Jeou, at that time responded that “I view you as fellow human beings.” Under the support of various fields, both parties agreed to build living zone for the indigenous peoples with the joint management method for community sustainability.

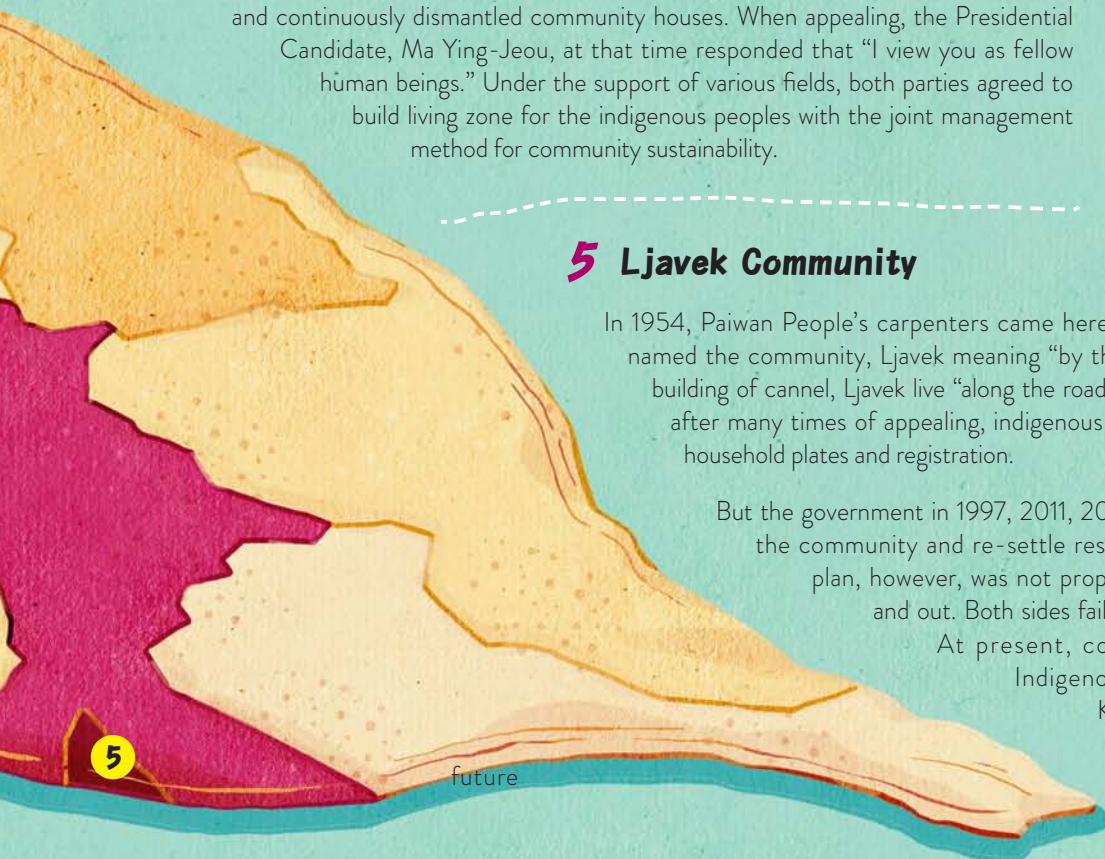


5 Ljavek Community

In 1954, Paiwan People’s carpenters came here to build their houses and named the community, Ljavek meaning “by the river.” Later, due to the building of canal, Ljavek live “along the road.” Here is national land and after many times of appealing, indigenous residents finally have their household plates and registration.

But the government in 1997, 2011, 2018, requested to dismantle the community and re-settle residents. This re-settlement plan, however, was not proper and residents moved in and out. Both sides failed to reach the consensus.

At present, community residents and Indigenous Affairs Committee of Kaohsiung City Government are still negotiating the of Ljavek.






Indigenous Wanderers in the Cities

Written by Savungaz Valincinan; Illustrated by Lin Jia-Dong

So I say farewell to my home beside the mountain
I do not want to weep
I thought I was good enough I would not be afraid
I took care and raised myself





These are the lyrics from Panai Kusui's "The Wanderer", a song that expresses the loneliness and frustration of an indigenous teenager who moved to the city alone to make a living. According to the Council of Indigenous Peoples' 2018 statistics, the percentage of indigenous peoples who have registered their household in urban areas have reached 46.9%. The total number of indigenous peoples actually living in urban areas may have already exceed 50%.

Around the 1960s, industrialization and capitalism greatly impacted traditional economic structures and caused a large amount of people to move to the cities. During this social transformation, the traditional livelihoods of indigenous peoples, such as traditional farming, hunting, or fishing could no longer support their households. The high demand for laborers in cities also attracted people from the indigenous villages to the urban areas.

In the early days, urban indigenous peoples mainly took on low social class, high-risk jobs in construction, mining, and offshore fishing, occupations that were described as "the highest, the deepest, and the farthest jobs". Even now, most of them still work in labor-intensive jobs to make a living. Although cities offer more employment opportunities than their home villages, living in the city is more costly, making it difficult for urban indigenous peoples to truly improve their economic situations. As a result, it is nearly impossible for community members to buy or even rent a house in the city.

This is My Home: Indigenous Communities on the Edges of the Cities

Though life in the city is tough, indigenous laborers still did their best to make the most out of their situations. They sought out and connected with one another. They built and settled down in new homes on the edges of urban areas, forming new settlements with a community identity. Carrying on the collective nature of the people, indigenous community members started to invite their family and friends from home to work and live in the city together. Most of the urban indigenous communities are Pangcah communities, including a couple of communities near Dahan River and Xindian River in New Taipei City, the Kuaileshan Community in Ruifang, Keelung; and the Sa'owac Community in Taoyuan. The Ljavek Community in the center area of Qianzhen District, Kaohsiung City is mainly inhabited by Paiwan people due to its location. And following the lifestyles of indigenous peoples, these communities are often located next to rivers.

Urban indigenous communities are not only physical shelters from the elements, but also an important place for community members to connect with each other and pass on culture and traditions. In the past few decades, these close-knit urban indigenous communities have developed their own community identities, cultures, and ceremonial rites. For example, the first generation of residents in Xizhou Community (New Taipei City) originally came from various home villages in eastern Hualien, including Matai'an, Guangyin, Tafalong, Zhangyuan, Shoufeng, and Kalotongan; but they slowly





formed a common identity in their new “urban home village”. Carrying over their original Pangcah culture and traditions, they now have their own community leader and social structure and organization, and hold annual rites and ceremonies.

The Ljavek Community in Qianzhen District, Kaohsiung City, is another unique example. During the 1950s, Ljavek Community was situated amid many factories next to the canal. Quality of life here was very poor. Nevertheless, since the Paiwan people are used to migrating and a lot of community members worked in the wood industries in the neighboring Fusing area, city-dwelling Paiwan people gradually gathered here and eventually formed a new community. They named this new home “Ljavek”, meaning “by the waters”. Following the social customs of the Paiwan community, the members elected an elder from the home village chief’s family as the Chief of Ljavek Community, and hold harvest rites according to the calendar back home. Although the community is located in the urban area, everyone in this community can speak the Paiwan language.

In 1958, Formosa Plastics Group built petrochemical factories in the area. The “founding factories” of the Group was built right next to the community, squishing the originally-expansive community into a narrow space between the factory fences and canal. Community members who have lived through that period recall when the factories emitted flue gas, plastic dust with chemical odors would fall from the sky like snow.

Later the factories closed down and the canal was filled up. But the elevated road caused the community to flood whenever there was heavy rain. The military dependents’ villages on the other side of the canal was torn down and rebuilt into public housing, new shopping centers such as Costco, Ikea, and Dream Mall slowly appeared in nearby areas. Qianzhen District was quickly transforming, while

the Ljavek Community seemed to be forgotten by time, quietly watching the development and changes of the city with its wooden walls and tin roofs.

