Issue 37 | INDIGENOUS SIGHT

Passing the Baton

A Long Overdue Homecoming in Mountains

ya mriqaz suma shduu mani amafazaq ananak a shnaw

Observing Others Gives You Clearer Insight into Yourself

ingqthaiza ininthawan thuini, maqa mashtay thau miku mafazaq munsai miniahala inai a thau a ininthawan, numawan shaunatantu kataunan minfazaq; kanuniza, mathuaw pidazah ya minfazaq shduu mriqaziza wa kazash, numa min' auraiza aminfazaq kataunan a thau pasain sa shnaw amiakuza ya mriqaz a ininthawan. miazai sa Thau a kataunan miaqay miaqulqul a tilhaz, mashtay sa Thau thaithuy amalhintaz mutusi hudun talatalah sa kawi numa itiza matinanai kataunan sa kawi, maqa mathuaw mabrith a "apuy" maqa amara ininthawan a aniamin, akmalawa izai a kalawan sa Thau mapakadaidaz ya miazithu mapa' usuun ininthawan a kushwit.

uqthawan, imuhala wa kawash ianan manasha manasaia mutusi hudun a makakakri, sasaziza wa kataunan sa parhaway mathuaw kmilhim bangqir a pruq. kanuniza antu muqay mathuaw mundadaan sa makuliush a saran, miaqawan akmilhim miakuza ya mriqaz ya tanatuqash tu kahiwan a ininthawan, numa amalhituz tanatuqash a ti-hui, numa miaqaqitan mapalhalhituz.

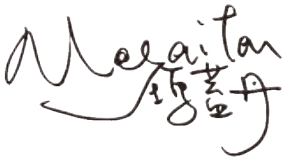
imuhala wa kawash makitnasha Shpuut munai kataunan minfazaq mita wa kazash, izai shduu aminfazaq ya tu kahiwan maura wa kalawan. numa munai kataunan a huruy sa Shpuut numa itiawan sa suma kataunan a thau, mulhthkiz shduu tunmaza mapamashtay a lushkin, antu muqay shduu shmadadu minfazaq suma wa kazash, shduu mani mriqaz ananak a Thau kazash a bangqir, amaqa sa mathuaw mashashu ininthawan a miakuza ya mriqaz.

With the changes in society, the general public have grown more interested in the way indigenous peoples live and have started to visit indigenous communities. It is easy to simply learn about "visible" and "tangible" sides of culture, but to make good sense of each indigenous people's view of life and value has been largely overlooked. For example, "fire" is a necessity of life for the Thao people, so every man and woman; people young and old, need to travel to the mountains and carry logs back to their community at a designated time. This mission also symbolises a collective effort by every community member.

Furthermore, mountain hiking has been popular in recent years, and exploring abandoned indigenous settlements has become one of the root tracing methods young people have adopted. The real test is not about walking an extremely long distance, but to look for the most essential and purest view of life of the ancient indigenous communities and to become aware of the wisdom and experience passed down from their ancestors.

Recently, more and more non-indigenous friends are keen to visit our communities and to know more about our culture. During their visits, they might experience a paradigm shift. Both visitors and indigenous peoples can voice their opinions and share with one another, so that we can put ourselves in others' shoes and understand their cultures. In turn, we gain clear insight into the basics of our own community, which forms a unique view of life.

naur kazash a kalangkan
CEO of the Indigenous Peoples Cultural Foundation



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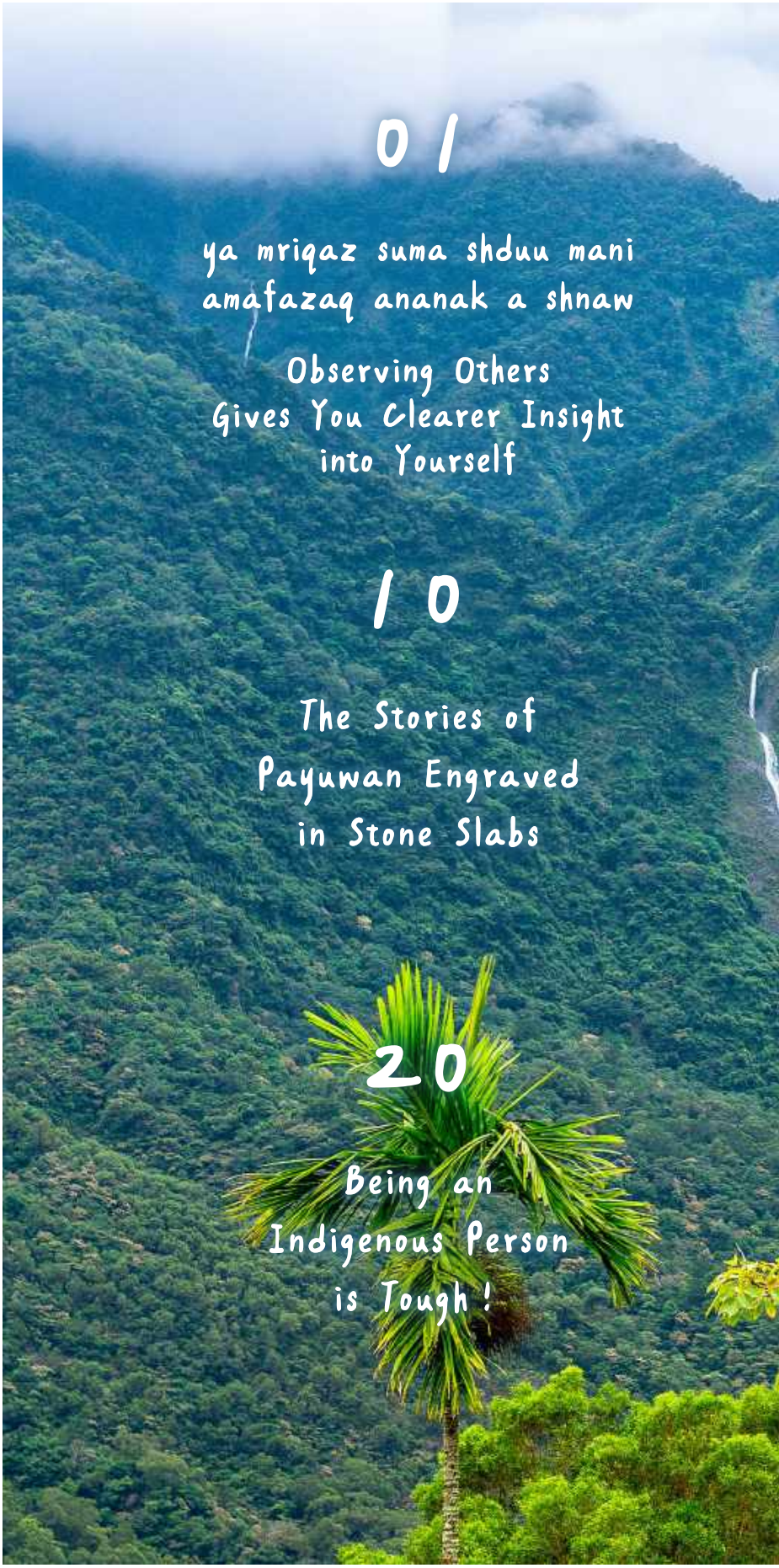


