IPCF magazine | 2020 December | Issue 30

INDIGENOUS SIGHT

The Era of Women

Knxalan kykuyuh

pangamizingan so ciricireng no kamavakesan

A Platform for Women to Voice Their Opinions, Breaks Barriers.

o pimasaodan namen a tao do Pongso am, mitarek o panisiboan no mehakay aka no mavakes, mangahahap sira o mehakay do rako a awa, o mavakes am, maneysavat sira do keysakan. mikakowran sira a mannga so soli a kanen no asa ka vahay, no abo sira do dang am, manzavok sira so tamek aka pangali da so wakay a ioli da do vahay a ikabsoy no asaka vahay. mikakahasan sira o mehakay a manengeh aka pangayo da. koan da no rarakeh am, mivahay sira o vongvongko do oned no kahasan, ori ji da angai no kamavakesan aka no kakanakan do marai a tokon.

o pitarekan no vazay aka no panisiboan no mehakay aka no mavakes am, omaing do kolikolit a kataotao no tao, beken a pakananaken sira o mavakes, o adan a pimeymasaodan no kakoa pa, aka no pininizpian rana siciakowa ya am, ya rana mizavoz o vazayvazay no mehakay aka no mavakes, ori o na ipitarek rana no aktokto aka no panaknakman no tao do karawan ya, yaro o ya mapakakanakan so kamavakesan a piveyvazayan sicyakoa ya.

o da masazi a vazay no mapakananak so tao a pangangavangan am, ya rana macita do siakay no yancomin ya, am no sira mikala so vazay o kamavaksan am, sira makeykai a makakala so da pininizpian, ta ya aroaro pa o apia aktokto da a panaknakeman da ka no kamehakayan. tamo macita sira o kamavakesan a ya makdeng a mapakavos so vazavazay da, da akmey ipannong o vazay do siakay a ya mahap sia do kapiapia no pimasaodan no tao do karawan.

o mapiangangay so pangaktoktowan no tao ya am, makdeng a vazay no yanbonkay, a mapaciray sia do tizivi so kavavatanen aka no apia vazay da no tatasa a kamavakesan, a ipipakatkat so nakenakem no malalavayo a tao, iciakmey da mimong no makakaday a vazavazay, a kabo no makataha sira a tao do panaknakeman da.

The division of space in my hometown, the Orchid Island, is closely related to gender. In the water, men dominate the deep sea full of adventure and danger, while women stay on the shore to harvest sea creatures; on land, women are seen attending to the neighbouring taro farms to feed the family and demonstrate their productivity whereas men chop firewood and go hunting in the dangerous remote mountains as part of the traditional Tao culture. The remote mountains are believed to be home to evil spirits and where women are supposed to avoid entering.

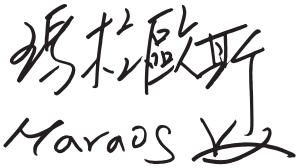
The gender difference in the traditional society lied in the discrepancy in productivity and labour conditions between men and women, and it did not serve as an excuse for gender discrimination. When traditional society, however, moved onto an industrial and business one, capitalism divided labour in such an unconventional way leading to a complicated social structure. Since then, many accounts of gender conflicts and suppression have resulted and hence gradually distanced women from society.

The gender conflicts which Taiwan's society faces have also affected and been duplicated in the indigenous communities. In effect, women have more comparative advantages than men as their experiences have made them more creative, persevering, and tenacious. It is noticeable that when women fully focus on one thing, they stand a better chance of being more successful than men, and bring about a positive influence on the society.

The Indigenous Peoples Cultural Foundation shoulders responsibility for raising awareness about the importance of gender equality, and keeps on bringing up new gender issues for discussion. We will continue reporting on the stories of successful women in various fields and plan to launch talk shows exclusively for women in the future enabling them to show who they are with full confidence and create their own values with which nothing can compare to.

Panirsirngen do yanbonkay

Chairman of the Indigenous Peoples Cultural Foundation



binanau’az pu’apaw sa kushwit

Dazzling Woman Power

isai tiakahiwan a kazakazash kataunan, ayuzi a thau lhungqizi a manasha a suun a lalawa, binanau’az lhungqizi a taun. numa ayuzi mat sa binanau’az malhkakrikriw mashashu. numa sa Amis, binanau’az ashuqrumin taun a lalawa. Paiwan a thau ayuzi mat sa binanau’az uakasaiman shduu piaqitan, numa muqay makintata pinalhi’azazak, kain shinqaan sa tuan wa buhat. antu tataal kazakazash uakasaiman a kataunan, numa mani kmalawa ayuzi mat sa binanau’az a thau antulatata a malhkakrikriw.

thathuini a binanau’az, put’uka kazakazash wa tmusuq, pashtay a thau shduu kain pu’apaw sa kushwit. ayuzi mat sa binanau’az sa buut antu tataal, maqa binanau’az mathuaw a'iaramaz, kmathu kataunan kmalawa sa faqlhu a aniamin, mathuaw painan makushwit. miazai thuini Thau binanau'az kinalawa wa kataunan, isai kataunan ya mriqaz binanau'az alhungqizi a pashtay, thaythuy pu’apaw wa mathuaw maqita riqazan. thuini a binanau'az isa mawalhnak a pruq lhungquz, minfazaq manasha aniamin, kain pu’apaw sa kushwit, numa maqa lhai a manasha sa thau mriqaz yamin yancimiin, mamzai mani ya mriqaz binanau'az kushwit.

isai ayuzi mat sa binanau’az shduu piaqitan, tuali mingkalangkan faat a thau Miniahala inai a thau a qbit sa kazakazash a kalawan naur ansuunin sa tuali. ya lhai a yancumiin matiqtha lalawa, mia’aza pasain sa lhkananai wa shinbuun, uakasaiman lhungquz a mathuaw manasha sa thau. pasain pashtiruq palhintaz ita mriqazuan, kain lhungquzi minfazaq ya makitdaudauk at'ania, piaqitan sa ininthawan numanuma.

In indigenous communities, men traditionally assume the role of handling public affairs; women take care of the family. The responsibility and roles of men and women vary from village to village. The matriarchal Pangcah society gives women the decision-making power, while the first child in a Paiwan family whose men and women enjoy an equal footing has an obligation to run and take care of the family. The culture and traditions and customs of each community not only play an important role in maintaining the social order and morals, but also set up roles suitable for each gender.

The indigenous women in the modern world, on the other hand, have become less constrained by the gender roles dictated by their culture, and hence, enjoy more freedom than their predecessors. Apart from physical constraints, women are raised up to be more considerate and sensitive; and when it comes to community development and other issues, they often voice their opinions with a much broader influence. This can be illustrated by the fact that the Thao people serving on the Council of Indigenous Peoples are all female, and so are the caretakers in indigenous communities. They are impeccable and irreplaceable at work. Most of the indigenous women of the new generation growing up in cities have more access to various and diversified cultural and educational resources, and can integrate what they have learned with their specialty. They dazzle us professionally with women’s capabilities and help raise the indigenous peoples’ profile.

In terms of advocating gender equality, the Indigenous Peoples Cultural Foundation, will do our duty as a press operator. We will introduce more diverse perspectives on gender, as well as report relevant issues at home and abroad in order to broaden the horizon and develop the critical thinking of our audience and readers. Only when our audience and readers start to learn, digest, and understand, will they be able to discuss issues more rationally, and reflect upon themselves to make gender equality possible and sustainable.

naur kazash a kalangkan
CEO of the Indigenous Peoples Cultural Foundation

INDIGENOUS SIGHT Issue 30

Publishing Organization:
Indigenous Peoples Cultural Foundation
Publisher: Maroas
Chief Editor: Magaitan
Coordinator: Sun Lin-Fong, Zhang Si-Lun
Executive Editors: Lovenose, Bali
Art Coordinator: Bali
Address: 5F., No.120, Chongyang RD., Nangang Dist., Taipei City, 11573
Tel: 02-2788-1600/0800-581-600
Fax: 02-2788-1500
E-mail: ipcfservice@mail.ipcf.org.tw

Editing & Production: Business Today Publisher
Art Editors: Zheng Liang-long, Liao Xin-hua
Translators:Chen Deh-I, Ker Nai-Yu,Lai Yu-Hsuan , Lin Shih-Fen
Indigenous Language Translators: Vagyatan(Tao), Magaitan(Thao)
Address: 8F, No.96, Sec. 1, Nanjing E. Rd., Zhongshan Dist., Taipei City
Tel: 02-2581-6196 ext. 336
Fax: 02-2531-6433
Cover Art:Lin Jia-Dong

Looking at the world from an indigenous perspective.
Online version: insight.ipcf.org.tw ►

 License Code: Chunghwa Post Taipei Magazine No. 2064
(mail category: "Magazine") ISSN：2313-111X

"Men Are Hunters, Women Are Weavers" Are Traditional Gender Roles Unbreakable?

Traditionally, indigenous peoples usually used gender to determine a person's role in society. The most common situation was that men became hunters, and women were responsible for textile weaving. Males were expected to complete the tasks which required physical strength, such as hunting, fishing, and chopping firewood; and women chiefly worked in and around the home, weaving textiles and working the fields. The gender-based division of labor gradually form a part of the people's traditional social order, and also generates unique gender taboos in different communities. However, as times change, is there any chance for modern indigenous peoples to break through these traditional gender roles?

Written by **Liang Wen-Jing** ; Illustrated by **Lin Jia-Dong**

"I am a young man, but I want to learn weaving."

Q1 Upon learning that his people's unique ground loom weaving techniques will one day disappear, young Paiwan male Sakinu decided to seek out a teacher and learn the weaving skills.

Sakinu was berated by the elders, who told him that men are not allowed to touch ground looms. None of the female weavers would teach him.

In traditional Paiwan society, there is a clear division of labor between male and female. Men are hunters and not allowed to weave textiles, which is conventionally considered a woman's job. Interestingly, the wood used to make the loom are mostly collected by male, who also construct the weaving tool. However, after the ground loom is completed, men are no longer allowed to touch it. The Atayal, Sediq, Truku, and Bunun communities have similar customs.

"Textile weaving is a woman's job. How about rattan and bamboo weaving?"

Q2 Dongi, a Pangcah lady, appreciates traditional rattan weaving crafts very much and wishes to learn the skills from community elders.

The elders consider rattan weaving a man's responsibility and thus refused to teach Dongi.

Because rattan and bamboo grow in the mountains, and gathering, processing, and weaving the materials all require much physical strength, bamboo and rattan weaving are traditionally done by men. Unlike textile weaving which is done exclusively by women, rattan and bamboo weaving are crafts that belong to the men.

"Women are not allowed in the Palakuwan?"

Q3 Pinuyumayan woman Araytay wants to send lunch to her brother, who is in the Palakuwan. So she pushed open the door of the building and walked in.

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“A patriarchal society or a matriarchal society? Who’s marrying into whose family?”

Q5 Mayaw and Panay, both Pangcah, are about to get married. They mention that Panay is going to “marry into” Mayaw’s family.

According to the elders, it’s Mayaw who is going to marry into Panay’s family!

The Pangcah and Pinuyumayan are matriarchal societies: the family’s land and property are passed down from mother to daughter. The husband moves into his wife’s house after marriage, and children bear the mother’s family name.

As traditional cultures transition into the modern world, gender boundaries are gradually blurred. For example, in order to pass on the fading traditional Paiwan textile weaving craft, Paiwan master weaver Ljumiyang Pacekelj, who was named as a “national treasure” by the Ministry of Culture, started to take in male students as well. The Truku Hunters’ Association, which was established this year in Hualien County’s Sioulin Township, accepts hunting license applications from everyone, regardless of the applicant’s gender.

In the past, our ancestors divided daily work and tasks according to the specific strengths and abilities of men and women to maintain the operation and order of society. Yet modern circumstances are not the same anymore, and the concept of equality is becoming more popular. Gender is no longer an unyielding boundary that cannot be crossed, but a topic that can inspire more thoughts and reflections.

All the males inside were shocked when they saw a woman step into the Palakuwan. The elders scolded Araytay, and told her that women are not allowed to step into the place.