After over six decades of living here, these urban indigenous communities are no longer temporary dwellings for the community members. They have seen three, even four generations of grandchildren grow and live there. For the residents, this is home.



Denied by the National Mechanism: Endless Violent Displacement and Dispersion

Back then although there wasn't much to go around, the urban indigenous peoples at least had a stable home. Unfortunately, this type of lifestyle was no longer possible after the 1990s. "Occupiers", "squatters" were what local governments called

these urban indigenous community members who took part in early city development and contributed their labor and strength. "We helped build this city, yet now they are going to kick us out" is the collective sigh of urban indigenous community members all over Taiwan.

Northern Riverbank Communities

In 2007, former Taipei County (now New Taipei City) launched the "Great Bi-Tan Reform Plan". During the progress of redesigning and restoring the waterway, a couple of Pangcah urban indigenous communities on the banks of Xindian River were forcibly dismantled and relocated elsewhere by the government. Within two to three years, riverbank communities including Sanying, Xiaobitan, Kanjin, and Sa'owac were involuntarily relocated.

At that time, residents at Xizhou Community petitioned to KMT president candidate Ma Ying-Jeou and expressed their wish to keep their homes. But Ma responded with "I view you as fellow human beings", "we need to educate you", "the indigenous people have to adjust their mindset", which sparked much discussion and dispute about this issue.

Afterwards, the County government proposed the "Sanxia Long-en-pu public housing project" as a response. However, it failed due to overly high rent and unsuitable living spaces. Yet the threat of forced relocation never stopped. Local governments claimed the urban indigenous communities were illegal and directly demolished the houses or sued the residents. These actions reinforced the image of "the residents are illegally occupying public land" and supported the government's moves to tear down the houses to reclaim the land, or even demanding compensation from the residents.

The northern riverbank communities were strongly supported by the academia, art and culture circle, and social movement groups during the struggle, and consequently attracted a lot of attention; also because the area is located in the political and economic center of Taiwan, media exposure, resources, and human resources could be leveraged effectively. In the end, the situation started to show a glimmer of hope.



Around 2016, the Sanying Community Self-help Association and Xizhou Community Self-help Association reached an agreement with New Taipei City Government: “settle us properly in another area and help us rebuild the community”. A safer location not far from the original site was chosen for the new community. The local government revised the land usage category (it was originally reserved for urban planning use) so that community members can legally rent the land through 20-year contracts. After the contracts expire, residents have priority to rent the land, which is basically equivalent to allowing them permanent residence. As for buildings on top of the land, they follow the “333 Plan”: community members will prepare one-third of the construction budget, the government will subsidize one-third of the amount, and a bank loan will make up the remaining portion. After the buildings are completed, the property rights belong to the shared legal entity of the communities. The layout of the new community is designed according to resident household requirements, and spaces for village ceremonies and activities are planned by the community members themselves.

Ljavek Community in Kaohsiung City

However, on the other end of the island, the Ljavek Community in Kaohsiung shared the same fate but not the same outcome. In 1997, Ljavek Community was reported as a squatter community. In an attempt to protect their homes, community members formed a self-help association and petitioned to Kaohsiung City Government. The government proposed the first replacement plan to the Community: residents who are willing to move will go through the social housing system and be relocated to Naluwan Community in

Xiaogang District. But this move will indicate an additional NT 3,000 to 4,000 per month in rent and management fees, and families who are allowed to move into social housing are low-income families and can only live there for eight years maximum. As a result, residents have no choice but to move back to the old community location after a couple of years.



Then in 2013, Ljavek Community received another demolition and relocation document from Kaohsiung City Government. Community members petitioned to the city government and city council multiple times. The Kaohsiung City Government Indigenous Peoples Commission also brought the members to New Taipei City to observe the northern riverside communities' solution. But Kaohsiung City Government arbitrarily decided on the replacement measures without giving community members a chance to hold equal discussions with the government. Using the same social housing relocation plan they used years ago, the government forcefully dismantled old communities and just gave promises that they will do their best to apply for rent subsidies and rent period extensions while asking the community members to "make do for the meantime".

In this relocation plan, Ljavek community members were arranged to move to Naluwan Community in Xiaogang District and the old Taiwan Power Company dormitories in Wujia District. But the process is flawed as it completely ignores the community's existing way of life, culture, and its collective societal structure. The

dispersion of community members destroyed the former community support system, tearing apart the horizontal connections within the community and forcibly reshaping them into vertical apartment building spaces. Community members lost their original spaces for ceremonies and daily interactions. Moreover, the new living arrangements were very unorganized: the same address may include six households/individuals, and one housing unit at the Wujia Taiwan Power Company dormitory has less than 66 m² of space, making it impossible to accommodate large families. The "one old house for one new house" swap was a complete failure.

Some community members eventually got tired of dealing with the city government and agreed to be replaced. However, there were still about ten households that refused to budge. In the early morning of April 1st, 2018, the Kaohsiung City Government's excavator entered the community and began to dismantle the remaining houses. This action finally aroused social awareness on the issue and the public condemned the government for its brutal action. With the help of Legal Aid Foundation, residents sought legal action for the first time and sued Kaohsiung City Government. Right now the case is still in court, but the damage done to community members who have been forced to disperse and lost their homes and houses cannot be undone.



Where is My Home? How to Raise Awareness on the Collective Needs of Housing and Culture

Even though there is the successful example of Xizhou and Sanying Community achieving a win-win situation through discussions with the government, there are no examples of what the government should do when faced with the collective needs of urban indigenous communities. Especially in the Ljavek Community case, we can see local governments do not have a comprehensive understanding of “informal settlement” and tend to ignore the historical backgrounds of indigenous communities and the communities’ collectiveness. As the result, the replacement plans proposed by the governments only satisfy the requirement of “having a place to live” and completely ignore other elements such as living quality and the need for passing on indigenous cultures. Some governments even think that as long as they propose a replacement plan, it is not forced eviction. During the replacement information session held by the Kaohsiung Council of Indigenous Peoples, Ljavek community members expressed that community culture should not be erased. Kuchung Kalavangan, the Chairperson of the Council at that time, responded that after the replacement, the Council of Indigenous Peoples will publish the Ljavek history as documentation of the community’s past history.

Actually, when the international society talk about protecting the right to adequate housing, it covers more than basic living requirements. In 2009, the Taiwanese government integrated the two UN Covenants on human rights into domestic law; as a result, the two Covenants should have the same effect as domestic law in terms of human rights legal protection and general comments explanations. According to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Article 11 and correlating General Comments No. 4 and No.7, it clearly states for the Right to Adequate Housing:

“In the Committee’s view, the right to housing should not be interpreted in a narrow or restrictive sense which equates it with, for example, the shelter provided by merely having a roof over one’s head or views shelter exclusively as a commodity. Rather it should be seen as the right to live somewhere in security, peace and dignity.”

In early 2017, during the second Two Covenants & National Human Rights Review Meeting held by the Ministry of Justice, international human rights experts provided a number of conclusive feedbacks. Number 44 was



especially directed towards the issue of urban indigenous communities: *“when providing the public with adequate housing, indigenous culture and collective needs should also be taken into consideration.”*

According to the descriptions of Right to Adequate Housing in the two Covenants, replacement does not justify forced eviction, and can only be considered as the last resort for compensation when housing demolition and relocation is inevitable. Whether the housing demolition and relocation case complies with the obligations mentioned in the two Covenants or not have to be determined according to the overall situation, and should at least satisfy the following conditions: the demolition and relocation act has a valid objective, the action complies with the principle of proportionality, and all involved parties can have sincere and thorough discussions on the issue.

