



Passing the Baton

Displacement, Return,
and Resettlement

Kahna mapansuhsuh

P U L I M A

ART AWARD 2023

藝 術 獎



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2023 PULIMA 藝術獎 徵件

為獎掖南島民族藝術之原創性，體現台灣原住民主體精神之創作，
並促進台灣原住民與全球原住民之合作對話關係。

徵選對象 | 具中華民國國籍及原住民身分(含平埔族群)之藝術創作者，創作形式不限。

獎勵方式 | 雙年獎、視覺藝術獎、表演藝術獎、評審團獎，總獎金新台幣240萬元。

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2023 PULIMA 藝術獎 表演創作徵件

建立國內原住民表演藝術創作平台，徵選未曾公開發表之作品，
發掘新興創作能量，促進藝文交流。

徵選對象 | 具中華民國國籍及原住民身分(含平埔族群)之個人或團隊，創作主題及形式不限。

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廣告



do ili o ya pakacitan so makakaday a ipipinapinan no kakoa pa

Treasure Hunt from Daily Routine in Indigenous Communities

tana pangaaapan do wawa aka no pangatesas so saki aka no niminmasazi a vazay am, to mimamayo o ya akmey katedbedan no asa ka ili a cicirawat.

da nipadket do 《原視界》 o vazay no malavayo a Bonongco a mingaran si Umav Ispalakan, nimangay do ili no Cowco do 新美, macikaop do rarakeh a mamaltog so omowmalalam aka no mamareng so saki aka no mapakheb so saroap do takey, ononongan na jira o pimasawdan da asa ka itetngehan, makma so mamaltog so omowmalalam do kakaasan aka no tominon aka no mamareng so ito no aramay. ipakatopos do vazavazay no malalavayo a tao do da talitalilisan, ya pacimatan do pangtoktowan no pangangavangan a ya omranes do ili no yancomin.

nimyapo nokakoa o kavonong so kanekenen no tao ya, kalovotan o niahahapan no manisibo a tao, mitarek o vonong no rarakeh aka no motdeh a vinyay, cicirawat oya no kakoa pa, am yarana mian so zampo aka no panrekmehan so kanekenen am, ya rana mablis o ya apan sia. o ya mamaltog so omowmalalam a tao am, da zazatan sira no ya omzat do omowmalalam dehdeh, tana yaro o masalit a vazay am, ya miparo o ya mapatnek so kalovotan a ciciponan do ili no yancomin sicyakoa ya. ko pakoyokoin pa jinyo mangakeypeng a malalavayo a tao am, masanib kamo a komawalam so kamanrarakehan, ipakatengen nyo do kangangay ta do ili.

Community identity is shaped, little by little, through daily routine such as hunting, wine brewing, or sharing life and personal experience, and these are also the features that differentiate a community culture from others.

For this volume of *Indigenous Sight*, we have invited a young Bunun person, named Ispalakan Umav, to have an authentic taste of daily life in Tsou people's Sinvi community. By so doing, this indigenous youth with life experience in both city and indigenous community had an opportunity to observe others when performing the daily rituals ranging from patrolling farms, producing alcoholic drinks, setting traps, and building a hunting hut, and at the same time share how he has been reminded of the past daily activities such as gun hunting, weaving clothes and spinning ramie yarn in the community, and brewing alcoholic drinks, etc. This attempt allows us a glimpse of the experience of young indigenous people leading a dual life between city and indigenous community. At the same time, we have an opportunity to see how the change in social value has influenced the indigenous community.

An illustration of this is indigenous food-sharing system. Hunters shared prey with their community members; food sharing varied from elders to children in the family. Indigenous peoples used to take this system for granted, but after electricity and refrigerator were introduced to them, things have changed. In addition, we have to address the environmental concerns from the society while at the same time striving to preserve the traditional way of hunting. Despite difficulties, we have to develop a hunter association, which caters to the modern world, and encourage indigenous women to become hunters. It is imperative that our people continue to search and establish their own norms and life style. I encourage young indigenous people to engage in inter-community communication so as to identify the ordinary and extraordinary daily routine in their community. They will be able to get to know themselves more by living each moment.