In Pinuyumayan, Pangcah, and Sakizaya societies, after male community members are initiated into their age class, they begin to live together in the Palakuwan. They are responsible for a number of community affairs, such as protecting the community, resource production, and holding rites and sacrifices. All communities with Palakuwan forbid females to enter the space. It should be noted that the Kubas in Tsou communities, though not communal spaces for a specific age class, prohibit women from entering as well.

“I am a woman, but I want to catch flying fish!”

Q4 Tao woman Manui greatly admires how her father and uncles catch flying fish. So she climbed up onto the tatala and announced that she wanted to go out to sea, too.

Manui was severely reprimanded by the elders who told her that women are not allowed to touch the tatalas as it would affect the community’s flying fish harvest.

Among peoples whose traditions include fishing skills and related customs, such as the Tao and Pangcah, most of them forbid women to touch fishing tools and boats. Women are also not allowed to observe the Ocean Rite and Fishing Ritual.

Note: Palakuwan is the youth assembly house of the Pinuyumayan people, different ethnic groups have different names, for example, the Pangcah people call it sfi, the Sakizaya people call it dabek.

The assembly house sits at the heart of addressing public affairs for indigenous peoples, and is where boys and men of different age classes receive training and education.

Be frugal and keep house,
be hardworking and resilient,
be gentle and considerate
How many social expectations have
bonded our last generation of women?

Knxalan

Be independent, confident,
autonomous, and free.
How much do you have to do to qualify
as "a modern woman" in our society?

kykuyuh

"The Era of Women"

Note: Knxalan kykuyuh means "the era of women" in the Truku language.

Our identity as indigenous peoples,
our gender position as a woman.
Only when it's "because we want to,
not because we need to"
can we truly get rid of the roles
imposed on us by society.
That is when we can tell our story
and write down the glory of the era of women.

Ciwang Teyra

Healing Historical Traumas Through Understandings

Having witnessed the oppression of Taiwan's indigenous peoples by external powers and as a victim of historical traumas as well as the microaggression, Ciwang Teyra believes that there must be a platform established for facilitating cross-cultural communication to prevent this undetected subtle trauma from recurring from generation to generation.

Written by **Liang Wen-Jing** ; Photo credit: **Lin Yi-Hsien** ; Translated by **Lin Shih-Fen**

> We can't stick to the echo chamber and refuse to change the status quo. We indigenous people, a minority group that accounts for only 2.4% of the total number of Taiwan, must take the initiative to open dialogue with the other 97.6% of the majority. Only by doing so will there be possibilities for changes to happen.

"The reason I choose to work on microaggression is that it constitutes an important part of my life experience." Ciwang remembers clearly that on the day the Truku name rectification was officially approved, an elder was surprised by her appearance and asked her, "Are you Truku? You don't look like us at all!" Although she did her best to explain, the elder did not trust her and kept nagging, "You just don't look like us. I won't trust you unless you cut the heart out to prove it!"

"Cut your heart out to prove it!" Although it was just a joke, Ciwang could not help but feel hurt upon hearing that. Later, as she looked back on how she grew up, she discovered that the idea of "striving to be a Truku" is like a lingering curse that has shackled her life. It is for this reason that she chooses to focus her research on indigenous microaggression.

Microaggression

Microaggression originally refers to the disparagement of African Americans by the Caucasian American society expressed in the form of speech and behavior. Now it has been extended to mean the harm caused by prejudice against the oppressed groups by the unconscious and ignorant mainstream society.

Microaggression does not suggest that discrimination is insignificant or that the harm is minimal. Instead, it emphasizes the fact that discrimination is often hidden in the details of everyday life and taken for granted.

Name Rectification: the Importance of Gaining the Right of a Say

Ciwang's sense of ethnicity is inspired and cultivated by her father Teyra Yudaw, who is a junior high school principal. Having been a keen enthusiast committed to ethnicity and cultural issues, Teyra is an active promoter of name rectification for the Truku. He would bring his wife and the young Ciwang along to the meetings with other community members. "I was too young to understand what the adults were talking about. There was nothing I could do but play with myself by the side. But up to now, I can still recall from time to time the scene of my father having meetings with those elders and their solemn faces," says Ciwang. With her father as a role model, Ciwang grows up immersed in the consciousness and understanding of ethnicity, which has been gradually internalized in her life.

Truku and Sediq: separating from Atayal and finding their names

Originally classified as a branch of the Atayal, the Truku people began seeking to rectify its name in 1996. The community comprised three major dialect groups: Truku, Tgdaya, and Toda. Despite their shared appeal for separation from the Atayal, these groups came to split internally into two sides holding different opinions about their names. Those based in Nantou County proposed the ethnic group be renamed as Sediq, while those in Hualien preferred Truku. Although the two communities belonged to the same lineage and language family, they nonetheless decided to take on different names. Later, the Truku and the Sediq obtained their official recognition from the government in 2004 and 2007, respectively. Since then, the two have become two separate ethnic groups by law.

Her last year in senior high school saw the final stage of the Truku name rectification movement. The discussions were often tense due to people holding different views about how the name should be rectified. This process awakened Ciwang to the importance of "the right to having a say." That is, they must construct a coherent and systematic discourse of their ethnicity to open dialogue with mainstream society. "This experience is an important factor behind my decision to take the academic path," says Ciwang.

When studying at National Taiwan University, Ciwang joined the Taiwan Indigenous Association of Truku Youth, where she worked with like-minded compatriots to push for name rectification and autonomy for the Truku people. During this period, she had not only to juggle studies and club affairs at the same time but also to deal with the impact of her indigenous identity.

Back in Hualien, where indigenous peoples are not a minority, Ciwang has never felt it strange to be indigenous. It is not until she comes to Taipei that her indigenous identity becomes unique in the Chinese-dominated society. Some of her classmates would approach her and ask such questions with curiosity as: "Is it true that you indigenous people ride wild boars to school every day? You must be good at drinking, right?"

Such microaggression occurs not only in different ethnic communities but also in her in-groups whose members are mostly indigenous. For most indigenous people, drinking serves as an important means of communication on the occasion of gatherings. Given her low alcohol tolerance, Ciwang is subject to teasing by other peers: "How come an indigenous person like you is so bad at drinking?" Depressed by such microaggression of her compatriots, she cannot help but wonder, "Am I really 'qualified' to be called indigenous?"

"Half and Half": Transgenerational Historical Traumas

In the words of indigenous people, the term "half and half" refers to mixed descents of the indigenous and non-indigenous. "I have been often dubbed as 'half and half' as a child, so I had to work very hard to prove my Truku identity," recalls Ciwang. She was born into a mixed family with a Truku father and a Minnan Chinese mother. Unlike her father, who has sharply outlined features, she is fair-skinned, which makes her Truku blood hard to be identified.

Such a "sense of being different" gradually accumulates and keeps bothering her, ending up as a kind of identity anxiety. To Ciwang, it seems like a sin not being a genuine Truku nor having a standard look. "I have to struggle to prove that as a Truku, I do identify with my ethnicity and culture," admits Ciwang.

The origins of such oppression she feels are twofold from both the outside and inside. The former is the lack of understanding by mainstream society, while the latter the doubts of indigenous communities. Growing up as "half and half" leaves many "less-than-pure" individuals having to undergo a long process of struggle for self-identity.

While studying for her doctorate at the University of Washington in Seattle, Ciwang touched on the theories of microaggression and historical trauma, through which she finally found an explanation for how in-group oppression is developed within indigenous communities. This enabled her to let go of the subtle "sense of being different" that had been troubling her since she was a child. "Having understood how the oppression is formed, I feel relieved and become better able to deal with it, because I've got to know what kind of historical traumas my elders have suffered and what they are afraid of," explains Ciwang.

Taiwanese society's microaggression towards indigenous communities originates from the "historical trauma" caused by the colonial rule in the past. Today's indigenous people in their fifties or more are the generation that has lived through the authoritarian era when they were forbidden to speak their native languages, had their cultures and traditional beliefs corrupted, and were forced to conceal their identities. With the absolute power of discourse held in the hands of the dominant Non-indigenous community, indigenous peoples tend to be marginalized and become disadvantaged. By contrast, those "half-and-half" individuals—those considered to be "more Sinicized," "more fluent in Mandarin Chinese," and "do not look like indigenous"—have less difficulty integrating into the mainstream society. This results in indigenous peoples' severe lack of trust in mainstream society or those with less pure bloodlines or appearances. Such traumas caused by history do not heal over time, but rather are passed on from generation to generation, resulting in an ethnicity complex that is more difficult to deal with.

Embracing Who You are to Open Up for Dialogue

In her childhood, Ciwang once thought of abandoning her Truku identity because of being mocked as an "uncivilized barbarian." "My father speaks Chinese with an accent, so I once said to him deliberately, 'Dad, will correct your pronunciations?'" she recalls. Upon hearing this, her mother admonished her solemnly, "Your dad works very hard to prove to society that as a Truku, he is no less outstanding than anyone else, and so is the entire community. No one will recognize you if you do not identify who you are and where you are from." The lesson from her mother is engraved in Ciwang's mind to this day, becoming a driving force that motivates her to reconcile with her identity and further to resolve the historical traumas that have persisted across generations.

"We must seek to open dialogue with mainstream society to bring about change," concludes Ciwang. She strives to unveil the historical traumas that have been inflicted on indigenous communities to find the origins of oppression. She believes that only by connecting and interacting with different communities can we resolve these traumas, stop microaggression from recurring, and bring better mental and physical health to the indigenous.

Women's Den

We are First and Foremost Human, Before We are Woman

Throughout her thirty years of indigenous feminist movement, Apu'u Kaaviana tried various ways to help women find their true"self". From establishing the Women's Den to offering leather crafting workshop, cultural development workshop, women empowerment workshop, and cultivating the Usuru, women's farmland.

Written by **Liang Wen-Jing** ; Photo Credit: **Women's Den, Tseng Hsin-Yao** ;
Translated by **Chen Deh-I**

> I would like to bring back the female worldview, so women can be themselves again.

Female Indigenous Organization Worker

After the Typhoon Morakot in 2009, the people of the Takanuwa Community returned to their devastated homes. They worked hard at rebuilding their homes while taking to the streets in protest of government's permanent housing policy. In order to stand guard over their land, women built a simplified grass hut on a vacant lot in the community, and named it To'onnatamu, meaning where the elders are. There they worked actively on preserving food in preparation and prevention of disasters.

During the day, they grew vegetables and kept chickens in the clearing in front of the hut, and looked after the elders and children resting in the hut. During the night, they cooked over the fire and kept each other company. Two or three years went by this way, until one day, a few elders were rather moved when watching Apu'u farming the plot with other women, "seeing you like this is just like seeing the old Usuru." The sight of women working in the field brought the elders back to when the Usuru, the women's farmland of the Kanakanavu people, still existed.

In the past, there would always be a plot in the community, growing a mixture of traditional xerophytes, such as millet, turmeric, and taro. When men leave to hunt, the plot would be where women gathered to plant food, preserve crops, and store food. Men would not know how to farm, only women would have possessed such wisdom. Apu'u says, "it wouldn't matter if men came back empty-handed from the hunt, women would gracefully produce food from the Usuru."

The typhoon devastated the community, destroyed all financial assets and resources, and traumatized the people irrecoverably. Even though they have returned home, they continue to face fears of disrupted transportation during flood season, and survival crisis such as lack of food supply. "We didn't used to be afraid of going hungry when we had the Usuru, why are we so afraid of being without food now? Why have we forgotten that we have the Usuru?" asked the elders.

"Women play a vital role in terms of survival. When facing major disasters, the knowledge and wisdom possessed by women can reestablish the normal life, and provide food with stability, but this vital role has vanished in the modern age," Apu'u lamented, "after the typhoon, everyone's heart broke, and what we needed to do was to anchor everyone with the Usuru, and rebuild life as we knew it in the community."

See the Inequality of Indigenous Women Starting from the Urban "Den"

The strength supporting the rebuilding of the Takanuwa Community originated from the Women's Den, which is the Kaohsiung City Indigenous Women's Sustainable Development Association established by Apu'u in 2003.

The Takanuwa community is a patrilineal society, and since her young age, Apu'u had sensed the low social status of women in their community. "In 5th grade, a good friend of mine said she was getting married and won't be coming back to school the next semester." Still rather young back then, the concept of marriage was unfathomable to Apu'u, who could not understand how marriage had anything to do with them.