Passing the Baton

A Long Overdue Homecoming in Mountains

There are times in life when we tend to avoid talking about certain issues for fear of offending or hurting the feelings of people involved due to our lack of knowledge or familiarity with the topics that prevents us from making sound judgments. Therefore, we always keep a safe distance from each other, which also leads to estrangement. For different ethnic groups in Taiwan, being unfamiliar with each other does not help achieve a multiethnic society that embraces diverse cultures. Only by recognizing and appreciating each other's differences can we achieve mutual admiration and respect.

As a mountaineering enthusiast, the singer-songwriter Wang Hui-Chu has conquered twenty-two out of Taiwan's highest peaks. She not only regards nature with awe and reverence but also respects the culture of various indigenous groups, keeping in harmony with the mountains and forests. In this issue, we invite her to the Payuan Community to learn knowledge about the mountains and indigenous culture from the Paiwan people, experiencing first-hand the power of mountain forests as well as nature’s love for mankind.

Plutut : Embrinah sapah dgiyaq

Note: "Plutut: Embrinah sapah dgiyaq" means "Passing the Baton: Returning to the Homelands in the Mountains" in Truku language.

Guess Which Indigenous Community I am From:

Wang, Hui-Chu

Having been born and bred in the Chia-nan Plain in southern Taiwan, when I was young, I only had a rudimentary knowledge about Taiwanese indigenous peoples, which was mainly based on textbooks and sightseeing experiences to scenic spots like Formosan Aboriginal Culture Village and Sandimen. Later in senior high school, I got to make friends with peers with indigenous backgrounds and therefore foster a deeper understanding as I learned more about them. Perhaps due to the limited exposure to indigenous communities in the city, however, I still had some stereotyped perceptions of these people, thinking of them as "being good at singing and sports," as well as "having sharply defined features."

While in university, I was able to meet students from different departments and receive more diverse information. Hence the focus of my understanding of the world gradually shifted from self-exploration to social observation. It was at this stage that I began to pay more attention to respect for different ethnic groups. Over the years, policy changes in response to the Indigenous Movement have enabled more and more peoples on the island to be officially recognized, with the number increasing from the previous nine distinct ones to the current sixteen. However, there are still few channels in daily life for us to obtain information about indigenous communities. Fortunately, as a member of the music industry, I have the chance to befriend and work with many excellent indigenous partners and artists. Though not having had the opportunity to attend traditional indigenous events so far, on a round-island trip in 2017, I paid a short visit to the Pangcah Cilamitay Community in Hualien, where I was treated to a campfire dinner. I have also been to the Vedai Community in Pingtung and had a drink with the host of the B&B. The next day I was invited to attend the service at the local church, where I got to feel the solemn side of the Rukai people. Before leaving, I was met with a Rukai greeting, "Sabau," meaning "hello, thanks, and great work."

As a mountaineering enthusiast, I have encountered many indigenous people working in the mountains as mountain collaborators or shuttle drivers who drive around freely in their pickup trucks. Characterized by good humor and a relaxed attitude, they always provide us with the most timely and accurate information about the mountains. This kind of expertise, as I see it, is derived from their familiarity with this land. Recent years have seen widespread discussion on the issues of traditional territories and the opening of mountains, which has sparked varying opinions from all sides in online communities. While the intentions of mountaineering and tourism activities should be good and mutually beneficial, misunderstandings and friction between locals and mountaineers are prone to happen due to unfamiliarity with each other. Although the "hunting" course to which I have been looking forward is canceled due to the traditional gender norm that "men hunt and women weave," I still hope to learn from the narrative of local residents and the experience of other courses to gain a more comprehensive view of mountains.

Be it in the city or on the mountain trail, I am always attracted to those who speak in their mother tongues, listening up for the magical appeal hidden in the languages that I don't understand. Perhaps it is because this precious heritage has been preserved despite countless historical and general environmental changes that it has become so beautiful. Having gone through all kinds of turmoil and difficulties, the people of the Payuwan Community have regained their self-identity, courage, and confidence in the process of rebuilding their ancestral homes. Such ethnic traits are what I hope to learn from this trip.


Wang, Hui-Chu
Singer-songwriter
Speaks with an unhurried tone but becomes hyperactive when playing video games
Has conquered 22 out of Taiwan's highest peaks, and the number is still increasing
A crazy lover of dan bing (Taiwanese egg crepe), so much so that she once dreamed of opening a breakfast restaurant


Let's Explore !

Past and Present of the Black

The Payuwan Community of the Paiwan, is located in the Majia Township, Pingtung Country. During the Japanese colonial era, it was dubbed "the Black Kingdom," inspired by the Japanese people's first impression of the village. When they saw from across the slope of the mountain the stone slab houses built along the hillside, the dark roofs sparkled in the sunlight like the scales of the hundred-pace viper reflecting the light. Rows of houses stretched like several black hundred-pacers that dominated the mountains.