There is still room for discussion and improvement when it comes to city development and the human rights of residents. We need to think about other issues in urban development: besides modern cityscapes with tall buildings and skyscrapers, can all residents live in the city equally and with dignity? Can we let traces of history and city development co-exist, and not just reduce them to a page in history archives? “What will happen next to our homes?” remain the biggest question in the hearts of urban indigenous peoples who are still fighting for and protecting their homes.❖



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Craftsmanship Class for the Indigenous Peoples in Shulin High School Where Students can Learn Cultures with Fun on Urban Campus

Written by You Nien-Hsiou; Photo credit: Hsieh Hsiao-Ming



Passionate and energetic students from craftsmanship classes for the indigenous peoples of 3rd year student of shulin senior high school demonstrating cohesion and friendship.

Which subject is the most favorite one among students? Students at Craftsmanship Class for the Indigenous Peoples in Shulin High School in New Taipei City will tell you, “Ethnic Costumes” or “Traditional Music and Dance!” Even though they need to come to consultation sessions during summer, they do not feel tired. The whole classroom is filled with passion and vigor.

Shulin District has the highest indigenous population in New Taipei City and about 8% of students in Shulin High School

are from indigenous background. But there has been a low percentage of indigenous students in New Taipei City receiving education higher than high school compared to the national average. Thus, Shulin High School in 2008 set up Craftsmanship Class for the Indigenous Peoples to provide indigenous students better educational resources and to help them safeguard and inherit ethnic cultures.

Visits to Indigenous Communities to Help Indigenous Students in Cities to Know Ethnic Cultures

For indigenous students growing up in cities, they are both familiar with and stranger to their own ethnic culture. Cheng Ya-Chi from Pangcah community lived with her grandparents in Yuli Township, Hualien County since she was little. Until in Junior High School, her parents brought her to Sanxia, New

Weaving, the required course, requesting students to make their own ethnical cloth before graduation.



Learning traditional music and dance in the class, one of favorite courses of students.

Taipei City. The community life that she was familiar with became remote. Tseng Chen Kung-Hsien whose hometown is a Paiwan community nearby Fugang Fishing Port, Taitung County was born and grew in Shulin. His parents have been busy at work and seldom go back to their hometown. For him, going back to the Paiwan community means a temporary visit. He does not feel going back home. It is Craftsmanship Class for the Indigenous Peoples that helps these students to understand their cultural roots deeply.

At Craftsmanship Class for the Indigenous Peoples, students need to study general subjects like others as well as courses of indigenous cultures, traditional music and dancing, and traditional costume making. Additionally, the School

also arranges cultural seminars, indigenous language accreditation classes, visits to relevant cultural and art venues of the indigenous peoples. In summer and winter vacation, students are led to field trips to indigenous communities.

Compared to students in general class, these students need to spend 4-5 hours more on craftsman courses. In the 2nd and 3rd Year, they have to make use of their time outside class to prepare for demo presentation. Although they need to work very hard, these students love cultural courses. They would tell you in detail about indigenous communities they visit and share their great joy with you. For example, they stayed a night in Saisyiat Community in Miaoli and visited the Red Leaf Community and Orchard Island in Taitung, Kanjin Community in Taoyuan, and Sanying Community and Xizhou Community in New Taipei City.

The Most Popular Courses, Traditional Music & Dance and Ethnic Costume Making

According to Lai Hui-Ying, Home Teacher of the Third-Year Students, when Craftsman Class for the Indigenous Peoples was established, the biggest challenge was planning students' favorite indigenous cultural courses. Because these courses need to be taught by indigenous teachers who are professional and willing to take the mission to hand down cultural heritage, most of the time, these teachers have already actively devoted themselves to indigenous and community education. Located in a big city, Shulin High School found it difficult to recruit these teachers.

Fortunately, over the past years, professional and passionate indigenous teachers are at the school to teach students. Lin Yuan-Hsiang who teaches traditional music and dance commutes from Hualien to Shulin every week to teach traditional indigenous music and dance. After long-year cultivation, music and dance performance of Shulin High School has become famous in Northern Taiwan.

Another favorite course of students is "Ethnic Costume Making" taught by the indigenous teacher, Kaing Lipay. The course requires students have to make their own ethnic costumes before graduating. It is time consuming to make ethnic costumes and that process enables students to know more about their own cultures. Tseng Chen Kung-Hsien said for Paiwan people, there has been the caste system. People with different statuses have to use different decoration patterns and wear different costumes and one of their assignments given by the teacher was going home to consult with the elderly at home about their family history.

“At the beginning, I thought the pattern requested by the teacher does not look nice.” Cheng Ya-Chi admitted that she has an argument with the teacher about style of her ethnic costume. She thought modified Pangcah costume is more beautiful from the modern perspective of aesthetics but her teacher insisted on the preservation of original manner. Her teacher tried to reason Cheng from the perspective of “heritage” and when tradition is changed along with modernity and fashion, unique cultural languages on indigenous costumes may disappear. This point convinced Cheng and Ethnic Costume Making became her favorite course.

More Passion Returned by Students for You Company and Caring

“The indigenous children needs your company the most,” said Lai Hui-Ying who has been the home teacher of the Craftsman Class for the Indigenous Peoples for six years. She described the pressure for indigenous children who live in cities to integrate with the mainstream society; they mostly are the economically disadvantaged and they parents cannot find much time to accompany them. In general, indigenous students are lack of confidence.

These students may come from families with different background and teachers need to sympathize and care them more. Some may have parents both re-married and children cannot get along with new family members while others need to help make a living for their families and have difficulty to find the balance between work and school. In addition to patient listening and company, Lai

tries to help students to graduate without too many absent hours. Lai said it gently, “It is also a teacher’s mission and responsibility to find the balance among family, work, and school.

Living in cities, indigenous students due to different figure profile and skin color may look very different from others. They are then disadvantaged. But here Craftsmanship Class for the Indigenous Peoples is like a big family where students are able to open their heart to learn together. After the establishment of the Class, as long as students are willing to go to universities, most of them demonstrate good academic performance. About one third of them are administered to national universities. “Some of them are very naïve and straightforward and they bring joy to people surrounding them. Our class is happy and unified. That explains why I like to be with them,” said Lai with a smile.

Craftsmanship Class for the Indigenous Peoples provides the arena for indigenous students in their growth and learning stage for them to make their dreams come true regardless of their willingness to advance indigenous music and dance or develop physical strength. These students may not be so sure about their future career, yet the Class gives them more options and opportunities in cities to decide their future.❖



Performance of Craftsmanship Class for the Indigenous Peoples in Laiyi Senior High School on International Stage

Written by Chao Hsin-Ning; Photo credit: Craftsmanship Class for the Indigenous Peoples in Laiyi Senior High School



Dance and singing, two key items, of craftsmanship class for the indigenous peoples in Laiyi Senior High School.

Through either modern dance that performs unlimited possibilities with bodies or traditional indigenous dance that shows respect to ancestral spirits with passion and vigor, students of Craftsmanship Class for the Indigenous Peoples in Laiyi Senior High School are able to demonstrate their best efforts. These students are repeated champions of national dance and choir contests. More amazingly, a group of dancers among them are both champion of indigenous and modern dance in the 2017 National Group Dance Contest.

From cultivation in daily life, the indigenous peoples demonstrate better art expression abilities. Talents can be observed in daily dancing, singing, and painting. When studying at school, most indigenous peoples, however, due to economic pressure, are not be inspired and guided systematically and their talents are unlikely to be developed professionally. Hence, in Laiyi Senior High School where 95% students are the indigenous peoples, Craftsmanship Class for the Indigenous Peoples was established in 2006 to teach students basic art training for presentation of diversity and creativity of indigenous cultures.

But unlike schools in urban area, it is quite difficult for Laiyi Senior High School to hire professional and passionate teachers. Liao Yi-

Hsin, Dancing Director of Pingtung's local professional Sandimen Tjimur Dance Theatre of Paiwan offered help to plan the dance course. Therefore, in the beginning of its establishment, Craftsmanship Class for the Indigenous Peoples in Laiyi Senior High School was known for its traditional and modern dance performance before the establishment of Fine Art Class.

