

INDIGENOUS SIGHT

Crossing into Different Lives



mukakakua kuparaiaiahliisa cucu sala'a

pinadnaden o amizingan so cireng no rarakeh aka no malalavayo a tao

Establishment of the Middle Ground Views across Generations

o pimasawdan no makeykeylian a tao an, pangozayan o cireng no rarakeh do kabedbedam no asa ka ili a vazavazay; am sicyakwaya am, no siya mian do keymimili o malalavayo a tao an, da jia onongi o da powboten a cireng, ta yabo do ili o ya mapazzon sira a mapatowaw so pannakenakeman da, no mikownayan an, masazi rana o kakteb no vaza no asa ka ili. teyapia o pangaktoktowan no rarakeh, o malalavayo a tao am, sira macinadnad rana do pangangavangan, ori o na ipiciakatkat no da pangaktoktowan.

no patwawen o cireng no malalavayo am, rmanakem o kapanadnad so rarakeh do keymimilian. o ji macilovolovot do keylian a mangay do kabebbedan a vazay am, ji da patwatontona no kaylian o kapowbot so cireng do ngoso no tao ya. no omrames do ngongyod a vahay am. mangay walamen o rarakeh, a omamizing so cireng da aka pacikaop do kaloalovotan a pamaremarengan so kanen no makeykeylian.

o malalavayo a too sicyakwaya am, ya teyapi o da pangozayan a sowey(數位化) aka no kompiyote, ta ya na ipipasngen no nakenakem no tao, tana sira miyan do rako a ili o malalavayo a tao an, apia o da ka pacingosongoso no vazay do ili, a sira makeykai a makamizing so ikoikod do ili, a yanbonkay sicyakwaya am, da ipilimwang o makakaday a vazay no malalavayo a tao, ori o da ipakacita do tizivi so vayo a pannaknakeman, aka no da papowen a mikamadada a apzapzatan no malalavayo a ta o.

da pakdengnan no yanbonkay a ya amizingen o vazavazay no malalavayo, akman so ya mapatnek so vazay do ili, aka no ya mapangay sira do tivivi so da papowen a anoanood. no makwa am, pakayrasen a pangain do tizivi o da ikakza no malalavayo a ganam, ipipakatkat no teneteneng no tao sicyakwa ya, akaro no cireng a malavat da.

Traditional villages impose specific age rules and have their own systems to follow. It is always the village elders that provide opinions and make decisions on public affairs. However, when young people return to villages, they are faced with the predicament where they cannot voice their opinions freely. Some communities do not allow young people the decision making power and the right to have their say on public affairs, which will result in a community-based imbalance of power in the long run. In effect, elders are rich in wisdom and experience; young people are competent in competitive society; therefore, both parties should make an attempt to reach a consensus on getting the floor.

When voicing opinions, young people should also abide by the community traditions and customs. "Participation" is highly valued by indigenous communities. For instance, if a young person never takes part in river protection and ocean cleanup, but only expresses his thoughts in meetings, traditional villages will not accept the ideas proposed by such a person who does not live a collective life and who only stresses the importance of freedom of speech. In other words, after young people return to villages, they should not stay at home all the time. Instead, they have to be there; beside elders, to the site of ceremony, to the area of production in order to become part of the community. That is how young people's opinions make sense and matter. The youth in deed are the assets, as well as the drive for better indigenous societies. This drive, nevertheless, needs to be propelled in the right way and by the support of traditional values.

In addition, young people nowadays are equipped with helpful tools, digital devices and the Internet. The Internet breaks the barrier of distance. Irrespective of living in cities, young indigenous people are still able to express their opinions on community issues or receive village information in real time. This year the Indigenous Peoples Cultural Foundation (ICPF) spared no effort to promote the new media platform designed for young people. This platform enables us to communicate cultural messages to the younger generation, or for the youth to show their talents. It caters to young people's preferences for an instant, innovative way of communication.

The ICPF will continue to pay close attention to the issues about young people. For example, we have made a video about the return of young people and their struggle or included topics such as music or plays to grab their interests. Dance and sports favored by young people are on the list as well. We hope to encourage more communication amongst the younger generation.

Panirsirngen do yanbonkay

Chairman of the Indigenous Peoples Cultural Foundation

瑪拉歐斯
Maras

pu'kataunan sa parhaway a kushwit

Youthful Energy Pumps New Energy into Indigenous Communities

Thau a kataunan lhmazawan ianan mani sa faqlhu a kushwit, maqa ianan sa manasha wa parhaway mutauiniza. thuini a parhaway numa sa suma wa miniahala inai a thau a qbit sa izai a shmuzaq, mapalansuun minfazaq, numa kmathu sa faqlhu a inagqtu manakataun ; isa kataun ya mlhkakaktha, shduu mu'apaw sa faqlhu a kalawan. parhaway kinathu sa izai faqlhu a kushwit sa piaqitan kataunan shumpazaw a thau.

miazai sa kahiwan Thau a lalawa amalhituz, multhkiz makikalhi sa izai tanatuqash ya aminfazaq, kanuniza ya parhaway minakalangisusayuan musha sa taun, antu aminfazaq sa ananak a lalawa numawan amutun sa ananak a lalawa. isa naak a kataunan, tata wa thau kmalawa sa LINE a qbit, itia sa parhaway a thau makatanathu makthin, muqay munsai sa izai Thau a lalawa malhinuna, miazithu parhaway ya munantua,shduu az'az shmuzaq sa Thau a lalawa. iaku ya tatata wa qali amunsai izai a qbit malhalhinuna, sa izai sa parhaway pasain sa faqlhu a kawash a aniamin, mingqtha sa sasaz minfazaq a kalawan.

parhaway tu mu'apaw, numa pu'kataunan mingqitan. kahiwan mzai dai isa kataunan muqay sa izai"tanatuqash, azazak, atu", kataunan ya malhkaktha miarain shanasa izai tanatuqash thaithuy, numa sa parhaway a lushkin miazai amu'uka. thuini a parhaway mutautauiniza, shduu mapalansuun sa izai latusha ya malhalhinuna numa malhkaktha, muqtha munsai ianan sa kushwit a parhaway kmalawa.

parhaway a kawash sa shumpazaw a kushwit, naur kazash a kalangkan sa pinsasaasin a kalapaw numa amapalhalhituz sa parhaway mani. thuini a kawash naur kazash a kalangkan mathuaw shmukus sa faqlhu a sasaasin, shiminaparhaway amariqaz, miazai sa inianan nauriza wa faqlhu a riqazan muqthawan piaqitan puil, numa tmiruq mu'apaw ya munsai sa parhaway miazaza wa malhkaktha wa kalawan muqthawan pinutiqu, pu'parhaway isa dawaz sa saran numa Facebook shduu mara sa numa mutal smasaas.

ya kahiza, naur kazash a kalangkan (ICPF) a App shduu mani apiakushwit pasain sa ma'aza numa pidazah ya amara, pashtay miaqay shduu tmiruq sa ikain ya miku mriqaz sa faqlhu a riqazan, numa shduu amin munsai sa App pishfazaq sa makakakri. thuini a kawash sa Alian96.3 makinturu a kawash, maqa ashiminaparhaway mriqaz, naur kazash a kalangkan ianan pu'apaw sa AR li-ziin, munsai sa Facebook shzaqan sa punuq mashiwan sa miniahala inai a thau a aniamin. faqlhu a sasaasin sa ya kahiza wa shumpazaw, numa lhmithuz mani sa parhaway a farukuz, numa naur kazash a kalangkan amitamar mubuhat, numa iatunaw matiqlmu sa parhaway a kawash.

As the number of younger people returning to villages increases, a new force starts to form. The younger generation has come into contact with other groups within society, bringing back new ideas and fresh perspectives. Innovative approaches or solutions can then be derived when discussing issues in the villages. This youthful energy is front and center since it provides indigenous villages with a fresh impetus for a better development.

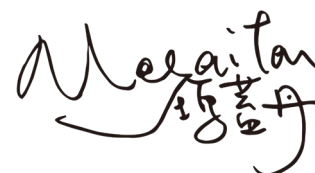
An illustration of this is the passing on of indigenous languages. In the past, we learned to speak our language from our elders, but young people who left hometown did not learn to speak their mother tongue. As a result, the language gap is inevitable. People in my village created a Line group in which there are 90 young people who are required to communicate only in Thao language. This gives them an opportunity to learn their mother tongue wherever they are. I also chat with them on LINE every day. This is how young people take advantage of new technology to change traditional ways of learning indigenous languages.

With the return of young people, the demographic structure has become more complete and balanced. In the past, people said that there were only old men, children, and dogs in indigenous villages, and that only elders voiced their opinions. The voice of the middle aged and youth became silent. Now, as more young people come back, old and young generations can finally communicate and exchange their ideas together, and the young generation get to execute their own plans.

Since young people are the rising generation, the ICPF will establish a closer rapport with them. This year the ICPF spared no effort to promote a new media platform in order to draw more attention from young people. One of our efforts is to re-organize the existing news stories and select those that are most pertinent, so that they can capture on the websites, or Facebook, and share those stories.

In the future, the ICPF will work to improve our App to ensure smooth and easy access to information. People can choose the news they want to watch without any hassle, and we will promote events through the App. This year is the third anniversary of our radio channel, Alian96.3. To attract young people, we will launch ICPF's AR filters, so people can upload indigenous symbols and accessories as their Facebook profile photo. Using new media platforms is a trend, as well as a way to bridge the gap between the young generation and our application. The ICPF will continue the work and embrace new generations.

naur kazash a kalangkan
CEO of the Indigenous Peoples Cultural Foundation



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Looking at the world from an indigenous perspective.
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Crossing into Different Lives



mukakakua kuparaiaiahlūisa cucu sala'a

*The expectations for life,
definition of dreams,
how many times have we hesitated because of reality?*

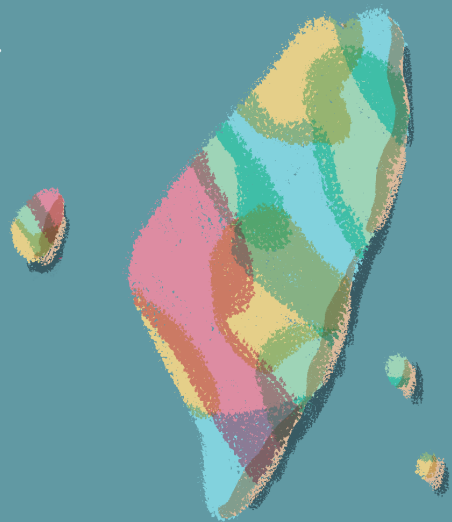
*Ignored by mainstream society, disregarded by community members,
the continuity of indigenous languages has often been threatened.
However, age and identity does not hinder us from promoting the languages.
We have always been proud to speak our own language.*

*With the lack of resources and the communication gap between generations,
it is very challenging for young people to realize their dreams.
But the strength of youth lies in endless creativity.
We are the makers of our dreams,
and we present a unique interpretation of our home villages.*

*The distance of borders, clashes between cultures,
there are many difficulties in interracial marriages.
Yet by overcoming cultural and language differences,
And accepting and understanding each other,
we can still build a loving home.*

*Diverse cultures, pressure from the family,
gender discrimination and bullying...
The road to gender equality is filled with obstacles.
But so what if we are different?
It is our differences that make us unique and outstanding.*

*This society has too many standards,
And we are all learning,
how to do the things that we really want to, and to become our ideal self.*



N.B.: mukakakua kuparaiaiahlūisa cucu sala'a means "walk a different path than others" in Hla'alua language.



Speaking to the World in Our Languages

A language is a tool for conveying emotions and bridging ideas, and we cannot live without it in our lives. Yet, with the rapid pace of modernization, Taiwan's indigenous communities are facing the aggressive impact of the mainstream culture, pushing indigenous languages to the brink of extinction. The loss of language and inability to speak one's mother tongue will result in the disconnection between people due to the lack of dialogue, ending up with a fractured and unsustainable culture.





In Taiwan, the indigenous population accounts for 2.37% of the total population, and very few of them can speak their mother tongues. Despite a population of only around 400, the septuagenarian amalanamahlu salapuana of the Hla'alu has never thought of giving up revitalizing his mother culture. Year after year, he continues to apply for the government-sponsored program to nurture seed teachers for the preservation of the language. He has devoted his life to education with enthusiasm that knows no end.

Currently, the Sakizaya people has a population of around 1,000 people, with 40 percent of them speaking the language. Jack Lopchi Chan, a Canadian immigrant, is captivated by the Sakizaya language and throws himself into learning it as a middle-aged beginner. He takes a step-by-step approach starting from pronunciation, conversations, and eventually to practical applications. Now he is proud of being one of the very few people in the world who can speak fluent Sakizaya.

Though it seems that the transmission of language and culture is facing a critical situation, there are still quite a few unsung heroes who are determined to revitalize their mother tongues and cultures despite the difficulties. Let us speak out loud to the world in our languages and let the voice of Taiwan's indigenous peoples be heard on the world stage.

Cultivating Seed Teachers for Hla'alua

The Septuagenarian who Salvages the Endangered Mother Tongue

Hla'alua is one of the endangered indigenous languages in Taiwan. The language and culture of the Hla'alua are on the verge of being lost due to its sparse population. But thanks to the unceasing efforts of amalanamahlu salapuana, the 72 years old village elder who initiated the Hla'alua revitalization project more than a decade ago, the language has been passed on to the next generation, heading toward a promising future of revitalization.

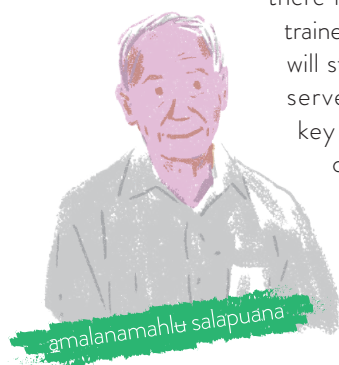
Written by **Chen Yi-Ru** ; Illustrated by **Lin Jia-Dong**

Translated by **Lin Shih-Fen**

Located deep in the mountains with an hour and a half's winding road ride from cities, the Taoyuan district is the northernmost administrative district of Kaohsiung City. It is also home to the Hla'alua People, who are the last of Taiwan's 16 indigenous groups to be officially recognized by the government. With fewer than 500 population remaining, the language of Hla'alua (aka Saaroa) is now listed among Taiwan's most endangered indigenous languages.

More than 20 years ago, having noticed the younger generation being cut off from their mother culture, the Hla'alua people began to promote the revitalization of the mother tongue. They set out to establish a systematic corpus of Hla'alua and engaged in a mentorship program teaching younger people to speak the language. To date,

there has seen a batch of well-trained Hla'alua instructors who will step onto the frontlines to serve as seed teachers. The key person in this endeavor of salvaging the moribund language is amalanamahlu salapuana. A recipient of the Outstanding Contributions to Advancing Taiwan's



Languages Award by the Ministry of Education, amalanamahlu can be fittingly described as the "Father of modern Hla'alua language."