Throughout history, the Payuwan Community has undergone four migrations before settling in its current location. It was first located in Kapaiwanan at the lower left of the present site, which was lower in altitude and close to the river. Later, due to the pressure of the growing population, the villagers were forced to move out in search of arable land and therefore established several minor communities. During the Japanese rule, the colonial government began to extend its reach into the mountains, bringing the Payuwan Community under its control. In 1934, after the community was hit by a landslide, many of its subgroups were persuaded by the Japanese to relocate collectively to the current site, along with the elementary school and the police station. In its heyday, the Payuwan boasted twenty-six minor communities and two thousand-

Kingdom Payuwan

plus people. Lastly, the postwar period saw the increasing appeal of the lowlands, which urged the entire community to migrate down the mountains for the convenience of education, medical care, and commerce. Since then, the community has split into several subgroups spreading out across Pingtung and Taitung in townships such as Majia, Sandimen, Jinfeng, and Taimali.

After the community left its original site, the stone slab houses were left to fall derelict and collapsed. In recent years, the reconstruction work of the Payuwan community has been launched under the assistance of the public and private sectors. The project was supported by the young descendants from the community who formed the Sepayuan∞more work group with a view to reconstructing the memories of their home village, as well as passing on the lifestyle and spirit of the Paiwan to the next generation through practical actions. At present thirteen traditional houses have been rebuilt. Once again, spirals of smoke from cooking stoves, the Paiwan language, melodies of the nose flute, and tales are seen, heard, and told in the Payuwan community, reminding people of the sparkling Black Kingdom of Payuwan of the past.

The Stories of Payuwan Engraved in Stone Slabs

In the past, the paths throughout the Payuwan Community were inter-connected by stairs paved with stone slabs. These paths, surrounded by taro plants, shell gingers, lilies, and marigolds along the way, will finally take one to the highest point of the village——the former site of the elementary school, where the memories of the Payuwan residents are preserved.

Taro Roasting Oven Inspired by the Female Body

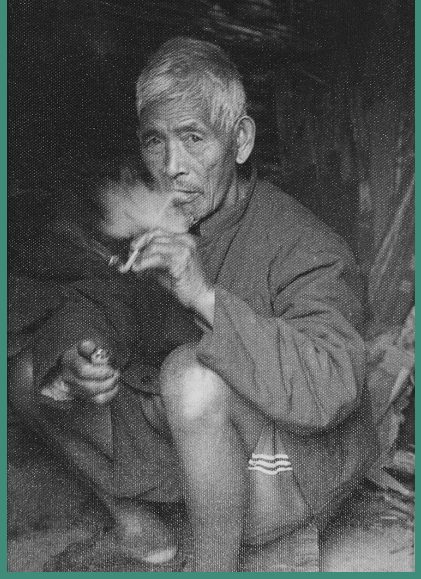
In the early days, when there were no refrigerators, the Paiwan people smoke-roast fresh taros for ease of preservation. Apart from a kind of staple, the resulting dried roast taros, or "aradj" in Paiwan, also served as merchandise to be traded with plainsmen for salt and sugar that could not be produced in the mountains. The stir-fired aradj with sugar makes a favorite snack for kids.

Legend has it that the Paiwan people had been racking their brains on how to roast taros. It was not until one day when a man saw his wife squatting on the hillside with her private parts exposed that he was inspired to invent the stone oven made of slabs.

To prevent taros from scorching while being roasted, people would climb up the oven to turn them over.

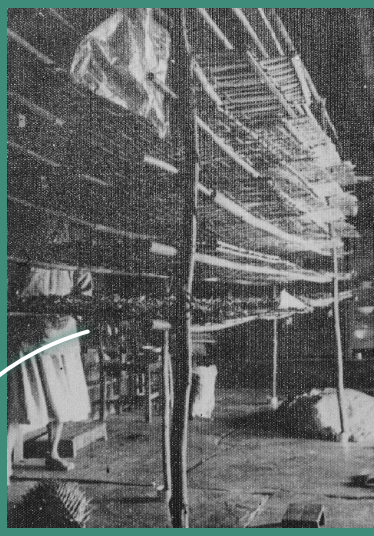
The Compulsory "National Language" Policy

During the colonial period, when the Japanization movement was implemented, it was compulsory that people pay respect to the emperor and speak only Japanese, the national language of the time. This "National Language Monument" is the heritage that bears witness to this past.



The Introduction of Sericulture That Changes the Mode of Trading

Sericulture, or the technique of silkworm farming, was first introduced to the village as a sideline in 1932 during Japanese rule. In the early days, the crops grown in the village were mainly staples for daily consumption. The only use of silk was to trade for money. The introduction of sericulture has transformed the villagers' mode of trading from bartering to monetary transactions.

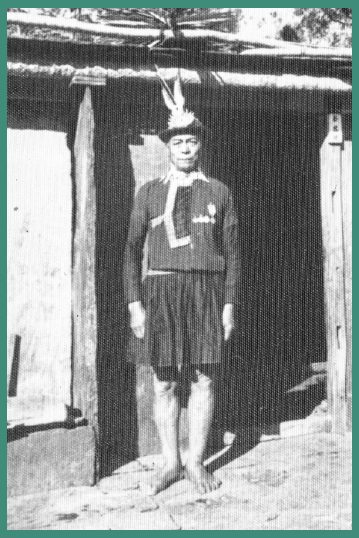


Silkworm rearing rack

The Old Man Who Survived the 2009 Typhoon Morakot

In 1974, the entire Payuwan Community was relocated except for a village senior who refused to leave and chose to stay in the mountains. In August 2009, when Typhoon Morakot struck Taiwan, the old man was left unaware of it due to the lack of telecommunications access. He simply stayed in the house listening to "the howling of the entire world." A few days later, when the storms had finally stopped, his son returned home to see if his father was safe and sound. Not expectant, he was surprised to find that the old man was still alive. The two cried and hugged each other.

The Last Herald of Payuwan



This is the last official herald, or "representative," recognized by the community leader of the village. When the community leader wants to talk with headmen of other communities, usually he will not go for himself. Instead, the herald is sent to convey the message on his behalf in the first place. In Paiwan society, the herald ranks as a "warrior," and is allowed to wear hawk-eagle feathers bestowed by the chief. However, since this title is specially granted to the herald alone, it cannot be passed by inheritance.

The sound of the flute reminds people of the hissing of a hundred-pacer threatening to attack.