Supplementary Basic Course for Accumulation of Cultural Strength

"Our significant feature is to cultivate the art talent with professional and authentic method that combines traditional arts of the indigenous peoples and innovation," said Shi Yi-Ni, a teacher of Craftsmanship Class for the Indigenous Peoples. Most of her students are from Paiwan and Rukai communities with distinct characteristics different from those in cities. Cities have abundant resources and children are able to learn from very young age. When they join art classes, they have good foundation. But in Pingtung, 90% students in art class are interested in singing, dancing, and painting and have not received formal training. They may start late but the indigenous children are gifted and through educational training, quick progresses will be made.

Craftsmanship Class for the Indigenous Peoples in Laiyi Senior High School teaches basic courses as students learn in general class as well as subjects students chose when they entered the school for different artistic training. Students in Music and Dance Group, for example, need to learn indigenous dance, ballet, oriental dance, modern dance, and choir while those in Fine Arts Group is taught with weaving, leather carving, glass bead making, and ceramics as well as sketching, color application, and computer aided design.

"We hope that through teaching of academic and basic art courses and with their born talent, these students will be visible internationally," further described by Shi Yi-Ni. Like outstanding pianists, they need to lay sound foundation of finger skills and music scale playing before they are known internationally.

These students also need to take indigenous language and cultural courses open for all



Above: Learning portrait painting and colors required for students in fine art course of craftsmanship classes for the indigenous peoples.

Below: Performance of craftsman classes for the indigenous peoples in Laiyi Senior High School in the singing contest.

students and the school arranges them to visit indigenous communities. Led by community vuvu, students are introduced to totems and essence of indigenous cultures via wood and leather carving works. At the same time, they learn gradually extinct ethnic cultures. Learning in indigenous communities is what students expect and teachers are excited. From the community elderly, students and teachers have the most valuable experience to contact the purest cultural essence.

Trust Gradually Developed between Non-indigenous and Indigenous Teachers and Students

Shi Yi-Ni frankly said, "A lot of people think it is easy to teach the indigenous peoples to sing since they are gifted. But it is because students are good at singing, conflict may easily occur during teaching."



Above: Performance of craftsmanship classes for the indigenous peoples in Laiyi Senior High School in the 2017 National Dancing Contest.

Below: Professional teachers who teach dancing group of performance of craftsmanship classes for the indigenous peoples.

Singing is an important part in indigenous culture and students love singing in daily life. They are no stranger to singing. In vocal music and singing class, it is easy for students to resist learning by saying “no, vuvu does not sing that way, teacher!” The indigenous youth have been developed with singing and motion habits since they are little and they certainly resist when you want to change their concepts of application

Responsibility of teachers in Craftsmanship Class do not only cultivate students with art and cultural specialties but also convey diverse knowledge and skills. Teachers need to introduce students to multiple expression methods of singing and dancing to slowly allow students to appreciate singing and dancing in different time. Once students are fascinated with these stories,

they will be able to devote themselves to the professional field.

As non-indigenous people, Shi Yi-Ni shared her story about trust she won from her students after spending a long period of time. But after getting along with her students, now she always feels touched for pureness and passion of the indigenous peoples. When annual ritual festival comes, teachers always receive passionate invitations from students and their families. This experience is difficult for teachers in cities can encounter.

Art Dram & Practical Barriers

Craftsmanship Class for the Indigenous Peoples in Laiyi Senior High School became well-known. After annual gradual performance, professional theaters often offer opportunities for students to join. Many graduates were admitted to universities of arts and became independent dancers with outstanding results. Some also study under public funding in universities of fine arts and would like to come back to teach local students.

“The indigenous children receive more family pressure than those in cities,” said Shi Yi-Ni. Only few students are given resources to continue their schooling. For the Craftsmanship Class, the biggest challenge lies in low acceptability for arts in our society. Many students have difficulties to find the balance between their dream and reality. They cannot continue their art learning simply because of family factor or economic consideration for making a living.

Lower birth rate in Taiwan also results in insufficient number of students for Craftsmanship Class for the Indigenous Peoples in Laiyi Senior High School but learning passion of the indigenous peoples is the drive for the School to go ahead. Teachers in Laiyi Senior High School are touched to see students active self-training outside class. Many teachers said, “As long as one student would like to learn, I will continue my teaching.” Probably the percentage for these students to become professionals is low, but when the seed of arts is planted, a flower will surely grow and eventually, arts will enrich their life. ❖

Does the Affirmative Policy for Higher Education

Admission Turn Indigenous Students Further Away?

Written by Muni Druluan; Illustrated by James Lee

Why does the government grant indigenous students extra examination points? Has the entire indigenous education policy further alienated indigenous people from their culture and identity by default? The resentment lies deeply in their subconsciousness—"The extra points make me dislike my own indigenous identity. The government has no place in making the decision for me with regard to my college entrance exam score. I am just as capable as everyone else!"



In 1944, before the Nationalist government retreated to Taiwan, it enacted the Regulation on the Preferential Treatment of Students from Frontier Regions in mainland China; thus the regime extended the scope of this regulation to make indigenous peoples of Taiwan also eligible for the preferential treatment in education. This is also the earliest educational affirmative regulation in Taiwan.

The Presumable Good Intentions from the State


When an ethnic group holds culture and language that are different from Non-indigenous people and resides in a region not populated by the Non-indigenous as the majority, the group would be identified by the Nationalist government as a people requiring support from affirmative educational policies. Although the education policies for indigenous peoples were put in place

around the 1950s to ensure equal access to education in general, here education solely means teaching materials based on the Non-indigenous body of knowledge. As common language and culture are powerful tools to drive national solidarity, to firmly establish its regime, the Nationalist government quickly introduced enforcement rules and guidelines for Mandarin based curriculum after Japanese government withdrew from Taiwan.

In 1949, the displaced Nationalist government retreated to Taiwan and enacted Education Guidelines for Upland Peoples. The first article of the guidelines stipulates clearly that “Mandarin based education should be thoroughly enforced to enhance a sense of national solidarity.” In 1951, Directions on Upland Governance, a specific policy regarding indigenous peoples, was announced. Article 20 of the directions specifies that “Mandarin and Chinese should be actively promoted and encouraged with all kinds of effective measures to encourage upland peoples’ interests in learning Mandarin and Chinese. The progress of the effort is to be stringently supervised and validated.” Therefore, measures like waiver of tuition and examination, guaranteed school entrance, education subsidies for upland regions have become de facto propaganda disguised in the name of education policies.

Mandarin driven policies were churned out one after another. And of course, statistics indicated improvement of indigenous people’s integration into Non-indigenous education system. However, the Mandarin only policies marked a long dark age for indigenous cultures and languages as they thoroughly undermined and degraded native languages.

The state facilitates indigenous integration into the mainstream society by removing language and cultural barriers. Once homogeneity is achieved, then indigenous people will no longer be the special ones who need help. However, where does that idea of integration as the prerequisite of a competent person come from?



“He got into that top school because of the additional points.”

Would Everything be Alright If Education Affirmative Measures Include Indigenous Language Proficiency Certification in its criteria?

In 1987, with the lift of Martial Law, Taiwan saw the rise of local cultural identification and ethnic cultures recognition which led to the burgeoning of related educational regulations.

As to whether the affirmative policy of higher education admission for indigenous students should include cultural and language proficiency certification, there are all kinds of opinions from scholars, government officials, parents and the public. The most common and familiar view argues for the justice and fairness for the access to the preferential treatment. On the basis of justice and fairness, when the state tries to uphold cultural subjectivity, indigenous students have to prove that they are competent culturally and linguistically before they are granted the access to the preferential treatment.