Becoming a Dictionary Compiler at Age 50

Now 72, amalanamahlu, although having the Hakka blood running in his veins, has developed a close bond with the community throughout his life. He was adopted by his Hla'alua adoptive father when he was three months old, and as a child, he has considered himself a Hla'alua, feeling deeply attached to the village. "This is where I was raised and have spent my entire life," says he.

Having learned to speak Hla'alua and sing ancient chants from village elders as a child, amalanamahlu painfully witnessed the decline of his mother tongue and the disappearance of culture and traditional rituals due to the government's Mandarin Chinese policy and the arrival



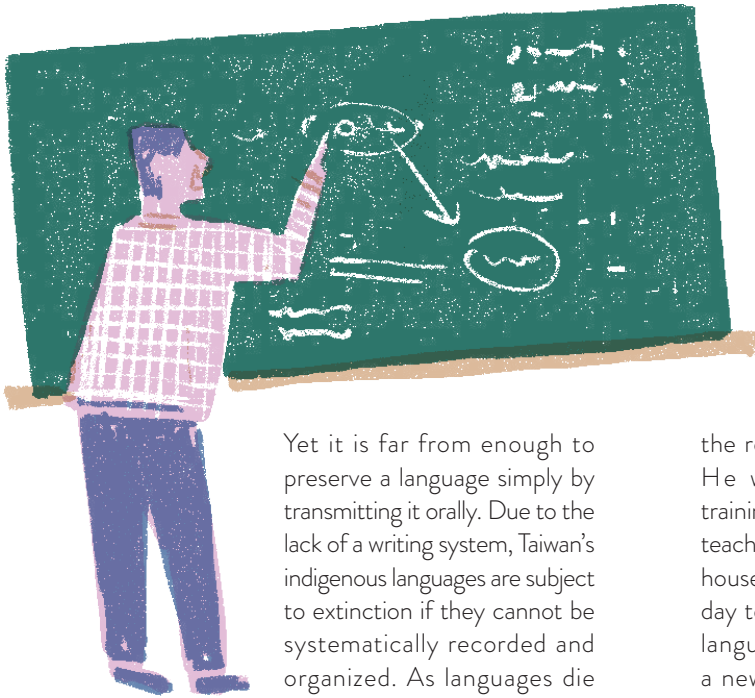
of foreign religions. Even the Takiaru (Holy Shell Ritual), the most important agricultural ritual held annually by the Hla'alua people, has been halted for decades.

It was not until 1993 when the community was invited to represent the Takiaru on the stage of the National Theater for a performance featuring Taiwan's indigenous music and dance, that amalanamahltu decided to put himself into revitalizing the Hla'alua culture. The idea was triggered by a deep-lying regret hidden in his mind for years: His adoptive father died at age 44 when he was only 5. Too young to remember anything, he could not recognize his father's face. Later, when he became a grown-up, he attempted to search for his father's tomb, but to no avail. "I am so sad that I can't find my adoptive father. What can I do to show my gratitude for him?"

As a result, upon receiving the invitation, he decided to take this opportunity to revitalize the traditional Hla'alua

ritual culture and also use it as a means to express his gratitude for his father. At that time, there were 12 elders remaining in the village. amalanamahltu devoted himself to learning about the Takiaru from them, and also called for more fellow villagers to join the ranks. Gradually they pieced together the picture of this traditional ritual and finally brought it back to life on the stage of National Theater after a half-century oblivion.

The success of the performance gave amalanamahltu an expectation that the opportunity for cultural revitalization had finally come. But after two years of waiting, there was nobody to step up and take the lead. As the elders passed away, which exacerbated the loss of the Hla'alua language, amalanamahltu felt it was like a race against the passage of time. Worried and anxious, he decided to take immediate action to visit the remaining elders to find out ways to keep their mother tongue alive and pass it on.



Yet it is far from enough to preserve a language simply by transmitting it orally. Due to the lack of a writing system, Taiwan's indigenous languages are subject to extinction if they cannot be systematically recorded and organized. As languages die out, the cultures behind them

will also eventually disappear. Just when amalanamahlɿ was troubled about this, he happened to meet Dr. Szakos Jozsef, a German scholar who came to the village for field research. "At that moment, I thought it was a great chance. If we could learn the Romanized writing system, we would be able to transcribe the spoken Hla'alua using the Latin alphabet," recalls amalanamahlɿ.

Despite only an elementary education, amalanamahlɿ began to study Western romanization at the middle age of nearly 50. It took him an entire year to master the spelling system. Typing with fingers roughened from farming, he worked relentlessly to record all the words and sentences spoken by the elders and saved the data on the computer. The corpus thus built served as the basis for the later compilations of the illustrated Hla'alua dictionary and the online dictionary provided by the Council of Indigenous Peoples, the Executive Yuan, both of which are currently the most useful references for Hla'alua learners.

Passing the Torch

Training Young Instructors through Mentorship

At present only four of amalanamahlɿ's peers remain alive in the village. With the rapid decline of Hla'alua, the responsibility for preserving their dying mother tongue rests solely on the shoulders of amalanamahlɿ. In 2007, the government launched Taiwan's version of Te Kohanga Reo for indigenous languages modeled after New Zealand's total immersion Maori programs. The program aimed to adopt an immersive approach that exposes preschoolers to a Hla'alua-speaking environment to help them pick up their mother tongue at an early age. amalanamahlɿ's community was one of the applicants of the program, and he himself took

Hla'alua
"mavacangiui?"



the role of the headteacher. He was responsible for training the four Hla'alua seed teachers who would visit every household in the village every day to promote family-based language instruction. Later, a new "mentor-apprentice" program was introduced by the Council of Indigenous Peoples, allowing young fellow villagers to receive an intense training course five days a week for eight hours a day. Currently, amalanamahlɿ has two students on hand, both young in their 20s and 30s. Although it's easy for them to acquire their mother tongue and learn the ropes quickly at this young age, Amalanamahlɿ admits that it takes much longer for them to become fluent speakers.

Over the past ten years, amalanamahlɿ has trained seven to eight Hla'alua instructors successfully. Those who pass the Indigenous Language Proficiency Examination at the advanced level are eligible to teach in schools as certified indigenous language instructors. Take vanau savanguana for example. Now 42 years old, she is teaching full-time at Hsing Zhong Elementary School in the village. As amalanamahlɿ's daughter, she has been familiar with speaking Hla'alua at home since childhood.

In the process of passing on the mother tongue, frictions inevitably arise between the father and daughter when it comes to translating Mandarin Chinese into Hla'alua for the sake of teaching. "He's really stubborn! Sometimes you have to spend a great deal of energy to communicate with him," vanau says bluntly. For instance, as many of today's Chinese vocabulary and expressions do not have a counterpart in Hla'alua, what amalanamahlɿ does is peruse ancient records carefully to work out a seemingly proper translation. However, sometimes the modern usage of these Chinese words may have diverged from their original meaning. At this point, vanau has to explain it to him to let him know the differences.



Despite the occasional difference of opinion, vanau agrees with him eventually. "In fact, he is right to stick to his own way to ensure the original essence of the Hla'lua language is not lost in translation." When speaking of such items as cinemas and photocopiers, which used to be foreign to the village and therefore lack Hla'lua equivalents, many people may adopt the approach of transliteration or substitute them with words with similar pronunciations. But amalanamahlu refrains from doing so. Instead, he makes it a point to understand what these objects are used for, and then paraphrase them in plain Hla'lua. "Take the cinema for instance. It is paraphrased as 'a place where people watch things on a big screen.' That's why our wording is so long," explains vanau.

A Role Model for Teaching Hla'lua at Home

Apart from a solid mentorship, amalanamahlu also places great stress on the preservation of Hla'lua at home. He insists that only Hla'lua be spoken, and therefore all his five children grow up fluent in the language. "I'm very rigorous about creating a comprehensive Hla'lua-speaking environment at home. My kids are not allowed to watch TV to refrain from any possible exposure to other languages. Besides, they must speak Hla'lua when answering the phone." "Although TV programs were banned by my father, we still managed to watch them secretly. There was a time when he got us doing that, he grew so angry that he smashed it in a fury. Do you know how expansive a TV set was back then?" adds vanau smilingly.

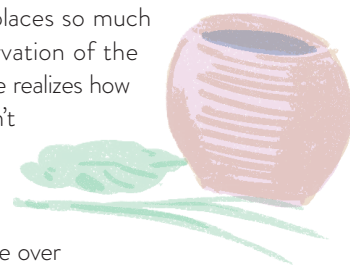
As vanau recalls, for as long as she can remember, she has been speaking Hla'lua. "When I was little, I did not realize that I was Hla'lua. I just knew that this was how I spoke, and Hla'lua was the language I used to communicate with others," said she. "But after I got to school, I found it was Mandarin Chinese, not Hla'lua, that was spoken by people

around me, including my classmates. It wasn't until then did I begin to learn Mandarin Chinese. But once we got home, we switched back to Hla'lua naturally."

After vanau herself becomes a mother, the seeds of mother tongue planted by her father begins to sprout and bear fruit. Like amalanamahlu, she has insisted on talking to her kids only in Hla'lua since they were little. Now her son and daughter, nine and seven years old respectively, are equally fluent in the language. "As long as they are within a 100-meter radius from me, they must speak Hla'lua. Otherwise, I will dash to give them a finger flick on the mouth," says vanau laughingly.

The reason why vanau places so much emphasis on the preservation of the mother tongue is that she realizes how important it is. She wouldn't have known that if she had not begun to assist amalanamahlu with cultural revitalization since over

a decade before. "I grew up watching my father working so hard for this cause. His ultimate goal is to save our culture from dying out. Now as a Hla'lua instructor burdened with the responsibility to take the baton, I must set an example and pass on whatever I know to the next generation." "Now I am proud of both my kids for being the only two among their peers who can speak Hla'lua so fluently," says she proudly.



Every Tuesday is the designated "Mother Tongue Day" at Hsing Zhong Elementary School. On this day, the chanting of Hla'lua can be heard rising and falling throughout the campus, symbolizing that the seed of mother tongue planted in these young

minds has begun sprouting and thriving. Reserved by nature, amalanamahlu smiles shyly and says, "I am so glad to see more and more of our young people being able to speak the mother tongue." It's a long journey to revitalizing the Hla'lua language, but amalanamahlu never complains of being tired. "I want to let my deceased father know this is how I show my gratitude for him and that he has made the right decision to adopt me."



A Foreigner who Speaks Sakizaya

Finding a Second Home in the World of Indigenous Culture

In March of 2020, an unexpected foreign contestant amazed the storytelling competition held by Hualien City Office for promoting indigenous languages. Speaking Sakizaya fluently, this dark horse told a vivid story of a young man's unsuccessful quest for a girlfriend. Although it was his first time to enter the competition, he ended up with the third place, which immediately became a topic of discussion in the circle of indigenous language promoters: There is a foreigner in Hualien who can speak Sakizaya!

Written by **Zhao Xin-Ning** ; Photo credit: **Jack Lopchi Chan, Lin Jing-Yi** ; Illustrated by **Lin Jia-Dong**
Translated by **Lin Shih-Fen**

"One can't say he's been to Taiwan without getting to know its indigenous culture." Jack Lopchi Chan, 62, is an immigrant hailing from Hong Kong and has spent decades studying and working in Canada previously. In 2009, he decided to move to Taiwan to search for a suitable environment for his daughter to learn Chinese. But having been in Taiwan for so long, it wasn't until last year when he began learning the Sakizaya language that he began to feel a true sense of closeness to the land and its culture.

As early as when he was in Canada, Chan has grown fascinated with indigenous culture. Canada is home to more than 600 indigenous peoples, and in Victoria alone, where he resided, eight different ethnic groups live close

to each other while still retaining their unique languages and cultures. However, having suffered severe oppression and discrimination from the government, Canadian indigenous communities have always distanced themselves from the outside world and now are also confronted by



Jack Lopchi Chan



the threat of population outflow. Although he did make some indigenous friends as a student, due to their early exodus from the homeland, Chan never had a chance to visit their communities and get a deeper understanding of their culture.

Rising from the Ashes a Fascinating Story of Sakizaya's Rebirth

To provide his daughter with a good learning environment for Chinese, Chan once considered relocating to China or Hong Kong. But he ended up moving to Hualien, drawn by the tranquility and relaxed atmosphere of eastern Taiwan, which reminds him of the vast expanse of Canada's environment.

Chan loves to play tennis in his leisure time. Therefore, he gets to make a group of indigenous friends hailing from various ethnic groups in Taiwan, including the Pangcah, the Truku, and the Bunun. Under the invitation of his Pangcah friends, Chan has the chance to visit Taiwan's indigenous communities and attend annual traditional rituals, which helps to expand his circle of friends. In 2019, Chan made two more Sakizaya friends.

The Sakizaya was officially recognized by the government as Taiwan's 13th indigenous group in January of 2007. Currently, it has a population of less than 1,000. Though newly recognized, the Sakizaya people have been waiting for long to regain their identity. With the introduction of his Sakizaya friends, Chan came to know the tragic story of the Sakizaya: the Karewan Incident. The Sakizaya was



once the largest indigenous community on the Kiray Plain (today's Hualien City). However, in the late 19th century, they suffered a massacre in their rebellion against the Qing dynasty's policy of opening up the mountains and pacifying indigenous peoples. The Sakizaya people came near to being exterminated. Fearing that they would be hunted down and killed, the surviving villagers hid themselves amongst their compatriots, the Amis, for 129 years. It was not until the 1990s that the Sakizaya began its fight for recognition, which was finally achieved 13 years ago. Only then could they rightfully say, "we are Sakizaya!"

"I am captivated by the story of the Sakizaya," says Chan, who is even more moved by their history and culture after attending the Palamal (the fire god ritual), an annual event held in memory of ancestors. Solemn and quiet, the ritual symbolizes the Sakizaya's "death and rebirth from fire." To add more significance to the event, the

village elders will relate the stories to young descendants about the halcyon days of their ancestors' farming and hunting life on the Kiray Plain, as well as the bitterness of displacement after the village's extermination. The intention is to pass their history along to the next generation, hoping to get young people familiar with their roots and inspire them to glorify the Sakizaya community.

Sakizaya Made Easy Learning with Romanization

Chan seems to have a connection with Sakizaya that knows no end. Last year, he happened to meet a Sakizaya language instructor who was impressed by his keen interest in the Sakizaya culture. So he invited Chan to attend a series of indigenous language classes at Hualien City Office. Chan was excited to find out he didn't have to be Sakizaya to be eligible for the course, so he signed up eagerly.



Jack Lopchi Chan (third from the right) got to know a group of Sakizaya friends in the language class. Normally they speak Sakizaya for chatting and sharing their lives.

In the two-month beginners' class, Chan learned to say basic greetings in Sakizaya. Later he went on to enroll in the storytelling class to learn more about different situations for daily dialogue. During the interview, he excitedly makes a display of his textbooks and handouts, introducing them one after another: some lessons are about songs, some for shopping and dining, all of which could be readily applied in everyday life for various purposes.