For economic reasons, women in the indigenous community often entered workforce early to support the male in the family in pursuing education, or abide by the custom of "marriage exchange" with other Kanakanavu communities, and enter marriage at a young age. After Apu'u got older and left the community, she discovered that in addition to the deep-set gender inequality in the city, there was also discrimination against the indigenous peoples by the Chinese. Once, Apu'u attended a "cultural event" held for "urban aboriginals" in the city, and as soon as she arrived, she frowned. "Indigenous women were dancing in traditional clothing with extremely short skirts while the emcee was yelling in Taiwanese, 'shake that booty! You aboriginal chicks need to kick higher!'" She recalled. All the "uneasiness" she felt facing gender issues since her young age suddenly resurfaced, and she wondered, "where are the other indigenous women in the city? Are they treated this way as well? What can we do about this together"

In 1997, Apu'u established the Kaohsiung County Indigenous Women Development Association in Fengshan, hoping to provide a "den" to all indigenous women in the city where they can form a support network. She encouraged blue-collar indigenous women from different ethnic groups to be brave, and tell the stories of their lives. After a long time of companionship and practice, these women finally had the confidence to embrace their indigenous cultures, and became lecturers of indigenous culture and craft in community colleges.

With her successful experience in the city, Apu'u began thinking about how to replicate the pattern of women empowerment in her indigenous community, and help her people break free from the gender stereotype.

Bring Women's Den to Community Encourage Women Participation in Public Affairs

But problems in the indigenous community was a whole different story, Apu'u says, "domestic violence is a serious and complicated problem, but with the intimate interpersonal network in the community, everyone traditionally assumes that the woman is to blame for the domestic violence. A lot of children even grew up watching their mothers subjected to domestic violence and public condemnation, to the point that they were seriously scarred."

To keep these women company, Apu'u established a Women's Den in her community, followed by organizing leather crafting workshop and cultural development workshop, so that the women can learn new skills while taking care of their children involved in the cultural development workshop next to them. Teachers in the development workshop are also the same women, teaching children the everyday culture in their community. On the one hand, it helps to nurture the women's confidence in storytelling, on the other, children get to see their mothers "in a different light", and rebuild that trust between mothers and children.

Women's Den hopes to help the women find themselves again, encourage them to actively participate in the public affairs of the community, fight for a chance to go back to school, and even work up the courage to report the domestic violence incidents. Women's Den was naturally criticized for bringing about these changes, the public believed that women who go to the Women's Den are "far from decent", and could easily lead to family dispute, "if you go, you can kiss your marriage goodbye!"

"In a closed community that is dominated by patriarchy, it is extremely challenging to attempt to protect the safety of women." Apu'u sighs, "people seemed to have forgotten that we were first and foremost human, before we were women."

Finding Our Way Home Regaining the Female Worldview

After years of hard work, just when things at the Women's Den were beginning to run smoothly, Typhoon Morakot came and almost wiped out the entire community. However, this disaster incidentally helped Apu'u and sisters at the Women's Den reconnect their femininity with the land, the community and the environment, "we want to bring back not only the Usuru farmland, but the female worldview, the knowledge system connecting women to the indigenous community culture."

How to plant the crops, how to preserve the seeds, how to coexist with the land, and maintain enough food to sustain the community..., all of which are the knowledge and wisdom exclusive to women. But as time went by, everyone forgot what it meant. "If we can take good care of the land, we can bring back the rich ecology we had. That is how we can live a dignified life on our own land," so says Apu'u.

In the future, Apu'u will continue to lead the sisters of the Women's Den, and find their path in the community and on this land. Apu'u has always believed that only by rediscovering the ecology and culture that is connected to the land, will they be able to reclaim the value and meaning of their roles in the community as women, and really find their way back home – back to their own land, to their own culture and become their true selves.


Memebr of Sikawasay & Indigenous
Music and Dance Instructor

Panay Mulu

Breaking Loose from Bodily Constraints

With A Soul Moving Freely between Spiritual and Mundane Worlds

Growing up in a time when discrimination was directed against indigenous peoples, Panay Mulu used to be a Pangcah who refused to speak her mother tongue and struggled to deny her identity. Yet 30 years of field research into Taiwan's indigenous music and dance has changed her mindset, motiving her to embrace her mother culture and in turn learn from community shamans to look at things from a spiritual perspective.

Written by **Chen Yi-Ru** ; Photo credit: **Lin Jing-Yi** ; Translated by **Lin Shih-Fen**

> **We finally know that as women, we are fully capable of serving different roles in the worlds of spirituality and mundanity. That feels really great!**

On an Autumn day, the cheerful sound of music and dancing is heard on the campus of National Dong Hwa University. Standing in the middle of the classroom is Panay Mulu, who is leading her students to explore Taiwan's indigenous music and dance culture. She is currently an associate professor at the Department of Ethnic Relations and Cultures, but also an ethnomusicologist who has conducted fieldwork in Hualien for nearly 30 years. Five years ago, she even went from being an observing researcher to becoming a member of Sikawasay, the shaman group from Hualien's Lidaw Community.

"In the past, few people were happy to admit that they were indigenous," recalls Panay, who is now 60. As she remembers, when she was young, indigenous people were often referred to as "barbarians" or "mountain people." She has also heard classmates being admonished by their parents "not to mingle with indigenous kids." Whenever children made a mistake, it was indigenous ones who were often punished most severely. "The discrimination in the eyes of Non-indigenous people hurt us badly like a sharp sword." says Panay. Therefore, she was determined at a young age to study hard and became superior to others so that she would never be looked down upon.

In her third year of primary school, Panay's father bought her a piano, which was the first one in the community. That's how she entered the world of music. After senior high school, she went on to major in music at National Taiwan Normal University, and it was there that she met her mentor, Hsu Tsang-houei, who has changed her life.

Who am I?
The Mystery of an Unsettled Heart

Upon hearing Hsu's name, Panay sits up straight and exclaims that the deceased Professor Hsu is indeed a great teacher worthy of respect.

Dubbed as the "Promoter of Taiwanese Folk Music," Hsu launched the Folk Song Collected Movement in the 1960s. He often referred to Panay as "Princess of Pangcah" and extolled indigenous music as Taiwan's beautiful treasure. Such comments were a shock to Panay, who had chosen to study Western music, and in turn led her to generate a sense of contradiction about her identity.

Once Panay went with Hsu to the Kiwit community for field study. She had thought she knew the Pangcah language well, but it turned out that she couldn't understand what the elders were saying at all. "I was really frustrated," admits Panay, "wondering who the hell am I? How come I come to know nothing about my mother tongue?"

Having finished her study in Taipei, Panay couldn't wait to move away from the life difficult for her to adapt to. She decided to return to Hualien without hesitation, where she would find a teaching job in middle school. Yet even with her high academic achievement and stable job there, Panay still felt unsettled. "It's like living in mainstream society with a fake Non-indigenous identity, which makes me feel so distant from the world that I belong to."

Getting Connected with Ancestral Spirits Upon Receiving an Indigenous Name

It was not until one summer vacation when Hsu asked Panay if she knew that in the Fakong Community, the Pangcah people there would stay up all night on the first day of their Ilisin, did Panay came to a turning point that would forever change her life. Driven by an intense curiosity about such a practice she'd never heard of, she rode her scooter straight into the mountains, heading toward the community. Along the dark path were numerous graves, and streetlamps were scarce. She began to regret being so impetuous, but there was no way back. In the end, it took her more than 3 hours to reach her destination.

During the ritual that lasted all night, Panay hid in the crowd and documented the event with a camera and tape recorder like a researcher. However, as there were no other females present on the spot, eventually she was recognized and brought to the front of the community elder, with three bowls of rice wine placed at her feet.

When asked by the elder about her name, Panay gave three different ones in Mandarin Chinese, Taiwanese, and Japanese, respectively. But the elder responded sullenly, "Tell me your Pangcah name, otherwise I can't converse with you at the ritual." Then, she was given the name of "Panay" and then asked to consume the rice wine. Having not drank a drop of water that night, Panay felt relaxed all over imbibing the liquor. When she finished the last bowl, for some unknown reason, she fell on her knees and broke down crying. "Now, according to my interpretation as a shaman, such reaction shows that my spirit has finally become connected with those of our ancestors," explains Panay.

It is from then that Panay becomes fascinated with her mother culture and begins to document the traditional music and dance by participating in the rituals of different Pangcah communities. One time on her way to the beach, she heard a faint singing voice coming from nowhere. That was a poignant song she'd never heard before. "I felt the urge to cry and thought that was the true melody of the Pangcah." The sound of the chorus led her to the Lidaw Community, where she discovered the singers to be their shaman group, Sikawasay.

Afterward, with an intense interest in the Pangcah music and dancing, Panay quits her job at the age of 30 and throws herself instead into field research on indigenous culture. "What I used to neglect and deemed insignificant in the past has now become rich in meaning." Take, for example, the often-heard sounds of "oi ha hai" in ritualistic songs. They are generally considered to be meaningless fillers, while Panay has always tried to refute it but cannot find convincing proof. Now she finally finds the answer after becoming a member of Sikawasay. "That phrase means 'Come, Spirits. Here I am!' It is a language at the level of spiritual interaction that rhymes with the songs but is not yet transformed," explains Panay. "That's why I'm proud to be Pangcah," she continues, "because I am embracing the quintessential goodness, beauty, and truth of my culture."

The Quest for Spiritual Harmony and Completeness with Others

Transitioning from scholar to shaman enables Panay to settle her soul, which used to find no place to turn to, and also allows her to look at things from a spiritual perspective. Panay used to hate cooking until she was admonished by her grandmother that the kitchen is where women guard the lives of their families and where ancestral spirits enter the house. A kitchen without cooking smoke means the home is not breathing, and therefore dead. One must have smoke coming out from her kitchen so that God will protect the household and ancestral spirits know where the descendants are. "Even if it's just to make a bowl of wild vegetable soup, you've got to keep the kitchen warm."

When it comes to healing rituals, the Pangcah people believe that in the spiritual world, each of the five major sections of the human body is looked after by different spirits. When people sing and dance, they are resonating with all these guarding spirits taking care of their health, thus generating a natural sense of relaxation for both body and mind. "That's why indigenous people become so cheerful when they are singing and dancing, but outsiders simply do not know why they're doing so," Panay explains.

Having played up multiple roles of a wife, mother, daughter, shaman, and teacher, Panay never imposes a frame on herself and is always transitioning freely between these roles. "From a spiritual point of view, the gender of one's body is transient. Rather, it is the soul that will remain eternal." She adds that there is an important word in Pangcah, "sakelemt," meaning "mutual completeness" in terms of spirituality.What she seeks is a spiritual balance and harmony with people around her, including her husband, children, and students. That is, they complete each other's life.

In the Pangcah society, only three kinds of social roles can serve to sing poetry: shamans, community leaders, and women. It follows that females in matriarchal societies are not only in charge of mundane affairs but also serve as members of the spiritual world. "This is indeed the most challenging and enjoyable part of being a Pangcah woman," says Panay laughingly. "We finally know that as women, we are fully capable of serving different roles in the realms of spirituality and mundanity. I would not resist challenges that any of these roles gives me, but rather I really enjoy the process of going through them."

For Panay, inhabiting different roles as a woman is never a hindrance for her advancement. Rather, it is the strength that comes from the depth of her soul that allows her to live the best of her life.


Music Artist

Inka Mbing

Reborn Through Music, a Woman Singing the Lmuhuw

Once a repressed housewife, she only ever sang cover songs of foreign music with her talented vocal. After a root-searching trip, she was reborn though music and became not only a legendary figure in contemporary female music production, but an important heir to the language and culture of the Atayal people.

Written by **Yu Tai** ; Photo credit: **Huang Chien-Bing** ; Translated by **Ker Nai-Yu**

> **There is nothing romantic about my music, it's all about the nature and earth.**

Sounds of reading in the native language can be heard coming out of a classroom in Klapay Elementary School in Hsinchu County. Inka Mbing stands on the stage, asking the children, "Ima lalu su (what is your name)?" The majority of the children answered with their Chinese name, only a handful could answer with their full indigenous name.