The Paiwan Nose Flute That Conveys Love and Affection

The unique twin-pipe polyphonic nose flute is composed of the flute pipe with finger holes (used for the main melody) and the drone pipe (without holes) bound together with rattan. The instrument is mainly used by a man as a means to express his affection and feelings for, or simply put, to pursue the woman he is fond of. It is also played to mourn the death of honorable seniors or warriors who have made great contributions to the community. Traditionally, only males are allowed to play the nose flute. However, to ensure that their unique nose flute culture will not be lost, Mani's grandfather makes an exception to teach her how to play it.

The Cross: the Symbol of Christianization

Taken in the 1950s, this photo features a woman wearing a cross, implying that a funeral is going on in her family. From this, we can see that the Paiwan mourning shawl on the occasion of funerals has been replaced by the cross, a sign that symbolizes the penetration of Christianity into the community.

A Way Different Experience Than

Is there any change in your impression and views about indigenous people?

After spending a day with them today, I still think they are upbeat by nature and am impressed by their sharply defined features. I believe that whatever ethnic group one belongs to, every indigenous person has their own specialties and individuality. Although some friends of mine are indigenous, we seldom touch on issues about indigenous culture. It is because my knowledge about it is limited, and I am afraid that I might ask thoughtless questions that could make them feel offended. On an occasion like today's workshop, I feel much more relaxed and comfortable with asking things I want to know.

You take the challenge of making the Paiwan's traditional floral wreath. Do you have any previous experience in making handicrafts?

Yes, I do. I have not only bought a sewing machine but also made leather goods myself. I love the feel of handmade quality, though, I'm not sure if I enjoy making handicrafts. Making a floral wreath is far more difficult than I thought. It is not until I begin to try my hands that I realize there are so many details to pay attention to in each step. I know well that I am not good at crafts, so I get a bit nervous while making them. Seeing everyone working so swiftly and deftly, I feel stressed and cannot help but to speed up as much as possible. It's too amazing that they have to make hundreds of them in a day for the occasion of a wedding.

What impressed you most about the old site of the elementary school?

On my previous trip to Wutai, I had the chance to see a local slate house. It was preserved in a small museum, with an enclosed square cooking space inside. With this in mind, I bring up the question about the layout to know if there are any differences between them while studying the model of the Paiwan-style slate house. I admire the Paiwan people greatly for their skills and hard work in building slate houses. Every time I climb up the trail, I cannot help but wonder how many people are required to carry these stones up into the mountains, let alone build houses.

I often see people share their stories about the indigenous "forbidden places" in the mountaineering forum. This adds a sense of sacredness to my impression of indigenous communities, reminding me to be careful to follow the rules of the village. By the same token, the old site of the elementary gives me a feeling that resembles my previous mountaineering experience of visiting a place where I dared not to touch anything disrespectfully. Sometimes animal skeletons were found there, and I dared not approach them fearing that there might be taboos about them. Plus, they did not belong to me anyway. I feel very lucky to be able to be here today to learn about the Paiwan culture. This knowledge will serve as a source of information for me to share with other mountaineers when encountering a similar situation in the future.

Hearing Mani say that she returns to the old village for the sake of work, I cannot help but wonder how much time it took her to rebuild the community and acquaint herself with its history and culture. What can I do if I return to my hometown? Am I willing to do it? I haven't had any connection to my hometown since I left for college. If that were the case, what kind of role and mentality should I take when faced with the decision? It's never easy.

Usual !

What does it feel to serve as a cook for the first time? What does the pinuljacengan taste like?

Since I rarely cook for myself, having the chef here to help control the fire makes me much more at ease. Also, since I am good at making dan bing, I can take this opportunity to better my cooking skills. Perhaps in the future, I can open a breakfast restaurant of my own and teach guitar in the afternoon. Who knows? (laughing)

The taste of pinuljacengan (a kind of Paiwan millet congee) made with rice is easy to imagine, while the red quinoa version, though not looking delicious, smells fragrant and makes a perfect match with fermented tofu.

You have learned about the Paiwan rituals for birth and death. How do you feel about them?

It is customary for the people of Paiwan to bury a newborn infant's umbilical cord in the corner of the house and pose the dead in the same position as birth. They place a significant value on the meaning of life. Although we non-indigenous people share a similar view that we are living toward death, death seems to be a taboo topic in our society. People seldom talk about it even if they live to an old age. The lessons I learned today have given me some other perspectives on death.

You have experienced a night hunting with the local hunter. How is it different from your previous mountaineering experience?

Even when navigating the mountains at night, I remained in awe as usual. As a lowlander unfamiliar with the environment, normally I would make adequate preparations, equipping myself with mountaineering gear and offline maps as well as checking the route in advance. Since I didn't make any preparation for today's night hunting, I was more cautious than usual. Still, I felt much safer with the hunter serving as the escort behind us. Otherwise in most cases, I am usually the one who leads the team, escorted by the experienced mountaineer behind.

The Meanings Behind a Paiwan

The way a people dress is closely related to the geographic environment they live in, their trade relations with other peoples, and their social structure. The original garments of the Paiwan people were tree bark clothes made by pounding the bark of common paper mulberry trees or clothes made with game skins. After developing weaving skills, the Paiwan wove cloth with special patterns on them to indicate different social classes. The accessories they wear also carry different meanings.

The box patterns on the feather indicate the social status of the wearer: the more boxes, the higher the status.

Red and Black Forehead Flowers and Cloths

The "forehead flower" is placed on the forehead. Unmarried women wear red cloths and decorate them with lilies that symbolize purity. Married women wear black.

Careful! Don't Jingle Your Accessories!

Only unmarried women wear these jingling metal accessories because married women don't have to attract that much attention. Although these ornaments are exclusively for young girls, the wearer has to take care not to let the ornaments tinkle to show that they are demure young ladies.

Girl's Garments and Accessories

Feathers You May Borrow for a Certain Period of Time

Only the community leader can wear Hodgson's Hawk-Eagle feathers on their headdress. If you wear feathers that are not allowed for your social class, they could be yanked out by other people! Although Hodgson's Hawk-Eagle feathers can only be worn by community leaders, during wedding ceremonies, the community leader may lend out the feather to the newlyweds as a blessing. However, the feather must be returned to the community leader the following day.