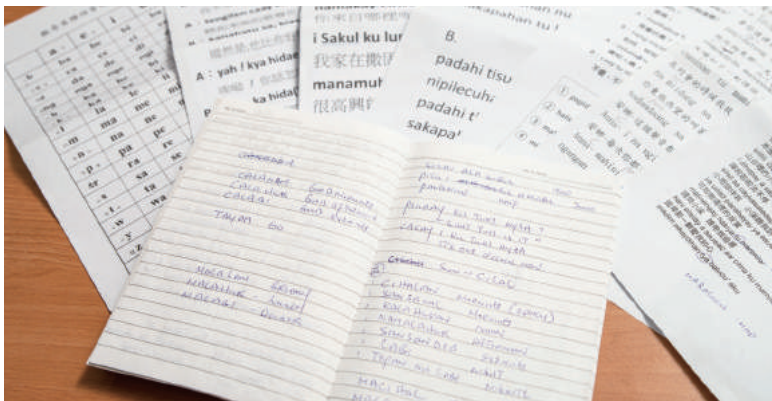
"I've always emphasized the importance of practice when I teach English," says Chan. After relocating to Hualien, he has taken on multiple titles. He was a former English lecturer at Tzu Chi University and now serves as the President of Hualien Toastmaster Club. Believing that a language that is no longer spoken is no different from dying, he strongly suggests students take opportunities to practice it in their daily lives. Now that he himself is learning Sakizaya as a beginner, he sticks to this principle by spending three or four days a week at the office for promoting Sakizaya in downtown Hualien, chatting with classmates in their native language. "The owner of the food stall near the office is also Sakizaya. I dine at the stall very often because I want to practice Sakizaya," says Chan laughingly.

Chan also finds some shared characteristics between Sakizaya and French. Although an ancient language,

Sakizaya is similar to French in terms of grammar. Syntactically, both languages feature verbs coming before the subjects, which makes him quick to learn the rope. Take "I am eating" for example. When translated into either language, the word order of the sentence is rearranged identically as "am eating + I." Besides, some of Sakizaya's conjunctives like "KA," "SI," and "SU" are also seen in French. The commonalities shared by the two different languages reinforce his interest in Sakizaya.

The teacher and classmates in the class are all younger than Chan. He also admits that learning a new language at the age of 60 is a bit of a challenge compared to when he was younger. But having spending decades in multilingual Canada, where most people are fluent





Chan remains highly motivated toward learning Sakizaya all the time. Whenever encountering a word that he doesn't understand, he'd keep it down on the smartphone and consult the dictionary later. Especially impressive are his handouts filled with notes he's taken in lectures.

in three to four languages, Chan keeps the motto “practice makes perfect” in mind and works hard to master Sakizaya. He expands his vocabulary through various means with the support of the smartphone and online dictionary, as well as his teacher. As time goes by, he has built a rich repertoire of vocabulary. In just one year, he has demonstrated a good command of Sakizaya by winning third place in the storytelling competition. This is not only a recognition for his hard work but also serves as a driving force that keeps him going further on the path.

A Stepping Stone to a Foreign Culture

In addition to learning the language, Chan also travels frequently with his teacher and classmates to Sakizaya communities for such activities as visiting the monument to the Karewan Incident, volunteering for blessing ceremonies, and dining with the elders. In his view, each scene and each object he sees in the communities, compared with a superficial view seen through a quick trip, are the embodiment of Sakizaya culture that money can't buy.

Chan says frankly that having been brought up in the Western culture, upon his first contact with indigenous culture, he is inevitably struck by a culture shock. But the most important thing is to stay respectful and tolerant,

abandon the Western perspective, and put yourself in the shoes of locals instead. Only by so doing can you truly understand and appreciate the long and splendid history of indigenous peoples' cultures.

“Language is the backbone of all cultures. It will be hard to explore an ethnic group in depth if you don't understand its language.” Chan has never stopped his pursuit of a better command of Sakizaya. He excitedly shares with us the course information for Sakizaya certification in the coming fall semester. Nevertheless, his ultimate goal is not to pass the test, but to bring himself closer to the Sakizaya through the process of learning the language.

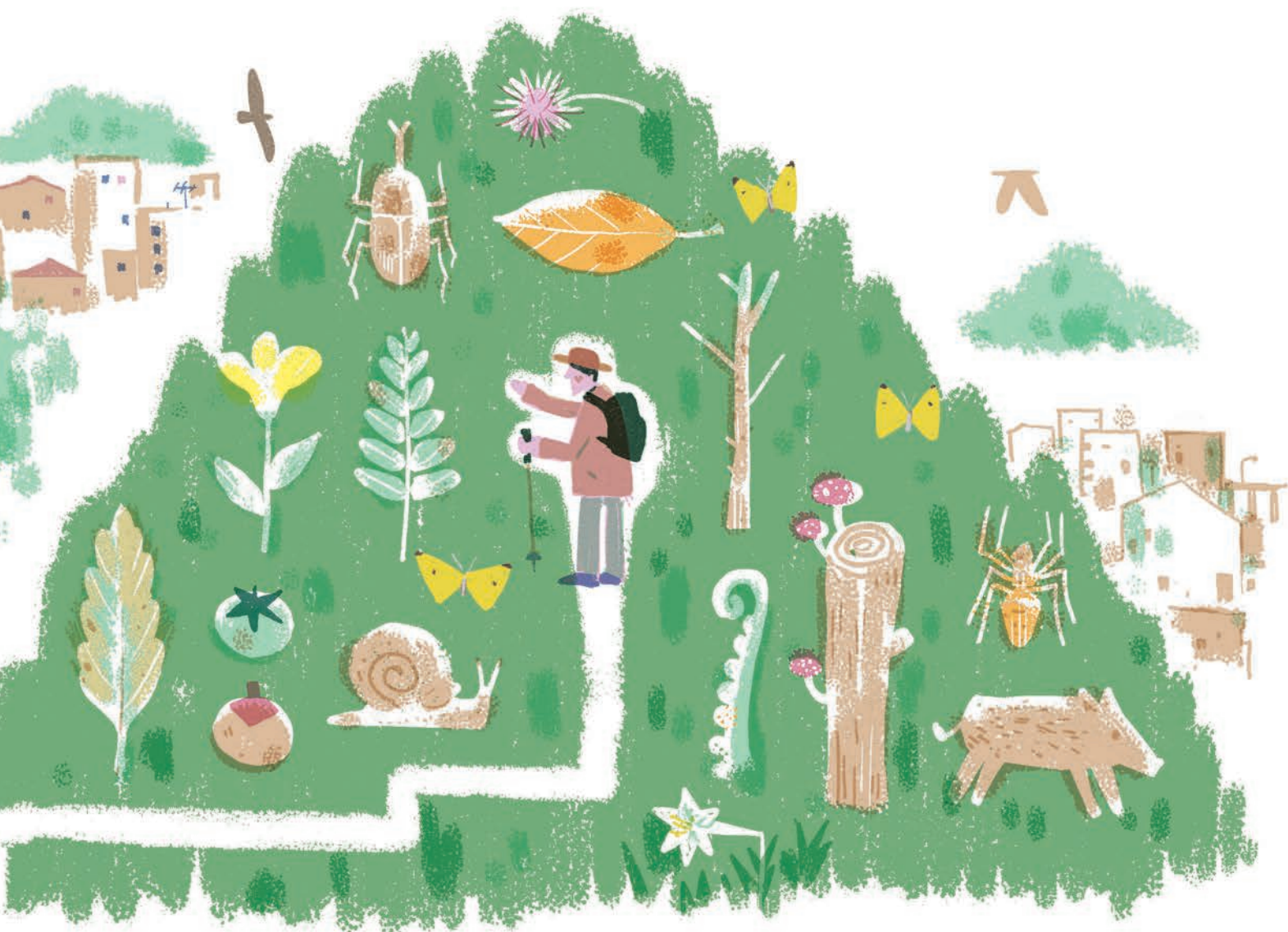
“Currently only 400 to 500 people in the world speak Sakizaya. Don't you think that's cool?” Chan says with a smile. He adds that having been here for nine years, he never expected to be able to learn a new language and get to know so many friends at an early old age. If he has the time and energy, next he would like to learn about the culture of the Kavalan, the people who fought shoulder to shoulder with the Sakizaya in history. Coming into contact with indigenous peoples is like opening a window on a new world, which enables Chan to cross the ethnic boundaries and enjoy the baptism of indigenous culture.



Where is the Young Generation?

Creating a New Future for Indigenous Communities

Many indigenous people in Taiwan are living in non-indigenous cities and towns due to changes in environment and for work or study. “Coming home” is the ultimate wish they have in their hearts, and many of them bring what they have learned in the cities back to their home villages to give back to their community. These different types of trade become the livelihood of many returning community members.



After going through the trials and training in the city, some return to their home village to develop new projects. Travel group Profound Life replaced the zoo-like traditional village tourism model and now leads travelers deep into the forests. They follow the footsteps of indigenous hunters through the woods and sleep under the night sky. Travelers are here not only to briefly experience local culture, but to actually enter the daily lives of the residents and let themselves become one with nature.

Combining his hobbies and professional training with his life experiences, Vuluk Pavavaljung, author of “The Indigenous Biology Log”, observes and records everyday plants and looks into the connections between natural environment and indigenous culture. His observations on village ecology and indigenous culture and history are shared online. Although there is only a limited audience, Vuluk still insists on documenting and passing on the knowledge so that more city-dwelling indigenous people that are interested in these traditions can understand the foundation and history of their people’s culture.

The current lifestyle and culture in communities are formed by centuries of evolution. It is not easy to just change them or add in new values and mindsets. Nevertheless, the young generation is leveraging their creativity and innovative ways to reboot community development and create a new image for their home villages.



The Beauty of Common Daily Life

Experiencing the Authentic Village Life Tourists do Not Get to See

Written by Yu Tai; Photo credit: **Profound Life**; Illustrated by Lin Jia-Dong; Translated by Lin Shih-Fen

*Though none of them is of indigenous descent, the team members at innovative travel group **Profound Life** still guides travelers to experience indigenous village life with vigor. The team collaborates with indigenous young people who have returned to their home communities to roll out travel itineraries. Travelers are invited to enter the villages and spend two days and one night with local community members in the mountains.*

Imagine hitching a ride into the lush forests of Hai'an Range on a "mountain Ferrari" (a pickup truck), then hiking about three and a half hours in the woods to a hunting hut. There is no A/C here, and no internet connection. But you can enjoy natural breezes and the sounds of birds and insects. You may find wild boar footprints and Formosan barking deer droppings randomly around you, announcing the beginning of your ecology lesson.

This is the itinerary for the Jiqi Old Trail Experience offered by new-gen travel group Profound Life. Half a century ago, the indigenous peoples that lived along the coast of Hualien walked to the rift valley for trade. They went along Jiqi, went over the mountains and crossed the Coastal Mountain Range. Nowadays, with the new coastal highway in place and the fact that community members have gradually moved to the plains area, the quiet old trail was slowly forgotten by the indigenous residents.

"If we don't look for it now, no one will find it anymore." Profound Life co-founder Liu Hsiang-Yuan said. About a year ago, the Jiqi Community Development Association in Fengbin Township, Hualien County, assembled local indigenous elders and youth to rediscover the historical trail hidden in the overgrowth. They rebuilt a taluan (hunting hut) halfway on the mountain where the former trading post was located in the following year. The team members of Profound Life also participated in the project; and later, with permission from the local community members, the company rolled out the Looking for our roots - Jiqi Old Trail Experience. Travelers follow local elders into the forest to experience a hunter's life - including gathering timber to make fire, harvesting the heart of rattan palms for food, and making traps.

Lots of Repeat Customers! Team and Local Communities Spend Up to Six Months to Plan Out the Tours

Profound Life founder A-Lun worked as a tour guide in the tourism industry for eight years. He found that most tour groups would just

stop at a tourist destination for short while then hurry to the next one. Many tourists do not have the opportunity to appreciate the beautiful local culture. Thus in 2018, A-Lun founded the travel group

Profound Life, which focuses on indigenous village tours, with two other partners. Every trip brings travelers deep into indigenous villages to really connect with local community members. The tours do not stop at specialty shops or popular tourist hot spots, and don't expect luxurious and comfortable lodgings.

The first tour on the main island of Taiwan A-Lun organized was an experience tour in the forests of Tefuye Village in Alishan Township, Chiayi. His high school classmate Liu Hsiang-Yuan decide to join the team as the two shared similar ideas about changing the existing tourism culture. Actually, the four team members of Profound Life, who are all in their twenties, all experienced the tours themselves and agreed that they shared similar ideas before they started to work together.

Now Profound Life's Facebook fanpage has 11,000 followers, and IG account has 13,000 followers. The four tours that run regularly are the Jiqi Old Trail Experience in Hualien, Tefuye Forest Expedition in Chiayi, Community in the Sky-Ruiyan Village Experience in Nantou, and Tao-the Island of People Tour in Orchid Island (summers only). Each tour departs at least once every month. The carefully planned itineraries attract many repeat customers for Profound Life. Some travelers form such strong friendships during one tour, they all come back later for



another tour. “Travelers who have experienced all four village tours can receive an exclusive necklace!” Liu said as he pointed to the wooden necklace around his neck. It is a smaller version of a Truku hunting knife, customized by Profound Life.

Entering the Villages to Experience Indigenous Lifestyles in the Mountains and Forests

Interestingly, only one of the four members in Profound Life are of indigenous descent. However, this does not diminish their determination to explore indigenous culture. Normally, when travel agencies plan their tours, they can get all details in place with just one phone call. But not for Profound Life. The team usually spends up to three to six months to figure out the community’s culture and get to know the locals before they plan out the itinerary. And they try to buy locally as much as possible.

Tsou youth atai yatauyungana is Profound Life’s important contact at Tefuye Village. After graduating from junior high in Alishan Township, atai yatauyungana moved to the city to work while he studied. Having no concrete goals in life, he returned to his village after completing military service, and was forced to stay there for a month after Typhoon Morakot hit Taiwan. However, this timeout period gave atai yatauyungana a chance to think. He started asking local elders about the village’s history, and learnt that his own grandfather played an important role in village rituals. The knowledge strengthened his resolution to learn more about Tsou culture.

Two years ago, atai yatauyungana came into contact



Above: All tours by Profound Life are results of long periods of study, research, and discussions with community elders and the young generation. The goal is to let travelers fully experience the daily life in indigenous villages and not just walk through the locations like tourists.

Below: Taro is a main staple on Orchid Island. Profound Life brings barefoot travelers into the fields to reconnect with the earth.

with Profound Life, and together they launched the two days and one night “forest internship” guided tour in Tefuye Village. Forgoing a set itinerary, the tour experience is flexibly adjusted according to the environment surroundings. After touring the village, atai yatauyungana leads the travelers into the forest, where every corner is a classroom. Take the common mountain plant, *Microglossa pyrifolia* (Lam.) Kuntze, as an example. The plant is known as “tapanzou” in Tefuye Village, but as “tapannou” in Dabang. atai yatauyungana also shares distinct ritual songs from different villages so that the visitors from the city can understand the unique features of every people and village, and appreciate the respect and reverence the Tsou people has towards nature. “When visitors come into the mountains, they may accidentally offend community members because they don’t know better.” In atai yatauyungana’s mind, conflicts that happen between tourists and locals usually originate from the fact the visitors do not understand the local indigenous culture. By giving the





travelers a chance to truly experience community culture can bring the public and indigenous peoples closer together.