"These kids are all Atayal kids, but the books and picture books they read are all stories of the Westerners." Walking along the tracks of Klapay Elementary School, Inka Mbing heaves out a sigh, "it is now or never in terms of passing on our culture and language."

Suppressing Her Passion for Ethnic Movement Stuck In the Stereotypical Role of a Housewife

Inka Mbing was raised by her grandparents growing up. In order to provide for the family, she left to work in the city very early on. In addition to being a resident singer in a western restaurant in Taipei, Inka Mbing was also the lead vocal in two bands. Gifted with a deep resonating vocal, she could wing any popular Chinese or foreign songs. To her, singing is a just way of making a living.

Having spent years in the city, Inka Mbing witnessed the countless injustice treatment suffered by her fellow indigenous peoples. After she got married with children, she formed the Taiwan Indigenous Peoples' Right Advocacy Association with friends in order to fight for the rights of indigenous peoples. When the Taiwan Indigenous Peoples' Right Advocacy Association was first established, there were many street protests. Inka Mbing would watch her friends take to the streets, holding up banners and yelling their demands. As strongly as she felt in side, she rarely stood on the front line.

"I was really emotional on the inside, but as a housewife, I must suppress my feelings and take care of my family first," Inka Mbing explained. The Atayal is a patrilineal society, and it is the duty of women to manage the household and take care of their children. Even in the city, Inka Mbing is still trapped in the invisible framework instilled by her indigenous community. Her concern for the rights of indigenous peoples and her passion for the development of indigenous communities always stayed hidden deep within.

Searching for Her Roots Ancestors Empowered Her to Break Free

"B'nuxsasba yen, Pucin kin-na ho lan, Kin ho-lanitaTayel, Gmiianitakwara....."

Once, by chance, she heard elders in the community chanting the "Ancestral teaching of the Atayal". The Lmuhuw, a traditional way of Atayal chanting, mentioned that the Atayal people originated from the Masitoban Community in Renai Township, Nantou County, and that there was a giant rock.

The elders' Lmuhuw brought her to tears, Inka Mbing immediately decided, "I must see that place for myself!" Inka Mbing drove through the night, heading straight for Nantou. When she stopped to asked for directions, local indigenous people warned her about the ancestors being mad because someone tried to move the giant rock not long ago, and cautioned her not to approach in case she got hurt. But her determination and faith won, and brought her to the giant rock.

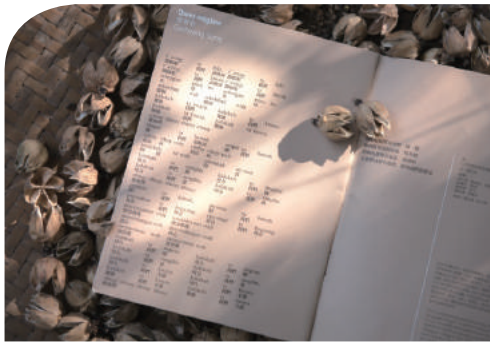
It was early morning, and the giant rock was covered by a veil of fog. A power willed Inka Mbing to climb onto the rock, and she heard a familiar voice speak to her, "my child, you have finally come home." In that split second, Inka Mbing felt herself becoming one with past ancestors, as if she herself was the old man singing the Lmuhuw on this rock all those distant years ago.

"If you want me to take action, please use me as your tool, I am at your disposal." Even after so many years, Inka Mbing's voice still trembled at the mention of her first conversation with the ancestors. On that day, Inka Mbing stood on top of the holy rock, and chanted the "Ancestral teaching of the Atayal" with her own voice and strength.

Ever since that day, Inka Mbing broke free from the traditional framework of stereotypical labor division by gender. The inspiration she gained from her search for root encouraged her to sing for herself, sing for Atayal women.

Reinterpreting the Lmuhuw from a Female Perspective

After the September 21 earthquake that devastated Taiwan, Inka Mbing and her band the "Flying Fish and Clouded Leopard" ventured deep into ground zero to help, and sang songs to bless the people there. Before each performance, she would put on traditional Atayal clothing, wear face tattoo, and pray for the ancestors to join her so that she can sing with the strength of the Atayal soul.



In the past, Lmuhuw can only be sang by the men. Naturally, Inka Mbing was criticized by the community. But she believes that passing on the history and culture of the Atayal people is the only thing that mattered. She visited the various indigenous communities in Taoyuan and Hsinchu, bringing with her a voice recorder to learn the language and ancient melodies from the elders, even though people often closed the door on her face, the friendly looks in some gave her even more strength. Inka Mbing shares that she once met an elder who was critically ill, the elder held tightly onto her hand and sang all the ancient melodies he knew, and named Inka Mbing "the collector".

All of the data she collected and compiled became her album released in 2008, "Ga-ga", and won the Golden Melody Award for Best Indigenous Singer - Vocal Category the next year. "gaga" is the collective rules and customs of the Atayal people, the law to co-exist in harmony with nature. Over the years, Inka Mbing took all of her rage towards the injustice and unfairness of the society, her sympathy towards her people for the insult they endured, and lament for the gradual loss of their indigenous culture, and channeled them into her powerful vocal, so that her emotions may roam freely in the mountains.

"There is nothing romantic about my music, it's all about the nature and earth." Inka Mbing says, her music is inspired by observing the women in her community. For example, the "Weaving Song" tells of her childhood memory of the beautiful figure of her grandma weaving; "Missing my Home" describes how an Atayal lady misses home after getting married far, far away from home, and portrays the laborious life women in the community repeats day after day.

Six years ago, Inka Mbing moved back to her indigenous community. Over the years, she concentrated on teaching her native language, and could be seen in Shui Tien in Hsinchu, Ulay in Taipei, Faxiang in Nantou, and even Smangus. Inka Mbing teaches the children to think, talk and chant in their native language, and they wrote songs together, a total of 15 nursery rhymes were collected and published in the album "Inka Mbing and her young Atayal friend / Ima lalu su", released in 2014. The creative gem of her and the children became the best tool for teaching children to sing at schools.

Nowadays Inka Mbing rarely performs publicly, but by passing on the songs and language, she is evermore determined in her journey of practicing the gaga.

Faisʉ · Mʉkʉnana

Literatrary Writing, the Best Cure for a Homesick Tsou Woman

Writer Faisʉ.Mʉkʉnana was originally just a housewife located in northern Taiwan, deeply homesick with no other ways to express her feelings. She wrote relentlessly, documenting and polishing her memory on life back in her indigenous community, turning them into literary gem, and filling in the gap of the recollections on everyday indigenous lives missing from the collective history due to the tumultuous times.

Written by **You Tai** ; Photo credit: **Lin Sia** ; Translated by **Ker Nai-Yu**

> I write about everything in our indigenous community, the good and the bad, so that further down the road, if people want to learn about the history of our community, they will have something to go by.

Tsou Literary Writer

Faisʉ·Mʉkʉnana was born in Lalauya Community, Alishan Township, Chaiyi County. She grew up during a difficult time, when lives were hard for everyone and people had to take on really heavy labor works.

As the oldest daughter in the family, Faisʉ grew up a diligent kid. She would march deep into the mountain with her second aunt to harvest bamboo sheath, or hike 2 to 3 hours through the mountain just to visit the only beauty salon in the entire township. Faisʉ smiled as she recalled, "there was no electricity back then, after the perm solution and hair curlers were applied, we had to walk ourselves over to the fire and squat in front of it to heat up our hair."

Faisʉ grew up to be a teacher at their community kindergarten. Adults in the family demanded that she marry the person she was arranged for as a child, according to tradition, which really annoyed Faisʉ. Her female cousin once told her, if you marry someone you don't like, life will be nothing but misery from then on. Unwilling to accept how women cannot make decisions regarding their own marriage, Faisʉ was 24 before she finally decided to marry her military husband from Sichuan, introduced to her by a friend."Back then, Tsou women rarely marries a puutu (non-indigenous person), this was big news in our community."

A Tsou Woman, Extremely Homesick

Growing up, Faisʉ had never traveled more than 5 times to the Chaiyi downtown, but as soon as she got married, she transferred to Penghu with her husband's troupe. Instead of the lush green in the mountains Faisʉ used to see, she now watched the vast ocean that seemed to lead no where, yet still managed to develop her own pace of life, collecting sea snails along the coast at ebb tide with women from her neighborhood to help make ends meet.

When she got married, the Vietnam war was still on-going, and for quite a long period, the Taiwan troops were frequently on the move. Wherever her husband's troop moved, Faisʉ followed, and with the money tight, they alwys stayed in places with cheat rent. "There wasn't really anything I couldn't get used to, I probably would not have fit in in a rich household," Faisʉ laughed.

Back then, military personnel makes about half the salary of a civil servant or teacher. Faisʉ and her husband moved with their pair of son and daughter from Pingtung, Kaohsiung, Tainan to Taoyuan, before finally buying their own house in Xinzhaung, New Taipei City, in 1988. However life changed, Faisʉ always remained the same, cherishing everything she had.

Faisʉ seemed to be at home wherever life led her, but deep down, she was always homesick for the mountains that nourished her, with details and events from the past in her community becoming ever more polished and glistening as time went by. However, her husband being in the military and always by the book, could not sympathize with Faisʉ's homesickness. He rarely cared about the customs, routines and life of the Tsou people, and showed absolutely no interest in visiting the community for the Mayasvi, the war ritual.

With no one to share her memory with, Faisʉ having never taken up a job and completely alone away from home, she just could not help being lonely. Every once in a while, she laments, "I know my husband loves me very much, but he will never truly understand the heart of a Tsou woman."

Putting to Words Her Life Back in the Indigenous Community

Faisʉ may only have a degree in elementary school, but she enjoyed reading. When she was younger, she learnt how to read by reading the Bible, as she got older, she broadened her horizon by reading literature and novels. Encouraged by her god son, Faisʉ signed for a creative writing class at the local community college, and with encouragement from female writer Zeng Xin-Yi in class, she began writing. Memories of her life in the Mount Ali when she was younger became the never-ending source of inspiration for Faisʉ.

"I didn't know what literature was, I just wrote about all the rustic and homey stuff." Faisʉ did not that what she wrote was of any significance, but with The Adventures of Tom Sawyer as example, Zeng Xinyi said that if stories about naughty kids can become great literature works, memories of real life and emotions are even more integral to producing literary gems.

Therefore, Faisʉ submitted her article titled *Wooden Clogs* to the China Motor Indigenous Literature Award. The article talks about a puutu buying out their patch of tung trees to make wooden clogs, the young Faisʉ was heartbroken because the tung trees with white flowers blooming were gone. But she had to accept the reality, because the money meant that her father could build a new house for the family. The *Wooden Clogs* eventually won the Merit Award - Prose Category, and that filled Faisʉ with confidence. She began writing during her free time between chores, learnt the Cangjie input method, and word by word, she committed the memories of her indigenous community to the computer, with her grandchild on her back.