Men and Women Place Their Feathers Differently

The Paiwan people in the north usually use pointy feathers, while the Paiwan in the south prefer slightly rounded feathers. In addition, men would put feathers in the front of their headdresses and let the patterns face forward. Women wear them on the back of their headdresses.

It is said that the eagles would peck their feathers after they are caught, so the hunters have to pluck the feathers as soon as they catch the bird.

Long Braids Made with Your Own Hair

The Paiwan call these long braids "Talaiku". They are usually made with the wearer's own hair and only worn by unmarried young girls. The braids are often dyed dark brown. Some say this practice may be connected to the Netherlanders they beheaded during the Netherland Colonial Rule.

The Various Stitches Used by the Paiwan

Embroidery stitches used by the Paiwan include cross stitch, bead embroidery, appliqué embroidery, couching stitch, and chain stitch. Garments with bead embroidery are worn at weddings as they look the most ceremonious.

Not only does each social class have its distinctive patterns, but every family also has its exclusive family pattern. For example, Mani's grandmother belongs to the common people class and her family pattern is the double-headed snake.

The garments of Paiwan women are very extravagant and are all made by their mothers. After the daughter is born, the mother will start to prepare the girl's garments and accessories.

Multipurpose Long Hems

Daily clothes are worn when doing daily chores or working in the fields. The long lower hem can be used to wipe off sweat. If wild berries are found by the road, the hem can be pulled up to carry them home.

The headdress in this photo is worn at significant events and ceremonies, and the clothes are daily clothes. Usually, the two will not be worn at the same time. It was worn like this that day just for introduction purposes.

Often Heard of but Never Tried: cinavu and qavai

After learning about the garments from head to toe, it's time to see what goes inside the belly. Time to let Hui-Chu Wang taste the traditional Paiwan dishes - cinavu and qavai - she made herself!

cinavu

In the Paiwan language, cinavu means "wrapping things in leaves". Marinated meat is wrapped in khasya trichodesma leaves and tied up with sword grass. Since the cinavu is boiled in water, the marinated meat usually has a strong flavor and is covered with a layer of taro powder for additional mouthfeel. Cinavu is usually eaten when people are out hunting or traveling, or during celebration events such as rituals and weddings.

qavai

qavai is a ball of sticky, soft food. Marinated meat is wrapped in sticky mushed millet then boiled in water with catjang peas and made into a soup dish. It is similar to the savory tangyuan (rice ball). This is also a dish that only appears at major events such as rituals.

Being an Indigenous Person is Tough !

Thoughts on excavating the Paiwan family house ?

I was very scared because there are actual ancestors buried beneath the Paiwan family house. A-Hui whispered to me, “although I’ve lived here for a long time, I’m still afraid that we’ll accidentally unearth their remains”. But I’m very impressed by her – she always knows what and where we have excavated. To me, those are just piles of rubble. I did gradually figure out the structure and layout of the family house, for example, if we dig up a series of large stone slabs, it means we are close to the walls, and gravel was used to fill in the gaps between slabs. But I still don’t know how to tell the depth of the walls and how far down should we dig.

When we were digging, I kept thinking “how long would it take to rebuild the family house?” I need goals in my life and I complete tasks according to the goals I’ve set. So for projects that have no exact schedule, like rebuilding the family house, I’d have no idea what to do next.

You were exposed to lots of indigenous cultures related to gender/social class, what are your thoughts on that ?

Physical differences do affect what you can or cannot do and these were the ways of our ancestors; however, this kind of labor division can be easily overgeneralized or given labels. Besides, in an indigenous society, there are not only different divisions of labor for different genders but also restrictions for different social classes. If they did not tell me about these customs today, I wouldn’t even know that they exist. Take the issue of indigenous students getting extra examination points for example, in the past, I wouldn’t be able to think about this issue from an indigenous perspective. But now, after spending two days here, I feel like I can relate to their situation a bit more.

Why did you especially interested in today’s weaving ?

For me, weaving is not exactly a fun task. However, when I finish a piece, I feel a sense of achievement and want to start another one. I like the state of concentration I get into when I weave. I concentrate so hard I can’t think of anything else. When you are totally focused on one thing, you forget about your problems. Yet I worry that after I become very experienced in weaving, I’ll lose that concentration.

Like when I realized I messed up the pattern halfway through today, my whole brain just went blank. How do weavers do this? And when I think about the traditional costumes, you have to weave a cloth that is so, so long. The Paiwan women are amazing.

If you could choose, would you like to be a Paiwan male or female?

I don't want to be an indigenous person, it's too hard. There are so many things to do and so many rules to follow. But if we leave out the issue of which people I'd like to be, I would like to be a woman. But then again, being a man is quite convenient, for example, Paiwan men don't have to worry about the "jingling".

The sounds made by metal ornaments on the costumes of Paiwan women.

Do you like qavai and cinavu, the traditional Paiwan foods?

My digestive system is not very strong so I usually avoid sticky rice. I think the outer skin of qavai is too thick and there is not enough meat inside. It's similar to the savory tangyuan (rice ball) that I don't really like. But I like cinavu. The taro powder has an unexpected mouthfeel. The taste today is quite light, I would like a little more flavor next time because I like strong flavors. Also, they use sword grass to wrap the cinavu, doesn't that hurt the hands easily? Can't we replace it with other leaves?