Other tours are operated in the same model as the one in Tefuye Village. On Orchid Island, travelers not only travel around the island on motorcycles, but also roll up their trousers to pick taros in the fields. They can learn about the dining customs and seasonal rituals of the Tao during the experience. The Jiqi Old Trail was originally used by hunters, and now travelers can learn how to survive in the forest with just one packet of salt and a hunting knife. When you reach Ruiyan Village, the “community in the sky”, you can actually make a jew's harp, listen to the ancient tunes of the Atayal in the taluan, and dream of the life in the olden days.

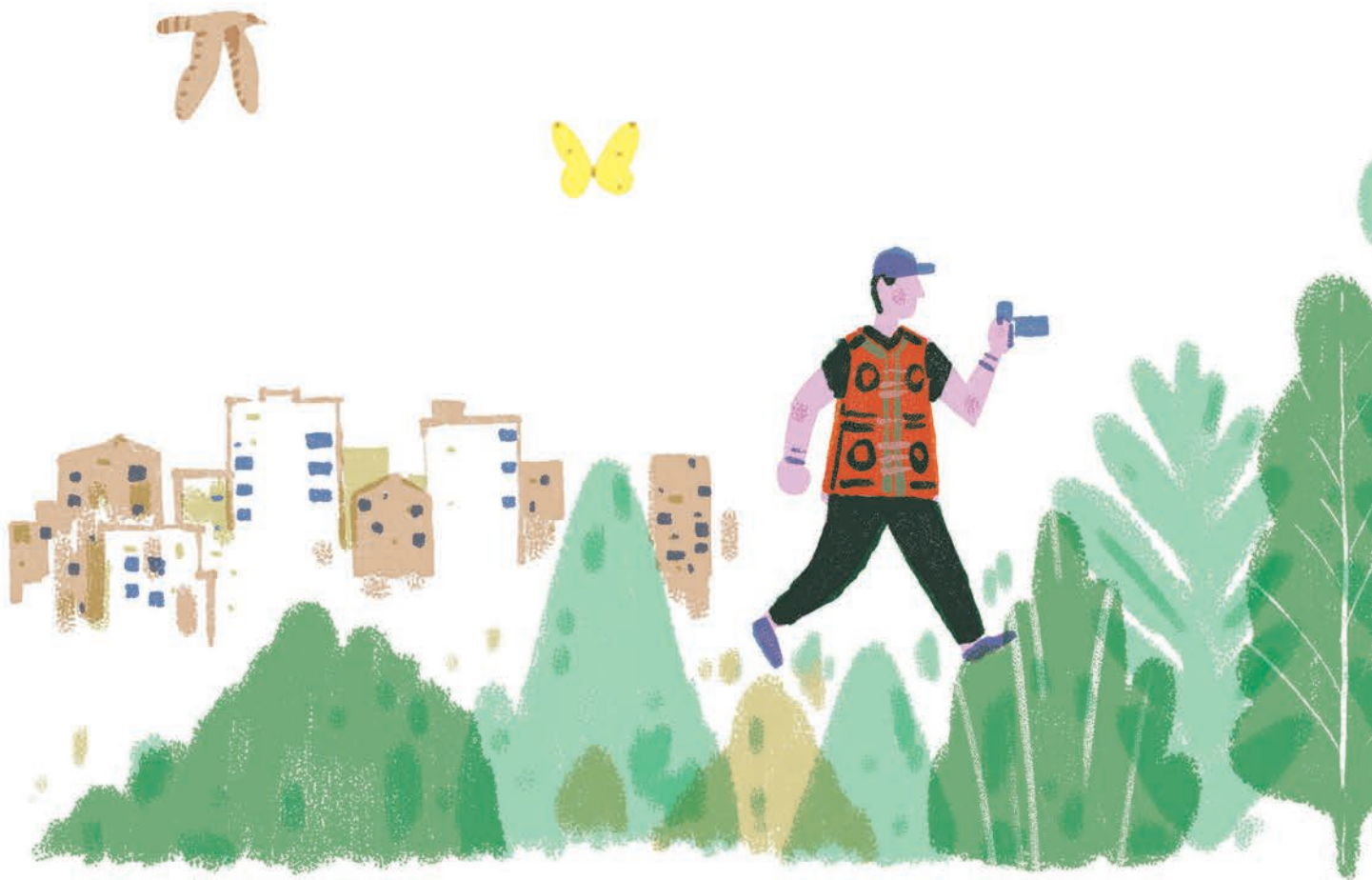
After Winning Their Trust, Community Members Become Family

“The hardest part is to win the trust of the community members.” Liu explained that they have to be culturally sensitive when planning the village experience tours, because you could easily misstep and run the risk of abusing indigenous culture. Liu mentioned that he once posted a photo of a village ritual on Facebook. From a photographer’s perspective, it was a powerful and beautiful photograph; but for the community members, they could not see the connection between the members’ actions and the ritual itself, and questioned whether this photo could really represent the ritual.

Liu immediately took down the photo upon hearing the community members' reactions. From then on, he would always invite village elders to preview the photos of major events and obtain their permission before publishing the photos. Although this means additional discussions and more details to take care of, Liu believes that this is necessary. Especially since each community has their own unique culture and characteristics, Profound Life insists on taking care of every little detail and everyone's feelings to present the communities in the most authentic way.

This is an extremely challenging mission, yet it is also the source of heartfelt emotions. “I actually have a godfather at Jiqi.” Liu recalled that after the community members decided to trust Profound Life, they basically took the team members in as family. The effort and dedication everyone put into the tours go beyond a simple business relationship between two business partners.

When they started, the team just wanted to offer in-depth village culture experience tours; but with each trip, they became more and more touched by the beauty of indigenous culture. The strong emotions motivate the team to further connect indigenous villages and city dwellers. Maybe we can say Profound Life is the number one fan of indigenous village life!



Wildlife Observations in Modern Communities

Ecology Sketches by a Paiwan Young Man

Written by You Nian-Xiu; Illustrated by Lin Jia-Dong; Translated by Lin Shih-Fen

Paiwan youth Vuluk Pavavaljung from Pingtung County's Shandimen Township has always been interested in insects, and eventually chose to study entomology in university. Combining his professional knowledge with the experience of living in his indigenous village, Vuluk shares his observations on community flora and fauna on his Facebook fanpage "The Indigenous Biology Log".



Vuluk Pavavaljung



This August, he posted an article sharing a list of 39 betrothal gifts given at his sister's wedding. In addition to garments for the bride and groom, feathers, and clay pots, the groom also had to prepare betel nuts, bananas, taros, and sugar canes. These farm produce symbolize that the family will work diligently in the fields and have plenty of offspring. Furthermore, a pig slaughtering ceremony was held the day before the wedding, and the animal was divided into different portions: neck, legs, ribs, and organs. The documentary-like content ignited much discussion among readers, and "The Indigenous Biology Log", which has only gone online for less than a month, was shared by over 130 visitors within a couple of days.

"Actually, all I wanted to say was look how much trouble we have to go through in a Paiwan wedding. I didn't realize it would become such a hit!" Explained Vuluk Pavavaljung, owner and writer of "The Indigenous Biology Log". The 23-year-old just wanted to share his own observations on his elder sister's wedding. He didn't expect the post to garner so much attention.

The Rich Ecology in Shandimen Fosters a Young Insect Fan

Dewen Mountain in Shandimen Township is a treasure trove in the eyes of insect lovers. The rich and diverse ecology is home to many beetles and butterflies, which is why Vuluk, who was raised here, grew up with such a special interest

in insects. After he collected the insects with his village playmates, Vuluk read up information in the encyclopedia and educated himself through other resources to make sure his insects can thrive.

"I had my own little fridge where I raised a dozen of bugs in. I kept the temperature at 25°C." Vuluk knows every insect he kept like the back of his hand. Under his diligent care, his stag beetles could live up to one and a half year-old. And he still remembers the time he raised dragonfly nymphs in a fish tank. One late afternoon when he came back from school, he found that the nymphs had emerged as adult dragonflies. This miracle of life greatly impressed him.

Because of his love for insects, Vuluk chose to study entomology in university. Memorizing the names of different insect body parts was a walk in the park for Vuluk, and he enjoyed learning about the meanings behind insect behaviors. For example, when he saw butterflies flying about the village when he was a boy, he just thought they were very pretty. But now he understands that the butterflies could be guarding their territory or seeking a mate. Every time he talks about the world of insects, Vuluk's eyes shine with excitement. "I'm very glad I could learn all of this at school, it helps me understand the world of insects better."



Documenting Community Wildlife and Carrying on Cultural Customs

The title of “The Indigenous Biology Log” includes the Chinese characters for “indigenous” and “biology”, and the content is mainly about Vuluk’s experience of living in an indigenous community and anecdotes related to insects. His posts are unique since Vuluk introduces the flora and fauna in indigenous culture from a biology perspective.

This year, Vuluk’s sister got married. Intrigued by the 39 betrothal gifts on the list, Vuluk asked the elders about the meaning and usage of the items, and shared his discoveries on his fanpage. “After setting up the fanpage, I realized that a lot of people actually care about indigenous affairs and the village ecology.” Vuluk said happily.

His sister’s wedding gave biology lover Vuluk more opportunities to learn about and introduce plants that often appear in indigenous daily life and common rituals. For example, the wreath headdress “Lakarau”, which is often used in community rituals, is mostly made with the stems and leaves of pigmy sword ferns then decorated with marigolds. The story behind this is that marigold seeds go where the wind takes them and can blossom anywhere they land. This symbolizes that the strength of Paiwan women

and that they can carry and support her family through thick and thin. When the community members were making the wreaths, Vuluk saw a type of fern he had never seen before, and shared a photo of it on social media. An older brother in the community replied that it is limpleaf fern, also known as “lamlam” in the native language. Such interactions with the community bring new knowledge to both the readers and the author Vuluk.

“I steer away from common indigenous plants such as millet, may chang, and red quinoa.” Vuluk enjoys researching the meaning and symbolism behind the plants in indigenous culture, because the traditional indigenous lifestyle is closely connected to the natural resources in the environment. The diverse use of plants in medicine, cooking and other aspects of life is part of the wisdom of living passed down from generation to generation in indigenous communities. Vuluk mentioned tropical crepe myrtle, the plant he is researching recently, as an example. This kind of myrtle is the “firewood of love” in Paiwan culture. In the past, unmarried young men would leave a bundle of tropical crepe myrtle firewood at the doorstep of the girl he fancies. “We used this plant to get the girl!” Concluded Vuluk with a laugh.

Caring about the Balance between Ecology and Culture from a New Generation’s Perspective

In addition to finding wisdom in the surrounding ecology, Vuluk also closely observes traditional indigenous culture transformations in modern society. He brought up an article published by the NPUST Bird Ecology Lab which mentioned that the Paiwan and Rukai

people now are promoting the use of realistic synthetic feathers instead of real ones so that the Hodgson's Hawk-Eagle, or "adis", will not go extinct. This hawk-eagle is listed as a level-one protected species, and there are less than 500 pairs of them left in Taiwan. However, Vuluk was puzzled by the information: where is the market demand for these feathers?

Looking for answers, Vuluk studied academic papers and went back home to ask community elders. That's when he learned that according to their legends, the hundred-pacer snake, which is the ancestor of the Paiwan people, transforms into a male Hodgson's Hawk-Eagle in old age. Thus the hunting of male Hodgson's Hawk-Eagles is forbidden as the bird is a form of their ancestor. If someone accidentally kills one, the feathers must be given to village royalty. Members of the royal family will wear the feathers during important events, such as weddings, as a symbol of nobility. However, nowadays different society classes frequently intermarry and wearing feathers is no longer the exclusive right of the royal family; consequently, the demand for the feathers have significantly increased, bumping up the price for them as well. Vuluk explained that when the client orders feathers from the hunter, prices vary for different parts of the feather, the minimum is around NTD ten-thousand dollars, with some going as high as over fifty-thousand.

"As a young man of the Paiwan community and someone who studies biology, I fully support the project to use synthetic feathers. I hope we can promote the project to other communities." Vuluk acknowledged that it is no longer suitable for people to hunt the protected species for their feathers, and synthetic ones can help the people reach a balance between traditional culture and ecological preservation.

Daily Life in the Community are Material for Inspiration

Vuluk returns to the village about once every month to look for writing inspiration and material. He once removed a bee hive at his house and observed the emergence of paper wasp drones; and during a typhoon day, he accidentally found a yellow-margined box turtle (a level-two protected species) at his door. For Vuluk, inspiration comes from everywhere in community life.



Though the indigenous village offers countless inspiration, available information regarding these plants and animals are still limited, and not much can be found on the internet. Vuluk has to spend up to a week reading papers and compiling information before he can churn out an effortless, seemingly spontaneous article for his Facebook post. And there is no profit from operating the community, but Vuluk says doesn't mind. "This is what I enjoy doing. Even if it is not a popular topic, I will still keep on doing it."

"When I lived in the community, I always took traditional culture for granted. But a lot of people have no access to these things." After he moved to the city, Vuluk realized that a lot of indigenous people who grew up in the city are interested in the world of traditional culture yet have no means of accessing it. This further encouraged him to record his daily life observations, combine them with his own professional knowledge and share them online so that everyone can have the opportunity to learn about the traditional culture and ecology.