In 1987, the Regulation on the Preferential Treatment of Upland Students Admission into Higher Education was released (renamed as Regulation on Affirmative Quota for Indigenous Students Admission into Higher Education and Government Scholarship for Overseas Study in 2001.) This is the first indigenous-oriented regulation.

Education policies based on this argument have trapped indigenous education in the original dilemma all this time. When those in power ignore the importance of cultural preservation, indigenous people are forced to learn an alien culture and language in order to survive in the contemporary social institution. However, when those in power value the subjectivity and development of ethnic cultures, indigenous people are required to prove their cultural and knowledge competence for the acceptance of contemporary social institution.



In 1988, the Ministry of Education formed Education Committee for Upland Peoples. Claiming the purpose of indigenous education is to facilitate integration into modern life and uphold traditional cultures, the state expressed its respect and care for indigenous cultures.

In 1988, Education Act for Indigenous Peoples was released. This is the first time the term indigenous appeared in a regulation title.

In September, 2001, The Grade 1-9 Coherent Curriculum Framework was enforced. Elementary school students are required to choose one out of Minnan, Hakka, and indigenous languages as a part of their local cultural learning activities.

In 2001, Regulation on the Preferential Treatment for Higher Education Admission was announced. The Ministry of Education and the Council of Indigenous Peoples worked together to revise the law.

In 2007, Cultural and Language Proficiency Test for Preferential Treatment of Higher Education Admission was launched. In the same year, the initiative for indigenous languages proficiency certification also started. In 2014, the test incorporated language level certification.



Cultural minority or the culturally unique people alike, the nature of the requirement remain the same. Once again, indigenous people are demanded to prove they are in a position which requires preferential treatment. This no doubt wrongs these people again to the same degree. This reckless link between indigenous language proficiency certification and higher education admission scores made by the government fails showcase the cultural richness of indigenous peoples. Instead, their cultures are rendered plain and dull.

One-sided Decision Instead of a Choice for All

Since 2001, when Taiwan society embraced the development era of cultural subjectivity, the Ministry of Education continued to promote education policies pertaining to indigenous peoples.

- In 2005, The Five-year Mid-term Development Plan for Education for Indigenous Peoples was finalized.
- In 2011, the Ministry of Education and the Council of Indigenous Peoples together developed The Whitepaper on the Education Policies for Indigenous Peoples and The Five-year Mid-term Development Plan for Education for Indigenous Peoples.
- In 2015, the Ministry of Education and the Council of Indigenous Peoples jointly announced The Five-year Mid-term Development Plan for Education for Indigenous Peoples and The Four-year Talent Development Program for Indigenous Education.
- In 2017, Indigenous Languages Development Act was released. The act established the national language status for indigenous languages.
- Education Act for Indigenous Peoples was amended in 2019 to specifically stipulate the development of ethnic education system should be based on the knowledge body of indigenous peoples.





Given the fact that daily language learning environment is missing from the picture of school based indigenous language programs and indigenous students are further burdened with extra study hours, these programs turned out to be unsuccessful. Education policies in recent years have gradually adopted a bottom-up engagement approach and included more indigenous people into the decision group for teaching material development. An effort of compiling appropriate teaching materials based on the knowledge bodies of respective indigenous peoples also appeared across different disciplines to prepare for future teaching needs. However, with more than half

of the indigenous population living in urban areas, there is still a shortage of accredited indigenous language teachers and relevant cultural talents. The shortage of language teachers for those smaller indigenous groups was even more severe.

The lack of talents hinders the effort to enhance indigenous language teaching. In the meanwhile, the long standing affirmative policy for higher education admission also put a strain on indigenous education. In addition to the obvious stigma associated with the preferential treatment for school admission, the extra 2% indigenous student quota for colleges admission, a rule put in place to reduce conflicts between Non-indigenous Chinese and indigenous

people, did not work. In fact, after the enforcement of the policy, less indigenous students entered into public universities, where the fee is cheaper in addition to lots of education resources available. Furthermore, the annual household income of indigenous families is 40% lower than the national average whereas the dropout rate of indigenous students is two times higher than the average. It is expected that the dropout rate would only get worse when more indigenous students enter into expensive private universities.

40 years have passed since the introduction of educational preferential treatment after the Nationalist government retreated to Taiwan. 2018 statistics show that the tertiary enrollment rate for indigenous students reaches a historical high at 53.9%. However, there is still a 31.9% gap between them and general students. When other people criticize

indigenous people taking up resources and enjoy vested interests in affirmative admission policy, they are doing so without realizing that additional points only reinforce the catch-22 faced by indigenous students. It is as if other people are jealous of them driving a new car without noticing their helplessness because the brake is not working and they are trying like crazy to stop the car. "How is that possible that we get better grades than urban students when resources here in the indigenous community are so scarce?" "My dad can only work on odd jobs on construction sites in the city. It's really hard to get by so I have to study like crazy to get into a public university. Otherwise my family cannot afford a private school. This has nothing to do with where I live." What indigenous students need is to be able to have a say in their education as well as having access to resources that can really help them beside additional points.

Why is it Necessary to Have Indigenous Education Policy?

Does that mean indigenous education can only help by doing less? The more essential question should be: why do we need ethnic education?