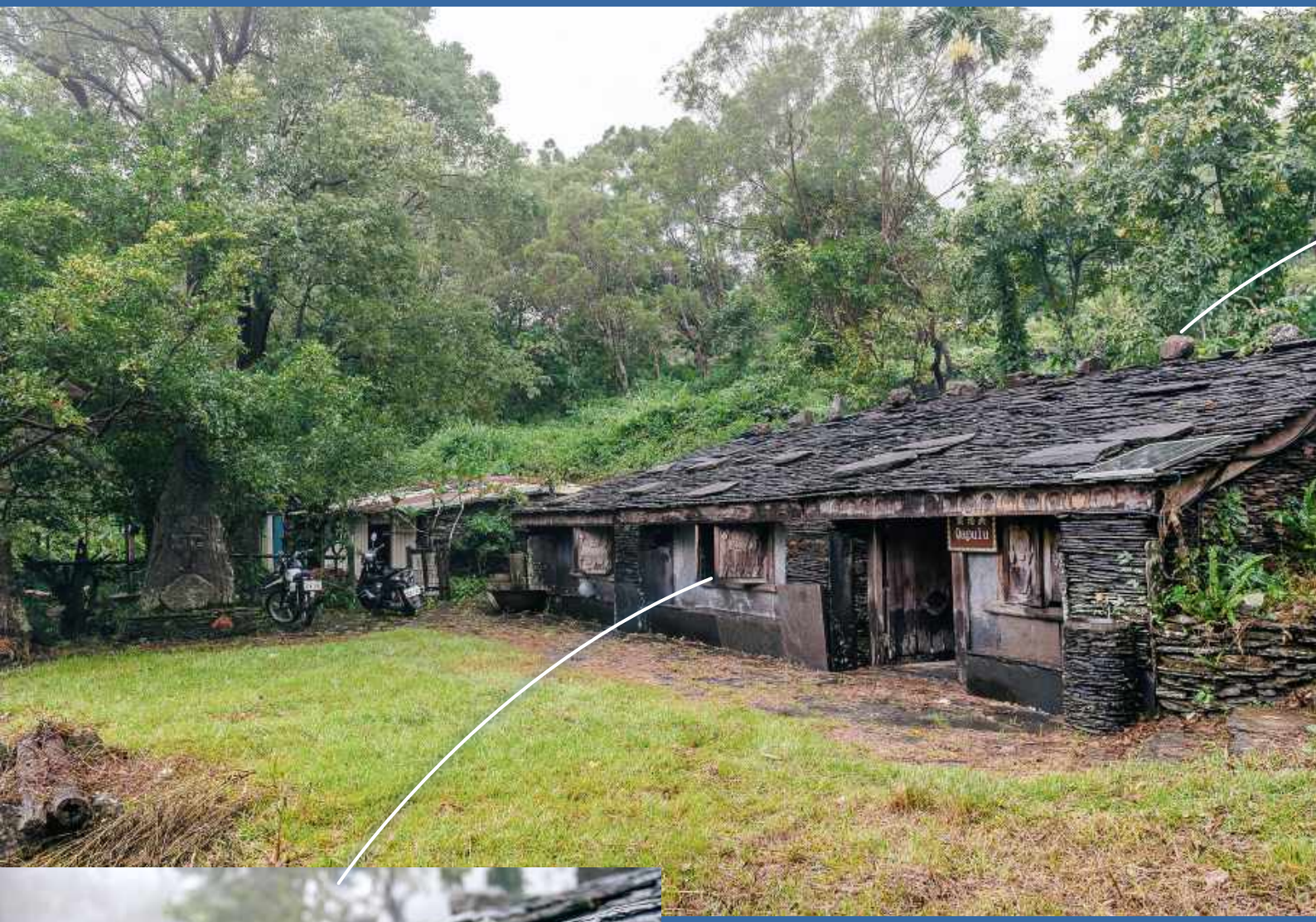
How did the night chats with the mentors go?

Mani said that some of their team members are not originally from the old Paiwan community, yet they are willing to work together and help the community. Why? And Pacak mentioned that it is difficult to find a group of people who get along well and can work smoothly as a team. I can relate to those comments. As an independent musician, I also need to spend time knowing other people and figuring out if we can work together or not. I really feel that it's difficult to find good partners with whom you share the same rhythm and can collaborate for a long time.

The stone Slab House :

More Than Just Warm in Winter and Cool in Summer

For many tourists, a stone slab house seems like a plain low house that's probably cool inside. But after living with community people inside, one can find that the stone slab house is full of culture and wisdom.



Low Lintels

Lintels in Paiwan homes are set below head height, so that anyone entering the house must bow their heads. This serves two purposes. First, visitors must, by necessity, bow in respect of the owner. Second, an intruder's movement is made more difficult, allowing for better defense.

If carvings are found on the lintel or windows, the house most likely belongs to a community leader. Carved totems symbolize the community leader's people, hunting zones, animals, mountains, and rivers.

Large Stones on the Roof

Large stones or other heavy objects are placed on the roof to prevent wind from blowing the slate away. Some communities will stack large white rocks on the roof that look like skulls from a distance. This leads enemies to think the residents are skillful head hunters, and serves as a deterrent.

stone Slab Houses Must be Built into the Mountainside

Paiwan stone slab houses have their backs towards the mountain, which creates a close connection between the slate and the soil. This allows the house to sway when the mountain moves during an earthquake and not collapse. The same goes for slate steps, which are built into the hillside to allow water to flow freely, and prevent the growth of moss.

A community can have more than one community leader. No hierarchy exists among them, with each having different people, lands, and hunting areas.

The Patch of Land in Front of the Community Leader's House

Before Japanese colonization, the community's medical or public activities would take place in front of the community leader's home. Only after Japanese rule were public spaces set aside for public events.

In the past, weddings were also held in front of the community leader's house. A swing would be erected for an important, traditional Paiwan wedding ritual. Costumes representing the family's social status would be hung on the swing, as would knives, symbolizing the community leader's right to collect agricultural taxes, and guns, symbolizing the community leader's right to collect hunting taxes.

Houses Must Have Smoke

Burning fires are important to indigenous people. Smoke can keep insects from eating wood, and also lets neighbors know someone is inside. If smoke isn't rising from a home for long enough, people will wonder if the resident is ill.

Animals' lower jaws are hung above the fire, while upper jaws are placed somewhere else. This is because the lower jaws are meatier. Community members smoke meat over the fire to tell their ancestors, "our hunt was successful, and we share it with you," and to let the animals' spirits rest in peace.

Without the maintenance provided by smoke, unoccupied stone-slab houses will collapse in about a year.

Fighting Positions Even in Sleep

The elderly are important family members who are valued for their wisdom. They sleep in the safest spot furthest from the door, while young men sleep near the door for defense. Ancestors are buried inside the house in a squatting position near the fire.