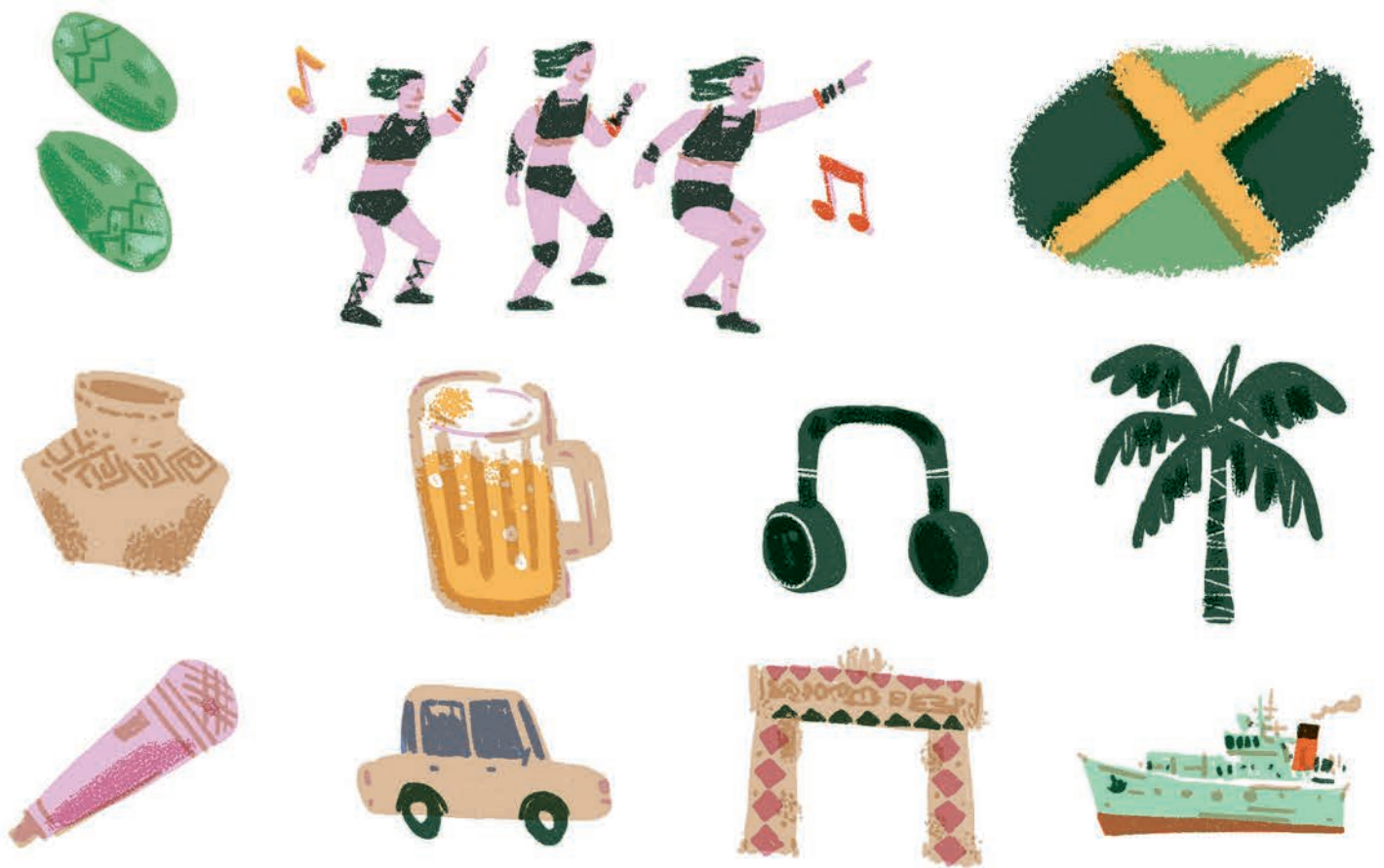
Piece by piece, the project grew. Now the online ecology log not only contains segments of Vuluk's daily life, but also documents precious traditional indigenous culture and ecology from a different perspective.



Love Transcending Borders

The Happiness of Cross-Cultural Marriage

Compared to the ethnic separation in the 1950s and 1960s, interracial marriage is now very common. Marriage between different races can lead to a lot of getting used to, learning about and compromising for families on both sides as well as across generations.

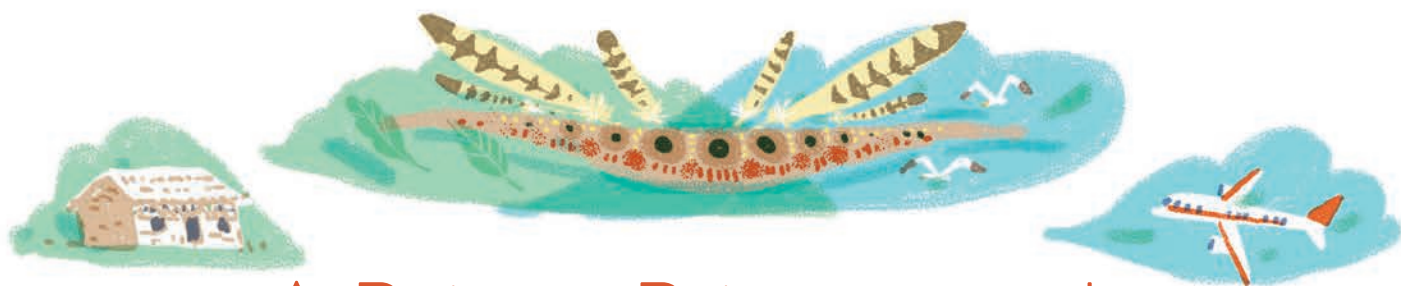


Because of a letter, an Irish sailor drifting at sea meets a Paiwan princess who's desperate to escape her duty of being the chief of her village. With similar cultural background and ethnic history, the two decide to come back to Taiwan together after many years, take on the family responsibility, and face the tests put forward by their indigenous village.

A Seediq girl who grew up without a loving family meets a Jamaican boy in the busy streets of Taiwan who is equally passionate about dancing. Despite the difference in cultures and languages, with their shared passion for dance and music and their love for one another, they overcome the barrier of cultural difference and form a happy family of three.

The ability to love cannot be diminished by distances between nations or differences between cultures. The key to a long-lasting marriage is to embrace and accept each other's differences and integrate into the lives and cultures of both sides.





A Paiwan Princess and a Northern Irish Indigenous Person

Cross-Cultural Relationship Spanning 10,000 Kilometers

Written by **Huang Hsing-Ruo**; Photo credit: **Dremedreman Curimudjuq**;

Illustrated by **Lin Jia-Dong**; Translated by **Ker Nai-Yu**



Cross-cultural marriage generally attracts a lot of attention. But what might spark from a marriage when both parties are indigenous persons, and one of them the future community leader of an indigenous village? With love and tolerance, Dremedreman Curimudjuq and Daniel Moore slowly break through the boundaries and barriers of culture and nationality, and integrate each other's cultures into their lives with acceptance.

“D-j-e-l-j-e-q-i,” the Irish man in front of me is spelling his name, the Paiwan name recently given to him, meaning “the cliff.” The hard-earned name was the result of 10 years relationship, continuous effort to win the approval of the village people, and the marriage to Paiwan princess Dremedreman Curimudjuq. Djeljeqi will be staying in Taiwan in the future, sturdy and firm like the rock cliff as entailed by his name, and help his wife become the community leader of the indigenous village as well as the solid support of the family.

Cross-Cultural Indigenous Love Transcending Border, Race, and Culture

Accepted to a graduate school in UK in 2009, Dremedreman Curimudjuq wanted to brush up on her English. She looked for a foreigner as pen pal online and accidentally connected with Daniel Moore, who was a sailor traveling on open waters without Wi-Fi then.

Dremedreman Curimudjuq and Daniel Moore overcame a distance of 10,148 kilometers on map and connected the indigenous cultures of the Paiwan people and Northern Ireland across the waters. However, as the firstborn in a Paiwan family and set to assume the status of community leader in the future, her marriage is not up to her to decide. "I'm the first one in my family to marry a foreigner," says Dremedreman Curimudjuq. This relationship has been anything but easy. In the 10 years of their relationship, although her family knew she had a boyfriend, they continued to introduce guys who are "appropriate matches" to her.

To make her family and her people really accept this relationship, Dremedreman Curimudjuq decided to take her boyfriend back to her indigenous village. This was the first time she brought any of her dates back to the village, because she knows that if she brings them home, it will send them flying with terror. However, Daniel Moore did not have any second thoughts, his determination finally made everyone back off. Slowly, family members who did not approve of the relationship to begin with accepted the fact that this foreigner is going to be their in-law.

Encouraged by Her Boyfriend She Returns Home to Assume the Responsibility as Future Community Leader

A little something happened before they got married, but not many people knew about it. Her parents were cruelly discriminated against by Non-indigenous in the past, with Dremedreman Curimudjuq born to become the future community leader, she grew up with her parents expecting her to outperform the Non-indigenous, and was sent to the neighboring town for school with extra classes after school was out. In addition, her mother began managing the entire village at the age of 23, experiencing the various ups and downs, thus more stringent in bringing up her future successor. All of which made her want to escape.

"The course of my education was in fact the route of my escape," says Dremedreman Curimudjuq softly. Growing up watching her mother as the community leader, she has long made up her mind to never walk in her mother's shoes. She continued to find excuses to escape, boarding school in senior high school, changed her choice at the last minute and relocated to Tainan to attend university, and finally applying to a school in Austria before getting her master's degree in UK.

But the seemingly legitimate escape route came to an end after she met Daniel. As a Northern Ireland indigenous person, Daniel shares a similar cultural background with her, even the jokes they make are similarly direct. She recalls mentioning to her English landlord that her boyfriend is from Northern Ireland, her landlord immediately replied, "in that case, he must talk really loudly and enjoy more than a pint, right?" Angrily, Dremedreman Curimudjuq realized that stereotypes against indigenous persons are the same everywhere. Later on, whenever Daniel, who is enthusiastic about indigenous cultures, asked her stories about the Paiwan culture, she had no answers. After a while, Daniel could not help but say to her, "please don't tell people that you're a Paiwan person because you know nothing about you, and that's embarrassing." As a Northern Ireland indigenous person, Daniel can share thoroughly the context of development regarding Northern Ireland and UK and is well aware of his family history. He believes that as a Paiwan person, Dremedreman Curimudjuq naturally must understand the culture of her own family,



"I think you need to go home." Daniels's words threw Dremedreman Curimudjuq into long contemplation. After much thought, she decided to end her education-disguised escape, and come home to assume her responsibilities.

Upon her return to the village, in addition to allowing her people to slowly get to know and accept Daniel, Dremedreman Curimudjuq also begun getting involved in village affairs. Increasingly, she understood the responsibilities shouldered by her mother as the community leader, and learnt about the Paiwan culture little by little, understanding the weight and status of herself in the hearts of her people.

The Unprecedented Cross-Cultural Wedding Bringing Together Two Indigenous Cultures

The test that followed was their wedding, which was not only a union of different nations and races, but an unprecedented wedding to Tjuvecekadan Village. As the founding family of Tjuvecekadan and her status as



Wedding in the community leader's family is a big deal in the indigenous village, and coupled with interracial marriage, the gathering of the two families is magnificently contradictory yet harmonious.





community leader, Dremedreman Curimudjuq is from an extremely noble family line and therefore the procedure and dowry of her wedding must both be of the highest standard. This is the final line drawn by her family after they finally approved of a foreigner as their future in-law.

Following the traditional Paiwan wedding procedure, the groom must propose three times before the wedding. Taking into consideration that Daniel is a foreigner and not to wear his family down by repeated flights and travels, the second and third proposal rituals were carried out consecutively in the following two days. During the third proposal ritual, a rare sight of Irish objects was also seen in Tjuvecekadan. The groom and his family put on traditional Irish clothing, brought with them betel nuts, millet wine and sticky rice cakes, essentials of a proposal, as well as Irish whiskey and bodhran. They even brought a flag bearing their family crest, symbolizing the fact that they are officially becoming a family with the Paiwan community.

The wedding in the following year was one of the biggest events in Tjuvecekadan in recent years. The wedding lasted three whole days with a traditional round dance on the first night, followed by the traditional wedding ritual and noon reception for guests on the second day, and the third day is the comprehensive traditional ritual between the new couple, ending with a reception for family and everyone who helped with the wedding.

The groom's family all flew to Taiwan from Ireland. Witnessing for the first time, hunters firing their guns at the Paiwan wedding to welcome the newly wed, the lively round dance and various traditional Paiwan rituals, the foreign guest were all fascinated. Daniel smiles and says, the cultural difference wasn't a problem, but when his family attended the wedding, they were stunned by the number of people present, they had not expected the wedding to be attended by everyone in the entire village. Dremedreman Curimudjuq laughs out loud, "because I have ten uncles to start with!"

Truthfully told, cultural clash happens all the time, before or after the wedding. Dremedreman Curimudjuq jokingly says that their life at home is like the live version of WTO Sisters Show, a TV program featuring foreigners talking about cultural differences, but they have also gained more profound insight into each other's culture. She's glad that the two of them are alike in personality, and seek the same values, she is even more grateful that her husband decided to forfeit his dream of joining hospital ships and stay with her instead in the village to fulfill her obligation as the community leader family. Passionate about Paiwan culture, Daniel is now an indispensable member of the village. Not only is he always thinking about what else he can do for the village, but he insists on hiking back to the old Tjuvecekadan Village and experience the vast horizon and serenity, much like his homeland, deep in the mountains. "I joined his hiking trip once, but halfway through we met someone we knew driving past, and I hitchhiked with them without hesitation. Why walk when you can ride?" Dremedreman Curimudjuq laughs.

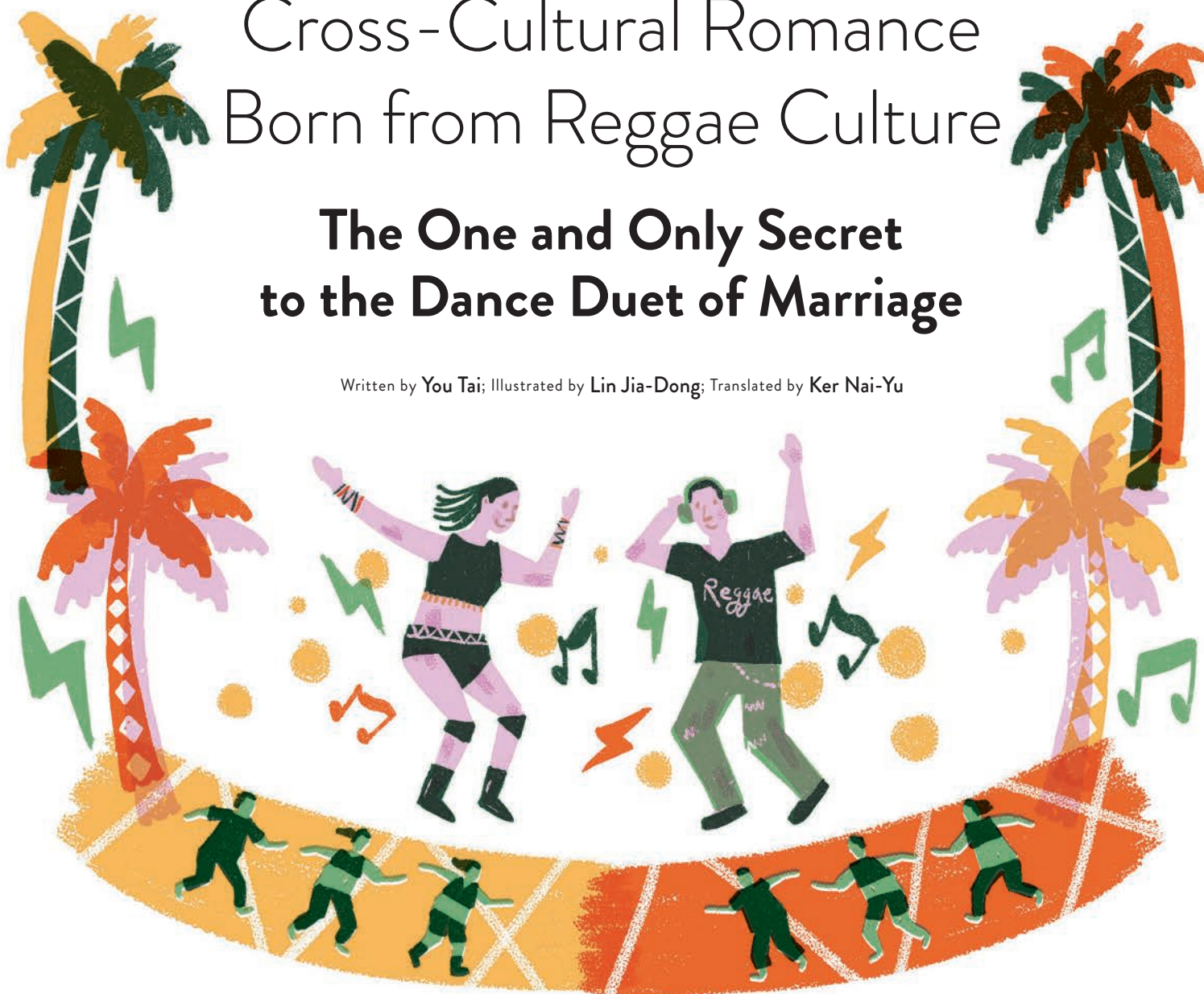
Now given a Paiwan name and wearing the Paiwan necklace given by his mother-in-law the village chief, Pjeljeqi senses the expectations elders in the village have for him to be solid as the cliff, and support his wife and the family no matter what the challenges and obstacles may be. Hand in hand, the couple integrates into the Paiwan community, discovering and experiencing together the culture of their village. In the future, they will also travel to Northern Ireland and experience a different kind of indigenous customs and culture.