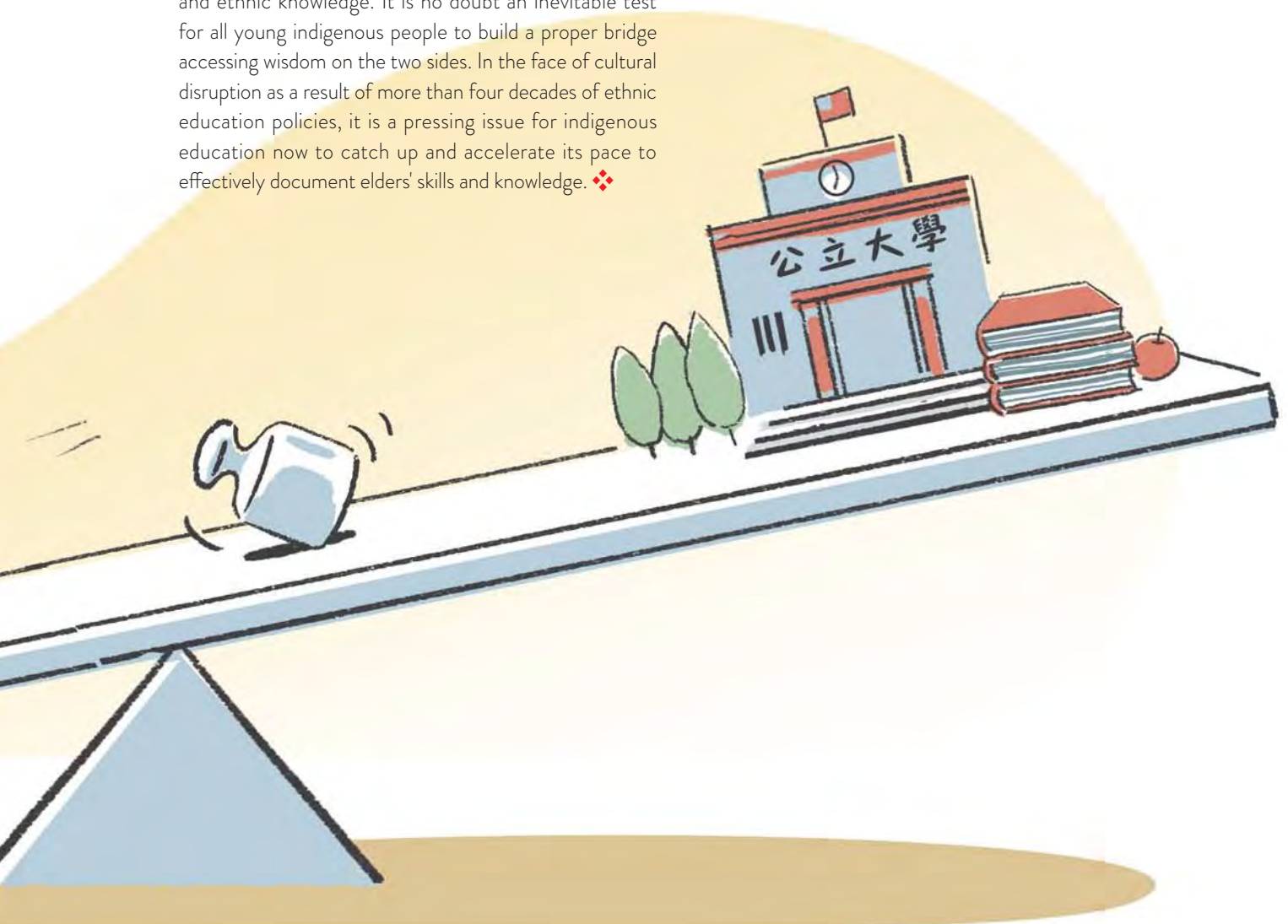


For example, Mandarin driven policy itself is a kind of ethnic education. It is a way for the state to forge national solidarity by instilling a shared identity, recognition and pride as a nation through one language and culture. People of this democratic country need quality ethnic education to foster mature ethnic dignity and at the same time to learn to respect different cultures as they understand that no one culture is better than another. Every culture comes with rich and profound essence. We should not take culture for granted. Culture is the accumulated wisdom of forebears and serves as a compass which leads the way for a nation. Dignity of a nation is acquired by learning to respect ethnic cultures. Mimicking the way indigenous people talk is hardly considered culture at all.

Contemporary indigenous people face a challenge posed by education, standing between science and technology and ethnic knowledge. It is no doubt an inevitable test for all young indigenous people to build a proper bridge accessing wisdom on the two sides. In the face of cultural disruption as a result of more than four decades of ethnic education policies, it is a pressing issue for indigenous education now to catch up and accelerate its pace to effectively document elders' skills and knowledge. ❖

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Find Warmth from Gatherings of **Indigenous Communities in Urban Jungle**

However far away from home they are, indigenous people living in the cities still have their hearts attached to their communities. To regain their joy and revitalize the traditional culture in the cities, young indigenous people team up to organize regular gatherings and build ties through various events that bring people together, giving them emotional warmth and a sense of belonging in the cold city.

The 24-Years-Old NTNU Indigenous Research Club: **The Second Home for Urban Indigenous Youths**

Written by Zhao Xin-ning; Photo credit: NTNU Indigenous Research Club



Group picture of the attendees of the Northern Taiwan Indigenous College Student Singing Competition.

“The winner goes to... the NTNU Indigenous Research Club!” Upon hearing their name being announced as the champion of the choir section of the Northern Taiwan Indigenous College Student Singing Competition, all the choir members in their traditional costume exclaimed and hugged each other with joy. This night, in the colorful metropolis of Taipei, hundreds of indigenous college students gathered at the auditorium of National Taiwan Normal University for the singing competition. The chill of Taipei’s rainy winter night was dispelled by the warmth and passion of the audience in the building. The attendees comprised

almost the entire 16 indigenous peoples of Taiwan, making the event even more riotous than the traditional rituals in indigenous communities.

The Northern Taiwan Indigenous College Student Singing Competition, which is held annually in December, has been the trademark activity of the NTNU Indigenous Research Club since its establishment 24 years ago. Although seemingly nothing more than a musical competition featuring singing and dancing performances of indigenous students, the event is significant in that it provides contestants an opportunity to explore their indigenous culture and values in the process of preparation and training.

Taiwan Indigenous College Student Singing Competition: An Opportunity for Urban Indigenous Youths to Explore Cultural Roots through In-depth Fieldwork

Yu, Jia-xian, the former club leader who also led the dance troupe in 2018, returned to the Ruhluc community in the Taoyuan District, Kaohsiung City during that year's summer vacation and spent two months consulting the community elders about their traditional folk songs, music, and dancing. After the school began, she also led a group of 30 clubmates back to the community on a two-day field trip.

“Actually, that was also my first time to experience living like a local in my hometown village,” recounts Yu. She was troubled with a mixed sense of identity in the course of growing up. Having grown up in a rural township of Kaohsiung, and despite her indigenous roots, she was unfamiliar with her culture and could not answer any questions about it. In 2014, when the Hla'alua people finally gained official recognition from the government, she returned to the community with her parents for the celebration. She found herself unable to get involved but could only watch like a bystander.

After entering the NTNU, she joined the Indigenous Research Club, where she met a group of indigenous schoolmates who also grew up in the cities. They soon hit it off due to their similar backgrounds. Each year, for the preparation of the singing competition, almost every participating team will organize fieldwork trips to varying indigenous communities to learn their traditional folk songs from community elders. “Learning from a real person is completely different from learning simply by watching online videos,” said Yu. To these indigenous youths who once had doubts about their identity, this also serves as a rare opportunity to rediscover their roots.

Originally, Yu was not sure if she could successfully introduce and teach her clubmates all the singing and dancing techniques she had acquired in the community. But when she showed the video of her first practice to her brother, who was then living in the village, he praised her for having done a good job. “It's my very first time to be recognized by my own community member,” commented Yu emotionally.

Winter Singing Contest and Summer Sports Meet Tie Up Indigenous Youths in Northern Taiwan

Generally, interschool competitions are held by different universities on a rotating basis. But the annual Northern Taiwan Indigenous College Student Singing Competition has been routinely organized by the NTNU Indigenous Research Club, which is a highly stressful task for the club staff every year. However, as the indigenous population in Taipei is smaller than those in Taitung and Hualien, there are few opportunities on campus for students to experience the indigenous peoples' culture and feel their warmth.

As a result, the club never considers it a hardship to hold the event, but instead stick fast to their beliefs and pride themselves on the passing on of tradition.

In the very beginning, the singing contest was a small event organized by a group of indigenous students in northern Taiwan who were fond of singing and had strong nostalgia for their hometowns. Because it was so moving to see indigenous music and dancing culture faithfully reproduced in the cities, the scale of the competition has been expanded year by year, attracting 7 to 10 universities in northern Taiwan to attend each year. Yu said that this event not only touches the attendees by creating a sense of honor, but also serves as an important link between different indigenous groups. The staff of each iteration, therefore, have a consensus that the singing competition must not be interrupted no matter how hard it is.

While winter is the season for singing and dancing, summer is the time for students from various universities to maintain close ties through sports of all sorts. The “Ball Sports Cup” is another event



The Indigenous College Student Singing Competition and Sports Meet are the two major events held annually by the NTNU Indigenous Research Club. These activities serve to bring together indigenous university students in Northern Taiwan and give them a feel of cordial warmth as if from remote indigenous communities.

organized by the Club. Apart from basketball and volleyball, which are common in most inter-school games, the sports meet also features the tug-of-war and weight relay race, which are unique to the indigenous culture. The club takes advantage of every opportunity to build up links that connect indigenous people to their traditions.

With frequent exchange and interactions, the NTNU Indigenous Research Club has kept in close touch with its counterparts from other schools. For example, the Indigenous Research Club of Fu Jen Catholic University makes it a routine to hold an experience camp every summer, in which participants will spend a few nights at an indigenous community to increase their knowledge about indigenous culture and enhance their self-identity. To support the program, the staff of the NTNU Indigenous Research Club are also mobilized by sharing their rich experience in organizing events. “We work as a team regardless of which school we belong to, because we are devoting our all-out efforts to promoting the indigenous culture,” said Yu.