Important Family Matters are Decided in Front of the Ancestral Pillar

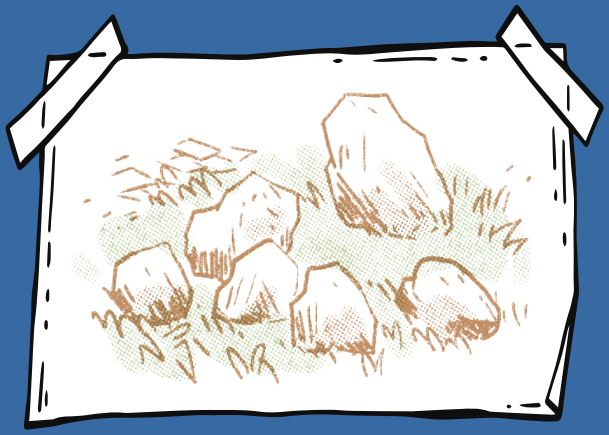
The ancestral pillar is an important structure in the stone slab house and a place reserved for the head of the household. Only the eldest son may sit here for discussions with family members. The family head will invite a priest to perform a divination in front of the post before going to war, negotiations, or hunting.

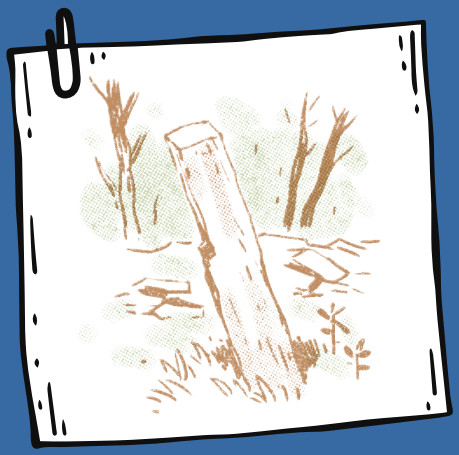
Payuwan Myths

Six Stone Soldiers

The Payuwan and Qucapungan used to be hostile to each other. It is said that on a headhunting trip to Payuwan, the Qucapungan were provoked by six human figures near the border between the two communities. When spears were thrown and arrows shot at these six people, only the clang of projectiles hitting stone was heard; the attackers had turned to stone. Ever since, the Payuwan people believe the six stone soldiers are there to protect the community from invasion.

Even today, one large and five smaller stones sit in Payuwan community's place of origin. These rocks are different from the shale found nearby, rather, they are made of sandstone usually found in rivers.





A Divine Man Bestows Water

Legend has it that a divine man named Rupaliyan lived in Payuwan Community. During a drought, the people had no water to drink and turned to Rupaliyan. When Rupaliyan poked his walking stick into the hill, an endless stream of water flowed from the hole. People today believe this to be the Lion King Waterfall. A large pool can be found under the waterfall, but hole from which the water flows is very small.

Later, when the Payuwan moved from their place of origin, Rupaliyan was no longer seen. People believe Rupaliyan left his walking stick in front of the community leader's house. A tilted stone post can still be found there today, planted into the ground in Payuwan's place of origin. The post and six stone soldiers are all made of the same sandstone.

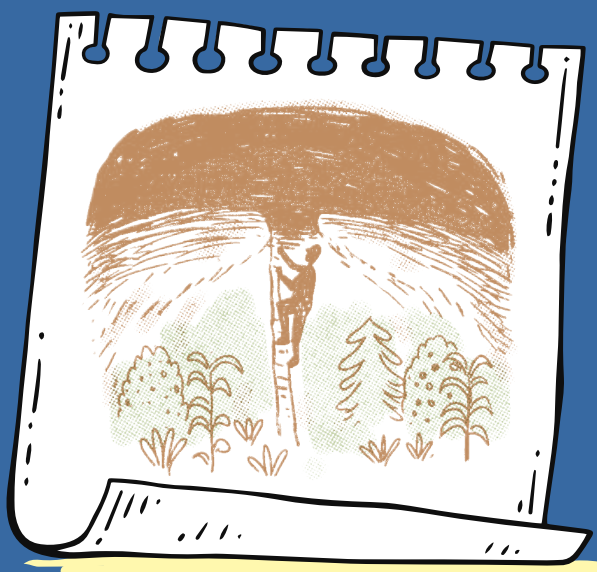
See Me Stand Between Heaven and Earth

Legend has it that the distance between heaven and earth used to be so short that people had to lower their bodies not to hit the sky. One family that was husking millet could no longer stand the daily back pain caused by bending over, and propped up the sky with a pestle. People have had more living space ever since.

Stealing Food from Underground to Aboveground

Long ago the world was divided into parts: one above ground, another other below. Under the ground could be found water, farms, and crops, but the land above ground was dark and barren. Legend has it that there was a couple from these two different worlds. The wife was from the underground, but when she moved above ground to be married she missed the underground foods very much. One day when visiting the underground she decided to hide millet seeds, red quinoa, taro, tree beans, and azuki beans in her nails, ears and nostrils, toes, buttocks, and genitals and take the seeds above ground.

Between the underground and above was a stone portal that opened at certain times. One time when the wife, who was very pregnant, was about to cross between the two worlds, she got stuck. There she turned into a parasol leaf tree, and that's why the tree's sap is blood red.



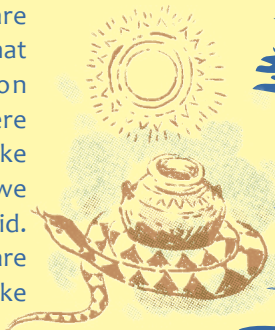
Because of where the wife hid the foods, they all have special flavors.

The Gluttonous Mother Rat

There once was a family where the father was often away for work. When the mother went to work in the fields, she would take her two boys up the mountain and sit them under a tree. But when the two brothers were hungry and crying, the mother ignored them. She even took a sweet potato, their only food, climbed a tree, and only threw down the peel for the brothers to eat. She fell asleep after finishing her meal, but when she woke up, the brothers were nowhere to be found.

At first, the mother wasn't bothered. She didn't even look for her children until their father came home and saw that the brothers were missing. They split up to search for the children, but the father found that the boys had turned into birds flying in the sky. The birds told the father not to worry about them. Heartbroken, the father returned home to confront his wife. He didn't expect to find that, out of grief, the mother had turned into a rat and hid. The father was furious. "If you leave this house again, don't ever come back!" Ever since, the community uses rat partitions in barns to prevent the selfish mother rat from returning to steal food.