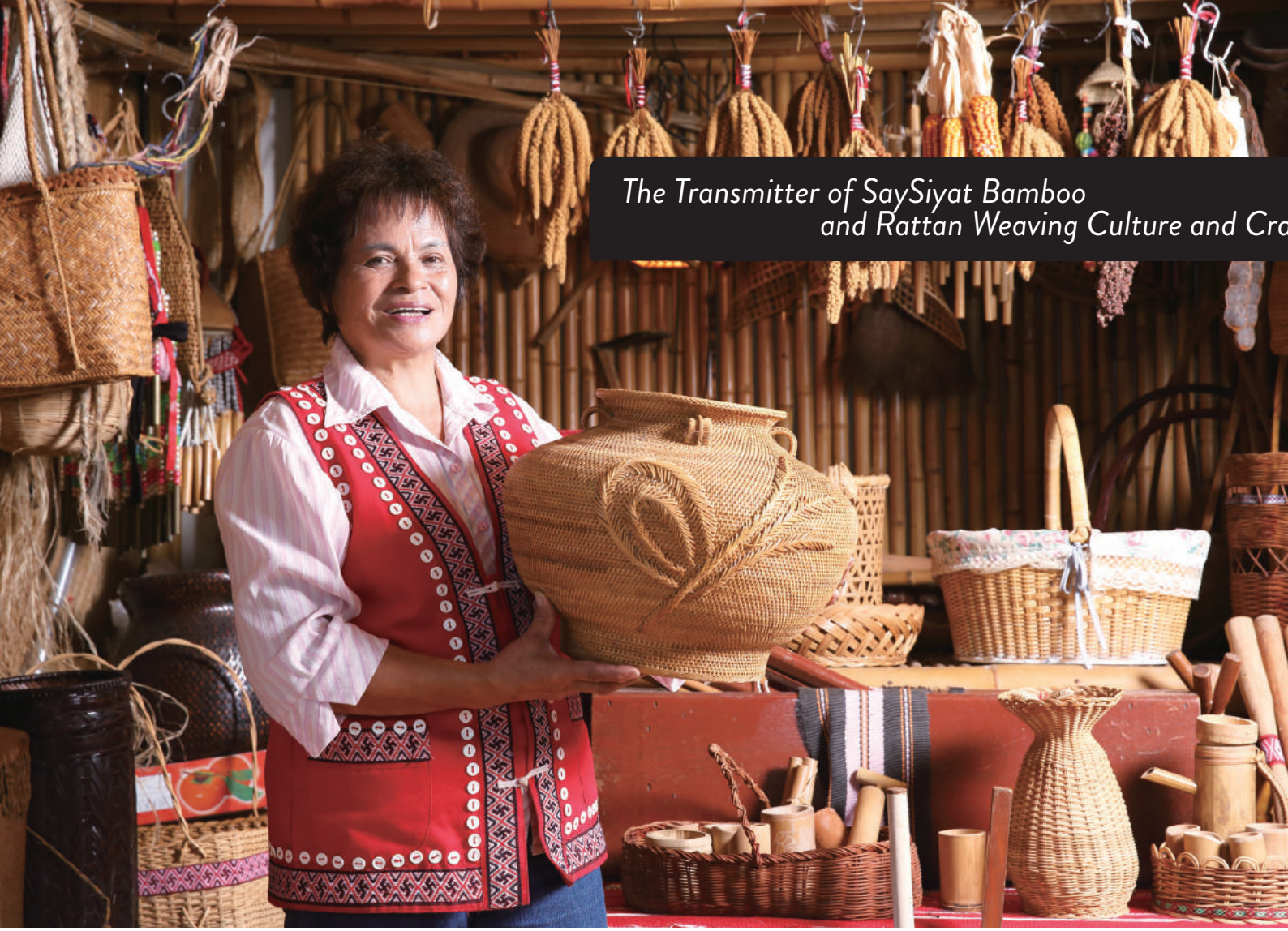
In 2003, housewife Faisʉ who wrote creatively with her grandchild on her back published her first book, *Dear Ak'i, Please Don't get Mad,* and brought to life scenes from a Tsou community deep in the Mount Ali in the 1930s. Hu Tai-Li, researcher at the Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, wrote in the prologue describing Faisʉ's writing colorful like the wilderness of the forest, which embodied the hardship of labor and the deprivation of food and supplies, "every memory she describes seems to come with a slight heave of sigh."

Female Strength Nourished by the Profoundness of Daily Life

In 2017, Faisu published her second book *Faces of Ancestors in the Flame*. In addition to documenting the lively and amicable anecdotes of life in the indigenous community, her book also depicts, from a nobody's perspective, life in a Tsou community, how they struggled to survive amidst the political turmoil from late Japanese ruling period to the early years of the Nationalist Government in Taiwan.

"I write about everything in our indigenous community because I want to pass on the history of our family," Faisu says that even though the Tsou people do not have written words, every Tsou child has spent time by the bonfire listening to adults tell stories of the family history. As well developed as the internet is nowadays, family history often tend to be neglected and buried. Faisu encourages indigenous women to start writing, and document everything in their lives. Writing in Chinese may lack the vibe unique to indigenous peoples, but at least the history and context of indigenous peoples will be eternal.

Having lived through regime changes and the White Terror, experienced loneliness of being away from home, and witnessed displacements caused by climate change, there is no judgement in Faisu's writing. Approaching 80, she continues to keep a record of life from the perspective of a regular nobody. Every time she recalls the past, the soft and gentle heart of this Tsou woman finds the strength to march forward with even more determination.



The Transmitter of SaySiyat Bamboo and Rattan Weaving Culture and Cra

Away Dayen Sawan

Seeking Ethnic Memory within Indigenous Crafts

Plain weave, twill weave, interlaced, spiral, triangle patterns...with a pointed awl in her hand, Away Dayen Sawan weaves the tough Major Jenkin's rattan, now soft and malleable strips, back and forth and pulls them together tightly. Away Dayen Sawan has been working as a weaver for more than thirty years; and throughout these decades, her great passion for the craft has never wavered.

Written by **Liang Wen-Jing** ; Photo credit: **Wang Shi-Hao** ; Translated by **Chen Deh-I**

> I like the natural scent of bamboo and rattan. Although it's hard work - you have to collect the materials in the mountains and process them afterwards, I just really enjoy doing it.

In Away Dayen Sawan's memory, her father was a man who could easily weave natural materials, such as bamboo and rattan, into daily life items. His products were so good that the Non-indigenous people living nearby would come and buy bamboo and rattan items from him. In fact, the SaySiyat people are well-known for their outstanding skills in weaving. During the Japanese Colonial Period, many Japanese went up the mountains to trade with the SaySiyat and order beautifully-made bamboo and rattan items. However, as the people's lifestyles became modernized and the elders gradually passed away, traditional bamboo and rattan weaving was slowly dying out since there was no one to carry on the tradition. "When I started to learn bamboo and rattan weaving, there weren't many exquisite bamboo and rattan weaving items left in the community. There were only a few daily life items." said Away Dayen Sawan.

In 1984, Miaoli County's Nanzhuang Township Office worked with a couple of neighboring communities and invited bamboo and rattan master weaver Chang Hsien-Ping to come and teach weaving courses. With her children old enough to go to elementary school, Away Dayen Sawan, then in her thirties, had the free time to sign up for the course, and thus began her journey into the world of bamboo and rattan weaving.

Trained by the Master
Learning the Basics of Bamboo and Rattan Weaving

Away Dayen Sawan described that when she began to learn bamboo and rattan weaving, there was this unexplainable attraction. She was completed hooked. "Back when I first started, I would work until midnight. I was thinking about how to weave and display the patterns I had in my head." Her husband was concerned about Away Dayen Sawan's wellbeing. "My husband would complain that I should get some rest!" Yet it is also because of her husband's support, Away Dayen Sawan is able to carry on her work in bamboo and rattan weaving.

Learning how to weave takes time. The students have to master many weaving techniques and also learn how to split and cut the materials. Back then most of the community women not only had to tend to the home, but also work to support the family income. It required a strong will to dedicate extra time and effort to learning bamboo and rattan weaving. "Initially, there were about fifty or so women in my class. But later they gradually dropped out due to family economic issues. Only I kept on going. Now these former classmates come to me to learn the craft." said Away Dayen Sawan with a smile.

After the community weaving course came to an end, Chang asked Away Dayen Sawan if she was willing to come to his factory in Zhunan and help produce some vases that were to be exported to Japan. Away Dayen Sawan agreed immediately. For the next decade, she would commute to Zhunan every morning at six-thirty, then return home at six-thirty in the evening without fail.

While she worked for her teacher and improved her own skills, Away Dayen Sawan thought about how to combine weaving with her traditional SaySiyat culture. After her training was completed, Away Dayen Sawan returned to her community and opened Ponglai Workshop. She kept in touch with her teacher Chang Hsien-Ping. "Now when I run into problems in my weaving, I still go to Mr. Chang for advice. He is always happy to help." Away Dayen Sawan said with a shy smile.

Not Only a Skill but Artwork Infused with Traditional SaySiyat Culture

Two years after Away Dayen Sawan picked up bamboo and rattan weaving, the SaySiyat celebrated paSta'ay - a major ritual held every ten years. "I had been thinking about integrating our SaySiyat story patterns into my work to reclaim our traditional culture." Using natural materials such as ramie fibers, bamboo tubes, and Job's tears grains, Away Dayen Sawan handmade her family's traditional Tabaa'sang (hip bells). The Job's tears grains, which has a grey-white base color and transparent sheen, shine like natural gem stones; and the bamboo tubes decorated with the grains and tied to the hips sway with the dancer's quick movements, creating a string of crisp rhythmic sounds. Away Dayen Sawan successfully recreated the traditional PaSta'ay Tabaa'sang.

"When I was little, the Tabaa'sangs were already made with modern materials from the outside world: cloth, sequins, and brass pipes." When she asked the elders to describe the traditional Tabaa'sang to her, they expressed that the traditional Tabaa'sang was completely handmade with ramie fibers nets, Job's tears grains beads, and bamboo tubes. "This is the first piece of work in which I attempt to rediscover my traditional culture."

For Away Dayen Sawan, bamboo and rattan weaving is not only a skill, but, more importantly, a connection to her childhood memory. "I grew up with these bamboo and rattan items. I feel a deep connection with them."

The warm, smooth texture of bamboo and rattan reminds Away Dayen Sawan of her childhood. She has been living in the mountains all her life, and remembers the time when everything - household tools, daily life items, hunting

equipment, clothing - was made with natural materials found in the mountains which were abundant with bamboo, Major Jenkin's rattan, ramie, and wood. She often followed her father into the mountains with a bamboo basket on her back to collect the materials. Later she would watch her father turn the plants into rice sieves, back baskets, and wine vessels.

"When I was young, only men were allowed to do bamboo and rattan weaving. Because it is a lot of work: you have to go into the mountains to collect the materials, and it takes a lot of effort to process the materials afterwards." Although she grew up watching her father weave, Away Dayen Sawan was already an adult when she began to learn the basics of weaving. Back then she would often go back home to ask for guidance from her father and other elders. She would also observe the SaySiyat bamboo and rattan weavings preserved in communities and museums, and carefully study their structures in detail. "I should have asked him about weaving sooner," Away Dayen Sawan said with a tinge of regret, "because my father passed away soon after."

Carrying on SaySiyat Culture and Refusing to Turn Weavings into Commercialized Products

"A lot of factories want to turn my work into commercialized products, or asked me to make them with materials that are easier to manipulate. For example, use plastic strips instead of bamboo and rattan. But I turned down all of them." Of course Away Dayen Sawan understands that replacing the natural plants with modern materials would make the weaving process faster and easier, and therefore make more money. "I don't know why, I just like the scent and texture of bamboo and rattan."

Unlike other people who earn money by taking orders, Away Dayen Sawan followed the footsteps of Chang Hsien-Ping and focuses on culture transmission and art creation instead. She joins modern weaving skills with SaySiyat people's totem patterns, such as the wa:on 卍 ("daughter of thunder"), Porong ("Chinese silver grass knot"), and dragon and serpent patterns, to create pieces that fuse tradition with innovation. Her work has won much recognition, including the National Craft Awards and Weaving Crafts Awards.

Many of the bamboo and rattan items made by community members were lost due to the fact people did not value traditional crafts as we do now. Nowadays, a lot of visitors from home and abroad would ask if Away Dayen Sawan is willing to sell her work. She always declines, expressing that it is impossible for her to produce significant quantities since making one piece of weaving already requires a fair amount of time and effort. Besides, she hopes to leave behind some weavings that belong exclusively to the SaySiyat culture.

Because she is so actively involved in local public affairs, the community members have elected Away Dayen Sawan as the very first female leader of Ponglai Community. "Now that I'm the community leader, I don't have extra time to give lessons." Yet the determined weaver is not giving up her work in SaySiyat craft and skills transmission for good. "After I retire from this post two years later, I will focus on passing on our bamboo and rattan weaving techniques."

Dresedrese Pacengelaw

"Replanting" Herself in the Soil of the Homeland

Having been engaged in tree planting with her husband, Sula Sukinadrimi, for twenty years, Dresedrese Pacengelaw hopes to recreate a lush piece of forest land for their next generation to grow up carefree and happy as the older generation did. By doing so, she has also found a way home through "replanting" herself in the soil of the homeland.

Written by **Liang Wen-Jing** ; Photo credit: **Tsai Tsung-Sheng** ; Translated by **Lin Shih-Fen**

> As a mother, I simply want to help my community members find their way home. Only when people are back will our language and culture be able to be passed on.