A Place for Learning, Discussion, and Company: A Platform for Urban Indigenous Youths to Know Different Peoples

Although the design of each year's club curriculum is different in style, the routine weekly course is always centered on language learning and the exploration of indigenous culture. At the beginning of the semester, the curriculum is designed to involve fun activities like fun challenges in the night markets to break the ice between newcomers. In the middle of the semester, academic-oriented discussions like watching documentaries and lectures on current issues are arranged

to spark discussions among the participants. For example, the case of Asia Cement Corp's mining disputes, which imposes a great impact on the local indigenous people, has become a hotly discussed topic in the club.

In the era of information explosion, life in the cities is teeming with attractions of all sorts of foreign culture. For urban-raised indigenous youths who have very limited opportunities to learn about their culture and discuss it with peers, it is pretty hard to acquire knowledge of their traditional culture on a constant basis and apply it in their daily lives. Yu admits that sometimes even she herself can be attracted by the freshness of non-indigenous cultures, but whenever she gets together with her clubmates, the passion and learning desire for their own culture will be sparked again.

Growing up in the cities, urban indigenous youths are challenged by the lack of life experience in indigenous communities. At the moments when they have doubts about their identity and culture, they cannot feel the warmth and support from their hometown village in time. In the bustling and fast-paced city of Taipei, the NTNU Indigenous Research Club serves as a platform for those who are interested in exploring and preserving their indigenous cultures, and a second home where they can support each other and learn together to further enhance their self-identity through collective efforts. This is undoubtedly the most valuable cultural treasure that indigenous students can find in the cities.❖❖



All the members of the NTNU Indigenous Research Club are close to each other. Everyone serves as an import pillar of support for one another in organizing activities, which has become the culture of the Club.

Lacinhan, A Decade-long Relationship Supporting Urban Indigenous Youths

Written by Nian, Xiu-ju; Photo credit: Lacinhan



Lacinhan reunite at a member's wedding. They never miss out on members' big moments of life.

It seems whenever urban indigenous residents get together, they are teleported back to their old good community despite being surrounded by the concrete jungle. They can talk in their native tongue, dance with locked arms and sing at the top of their lungs without being questioned nor the need to answer to anyone. And one group of urban indigenous youths are blessed with the formation of such a bond. For the past ten years, they have been unfailingly supported by their peers whenever they need to turn to the warmth of their community. The group goes by the name of Lacinhan.

Back in 2009, a 20-year-old Pangcah young man, Daong Cenceng, spent the entire summer vacation visiting indigenous communities along the eastern coast of Taiwan and observing their ceremonies.

To keep the tie formed with great gusto, he and friends set up a group named as Lacinhan on social network. “La” means where to in Pangcah and “cinhan” means financially strained in Chinese, a self-mocking name referring to their state back then. However, such a half joking start unexpectedly brought together a dozen Pangcah young people who all lived in cities in the North of Taiwan.

Besides all being indigenous urban residents, another thing they share in common is that all of them were involved in the anti-demolition

movement of Xizhou Community in Xindian in 2007. Back then, Pangcah people who moved to the North of Taiwan launched a campaign against the government's demolition move. This campaign and the Indigenous Dignity movement taking place in the following year played a critical role in drawing together the concerned college indigenous young people from all over Taiwan.

Stand by Me When I Miss Home

Urban indigenous people tend to be the minority in their social group when they grow up. Leaving home village behind for school or work inevitably makes them homesick from time to time and Lacinhan members are the ideal support for each other.

As conditions have changed overtime for urban indigenous people, it is now hard for them to follow the traditional pattern of community life, which is to engage and connect with each other through land. However, the prevalent power of internet now connects young people who live in different parts of the city. While members are all concerned about indigenous issues and actively involved in social movements, Lacinhan's gatherings in contrast focus on daily aspects of their lives with chilling out and learning as the main purposes.

Homesickness sometimes adopts the form of food yearning. Every winter, Lacinhan members would cook a pot of wine chicken soup together. Made of chicken sautéed with rice wine, the soup can bring village memories back to life for everyone. Sometimes, members would go to Xindian to buy snails from indigenous moms to make a sautéed dish. In the summer, they would go fishing together at a creek in the mountain behind the National Chengchi University. They would joyfully make a fire and roast their catch as if they are back in their community where their people chill out, chat, sing and dance.

It would not be an overstatement to say they are one family though biologically unrelated. Every lunar new year, Lacinhan would throw a spring party. They would pick a member's community and spend nights there to learn the Pangcah's way of "Papising(showing face)" and "Papising(showing face)." Lacinhan even helped one of its members to propose during one year's spring party. Elders in the communities would be less worried about those children living in cities when they see how these young people can be such a great support for each other.



Big holidays allow opportunities of reunion for Lacinhan. They make the most of these moments by having fun, such as gift exchange.

While their gatherings bring fun and joy, Lacinhan also plays a role in initiating indigenous cultural learning. "We do not speak fluent mother tongue and we also lacked the opportunity to practice it in the past." Said Daong Cinceng. Each one of their members specializes in one indigenous cultural skill. For example, one member is very involved in learning Pangcah language so that this member turned Lacinhan into a study group of the language. They would recommend reference books for each other, work on the grammars and try to converse in their mother tongue under daily scenarios. Sometimes, they would play guitar and write a song in Pangcah language together.

Striving for a Common Goal: Moving Back to the East of Taiwan

Some of Lacinhan's members came from communities in the East of Taiwan and some grew up in Northern Taiwan. One of the reasons why these group of kindred spirits can build such a strong bond over a decade is that they share one goal in common - moving to and settling in the East of Taiwan. Despite their aspiration to lead a life

in the East of Taiwan, it very challenging to fully settle there due to the uncertain likelihood of their families still living there as well as the significant lack of job opportunities in indigenous communities. When the members were about to graduate and start working, the discussion topic within Lacinhan shifted to the experiences of moving back to Eastern Taiwan.

Daong Cinceng shared his own experiences. He was born and raised in Taoyuan in the North of Taiwan. Ever since his involvement in indigenous activities in college, he had regularly traveled to eastern Taiwan. He would even stay in an indigenous community for one to two months during summer and winter vacations. He knew when he was still a student that he is not going to settle down for good in northern Taiwan. He commenced his journey back home after he finished the compulsory military service. He moved back to his grandma's place in Luye Township, Taitung County and started a graduate program at National Taitung University on top of his community health building work. Now his dream is realized as he is working for Chi Mei Aboriginal Culture Museum, Ruisui Township, Hualien County.

One by one, other members also accomplished their goal of moving back to Eastern Taiwan. Some work for museums. Some started their own business like hand-crafted lighting brand. Some work as indigenous community organizers and some work as social workers. Despite being busy with their own careers, they still regularly meet up to share their bit-by-bit process of moving back to Eastern Taiwan.

“As members all hold university or higher degree, our discussion goes beyond fragmented information exchange. You can say it's very thorough.” Those who managed to move back would continue to offer

advises to those who are making their plans on the skills required to find jobs in Eastern Taiwan, supporting them making plans every step of the way. Now there are about ten members who have already settled in Eastern Taiwan. As Daong Cinceng humorously put it that Lacinhan members do not have to worry about where to stay when they go on a business trip to Hualien, Taitung, places in the Coastal Range or along the East Coast.

Next Step: Business Integration to Unleash Greater Power

Two years ago, Tipus Hafay, the founder of Kamaro'an, invited members to her studio to exchange their career experiences in Eastern Taiwan. This accidentally triggered the third phase of Lacinhan- resource integration.

“We have known each other for so many years. Maybe we can integrate what we do because we know each person's strength.” Explained Daong Cinceng. Lacinhan members specialize in a wide range of professional fields with some overlaps. It is highly likely that they can integrate what they do to create a stronger momentum. But Daong Cinceng suddenly changed the subject by saying that though that plan of consolidating what they do is important, members are still more enthusiastic about the affair of getting married. Lacinhan members age between 25 to 32, the suitable age range to start their own families. Over the years, they have helped each other to make marriage proposals and perform as a group on members' weddings. They look forward to seeing the next generation of Lacinhan members. However, Daong Cinceng said quite shyly that given the tongue-in-cheek source of the name, he would definitely support the future generation getting a name changeover.