Paiwan origin stories are quite colorful. Ours is that the Sun and the Moon laid eggs in pottery jars, which were guarded by the hundred pacer snake to ensure our safe birth. So when we see a hundred pacer we aren't afraid. We don't hit them, kill them, or scare them away. The hundred pacer snake is our guardian angel.



Approaching Differences with Respect, Appreciation, and Understanding.

How does it feel to spend three days in the slate house?

It's generally very comfortable to stay in the slate house, not too cold and not too hot. But for a concrete house, you have to consider the layout if you want to make it comfortable. In the city, people think about building the maximum number of house units on a patch of land, but here, you have to consider typhoons and earthquakes. The purpose of buildings alone is really different. One is for safety and adapting to the environment; the other is for convenience.

There's a lot of wisdom to the stone slab house , like the grooves cut into the walls. Smoke from firewood inside the house really can drift through the crevices and get outside. It's truly amazing to create such a comfortable space built out of locally sourced materials.

What impressed you about the protocols, taboos, and myths about the family house?

Like on the first night, we almost committed a faux pas by sleeping with our feet facing outside. I was really surprised. This is just the opposite direction from what we normally sleep in. But when in the community, we respect the customs here. Another example is I finally got to see a section of landslide in person. Imagine the feeling if a cluster of stone slab houses was once there. It's really different from learning history or geography in class. You really need to come to this place to understand what the textbooks are talking about.

Myths are strangers for us living on the plain but they're within reach in daily life for the indigenous people. If I didn't visit here, I wouldn't have felt so close to myths. Looking at photos of ruins shared by Mani, I was thinking what it would be like if a myth became real. I grew up in a Taoist family, and Taoist stories don't have much connection with us mortals. The stories are about gods and spirits after all. Compared to indigenous peoples, their ancestral spirits, stories about growing millet have much more of a connection to modern life, reminding them what things to follow in daily life.

After these three days, how would you describe your new indigenous friends?

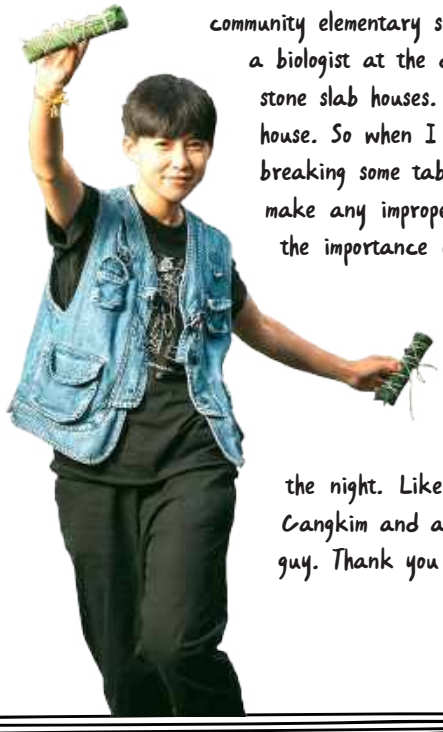
The indigenous friends I met during the past few days are a group of people who get to know their homeland and take it to heart, and introduce their history to more people to keep their culture alive and remembered. Obviously, you can do your own thing in modern life and don't need to worry much about it. But still Mani is willing to take up his family's role as community chief, fulfill the mission traditional society has given to him, and devote himself to the people. It's admirable from a modern perspective.

I was surprised and thrilled to get a Paiwan name straight from A-Hui's mouth (it's Cangkim). With the prayer led by the owner of the stone slab house, elder Mai, I realized this trip had come to an end.

Because the industrial road was opened, Payuwan Community is just a one-hour drive from Kaohsiung. I slept through the entire road trip. When I got out of the car, the smoke from the wood fire in my eyes awoke my spirit. Mani has us stride over the fire and step on silver grass to rid ourselves of bad luck from outside the community. Getting the smoke on our clothes let ancestors familiarize themselves with us outsiders. I was trembling, fearing that I might disturb the ancestors. But the tension gradually eased with Mani's good sense of humor.

The first thing after we arrived at Payuwan was eating. I was immediately captured by Mani and her family's mastery of cooking. With the teachers guiding us, I tried my hand at making Paiwan delicacies like cinavu and qavai which looked like meatballs. I also tried making pinuljacengan and stir-frying a fish for the first time. I was all thumbs, but I did get a sense of achievement when everyone said it was "yummy!" Pacak shared his passion, which is pretty much professional, horticulture. He let me, a plant killer, bring home a staghorn fern mounted on a board. Eve taught me how to knit a four-strand braid used in their clothes. Probably because I enjoy focusing on things in front of me, and my mind won't wander, I was fascinated making the braids and made many braids at one go. Now even eight-strand braiding is no problem for me. All these daily tasks take time and patience!

A small adventure with hunters was what I was anticipating the most, but it was also the most uneasy part of the trip. I'm the kind of person who will do all the preparation possible before hiking, but this time, in the rain at night, on an unknown road, I didn't know where to go or when to stop. Later, the hunters told us that a hunting trip usually takes a patient walk of five or six hours. That's when I realized I'd never really slowed down to feel what the mountains and forest have to offer.



When I see animal bones during a hike, I don't dare to take a second look. But in the community elementary school, I touched the head bone of a wild boar and stared like a biologist at the dried maggots in its eye sockets. Downstream, there are ruins of stone slab houses. The Paiwan have a tradition of burying the deceased inside the house. So when I helped clean the family house, I didn't dare speak for fear of breaking some taboo. In the community leader's house, I was very careful not to make any improper movements. Hearing Mani share Payuwan myths and culture, the importance of his personal identity and his mission, I felt old images were rerunning in front of me. Suddenly, I felt history was getting closer to me and I was getting closer to myself too.

This three-day trip has been so rewarding that I can't put it into words. For the first time, a typhoon struck when I was in the mountains and I feel blessed to have survived the night. Like, when I was about to leave Payuwan, I got the new name Cangkim and a new life. All of this happened before I turn 30! I'm a lucky guy. Thank you Payuwan!

2022.08.30

Taking Up the Baton >>