Protector of Forests & Ecological Restorer

Dresedrese's busy day begins in the early morning before the sun rises. By four o'clock, she is up and gets ready for a day's work: She opens her breakfast restaurant at six, then wakes her kids up at seven, getting them ready for school. After that, she goes back to work at the restaurant until the late morning. At noon, after closing up shop, she follows her husband to their nursery in the community to work non-stop on another "job."

In the nursery, seedlings of various kinds of native trees, such as Chinese sweetgum (Liquidambar formosanum), glaucous oak (Cyclobalanopsis glauca), Taiwan zelkova (Zelkova serrata), and Chinese Pistache (Pistacia chinensis Bunge), are planted in small plastic pots. All of them are grown personally by the couple, starting from seed collection and saving to cultivation. Seedlings will be kept there for three to five years until they grow old enough to be transplanted. For transplantation, these plants, along with the soil they grow in, will have to be soaked in water overnight to absorb enough water before moving to planting areas in the mountains.

Due to a shortage of water for irrigation, every time new seedlings are transplanted, the couple has to take an old-fashion approach by carrying water in large capacity plastic bottles to the mountains. The newly transplanted trees must be watered regularly for a consecutive month, with one bottle for a seedling per day. If there are 100 seedlings, say, 100 bottles are needed. The routine continues day after day, year after year.

Thirty Years into Tree Planting to Restore Ancestors' Forests

Since the 1990s, Sula has begun his great cause of planting trees with the support of his parents. Saddened by the sight of their ancestral forests being depleted by loggers and the government, the destruction of wildlife habitats, and the central reforestation policy that focuses on a single exotic species, the family decided to restore forests on their own without seeking any government funding. They used their money to purchase land, nurture seedlings, and persuade landowners to transfer their abandoned farmland for cultivating native trees. Over the years, with a constant effort, they have completed their First Planting Area, which lies at altitudes of 500 to 1,200 meters above sea level with an area of 100 hectares or so. When the planting comes to an end, they return the forest to nature and never enter the land again.

Dresedrese joined their ranks after marrying Sula in 2003. As Sula's parents grow older, the couple takes over the family business, regarding tree planting as their lifelong mission.

The planting of trees follows a routine annually from October through the rainy season of the following year. To begin with, Sula would have to spend several months clearing the land of "weeds:" invasive foreign species such as Malabar chestnut (Pachira aquatica) and bittervine (Mikania micrantha), which are highly productive and fast-growing. The former, in particular, used to be promoted by the government as one of the incentive species in its reforestation programs because of its economic value as a landscape tree. Yet it has proved problematic thanks to its invasiveness that tends to squeeze out other native trees, which has damaged the biodiversity of Taiwan's mountain forests.

"These foreign species grow and spread rapidly after being introduced, becoming a lethal threat to native trees. Without trees, there is no food for the wildlife and hence no prey for hunters. Planting trees is not that difficult; the most tiring task, however, is to weed. That is, to clear these harmful species of the land," says Dresedrese.

One doesn't need to learn from textbooks or experts to know such things as how to restore mixed forests, what to plant in what season, how far apart should different trees be planted, and how to prune excessive foliage to slow down evaporation of water from trees. "Nature will teach us how to do that," adds Sula. The various knowledge for planting trees has long become internalized as an intuitive part of their lives through the accumulation of experience for years.

At the Third Planting Area, Sula climbs up the slope and begins to dig holes for Dresedrese to plant seedlings. Then she backfills and compacts these holes with soil just loosened. As she waters the trees, she gives a silent blessing in Rukai, wishing each of them" grow up healthy with so many companions being around."

The Sukinadrimi family has been devoted to tree planting for two generations over a time span of nearly 30 years, a cause that takes much time but yields no real economic benefits. Their aim is simply to protect the land and forests and conserve wild plants and animals that inhabit there. Sula admits that he did think about giving up when he was young. But as he recalled the feelings he felt in the mountains with his father as a child, he soon regained his motivation. "When I see a tree that grows as tall as a house, I realize this is where my value lies."

Finding Herself Back in the Mountains

When it comes to how one may find their self-worth in the process of planting trees, Dresedrese, who has returned home from the city, is particularly impressed.

Born into a Rukai clan that hails from the Kucapungane Community in Pingtung County, Dresedrese is raised in the city because her family has moved away since her grandfather's time. Only on holidays would they come back to the relocated community. Therefore, although she's been aware of her Rukai identity since her childhood and understands the language, Dresedrese never has a genuine understanding of her mother culture. "I know I am Rukai and a descendant of the community leader; my grandmother was the matriarch of the clan, and I can get fully dressed in an ornate costume with an eagle feather headdress for rituals. But I still do not know what it means to be 'Rukai,'" says Dresedrese.

Dresedrese became increasingly doubtful about her identity as she grew older. After going out into society and began to work, she felt an ever-growing sense of cultural loss, which made her feel very frustrated. It was this sense of powerlessness and emptiness that drove her "back to the mountains."

She chooses to settle down at the Kabalelradhane Community, where her stepfather and families on her mother's side reside, and runs a drinks stand and breakfast restaurant for a living. In her spare time, Dresedrese likes to pester the community elders to chat with her, and she would document their stories using a camera and a digital recorder to learn more about her roots.

Shortly afterward, she met Sula and fell in love with him. "He is a man with a unique mind," says Dresedrese, attracted by his concerns for the land, forests, and the culture of his people. After they get married, she becomes the bread earner in the family. What's more, she even helps them purchase the land for the Second Planting Area by putting up her family's properties as collateral for a loan. "Anyway, I am still running a breakfast restaurant. At least it ensures we can make ends meet, and that's enough." Dresedrese says with a laugh.

Dresedrese relates her resolution as if it were nothing impressive. Yet back when she decided to marry Sula, her family did ask her to consider it carefully, questioning "Are you sure you want to move back to the mountains? The family you will marry into, what they do is simply plant trees. That means you'll not only have to help them with planting trees, but also feed the whole family. Think again before you do!"

Eighteen years have passed since she became Sula's wife and a tree planter. Asked if she ever regrets it, Dresedrese answers with a look of clear-sighted determination," Over these years, I've been seeking to discover 'who I am' and 'where I come from.' It is not until I married my husband and came to understand his family's cause, have I finally found the answers to these questions."

Paving a Way Home for Compatriots by Developing Eco-tourism

Sula Sukinadrimi himself also understands that judged by the standards of modern society, he is unqualified as a husband for failing to take up the responsibility to raise his family. "Every day at the sight of her getting up in the early hours of the morning, I'd think to myself, 'Ah, it's just another day for a kept man,'" says Sula self-mockingly as he looks at Dresedrese with guilt.

"I take it as our 'career.' While making money is important for sure, planting trees for the future generation is no less urgent. As long as we work at a steady pace and do as much as we can, one day we'll see our efforts pay off," Dresedrese responds softly, "If tree planting can bring in regular income for the community, it will encourage more community members to return or stay, and create an opportunity for us to develop eco-tourism as a source of economy."

Dresedrese believes that as long as there are job opportunities in the community, with people staying, the language and culture will naturally be passed on. This in turn allows their future generations to be nurtured in their homeland and acquire the mother tongue, without having to go through the same process of self-identification as their parents do. This process is just like nurturing the seedlings for transplantation. Those young trees, while not as tall and big as old ones, are deeply rooted in the soil where they are planted and are therefore able to hold on to the land to withstand storms and protect the earth.

Promoter of Health and Cultural Care for Taiwan's Indigenous Communities

Yi-Maun Subeq

A Gentle Strength with Firm Resolution

Like a drizzling spring rain that moistens the world silently, Yi-Maun Subeq is moving forward confidently with a gentle strength and firm resolution on her path to promoting indigenous health care in Taiwan.

Written by **Liang Wen-Jing** ; Photo credit: **Tsai Tsung-Sheng;**
Translated by **Lin Shih-Fen**

> What we fight against is not the mainstream society as a whole, but the trauma we have suffered from history.

"Yi-Maun, the pain is killing me."

In the hospital, hearing the fellow male Truku lying in bed utter these words in tears, Yi-Maun Subeq could not help but feel agonized.

The man is a construction worker hospitalized for hip joint surgery. This is not his first time to receive the surgery, though, as he has had his hip joint replaced once due to occupational injuries. But he resumed his work immediately after the first surgery because he is the only bread earner of his family. The arduous work caused the displacement of the hip joint, so he was in hospital again to fix the problem. During his hospitalization, however, he was neglected by the medical staff that would not give him enough painkillers, leaving him to suffer the pain. "I've just got out of surgery, and why did they say they wouldn't give me painkillers simply because I am a drinker?" he complains.

Unable to answer his question about the treatment he receives, Yi-Maun feels equally at a loss on how to explain why a patient like him has to suffer such severe pain simply because of his indigenous ethnicity.

Indigenous Consciousness Enlightened by Discrimination

Born in a multicultural family with a Non-indigenous father and a Truku mother, Yi-Maun was raised in Guofu Borough, a mixed community in Hualien City where the Sakizaya and Non-indigenous live. Since her childhood, the sharp-featured Yi-Maun has been aware of the prejudice and differential treatment imposed by the mainstream on indigenous peoples. She remembers, as a child, she was rejected by the parents of her non-indigenous friends. Their harsh words still linger in her mind until now: "You, a barbarian child, do not come to play with my kid!" It is such an unpleasant experience that sows the seed of indigenous consciousness in her young, ignorant mind.

As she grows older, to ease the burden on her family, Yi-Maun chooses to go to junior nursing college and becomes a hospital nurse after graduation. In the course of her clinical work, she has witnessed the discrimination commonly held against indigenous communities in Taiwan's healthcare system.

Take health care workers as an example. Most of them would assume that indigenous people have a liking for drinking, smoking, and chewing betel nut. "They tend to presume that painkillers won't be effective in these patients, and may even underestimate the pain and ignore their suffering."

Turn back to the case of the aforementioned Truku man. When he attempts to express how painful he is, the nurse simply asks him to be patient and say, "You have to bear with it. You must be a heavy drinker so that the pain gets so unbearable."

Recurring Tragedy Caused by Cultural Insensitivity

Apart from the stereotype in the medical system, indigenous people are also mostly socio-economically disadvantaged. Hence, when a family's main breadwinner falls ill, the hospital usually has to report to the social work system for its intervention and necessary assistance.

Take again the Truku patient for instance. He used to have an older brother who was also a construction worker and had the same surgery as he did. But unlike him, whose family is still able to provide support and care, his brother was left unattended in the hospital. His wife left home immediately after he got hospitalized, leaving him and their young children behind. While in hospital, the poor man even got a skin infection due to lack of care. "But the nurses and doctors back then knew nothing about cultural safety, nor were they aware that a disadvantaged family like this should be cared for by social workers," says Yi-Maun. In the end, the patient's brother died of septicemia after his fever persisted.

"Why should there be a necessary correlation between illness and ethnicity? Why is it that indigenous people have to be classified in the mainstream health care system?" Yi-Maun becomes increasingly bewildered by such questions that have been bothering her since her childhood. She bears witness to the discrimination of the mainstream society against indigenous communities leading to the recurrence of tragedy of the underprivileged, which seems impossible to reverse.

Hence, in 2001 she decided to return to the campus for further studies. She enrolled in the Graduate Institute of Aboriginal Health, Tzu Chi University, to focus on public health, hoping to find answers to her questions.

Introducing the Concept of Cultural Care to Provide the Most Appropriate Care

Back then, when it came to the issue of healthcare for indigenous communities, the medical- and social work-related departments in Taiwan's universities mostly focused on the aspects of how to reduce the incidence rate of diseases, to increase life expectancy, and on genetic studies, but seldom touched on the concepts of cultural safety, social determinants of health, and cultural care, resulting in indigenous people being equally disadvantaged in the socio-economic and medical systems.

"Therefore, we need to equip medical professionals with appropriate cultural sensitivity through systematic training and education. Only by doing so can we solve the problems faced by indigenous peoples in the medical and health care system," Yi-Maun concludes. After earning a master's degree in public health, she goes on to pursue her doctorate in medical sciences from the same school. She is not only the first Truku to obtain a doctoral degree, but also an avid advocate of incorporating indigenous cultural care into the medical system.