Much as Lacinhan is only a non-formal organization without standardized operation terms and rules, the group has managed to operate nonstop in cities for the past ten years, relying on the strength and the warmth of their bond. This group of young people stood by one another and grew together when they lived in cities. From school to work place, from being single to being married, their attachment to each other has never waned a bit. Lacinhan members aspire to become true Pangcah together.❖



Lacinhan members run marathon together. The share wonderful memories and form a strong bond between each other.

Eliminate Your Prejudices and Discriminations

Stop Debating the Indigenous - Non-indigenous Divide

Written by Kuo Po-Jiun; Illustrated by Nose Huang

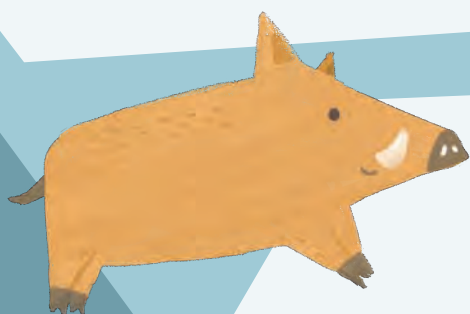
Are you an Aboriginal? You must be because you look so dark-dela!

The 1960s and 1970s saw the rising trend of migration of indigenous people from home villages to urban areas because of social change and economic development. Since then, it has been not uncommon for us to come into touch with indigenous people in our daily lives. But at present, after 60 years since then, is our society prepared and ready to show more respect for diverse ethnic groups in Taiwan?

The term “Microaggression” is the concept coined by American psychiatrist Carl Word and his research team. It is used to describe an attitude, held by socially mainstream communities toward members of a marginalized group, that subtly or unconsciously expresses indignities based on explicit and implicit prejudices. Although after years of education and change in social attitude, the discrimination of the general public against various ethnic groups might have gradually diminished, inadvertent prejudice may still be revealed through people’s behavior or everyday interactions due to sharp differences between both sides in life experiences and historical memories.

Over these years, thanks to the government’s promotion of transitional justice and indigenous people’s outstanding achievements in various fields, the way the mainstream society looks at them has greatly changed, with more positive impressions and expectations being held. In the minds of most people, however, indigenous people are invariably stereotyped as natural-born athletes, singers, and optimists. Such positive images or compliments of all sorts, though well-intentioned, can be contradictory to what they really are and therefore cause offense instead.

We must realize that indigenous peoples do not always look like the way we perceive them to be; nor will they lose their indigeneity if they fail to meet our expectations. Just like everyone in the world, indigenous people are born as individuals with varying personalities and life experiences. It is far from enough to show our friendliness and respect for them simply by appreciating their culture and history and in turn developing a sense of identification. We must also further shatter our stereotypes, avoiding imposing a frame that defines what they should look like or how they should act. Only by doing so can the public get to discover the unlimited possibilities and potentials of indigenous peoples. Following are some of the common misconceptions about indigenous peoples one can encounter on various issues.



***“Indigenous people are uncivilized
because they kill animals.”***

“When will the ban on hunting be lifted?” “How is the prey killed?” In indigenous society, people must follow the instructions and teachings from their elders for traditional hunting practices. They only hunt for as much prey as needed, and for most indigenous peoples it is customary to consume meat only on big holidays or festivals. Whenever a major event is held in the community, the number of pigs served on site implies the strength of a clan. The more the pigs, the stronger it is. In the end, all the pork will be distributed to friends and relatives as gifts.

2

***“You look so dark!
Are you Aboriginal?”***

Most indigenous peoples are dark-skinned. This is not only due to their genes, but also to the fact that they live in a natural environment where they have more exposure to the sun. Yet not all indigenous peoples are born with dark skin. The Pangcah people, for example, are famous for their naturally fair complexion.



3

***“Hey, we are
good buddies-dela!”***

The practice of mimicking indigenous people's Mandarin by adding the sentence-ending suffix “-dela” can be traced back to the military comedy movie *Yes, Sir* in 1987. The device was originally designed to highlight the character's ingenuity by coining such a way of expression that implied the influence of his native language, which suggests a hint of mockery. In the early days when indigenous people were learning to speak Mandarin, they tended to mix it with characteristics of their mother tongues, and thus created a hybrid form of speech featuring “-dela” at the end of a sentence.



4

***“You must be from Eastern
Taiwan, like Taitung or
Hualien, aren't you?”***

So far there are 16 officially recognized indigenous peoples in Taiwan. They live in different places all over the island, whether on Taiwan proper or on offshore islands, including Ponso no Tao (aka Orchid Island) and the Penghu Islands. The former is home to the Tao people, while on the latter you can even find the Pangcah people living there!

5

“Indigenous peoples are naturally fond of drinking.”

Don't non-indigenous peoples love to drink? In fact, indigenous peoples have their own drinking cultures. On important occasions, drinking as appropriate is viewed as a means of showing respect for community members and elders, while alcoholism is strictly prohibited. Generally, indigenous do not get drunk easily. This is because they are genetically born with more effective acetaldehyde dehydrogenase enzymes, which can better catalyze the conversion of acetaldehyde into acetic acid and reduce discomfort from drinking. So, we indigenous people are not natural drinkers at all.



6

“Indigenous people are optimistic by nature.”

A seemingly well-intentioned compliment like this reflects an oversimplified, monotonous impression of indigenous people in the minds of the public. Since every one of us, be it indigenous or non-indigenous, has varying personal traits, we should try to discover and appreciate the diverse qualities that make each indigenous individual unique instead of defining what they are based on the stereotype. In today's social environment, quite a few people are not happy with their lives. So next time when you let slip the sentence again, perhaps you'll hear an indigenous person say, “No, I've got tired of living.”



7

“Indigenous peoples are strong in singing and dancing.”

The indigenous people's culture is inextricably intertwined with music and dancing. Music serves as an indispensable part in all aspects of their lives, ranging from daily activities to important rituals. The indigenous people's performing prowess is not a gift, though. It is the accumulation of life experiences that contributes to their outstanding achievements in singing and dancing.



8

“The indigenous students receive financial subsidies and get extra points on the university entrance exam.”

In the past, with an attempt to facilitate the Sinicization of indigenous people, preferential treatment policies were implemented in terms of national examinations. Nowadays, as attention is being paid to the preservation of indigenous cultures, students are encouraged to learn their mother tongues to earn extra credit when applying for universities. This has undoubtedly burdened them with two-fold pressure, in which they must not only struggle to integrate into mainstream society, but also work to preserve their native culture.

The imbalanced distribution of educational resources is another factor that contributes to the disadvantage of students in indigenous communities when competing with those in cities. Currently, various policies have been launched to level disparities between the indigenous and non-indigenous groups. But when it comes to conserving indigenous culture and values as well as helping students to advance their education, what is truly needed is not extra point bonus and financial subsidies, but an even friendlier environment where they can be treated fairly.



9

“Indigenous people are natural-born athletes.”

As the population of urban indigenous people grows, many indigenous youngsters are born and raised in cities. Yet most of their families still have their hometowns in the mountains or coastal areas. When they return to the villages, the easy access to nature becomes a blessing that is not to be enjoyed by non-indigenous people. The living environment of indigenous people, which is natural and less populated, enables them to engage in physical activities of all sorts. Apart from this, indigenous peoples are endowed with a genetic advantage that makes them good athletes. Take the Pangcah, Tao, and Pinuyumayan peoples for example. These peoples are of the blood type of “Miltenerberger antigen subtype III,” which contributes to better respiratory metabolism and therefore an advantage in sports. But please be reminded that not all indigenous people are naturally enthusiastic about outdoor activities. There are also quite a few who are genteel and scholarly by nature.





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