Cross-Cultural Romance Born from Reggae Culture

The One and Only Secret to the Dance Duet of Marriage

Written by You Tai; Illustrated by Lin Jia-Dong; Translated by Ker Nai-Yu



RubyRed, half Seediq and half Hakka, survived her difficult teenage years with her passion for dancing, and danced her way into a cross-cultural marriage. She has been promoting the reggae culture with her Jamaican husband, Chad Omar Grant, from the States. With empathy, they try to understand each other's life and culture, and resolve the most difficult issue of cross-cultural marriage, which is cultural difference.

The petite RubyRed (Su Li Xue-jing, indigenous name Habaw Hana) generally wears casual dresses and is very friendly and easygoing, completely different from her daring and sexy image on stage. Prior to the interview, she posted 1,500 facemasks to the States. With a keen interest in black culture, RubyRed started a program on her Facebook to raise facemask after George Floyd, an African American male, was killed due to excessive police enforcement in the States, in support of her African American friends fighting for human rights.

Her Jamaican Canadian husband Chad Omar Grant sits quietly on the side, listening to his wife talk. From the opposite ends of the earth, RubyRed and Chad met 11 years ago because of their shared love for music and dance. Now married for 8 years, they have a 4 years old son Momotaro.

Passion for Street Dance Helped Her Through a Difficult Youth

RubyRed is half Seediq and half Hakka, raised by her grandparents because her parents were divorced. Originally from Hualien, they relocated to Falangaw Village in Taitung, but her grandparents were so busy operating a hotel that they didn't have enough time for her. RubyRed grew up with the kind of loneliness and alienation that no words can describe.

"When I was really young, a young indigenous woman came to stay at our hotel, and she played me music by Janet Jackson." Even though it was years ago, RubyRed can still picture vividly how the young woman danced spontaneously, shaking her hair. Her young mind completely struck with awe. Ever since then, whenever RubyRed heard music, she couldn't help but move her body. L.A. Boyz, the all-boy street dance crew popular back then, was her favorite group.

The years of loneliness as a teenager led to RubyRed's amazing moves. During that rebellious period, she did not get along well with her family, and many a times she wanted to try out her luck in Taipei but reality kept her cooped up in Taitung. She later got into National Taitung Senior Commercial Vocational School and started the street dance club. Even though she often had to wake up at 7 in the morning for school, and work part-time after school until late, she danced like there's no tomorrow whenever she had the time, breaking out all the sweat until she was exhausted, and rid of all the negativity in her. "It's a good thing I had my dancing, otherwise, I can't imagine what I would've become...." Recalling the difficult past, tears roll down RubyRed's cheeks.

Upon graduation from senior high school, she was finally able to move to Taipei. Being alone in a strange city with no one else to depend on, she must make her own living. Life was hard then, but she still had dancing. RubyRed practiced dancing with Joe in Ximending, the popping master in Taiwan. The moves nurtured by her loneliness won her champions in many street dance battles, and made her name.

10-min Dance Duet Leads to Soul Mate

When she was 22, RubyRed met Chad while dancing at a nightclub. A DJ from the States, Chad was visiting relatives in Taiwan and due to leave for Japan to work in a few days. "I saw her through the crowd, danced two songs together, then I left her my phone number," says Chad. Unlike the other girls dressed to show off their curves, RubyRed was dancing hip hop in her baggy T-shirt like no one else's business, he couldn't help but go over and ask her to dance.



RubyRed

Chad Omar Grant

Because of her family, love is hardly factored in in RubyRed's plan for life, and never had she imagined that she would get married. But this dance duet which lasted no more than 10 minutes drew her to Chad as if by destiny. They maintained a long-distance relationship between Taiwan and Japan until Chad returned to Taiwan, and two years later, they walked down the aisle.

"Do you know reggae?" Chad introduced reggae to his wife, a music genre originated from his homeland Jamaica, along with its affiliated dances, Twerk and Dancehall. RubyRed had always been attracted to black culture, the wild passion of reggae dance coupled with Latino music is very similar to the music and rhythm of indigenous music. Therefore, she started studying reggae culture, with dance and music becoming their shared language.

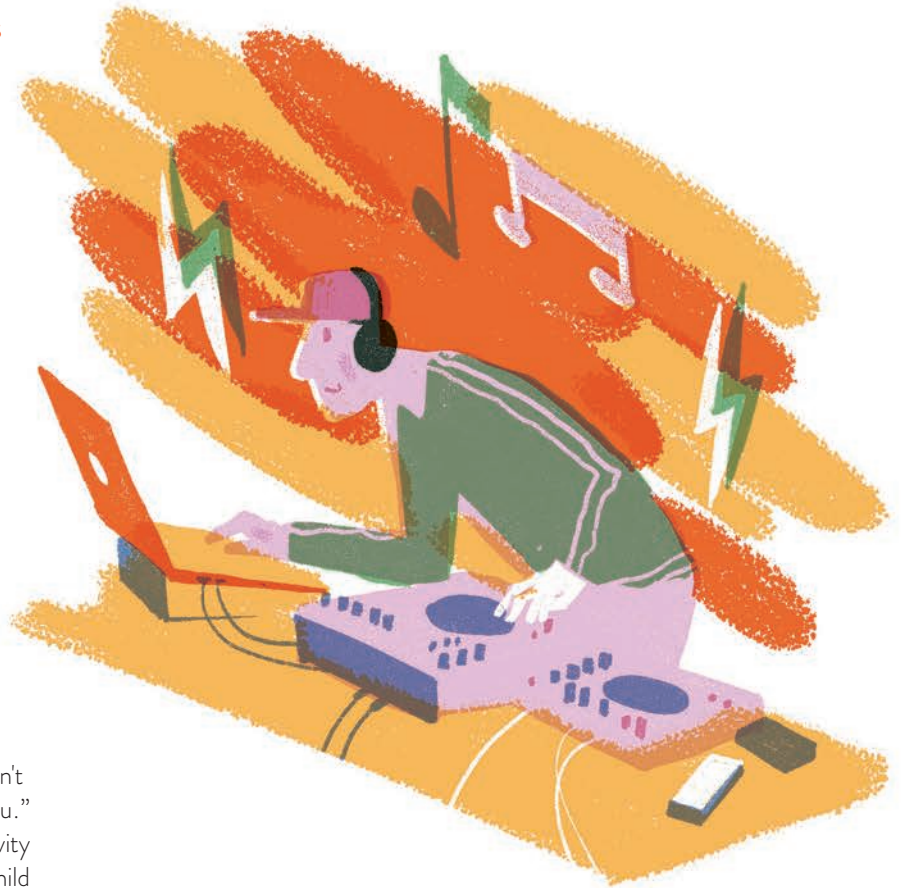
"Since the moves are anything but conservative, sexy reggae dance is often misconstrued as sex culture in Taiwan," explains RubyRed. Reggae dance places emphasis on the fast movements of the shoulder, breast and hip, many people look at it in a biased manner and thus believe that women who dance sexy moves must be promiscuous as well. RubyRed has also been frustrated because of such misunderstanding, but Chad continues to encourage her to spread the word that reggae dance is a culture that is healthy, sexy and full of strength. The two of them started the first reggae magazine in Taiwan, and set up a studio, traveling all over Taiwan to organize events and promote reggae music and culture.



Resolve Cultural Differences with Empathy and Tolerance

But cultural differences in life far exceed those in dance. Rather straightforward, Chad says that they have both been overcoming cultural differences since the moment they first met.

“In the States, we can dance with our bodies almost touching, but she shouted her protest.” Chad later understood that Asians find intimate body gestures to be offensive. Or, for example, the first time he brought RubyRed home to the States, she was very nervous and worried that her future mother-in-law won't like her. Chad found that unbelievable, and said to RubyRed over and over again, “if my mother doesn't like you, that's her problem, it won't change my mind about marrying you.” Chad also takes the privacy and subjectivity of their child very seriously. Until the child can make his own decision, RubyRed is not to post pictures of their son on social networks.



But the couple have a common understanding about their child's education, and that is he must learn about his own cultures and family histories. Chad is therefore dedicated to researching indigenous culture, no less passionate than RubyRed for Jamaican culture. In addition to reading books and literature, they also watch films together to learn about the cultures of their respective countries. For example, when watching Seediq Bale, the film about the Wushe/Musha Incident in 1930s, Chad was in tears because his ancestors were once slaves who fled Jamaica to start a new life in north America. Seeing the Japanese oppression against indigenous peoples struck a cord in his heart.

Encouraged by Chad, RubyRed worked up the courage to ask her grandmother on her mother's side about the whereabouts of her mother. Surprisingly, her grandmother is not at all against cross-cultural marriage, and kindly gave Chad an indigenous name, Kawas. What had set out to be a quest for RubyRed's root, turned out to be Chad, the foreigner, finding the familial happiness he hasn't experience in a while right there in the indigenous village.

“I'm sure all cross-cultural marriages will require some getting used to. Only by understanding and embracing one another will the marriage really last.” RubyRed says softly, “cliché, but I think love is the reason cross-cultural marriages can continue to overcome difficulties and move forward.” Marriage is like a dance duet, there are bound to be missteps. But as long as you have the rhythm and tempo that best suit you, the dance can go on and on.



Whoever Said We could Only be Boy or Girl?





The Quest and Sense of Loss for Diverse Gender Identity

With the society developing diversely, our awareness of gender identity is comparatively more courageously exposed. But the structure and indigenous village culture unique to the indigenous society coupled with the religious and colonial experiences, means that most indigenous peoples are facing a more pressing matter of indigenous identity. The intimate connection between indigenous villages and the church also reinforced people's idea of gender binary.

The trend of gender identity is hitting the indigenous community, indigenous peoples must fight for LGBTIQ from aspects of education, movements and organization, and to speak for indigenous peoples. While the trend is clashing with traditional gender concepts in indigenous villages, the atmosphere in the villages are slowly turning as well. More and more people are willing to understand and respect the individual differences. Love knows no boundary, every kind of diverse love should be blessed, and be proud of the love we have and of being loved.



We are Adjus

The Diverse Gender Identity of the Paiwan People

On the night of December 15, 2018, a special music festival took place on the playgrounds of the Timur Elementary School in Sandimen Township, Pingtung County. Many adjus walk in heels glamorously dressed. Holding hands, they enjoyed the cozy musical environment, and the freedom to show their true colors in front of families and friends. Organized by Colorful Wi, this is the Adu Music Festival, the first musical event featuring indigenous LGBTIQ in the world.

Written by **Liang Wen-Jing** ; Photo credit: **Remaljiz Mavaliv**

Illustrated by **Lin Jia-Dong** ; Translated by **Ker Nai-Yu**

“The term LGBT is for the Non-indigenous people, the Paiwan people call it Adu,” says Remaljiz Mavaliv, head of Colorful Wi and founder of the Adu Music Festival.

Originally, adju is used to describe companionship between Paiwan female, like “girlfriend”. The word is also appropriated for biological male, gay and transgender with gender qualities different from mainstream expectation in indigenous villages, and they call each other adju.



Remaljiz Mavaliv

Remaljiz Mavaliv believes that adju leans more towards transgender heterosexual in gender diversity, biologically male but identifies oneself as female and takes on a male partner. People generally think adju equals gay, but as Remaljiz Mavaliv points out, the two are not the same. Unlike gay men who are biologically male with masculine gender qualities and identifies oneself as biologically male in a romantic relationship, adju identifies oneself as biologically female, even though most adjus have no intention of undergoing sex change.

“In indigenous villages, we don't talk about gender identity, let alone using words including homosexual, gender diversity and transgender, they simply do not exist in our understanding of life.” Remaljiz Mavaliv shares that in indigenous villages, elders would require them to call a male elder with feminine qualities sister or auntie, instead of brother or uncle. These people live in the village like everyone else and participate in church activities, “but we do not talk about such existence, not in the village or at church.”





Lack of Discussion does not Mean We do not Exist

With the extremely high percentage of Paiwan Christians, especially the north Paiwan group where more than 90% of the population is Christian, the church is tremendously influential in indigenous villages, and intimately connects the interpersonal relationships in villages through fellowship and youth associations. "According to our concept, the indigenous village exists as a whole, if you leave the village or the church, it's like leaving your family. The relationship between the village, church and the individual is almost inseparable." Remaljiz Mavaliv states that in addition to the influence of traditional Paiwan culture, gender concepts in the village is profoundly shaped by the church, male and female labor division and gender binary are concepts that cannot be changed.



“Even though the church is not exactly friendly towards ideas of gender diversity, most adjus do not even consider leaving the church, instead, they try to ‘survive’ amidst such structure.” Remaljiz Mavaliv explains that the Paiwan society strongly believes in respecting elders, maintain solidarity, and avoid any division, even if the younger generation has doubts regarding traditions or the authority of the church, they will avoid any direct confrontation.

But this harmonious and peaceful pattern was interrupted in 2011, when conflicts regarding diverse gender identity shook the society, such the anti-LGBT education on campus by True Love Alliance, and the of draft Diversified Family Bill. The Taiwan society launched into heated discussions regarding gender diversity, and gradually split into the two factions of pro-LGBT and anti-LGBT. The Presbyterian Church, which is the system north Paiwan group belongs to, also changed its habit of no public discussion, and expressed their anti-LGBT position by quoting the Bible. Indigenous villages that have always followed the opinions of the church quickly expressed its opposition as well.