Cultural Care

Cultural care refers to professional caregivers are equipped with the understanding of different cultural backgrounds of varied ethnic groups in such aspects as language, customs, diets, socio-economic conditions, etc., and the ability to provide patients with the most appropriate care based on their cultural knowledge.

In 2013, the Council of Indigenous Peoples (CIP), Executive Yuan, held its first National Conference on Indigenous Affairs. Under the agenda of health and social welfare, Yi-Maun formulated the topic of "building a healthy environment with cultural significance" and served as the convener of the committee. For the first time, the concept of "cultural care" has been formally introduced into the chapter on policies.

This in turn indirectly prompted CIP to rename the Community Day Care Centers for Indigenous Elderly to Tribal Culture and Health Station in 2014. Yi-Maun took on the task of instruction, traveling to 80 or so communities throughout the island to give training at local stations and spread the concept of cultural care.

"One of the important issues of cultural care is how to incorporate such cultural elements as traditional food, crafts and skills, language, and clothing into the care model." Take delaying disability in older people, for example. We can engage community elders in activities featuring traditional local elements, like drawing community maps and weaving traditional backpacks, fishing baskets, and other everyday utensils. These activities can not only enliven their memories of how they lived in the past but create a connection with the cultural context at the same time to serve the purpose.

Yi-Maun went on to establish and direct the Taiwan Cross-Cultural Health Care Association (TCHCA) in 2018. In the following year, under the support of the Health Promotion Administration, Ministry of Health and Welfare, TCHCA trained Taiwan's first batch of nearly 60 seed teachers for cultural care dedicated to delaying elderly disability in indigenous communities. She hopes that through the establishment of the training mechanism, the concept of cultural care can be more effectively implemented in every corner of the island.

Eliminating Health Disparities Through Passage of Indigenous Health Act

In recent years, although the gap between the healthy life expectancy of Taiwan's indigenous people and that of all citizens has reduced from 16 to 8.2 years, the difference of nearly 10 years indicates that there is still much room for improvement in the relevant policies.

One of the most urgent tasks is to push for the passage of the Indigenous Health Act that addresses indigenous people's rights to health and life. The act is a basic bill that can truly implement health care for indigenous peoples, as it concerns a wide range of issues, including personnel training, the model of cultural care, cultural safety, funding of health care, indigenous health information, and the establishment of specialized agencies by local governments.

"Our priority is to send this act, which has been delayed for 10 years, into the stage of discussion and perfect it through rolling amendment. Only through legislation are we able to defend our rights on a legal basis," says Yi-Maun gently but firmly.

Having been working on indigenous health issues for nearly 20 years, Yi-Maun always remains soft and flexible, with a demeanor that is neither humble nor haughty, in seeking opportunities to open dialogue with mainstream society. "Some compatriots think that I'm a dove, which is too peaceful, and suggest me be more aggressive," she says with a smile. Yet, it is her belief that only by establishing effective communication channels with mainstream society can we truly eliminate the health inequalities caused by ethnic differences and heal the historical trauma and damage done to indigenous communities by colonizers.

Kawah Umei

Bravely Facing the Past and Healing Herself Through Documentaries

With childhood experiences such as community relocation and broken family relationships, adult Kawah Umei realized the emotions buried deep in her heart which she had neglected to address are the reason why she cannot just "let go and move on" with life. Thus she bravely took up a filming camera and began to document and sort out the lives and relationships between her and other people, and seek out the best way to get along with them.

Written by **Kuo Po-Jiun** ; Photo credit: **Lin Jing-Yi** ; Translated by **Chen Deh-I**

> When I make a film, I always have a goal: to make peace with myself. Every time I complete a documentary, I would be the one who had changed the most. The process is a chance for me to reconsider my relationships with other people and adjust my expectations of others.

Documentary Director

During the Japanese Colonial Period, Hualien's Lintian Mountain was a forestry station. The area attracted many indigenous peoples, Hakka, and Mainlanders to the region to seek a living. However, regulations that prohibited logging were announced in the 1990s and that led to a gradual exodus of the region's residents. Eventually Lintian Mountain lost its appeal and became desolate. Documentary director Kawah Umei's family moved to Lintian Mountain at its heyday. She witnessed Lintian Mountain at its pinnacle and the following recession, during which the family moved away; and this experience deeply affected how Kawah perceived her ethnic identity.

Kawah was born in Cilo'ohay Community in Lintian Mountain. Since this unique community was created because of economic reasons, it has a relatively short history (less than a century) and its residents consist of diverse ethnic groups who cannot live here permanently due to national dormitory regulations. This is very different to other traditional indigenous communities which have existed and developed in the same location for generations – they have their own territory and comprehensive social class structure and rituals. "It's very difficult for me to explain my community to other people. It is completely dissimilar to what society views as a "typical indigenous community". So I have always been unsure about whether I really grew up in an indigenous community or not." Kawah explained awkwardly.

Kawah did not know how to explain herself and her identity to the external world. Outsiders also regarded Cilo'ohay as very different to other average communities. Lintian Mountain was controlled and managed by the Japanese Colonial Government, thus the region was deeply influenced by Japanese culture. Local schools would often hold cleanliness contests and were very particular about the way students dress. Moreover, since Lintian Mountain region started developments earlier, the residents are more financially stable and most of the children have better education. Understanding the advantages of being in the right social class, Kawah's father chose to send his children to the school in town rather than let them stay in Cilo'ohay.

Kawah moved from Cilo'ohay to Cingaroan Community in Fonglin Township when she was four, and later went to school in another town. She was one of the best performing students in class. Nevertheless, these were not common life experiences of other indigenous children in general, and consequently prompted another identity crisis for Kawah. "I did better at school and dressed neatly, so other classmates did not dare to bully me. But when I spoke out for other indigenous classmates, they would say 'you are not one of them'. I did not realize that not looking like an indigenous child and not living in an indigenous community would cause trouble for me." Kawah said.

Arriving at the City of Her Dreams but Losing Her Original Culture

Just like many children from the east coast, Kawah dreamt of moving to Taipei when she grew up. Kawah's dream came true when she started studying social psychology at a university in Taipei. Yet this move would later trigger her desire to continuously look back and reflect on her life.

The Department of Social Psychology has group dynamics courses starting from freshman year. Students share their personal thoughts with classmates and upper classmen to practice the process of looking back on their lives and experiences. The course helped Kawah learn more about herself; and yet every time she dug deeper into childhood memories, she felt great pain.

"The model is a way to practice interview skills. But when we are so focused on the counseling relationship and not doing enough to handle the complex emotions, it can generate a lot of problems." When asked about the turning point in her life, Kawah smiled. "One day I was taking the bus to school, and suddenly realized I cannot carry that kind of mental pressure anymore. So I took the bus home and dropped out of school."

A passionate lover of film festivals, Kawah later passed the exams and entered the Department of Motion Picture at National Taiwan University of Arts. Realizing she is not that comfortable with her life in Taipei, Kawah chose to express the changes in her mind in her assignments. Pangcah Made Pangcah, Kawah's first film, focused on the theme "take off those high-heels". She finds wearing high-heels uncomfortable, yet many women have to wear them. "Women should be free of restrictions. As for me, I want to escape from the question of 'who am I?'. I used to wish to live in the city, and believed that I would receive a lot of wonderful experiences here. But as I try so hard to become someone who can communicate with everyone, I have forgotten my own original culture." Kawah admitted that she felt conflicted and did not know what to do.

Picking Up the DV and Reexamining Her Relationship with Her Father

Therefore she decided to use an objective perspective to record everything her father did at Cilo'ohay, and eventually managed to reclaim her own culture identity.

Kawah's father is the community Chief of Staff and also one of the few residents that stayed behind in Lintian Mountain. Year after year, he organizes the Ilisin and is dedicated to reviving local community culture. Kawah remembers helping out every year since she was little. Now an adult, she began to film the process with a DV. "The first year of filming was fun, the second year was a little boring." Kawah said with a laugh, "when the third year came around, I just recorded whatever I found interesting."

She considered the event boring because the Ilisin organized by her father was just like any average community annual event. It did not have the emotional connections and cultural identity of the people. Kawah collected a lot of information from books and publications, and realized that the Ilisin at Cilo'ohay is definitely not the same as those held in traditional Pangcah communities. "What I could not accept back then was why is my community so different to what I thought it was? Why doesn't my community have rituals and social class

structures? I could not document how my community operated and worked." Kawah tried to understand her own cultural roots, yet was very frustrated. "I'd often think what my parents gave me was not what I wanted. Just like the Ilisin organized by my father is not the Ilisin I wanted to see."

The current presentation of Cilo'ohay's Ilisin is the product of different groups of people who dispersed and resettled here due to the circumstances of the era. Although the break in history and culture transmission caused by the migration cannot be mended, Kawah slowly began to understand her father's choice as she came in closer contact with her family's culture. "The process of documenting the Ilisin helped me adjust my attitude towards my father. I think I sort of understand his efforts. In the past I did not see his troubles and misunderstood him." Kawah said slowly.

Facing Her Own Confusion and Attempting to Make Peace with Others

Kawah had another question in her heart that needed answers as she gradually rediscovered herself through filming documentaries. Back then when married couples rarely divorced, her mother split up with Kawah's father, left her hometown determinately and went to work in Taipei on her own.

When Kawah visited her mother in Taipei, she would sometimes run into Uncle. Yet during the 28 years Kawah knew about Uncle's existence, her mother never clearly explained her relationship with this man. *Why did Mother devote herself to a Japanese man for so long?* That was not Kawah's only question. Kawah remembers when her mother was working, she was extremely confident. She sang and socialized with her customers with ease, as if she owned the place. However, after she left the work place, Mother lost her individual identity and transformed into a person who fulfills the traditional role and expectations of a mother, lover, and simply, a woman.

In order to explore the intricate relationship between her mother and the Japanese Uncle, Kawah started to film *The Lost Days*. It was an opportunity for her to re-know her mother, and reexamine her attitude towards Uncle. In the film, Kawah documented the thoughts and feelings of mother and daughter when they were separated and her mother was working in Linsen North Road. It also shows interactions between her mother and Uncle, and her mother's thoughts and emotions when she left for Japan after Uncle's death.

Photo credit: Kawah Umei

"Although I don't really like Uncle, but he existed in my life for a very long time, and yet I never really knew him. When I became an adult, I thought, 'why couldn't I stay on friendly terms with this man?' " Kawah's motivation for every film originates from her desire to make peace with herself; and the process gives her an opportunity to understand the lives of others and the difficulties faced by other people. Looking back, it has been a rough journey. But Kawah has reclaimed herself, who was once lost and confused, through these documentaries. Now she can open up her mind as a mature adult and find the most comfortable way to get along with other people.

Olympic Boxing Athlete

Chen Nien-Chin

Being a Girl has Never Been an Issue for Me

If I Can Do It, I'll Do It

In the super-macho world of boxing, she was once the only girl on the team. Chen Nien-Chin left her hometown for Taiwan on her own when she was 13 to train in boxing, and has pulled through verbal bullying and the defeat in the Olympics. Not one to be limited by gender stereotypes and limitations, Chen usually trains with male boxers who hit harder and faster. Now, one decade later, Chen Nien-Chin returns to the Olympics with the force of a queen.

Written by **Chen Yi-Ru** ; Photo credit: **Hsieh Mu-Yu** ; Translated by **Chen Deh-I**

> "If you can do it, then do it. Male and female are just biological genders. Only you can decide what mindset you bring into the competition."

Eyes locked onto her opponent, the "Boxing Queen" Chen Nien-Chin launches a series of fast and accurate punches as she trains hard in the National Sports Training Center in preparation for the Tokyo Olympics. The 23-year-old boxer currently ranks world number two in the welterweight division, and is the first female boxer in Taiwan to take part in international boxing competitions. Chen is a seasoned Pangcah war goddess with many awards under her belt: she has won gold at the World Boxing Championships and took part in the 2016 Rio Olympics.