As the two factions headed into fierce confrontations, the families and friends of the “sisters” and “aunties” were often seen protesting in anti-LGBT parades with the church, yet when they return to the village, they can still chat and laugh with the “sisters” and “aunties” as if nothing has ever happened. Remaljiz Mavaliv says, “it’s

like they have split personalities, their cognitive reality is separate from the real life.”

Adjus Surviving under the Structures of School and Church

Before the binary opposition was roused in the society, the church and indigenous villages may “disapprove of” or “do not encourage” the existence of adjus, but adjus could still find a little piece of heaven amidst the unfriendly environment. However, with the confrontations heating up, they must directly face the blatant opposition of indigenous peoples. Some even claimed that LGBT is a foreign culture that is destroying the tradition and harmony of indigenous villages.

But are people with non-mainstream gender qualities like the adjus really the “foreign” culture? Remaljiz Mavaliv says that he studied in indigenous schools from elementary to senior high school and was bullied in elementary school for his feminine gender qualities. Upon entering junior high school, he discovered that there are people with qualities similar to his and that they formed a dynamic force not to be messed with, “when we first enter the school and join this group, you must greet the ‘sisters’ in the upper grades to show respect.” This special community was formed naturally on campus and passed down year after year, with the connections extending beyond the campus and into indigenous villages and the church.



People in this community call each other adju. Even though they must hide their true colors in front of elders, during youth fellowship with people of the same age, they were able to behave naturally. Not only can they talk all about their personal preferences and affections, but openly demonstrate the musical and art talents adjus have.



Upon entering high school, Remaljiz Mavaliv joined the gender diversity volunteer community Colorful (later renamed Colorful Wi) organized by the Taiwan Indigenous Teachers Association in schools in indigenous areas. Taiwan Indigenous Teachers Association has long paid attention to the diverse gender identity of indigenous peoples. They noticed that there are people like Remaljiz Mavaliv on campus whose gender qualities fail to conform to mainstream expectations, and gathered them together, and encouraged them to share their stories and form bands to participate in events.

The community first began with get-togethers and band performances, but with the heat of social discussion on marriage equality and gender equality slowly turning up, the community began forming solid consensus on diverse gender identity, and officially took on the name "Colorful Wi" (the united front for indigenous gender diversity). The first Adju Music Festival was born amidst the fierce confrontations in the society.

"If no one will speak for us in indigenous villages, we will rise and speak for ourselves." Remaljiz Mavaliv says that adjus have long endured discrimination and pressure, mostly accepting the status-quo in silence to avoid confrontation, but the increasing misunderstandings have made things even more difficult for adjus. "This can't go on anymore!" so thought Remaljiz Mavaliv. Therefore, on the eve of the referendum on same-sex marriage legalization in October 2018, he quickly came up with a logo design, set up a Facebook Fans Page, and decided to organize a music festival in his village to highlight the existence of adjus.



Adju Music Festival Sees the Pride Flag Waving Above the Village

The Adju Music Festival offers more than a concert, Remaljiz Mavaliv hopes to deliver the value of diverse gender identity in the guise of music. Therefore, in addition to musical performances, they invited LGBT-friendly vendors to participate in their market, designed many interactive plots including inviting mothers of adjus on stage to share their stories, and collect stories of adjus in different indigenous villages to showcase in the music festival.

"We hadn't intended for it to be big in scale, we just wanted the people of our indigenous village to see," Remaljiz Mavaliv laughs, he hadn't expected so many friends and musicians to initiate contact with him as soon as the word got out to express their full support. A music festival originally planned for a hundred people in the village ended up bringing in three to four thousand people, some even traveled from out of town.

Because of the Adju Music Festival, the pride flag waved for the first time in an indigenous village that never talks about LGBT and is even against it. Many indigenous people in their village saw the overwhelming responses to the event that day, became curious and wondered for the first time, "exactly what is going on in the minds of these kids?"

"This is exactly what we hoped to achieve, to create a platform for communication through music, show our people that we exist, and guide them to think about our culture and the interpretation of the teachings in the Bible from a different angle," says Remaljiz Mavaliv. In the future, the Adju Music Festival will go on to tour the different Paiwan villages and allow it to blossom and flourish. Even though the festival this year was canceled due to COVID-19, they ventured into different villages in the form of seminars, shared with more people the issues regarding diverse gender identity and in turn hoping to open up more space for dialogue.

Wrong Soul in the Wrong Body

Life Story of a Transgender

Fuis Sao Paotawa is 27 years old, a transgender, and a female soul in a male body. She used to be active in all gender movement activities, instigated and moderated many gender movement activities while she was an undergraduate, and used her own life story to educate everyone on gender issues.

Written by **Chen Yi-Ru** ; Illustrated by **Lin Jia-Dong**

Translated by **Ker Nai-Yu**

Fuis has long hair and pale white skin, eyes dazzlingly beautiful. Would have been hard to imagine that Fuis is biologically male.

Born in a Pangcah village in Taitung, Fuis lived with her grandparents until third grade, when she moved to Taipei to live with her parents. Fuis has always been soft-spoken and feminine, and ever since she could remember, she had felt that she was a girl. Since her mother wore mostly gender neutral clothes, she often put on her mother's clothes when she was younger.

The adults didn't pay attention to these signs when she was in elementary school, figured that she was just being a child. But when Fuis' voice failed to change in junior high school, her family began requesting that she try to lower her voice and sound less feminine, it was very confusing to Fuis, "my family wanted me to sound like a boy, but what should a boy have sounded like? I was born to sound this way, I have no idea what I could change about it."

When Fuis became romantically engaged with a same-sex partner in senior high school, her parents brushed her off as gay without realizing the difference in gender identity, "they just don't talk about it and pretend that this never happened, we eventually break up and I will concentrate on my studies," Fuis says, walking down the memory lane.

Misplaced Body and Soul Constantly Switching Identities



Fuis was really confused about herself when puberty hit, it was like the wrong soul in the wrong body. Taiwan had yet to provide proper education on gender diversity then, and she could only resort to online searching to understand her gender identity. Finally Fuis understood in university that "sexual identity" is not the same as 'gender identity', and that I was romantically attracted to a guy as a girl, not as gay."



After she established the fact that she's female in her freshman year, Fuis began putting on makeup and wearing female clothes. She also began taking female hormones to make her body more feminine. Fuis attended university in southern Taiwan then, apart from her parents, but whenever she returned to Taipei, she had to change out of her female clothes, "as time went by, I felt like I was suffocating! Why do I have to switch and struggle between two identities, it was really painful for me and I didn't want to go on anymore."

So by sophomore year, Fuis finally geared up the courage to confess to her parents her



gender identity. Coming from a conservative indigenous Christian family, her parents couldn't accept it and cut ties with Fuis since. "Looking back, I kind of regret it, if I hadn't come forward then, maybe I could still go home and see my family. Sometimes I would encounter elders who really take care of me at work, and I would think of my mother, hoping that I could still go home." Although Fuis can already talk about this situation with her family, her one regret will always be her family not being able to understand her.

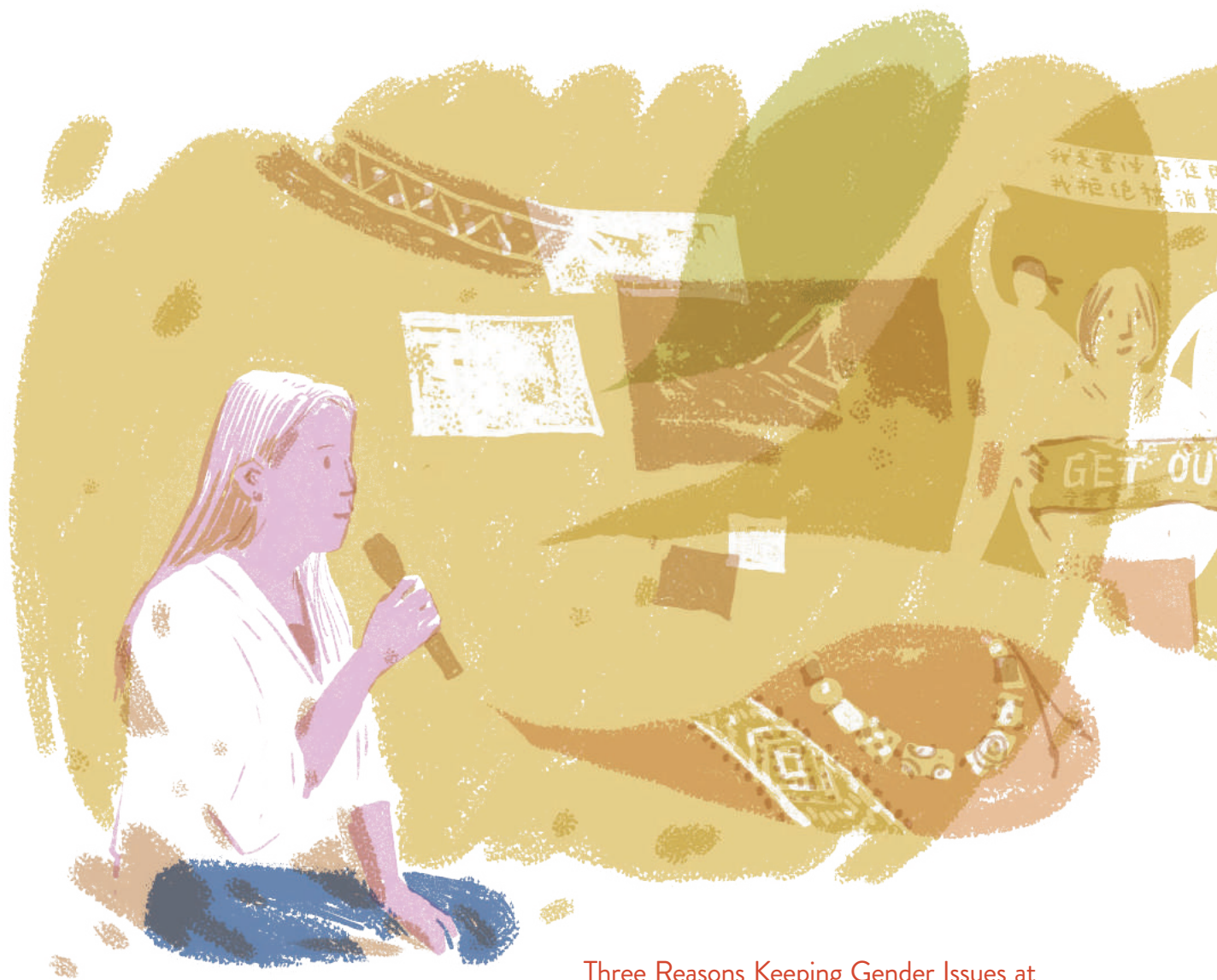
Dedicated to Gender Movement and Speak for Equality

Fuis began participating in gender issues because of

her experiences in other social movements. She grew up with a sense of justice, joined the Taiwan Indigenous Club in university in freshman year and spoke for indigenous land justice, and noticed gender inequality in these social movements.

"Almost every movement is steered by the male, the female is always responsible for the insignificant logistics. Everyone came up with the ideas together, why is it always the men who gets to speak, I found that extremely unfair." Fuis thus went into gender movement, organizing "male skirt week" on campus, hosted lectures with the school gender equality committee, and headed many gender movement activities.

Even though Fuis is different from the others, she had really grades, excelled at studying, grew up accepting different awards and was always surrounded by friends, besides. Stubborn in nature, if anyone comes at her with discriminating languages, she would always strike back, "I used to be call the Goddess of War at the Dept. of Nursing in university!" Fuis laughs.



But after she became a nurse upon graduation, facing the different kinds of patients and family members, she began receiving more attacks, people once even said to her, “how could someone like you be a nurse!” But Fuis is unyielding and always strikes back head on, “I know I am right, they came at me with insults first, and I will find ways to protect myself and safeguard my identity.”

Even though Fuis is mentally strong, she will admit that “it still hurts when I hear people say that, I didn’t want this for myself, honestly, it takes great courage to walk out of the door like this.” Exactly the sentiments and sorrow of many transgenders.

Upon graduation, Fuis decided to hide behind the scenes and away from the spotlight. She admits that it takes tremendous courage to keep standing there on the front line, “I’m not just standing up as an indigenous person, but also as a transgender, I have to face all kinds of criticism, and it’s not just myself being criticized, but also my parents and friends.”

Three Reasons Keeping Gender Issues at Bay in Indigenous Villages

With her many years of experience in gender issues, Fuis admits that there is still a gap in the acceptance of gender diversity in the indigenous society, “in the village, everybody knows that such people exist, they just don’t name it and pretend there isn’t.”

She believes that there are three reasons behind it, 1. the education level in indigenous villages are generally low, and thus more confined by traditional ideas, getting married, having children, and sustaining the existence of family and indigenous village are the most important tasks; 2. many indigenous people are Christians and have a comparatively singular opinion towards gender; 3. land justice and cultural heritage is more pressing amongst indigenous issues, and gender issues do not make the priority list. All the above reason make the promotion of gender issues even more difficult.

But Fuis also points out that now we have the concept of providing gender education, it means that these opinions



need to be “educated”, “if we can start young, while the child is still a blank piece of paper, everything we paint will show; but elders are already a full story book, it can be very difficult to add anything more to the book.”

Even though Fuis remains hidden behind the scenes these last few years, she continues to support the various gender movement activities, including the indigenous village cinema organized by Tong Liao Queer House, a gender equality advocacy group local to Taitung, or the Adu Music Festival organized by Colorful Wi, using films and music to entice the participation of local indigenous peoples, and share ideas with them. Fuis says, “these activities show indigenous people that we are just like everyone else, we all live in the same village and we want for you to actually see our existence, we need to be seen and recognized first before we can talk about how to live together.”

Slow but Steady Progress in Gender Issues

Fuis shares that even though they still hear people calling them a “cult” in these places, many just feel for them, “the elders simply don’t want their kids ostracized in society, that’s why they want us to be like normal people.”

Back in their time, they could face discrimination simply by saying that they are indigenous persons, with indigenous peoples already the minority, indigenous transgender is even fewer in number. Fuis can understand the concerns of the elders, “to convince them, we need to first live a good life, that’s the only way.”

According to her observation, indigenous people active in gender issues has only occurred in the recent decade, but even to this day, indigenous development in gender issues is still very conservative, like mankind discovering fire in the Stone Age. “When the Taiwan society is already discussing same-sex marriage and human rights, we are still doing to same thing, telling people what LGBT is about,” so says Fuis.

But she never gave up, “at least people nowadays are not treated the way we were, no one telling them ‘you are no child of mine,’ or ‘never set foot in this house again, you have no business carry the name of this family.’” The progress of gender issues is like a snail moving, slow but steadily forward. “There’s no rushing it, we can only hope that it will one day develop a pair of legs and hands, and begin to crawl, or slowly learn to run,” her voice gentle but firm, and hopeful.

The Driving Force of Gender Diversity

When the Pride Flag Waves in the Streets of Taitung

From radical pride parade to soft and gentle markets, and further into indigenous villages to listen to the voices of indigenous LGBT, Tong Liao Queer House, a group on gender diversity and equality, is established by young people who love Taitung. The more people willing to take one small step towards recognizing gender diversity is a giant step for Tong Liao Queer House.