Chen Nien-Chin is a member of the Pangcah community in Hualien. When she was two, her parents moved the family to Matsu where she later joined the Matsu wrestling team when she was in elementary school. The team visited Taiwan for offsite training during her 7th grade summer break, and her relatives introduced her to boxing coach Ko Wen-Ming. They talked about learning boxing in Taiwan. "I thought we were just going to meet somebody. But when I came back to Matsu, suddenly we had to call a family meeting!" Chen said with a laugh.

Alone in Taiwan and Gaining Support with Her Boxing Accomplishments

While her parents had second thoughts about leaving their young daughter to fend for herself in Taiwan, Chen, who had no prior experience in boxing, agreed to the proposal immediately. "In my mind, it was all very simple. I just wanted to see the world outside of Matsu, and I didn't care what I was going to do." When she first arrived in Taiwan, curiosity won over everything. Every day was new and interesting. However, Chen soon felt overwhelmed by homesickness and the strict training regime. For two whole months, Chen Nien-Chin called her father everyday as she cried on the phone. Her father always responded, "this is the path you chose, and even if you think it was a mistake, you have to figure out a way to pull through."

In addition to the loneliness, Chen Nien-Chin also had to endure the enmity from seniors on the boxing team. "Very few girls boxed, so they thought having girls on the team was weird. Everyone who saw me would think, 'why is she here?'" Chen recalled back then the male seniors would say things like, "what's a girl doing here boxing?", "go back to Matsu", "come here and let us beat you up". She trained with tears in her eyes until one day she realized, "there's no alternative anyway, I have to grit my teeth and keep on going. One day when I finally make it, you are all going to shut up!"

Chen Nien-Chin was extremely committed and practiced very hard. She entered her first competition in 8th grade and won first place in the National Presidents Cup Boxing Championships. In 2013, she took part in her first international competition and won the first gold for Taiwan in the Youth and Junior World Boxing Championships. Her accomplishments attracted much attention and also won over the support of her seniors.

Fearlessly Accepting Harder Challenges

Yet Chen Nien-Chin has to work harder than other athletes for these outstanding results. Very few Taiwanese boxers compete in the middleweight division since Taiwanese athletes are more on the slender side. Chen, who began her professional career in the middleweight division, admitted, "I picked an extremely difficult division to conquer. The tallest opponent I've ever faced was 192 cm tall, and I had to jump up to launch my attacks."

Chen Nien-Chin always spars with male athletes. She trains for speed with junior flyweight male boxers and for strength with light heavyweight boxers. “We indigenous people are also very tough. I never considered myself as ‘a girl’, and this has worked very well for me during competitions.” she said brightly. For Chen, a female body has never been a limitation. “If you can do it, then do it. Male and female are just biological genders. Only you can decide what mindset you bring into the competition.”

Chen eventually made it to world number eight in the middleweight division. In 2018, AIBA added the welterweight class (69 kg) for women, and her coach suggested that Chen switch over to that weight class for a better advantage. After mulling over it for three to four months, Chen decided to do it. “I thought it would be a cool challenge to start over again. If I could win in both weight classes, that would mean I’m really good!” she added with her trademark grin.

Overcoming the Olympics Setback and Coming Back Again in Full Force

Although Chen Nien-Chin has a very resilient mind, she has encountered a couple of setbacks as well. Four years ago, she won a spot on the Olympics team, and traveled to Rio to compete. Everyone thought she would win; however, the event would bring forth the greatest defeat in her athletic career.

Chen Nien-Chin had no equal opponent to spar with in Taiwan, and women’s boxing has only been held in the Olympics for the second time. Chen could only go with her instincts on how to behave and adapt at this world’s largest sports event. “That’s when I realized that the World Championships and the Olympics are two totally different things.” Chen gestured. She was shocked. “Everyone improved so much within a couple of months. I was

terrified." In the end, Chen Nien-Chin was eliminated at the round of 16.

After the stumble at the Olympics, Chen barely had time to collect herself for the World University Boxing Championships two weeks later. The large amount of stress distracted Chen and she performed badly during training. "The coach said to me, 'if you get beaten up again today, leave!' When I heard he say 'leave'," recalled Chen Nien-Chin, "I left the training session before it ended. Everyone thought I just needed to go to the ladies' room, but I turned off my mobile phone and disappeared."

"And for the following five days, I became 'the wandering Nien-Chin'." She said with a laugh. She hid at a friend's house, and no one knew where she was. In the end it was her father who made her come around with a phone call. "He said that he is dedicated to training me to become the best, sending me to the best training venue and best coach. But now I just leave them all behind? Is the Rio Olympics the only Olympic games? It's okay to fail. An athlete will always feel pressure, and I must learn to deal it."

Her father's words knocked some sense into Chen Nien-Chin. With the determination to "not be defeated", she returned to the competition arena and successfully won gold. The experience completely changed her. "I enjoy the growth and momentum after the downs. It takes a lot of work to climb back up from the bottom, but the process can let you grow significantly in a short time. It feels very cool!"

Fearless of Defeat and Soldiering On

Chen Nien-Chin describes herself as a "hyped" type of athlete. She's always excited to get onto the podium, and feels happy more than nervous. She has moved on from the setback at Rio and can't wait to compete at the Tokyo Olympics.

Boxing has taught her many lessons on life and made her strong and independent. "On the podium, you have to overcome any problem you encounter." Chen Nien-Chin said confidently. If you are knocked down, just get back on your feet again. Don't give up easily. "It's even more interesting when you start from zero. When you have nothing, that is the beginning to success."

The girl who came alone to Taiwan has found a home in boxing. Chen Nien-Chin now spearheads the development of women's boxing in Taiwan. She hopes to use her influence to let the public know that boxing is not simply an act of violence, but a professional sport that requires skill and training. Undaunted by challenges and continuously breaking through limitations, she has won round after round for herself and for Taiwan.


The Paiwan Pulingau of Tjuabar Community

Muakayi Ladan

Taiwan's Youngest Paiwan Pulingau

Chosen by Ancestral Spirits

In the army, Muakayi Ladan is a soldier in camouflage, while back in the community, she becomes a Paiwan pulingau in the traditional attire, serving to transmit the message of ancestral spirits. Having just turned nineteen this year, she is taking up the duty of preserving the traditional practices and culture of her community.

Written by **Yu Tai** ; Photo credit: **Lin Jing-Yi** ; Translated by **Lin Shih-Fen**

> I hope to pass it along. I will never lose the ancestral heritage to ignorance.

Shaking the mulberry leaves in her hand and chanting the tjatjulatan ("scriptures"), the pulingau is praying to ancestral spirits to bless the community. In the early Paiwan society, pulingaus were seen on many occasions satisfying various needs of people members from hosting rituals to healing the sick, alleviating disaster, warding off danger, and soothing the spirits. Consequently, they could be fittingly described as the guardians of the Paiwan people's physical, mental, and spiritual life.

Muakayi Ladan was born in the leading clan of Tjuabar Community. Since elementary school, she has developed a keen interest in watching pulingaus performing rituals. This is because her grandmother, who used to serve as the community leader, was often required to organize weddings and funerals for community members. Apart from seeing pulingaus at home, what impressed her most was the purification ritual during the yearly masalut. Only after being purified were the family members allowed to go out and collect offerings from other relatives. Every time as she listened to pulingaus chanting the ancient scriptures, the small Muakayi could not help but feel shocked and moved by their state of multiple identities in delivering the will of sacred spirits.

Destined to Become a Pulingau

Due to her parents' divorce, Muakayi was raised by her maternal grandparents from an early age. However, as they were often away to Taipei to the see doctor, Muakayi grew particularly close to her grand vuvu (grand granny), who also used to lead the community and had watched her growing up. As she could remember, her vuvu was pretty quiet. When being challenged by community members, though, she always kept calm and communicated with patience to avoid disrupting the harmony. This made her a widely trusted and respected elder in the community and an idol of Muakayi.

However, Muakayi's vuvu had always regretted not being able to serve as a pulingau because of her leadership position. This is because by tradition, the position of pulingau, which is hereditary and limited to the female, cannot be held concurrently by the community leader. Such was the case with both Muakayi's grandmother and vuvu. A leader's family without a pulingau is like a monarch without a prime minister. Hence, it became her vuvu's longtime worry that there could be no more pulingaus in the family.

"When vuvu was alive, she used to take me to watch traditional rituals, and I could feel her sense of loss..." recalls Muakayi. At those rituals, all were elders except for her and her older brother. They were left unattended while the adults were busy. Upon hearing of Muakayi's childish dream to become a pulingau, her vuvu would always say, "You'll push yourself to learn about it if that's your fate."

It turned out that Vuvu was right. Muakayi's fate proved unstoppable. When she was in middle school, she had a dream one day. In the dream, she saw her vuvu, who had been bedridden from a stroke, walk into her room and open the ceiling, from which she took out a black bead and handed it to her. The next day, Muakayi told her family about the dream, and all were shocked, because the Paiwan legend has it that when a woman dreams of receiving the zaqu ("holy bead"), she is considered chosen by the ancestral spirits to be a candidate for the pulingau.

Working Hard to Prove Her Ability

From then on, Muakayi has become an apprentice to her grandaunt, who is a qualified pulingau, learning relevant knowledge in her spare time after school. She told us that there are numerous things to learn to become a pulingau. In addition to learning all the myths and legends of the community, memorizing the scriptures, she has to familiarize herself with the features, images, and duties of the various spirits. Besides, she also needs to acquire a good knowledge of local geography and directions.

"The most difficult part is language," she says with a wry smile. Although she can speak some Paiwan, the scriptures are mostly written in the ancient form, which is rarely used today and therefore particularly hard to learn. She even does not dare to imagine that she will have to chant these scriptures for one or two hours in real rituals.

Since there has never been such a young pulingau before, Muakayi is inevitably subject to the doubts of other community members. "They wonder if I can make it at such a young age," she says lightly. In modern society, due to the change in the public attitude, not every household would follow the tradition to encourage girls to be trained as pulingas at an early age. Therefore, nowadays, most Paiwan pulingaus do not take up the position until their thirties or forties, even

fifties. In light of this, to prove her resolution and ability, Muakayi decides that she has to work even harder. While her peers are busy having fun and enjoying their youth, she chooses to stay home to memorize the abstruse scriptures. Sometimes she even has to squeeze out time to learn Paiwan from her grandfather. Her aim is to get familiar with the skills as quickly as possible to prove her competence.

In May 2019, Muakayi passed the liminqedjelj ("promotion ritual") and was officially promoted as a pulingau. She could never forget how nervous she was while waiting for long for the zaqu to be dropped from above. She even burst into tears, fearing that she wasn't the chosen one and that her family would thus be disgraced. In the end, the episode proved to be a coincidence. She was told by the elder who officiated the liminqedjelj that by tradition, the ceremony could not be attended by twins. On the day of her promotion, however, there were outsiders in the audience that violated the taboo unwittingly. That was why it took so long for the zaqu to appear.

It was at the liminqedjelj ceremony that Muakayi gained her first experience of divine possession. In one of the steps, to demonstrate her determination and perseverance, she had to get down on her knees and elbows and crawl in a figure-of-eight direction through the bamboo basket. At first, she felt only the physical pain and then lost consciousness quickly. It turned out that the fainting was a sign of possession by the shaman god, signifying its approval for her to become a pulingau. Then, the elder mimicked a bird chirping by her ears to wake her up. As she came to herself, her new life as a pulingau has begun.

Dedicated to the Family

As she talks, Muakayi shows uncharacteristic maturity for a 19-year-old girl. Each of her major life decisions is centered around her family. Her sense of mission for the community was indirectly inspired by her granduncle Djaikung Luveljeng, the famous doctor who has long been working to establish the South Link Hospital in Taitung to provide medical care for people living in remote areas. His involvement in the community affairs influenced Muakayi's decision to take the path of the pulingau. Muakayi has once attended a nursing school before but quit the program because of the family's financial difficulties. She then turned to join the military, where she can earn a steady income.

Yet, with a limited number of leave days in the military, Muakayi finds it hard to strike a balance between her job and community affairs. Take this year's masalut ritual for example. She failed to come back because she could not schedule a vacation, which made her very guilty. She understands, though, that as a modern Paiwan pulingau, she is inevitably challenged by how to perfect her professionalism as a pulingau. Equally important is that she has to ponder how to support herself when the community members no longer provide for her one day. She has even decided to remain unmarried throughout her life as long as needed by her family.