Text by **You Tai** ; Photo credit: **Meng Zi-Yang**

Illustrated by **Lin Jia-Dong** ; Translated by **Ker Nai-Yu**

Outside the Taitung Art Museum, a market with pride flag waving is bustling with life on the grass. An old lady took part in the Q&A game in one of the stalls, and when a crew member asked her, “nana, do you know what gender diversity is?” “Do you know what legalizing same-sex marriage is?” This old lady exclaimed that she does not support this, but after some explanation from the crew, her anxious face somewhat relaxed. Finally, she said that even though she could not immediately turn around and support them, she now understood more about LGBTIQ.

“A seemingly small change could converge to a greater force,” so says Meng Zi-Yang, convener of the third-year Eastern Taiwan LGBT Pride Market. He and 8 other local friends started in gender diversity movements with the annual LGBT pride, and in 2020, they officially registered as an association under the name Tong Liao Queer House, with Meng Zi-Yang as the first chairman.

From Parade to Market, Taitung LGBTIQ Walks Under the Sun

The 29 years old Meng Zi-Yang is a Rukai person born and raised in Taitung City, and later relocated to Taichung to attend university. Not being a good singer or fluent in the Rukai language, Meng Zi-Yang fails to live up to the stereotype expectations of Non-indigenous towards an indigenous person and had identity issues while living in the city and suffering from drug addiction. Because of

his knowledge in gender issues, he has always paid special attention to LGBT movements. Later on, to rid himself of the temptations of drug addiction, he uprooted his life and moved back to Taitung.

In the glossy and glamorous city, indigenous LGBT can drink at gay bars and partake in LGBT activities without



in Eastern Taiwan



a shred of concern, the vibe is free and friendly. But Taitung presents a completely different scene. Through his boyfriend, Meng Zi-Yang met a group of LGBTIQ that have relocated to Taitung. Every year since 2017, they organize the Eastern Taiwan LGBT Pride parade in Taitung, calling on people to understand and recognize the existence and needs of the LGBTIQ population.

After two years, they realized that the majority of people who walk amongst them in the parade, or give them thumbs up down the streets, are mostly visitors or people who relocated here, approximately 300 to 500 people. But the locally born and bred Taitung LGBT usually just stand in the shadow and watch. Meng Zi-Yang explains that even though Taitung is geographically spacious with a low population, country life is intimately connected and everything you do is talked about amongst friends and family, if you're seen participating in an LGBT gathering, "the news would have traveled all over Taitung by tomorrow."

In 2019, the Eastern Taiwan LGBT Pride decided to take on a form that people in Taitung are comfortable with. Turning from a proactive and aggressive parade to a soft and friendly market, they are telling the resident of Taitung in a gentle way that there is a group of people living in Taitung, whose sexual identity and gender identity are different from theirs. This event attracted over 1,000 visitors, many LGBT who used to hide in the crowd were willing to stand up and talk to them.

Meng Zi-Yang and his friends realized through this event that the low-profile LGBT population in Taitung needs a support group, so they decided to focus on issues of gender diversity in a more delicate and comprehensive manner. In March this year, Tong Liao Queer House with the mission to advocate for gender diversity was officially registered, the eight core members span a variety of occupations including student, teacher, social worker and service sector, and their gender identity includes gay, lesbian and bisexual. After a few months of operation, they currently have 40 plus members.



Into Indigenous Villages and Listen to the Hidden Troubles of Indigenous LGBT

Breaking free from the past routine of one major event per year, Tong Liao Queer House set off into towns and organized various seminars. Among which, Meng Zi-Yang was most impressed with the indigenous LGBT seminar co-organized with the Taitung County Public Health Bureau.

In order to access more LGBT population in indigenous villages, Tong Liao Queer House asked gender-friendly business owners for reference and invited LGBTIQ from Jinlun Village in Taimali Township and A'tolan Village from Donghe Township to share their life story. Sincere sharing from the moderator always invites enthusiastic interactions from the floor, telling the various predicaments of LGBTIQ in indigenous villages.

"In the village, it's almost impossible to speak for our own gender identity," says Meng Zi-Yang, even if you meet fellow LGBT in the church fellowship or indigenous village youth association, under the established power structure

of the indigenous village and church, gender identity issues is almost a taboo topic. The different traditions of each people also lead to different levels of blame, for example, the Bunun indigenous community emphasizes heroism and masculinity, boys that are more feminine tend to be reprimanded, "act like a man, will you?" Or the Truku people, which is a patrilineal community, if a lesbian with gender identity as male would like to participate in the hunting ritual, they would likely be forbidden to do so.

The president of an youth association in a Pangcah village once encountered a group of lesbians with gender identity as male, and they proposed that they put on male traditional clothes and take part in the youth class system. However, the traditional male Pangcah clothing is topless, not appropriate for the female body, therefore the president rejected the offer. The lesbians were devastated and left, unwilling to participate in traditional affairs again, a regret the president of the youth association never got over. This incident led to a lot of discussion. Can we appropriately adapt traditional clothing in light of the diverse gender diversity, and blur the line between male and female? Or should we not ignore the context of historical development, and preserve the traditional culture more delicately?

Facing the double minority of the loss of traditional culture and gender diversity inequality at the same time, many indigenous young people promoting cultural revitalization in indigenous villages believe that the importance of cultural revitalization overrides the promotion of gender awareness. In order to become core members of indigenous villages, they must conceal their identity as LGBT, some even say that they will not openly come out as LGBT until they have





successfully revitalized the traditional culture of their people.

“We also continue to wonder why cultural revitalization and gender equality can’t be advocated at the same time?” Meng Zi-Yang admits, discussions in the indigenous LGBT forum may see an answer right away, but they reflect realistically the numerous problems faced by indigenous

LGBT in indigenous villages, and also help Tong Liao Queer House to better grasp the needs of indigenous LGBT.

The Heart of Indigenous Villages is Love

“However, the heart of indigenous villages is ‘love’, and that is never going to change,” says Meng Zi-Yang. The intimately connected bond of indigenous villages may have deprived them of privacy but have also placed down a fundamental social network. With his day job as social worker at Taiwan Lourdes Association, Meng Zi-Yang observed that even if the gender diversity population in Taitung suffer from drug addiction or AIDS, they rarely require the intervention and placement of social welfare organization. Indigenous villages and their families always have a spot for them, a phenomenon rarely seen in the Non-indigenous society.

Also, because of love, the indigenous village is not entirely unwavering when it comes to standing against the gender diversity population. Meng Zi-Yang shares that after a Pangcah gay received approval from his grandmother



for his sexual identity, his grandmother turned around and convinced the male elders in the family, “times are different now, you must respect the will of your children.”

With the overall environment becoming increasingly friendly to LGBT, through the internet, children in remote areas can learn or seek company. “LGBT education for children is not just about teaching them to understand LGBT, but also how to get along with them,” Meng Zi-Yang says. Compared to heterosexuals, LGBT have no role models to follow in terms of relationship education, the kids must figure out on their own how to interact with others. When funding allows, Tong Liao Queer House also expands their scope to education, by forming alliance with local parent participating education organizations and seed tree house, they try to promote issues regarding gender diversity on campus.

Sitting on the east coast, Tong Liao Queer House has the firmness of the mountains and the tolerance of the ocean, they will continue to promote the ideas of gender diversity equality so that more pride flags will wave on the beautiful lands of Taitung.



En Route to Happiness

Hand in Hand, We Face the Tests from Indigenous Village and Gender Identity

Usan and Basagala are urban indigenous persons who returned to their indigenous villages to start their own business, and got married after dating for a year and half. Facing the completely different ideas of their respective peoples towards same-sex marriage, they listen and try to empathize, face the difficulties hand in hand with respect. Finally, their parents on both sides all attended their wedding, giving this wedding extra significance.

Written by **You Tai** ; Photo credit: **Usan, Hsu Ming-cheng**
Illustrated by **Lin Jia-Dong** ; Translated by **Ker Nai-Yu**

Approximately 1-hour drive south from downtown Taitung is the Paiwan indigenous village Jinlun, famous for its hot springs sitting along the South Link Highway. Usan and Basagala are receiving guests in the Bed & Breakfast Dagedan House they run together.

Married in May 2020, Usan and Basagala have a home of their own in a house in the village. Life after marriage is just like any other day, busy bustling between the B&B and Cafe. Occasionally, when they have the time, they will pass through the culvert nearby their business to



reach the Jinlun Beach, and pile stones in front of the vast Pacific Ocean. Two men, one dog and one cat, their lives are peacefully sweet, serene and steady.

Urban Indigenous Move Back Home Similar Backgrounds Bring Them Together

“I never thought I would be with an indigenous person!” The minute Usan finishes his sentence, Basagala chimes in, “me too!” Their eyes meet for a split second, and smile is all over their faces.

Usan has a Pangcah father and Paiwan mother, moved to Taichung with his parents during elementary school to receive better education, and stayed in Taipei in the hospitality service after he grew up. Six years ago during the harvest festival in his indigenous village, Usan suddenly realized that he has indigenous origin, yet he knows nothing about indigenous culture. Therefore, when his parents decided to move back home for retirement, Usan followed and started his Bed & Breakfast Dagedan House in Jinlun. In the past two years, he further opened LI.KA CAFE nearby the B&B to create more employment opportunities for young people in the village.

Basagala is Rukai, from the Taromak Village in Taitung.





After he was discharged from the military, he returned to the village to help his parents farm naturally. He met Usan in the hospitality course he worked as part-time. 6 years apart in age, their paths never crossed before they met, but they had similar experiences growing up in the village, went to school and worked in urban areas before finally coming back to their indigenous villages. Congenial interactions between the two quickly brought them together, and after a year and half, seeing the adoption of the special law for same-sex marriage, they decided to get married.

“He’s the type of person that wears a smile no matter what,” says Usan, feeling the never-ending joy when he is with Basagala. They have both had experiences of long-term relationships for over a decade, so they know exactly what kind of person they want to spend their lives with. Basagala also says that parents on both sides know about them, and that comfort and ease naturally prompted them to take the next step and enter a substantial marriage.

Listen to and Sympathize with Elders

Whatever gender identity, marriage is ultimately about two families, and not just the couple. While discussing their wedding details, Basagala from a patrilineal society



immediately encountered a tremendous obstacle. His mother never approved of same-sex marriage to begin with, elders his father’s age piled on even more pressure, but the most difficult of all was his oldest brother who said blatantly, “you can be together all you want, but you can forget about getting married.” That made Basagala’s mother even more worried that the wedding will tear the family apart.

The law may have given LGBTIQ the right to marriage, but people’s beliefs and ideas are not about change overnight just because the law was adopted. “Why can you get married and I can’t?” Basagala admits, he was frustrated as well. Having been born to a large family and close with everyone, he may be able to bravely be himself away from home, but deep down he wishes for the blessings of his original family.



When he was depressed, it was Usan and Usan's parents that gave him the courage to go on. Usan's Paiwan parents are more open to the idea of gender diversity, and they knew very early on the gender identity of their child, so when Usan told his mother about their plan to get married, his mother was far from surprised and even said, "that's fantastic, so should we pick a day and visit Basagala's parents?" When Usan's grandmother saw Basagala, she was overjoyed, touching his face and saying, "such a beautiful child!"

The carefree and easygoing attitude of Usan's family gave Basagala more courage to face the difficult situation in his family. Usan accompanied Basagala in delivering their wedding invitation to elders in the village and notifying them of the news, even when they encountered different opinions, he would bend down and listen to what they had to say. Some elders were unpleasantly surprised, while some voiced their sincere concern, Basagala discovered, when the two sides are no longer angry at each other, the elders are simply worried that they will be discriminated against in the future for their sexual identity, not just

because they simply disapprove of it. Some family members and friends even approached them to give them blessing upon hearing of the news.

On the other hand, religion is usually why indigenous peoples are against same-sex marriage. In order to reassure their parents on both sides about the wedding, Usan even invited to Taitung the reverend of the Taipei Church of the East, and talk to them by quoting the Bible, emphasizing that everyone deserves blessings, and that they need not afraid that same-sex marriage is at odds with their faith. This gathering was very reassuring to Basagala's mother, even though she could not sincerely support same-sex marriage, she's willing to take the first step to attend and bless her child's wedding, out of her love for him.

"Be it support or opposition, I think it's very important that we hear them out quietly, and thank them." Usan was very impressed with how Basagala was willing to set himself aside when facing the elders, and sensed just how determined Basagala is in marrying him.



Parents from Both Side Present Fulfilling the Perfect Indigenous LGBT Wedding

The couple chose May 20, 2020 as their wedding day, in addition to symbolizing "I love, love, love you", it was a weekday, a perfect excuse for those who oppose same-sex marriage to not attend.

With both of them as indigenous persons, they insist that everyone attend the wedding in their indigenous clothing. Having learnt embroidery as a child, Basagala follows the Rukai tradition and spent months making traditional indigenous clothing for Usan. It's the first piece of hand-sewn indigenous clothing Usan has ever owned, having grown up in the city. Basagala further picked flowers and weed in the village, and braided the beautiful wreaths they both were going to wear, he says jokingly, "we're both short because we're going bare foot, so we need wreaths to add a little height."

In order to help their sons' wedding fully deliver the indigenous spirits, the two mothers brought their homemade delicacy to share with the guests, the taro abay unique to the Rukai people and the sticky rice hahah of the Pangcah people. Many other indigenous friends also brought their homemade cooking to celebrate, turning the entire reception into a mini version of the Taitung Slow Food Festival. 70 guests were originally invited, but over 100 turned up, neither of them had anticipated that so many people could understand and support same-sex marriage, to the point of showing up in person to give them their blessings.

When they were giving their wedding speeches, Basagala voiced his gratitude towards his mother through the microphone, "I would especially like to thank my mother, who had to overcome tremendous pressure to stand here today and give me her blessing..." Before he could finish, Basagala hugged his mother on stage and both broke into tears, sending the audience all into tears as well.

It Only Takes a Minute to Decide to Bind or Resolve with Love

The reverend that married Usan and Basagala said that he has already married 26 couples since same-sex marriage was legalized, but this was the first wedding where both sides of the parents were present. It shows that even with the law legally adopted, many LGBT couples are still unable to get through to their parents.

After the wedding, neighbors that didn't used to greet them are now willing to give them their blessings. During family gatherings, not only can they attend hand in hand, but they can naturally introduce each other as "my husband." The unspoken and complicated hurdles have gradually resolved and disappeared.

"I hope our story brings some positive energy to children who are wandering out there," says Usan. Many people are afraid of and avoid their family because of their sexual identity, but the reason that family bond feels suffocating or restricting is because of love, it is necessary to take on the responsibility of marriage and to fully understand the attitude of the family members. After all, regardless of gender identity or ethnicity, marriage is never a fairy tale, but a test of the real life.





"Two roads diverged in a wood,
and I took the one less traveled by,
and that has made all the difference."

Robert Frost, The Road Not Taken.



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