Panirsirngen do yanbonkay
Chairman of the Indigenous
Peoples Cultural Foundation

瑪拉歐斯
Maras

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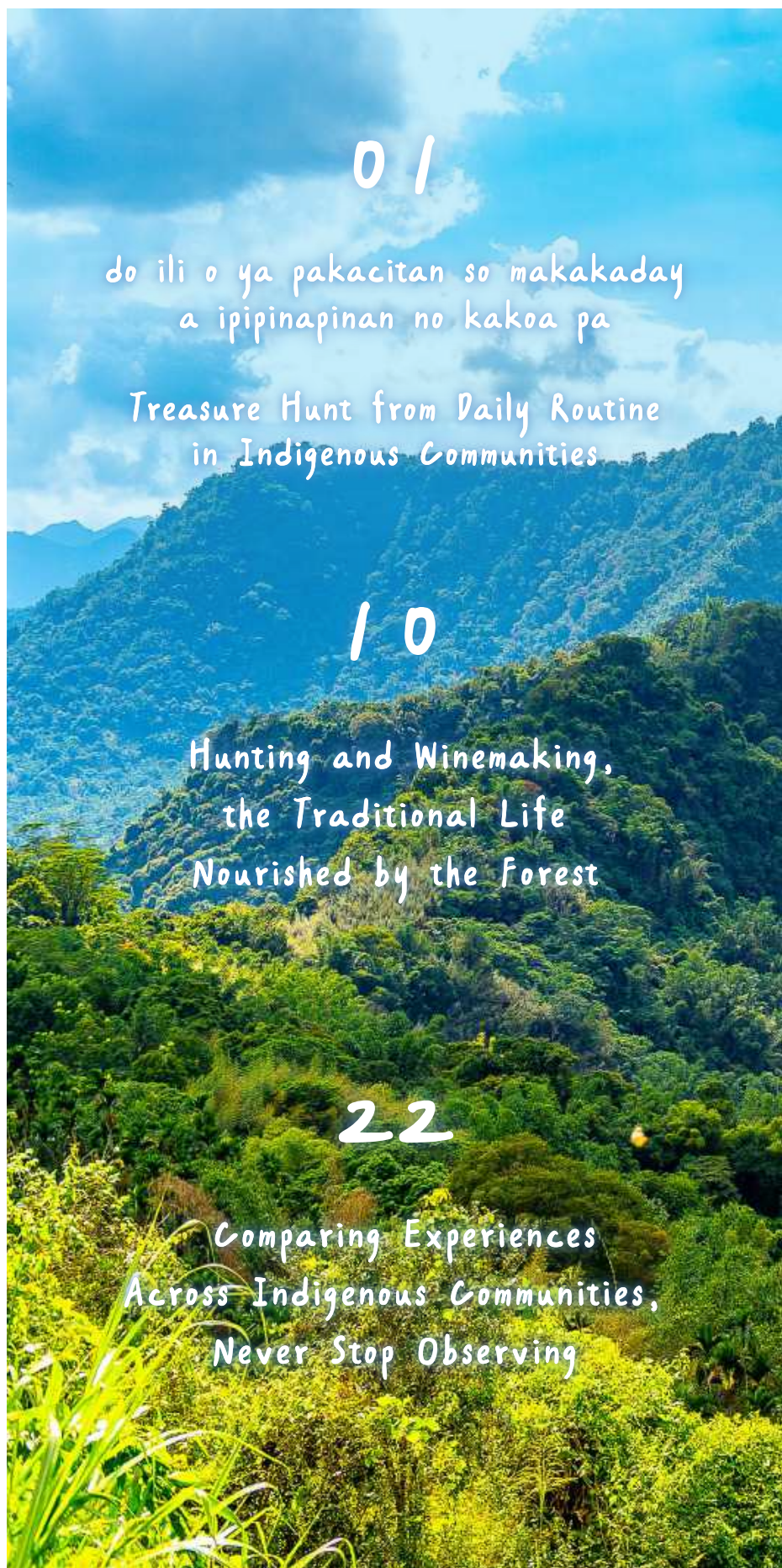
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Completely Different
Lives In and Outside the
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Passing the Boton >>

Kahna mapansuhsuh



Note: "Kahna mapansuhsuh" means "Resettlement" in Bunun.



Passing the Baton

Displacement, Return, and Resettlement

Part Bunun and part Atayal, Ispalakan Umay has traveled and moved between indigenous communities and cities from a young age. This time, she has come to the Niahosa Community, a Tsou community relocated from the Tapangx Community. After completing his education in the city, Tsou youth Voyu e toskə came back home to start speaking his mother tongue, practicing the Tsou culture, and willingly recovering his indigenous name. Their apparently different experiences and background collides, nurturing the visitors and encouraging the generation of indigenous youths.

Ispalakan Umav

Child of a Bunun and Atayal


Administrator of
Facebook Fans Page
"mapasava Bunun saikin"

Podcaster at "What's up Umav!"

Get a Little Taste of Tsou with Umav

Let's Explore!





My name is Umav, full name Ispalakan Umav. I inherited my grandmother's name and have been using my indigenous name on my official ID for over a decade. I am the daughter of a Bunun father and an Atayal mother. My parents come from different indigenous groups and their homes are far apart. Lived in many places growing up, moving a lot. In addition to indigenous townships, I have also spent half my life in urban areas. I see myself as both from the city and the indigenous community, and sometimes, perhaps I am neither. It all depends on how I am remembered or identified by those people.

I can write about my past experiences visiting Alishan, or how I have been amazed and moved by the Tsou culture, but instead, I would like to share a little of my background with our readers. I have Tsou friends whom I deeply admire and respect. What they have taught and shown me is to share such beauty on even mundane days, and I hope that one day I will also shine just like them with everything that I have learned.

So thrilled to have been invited by *Indigenous Insight* to visit Niahosa Community in Alishan. Many would think that there is a mountain separating the Bunun and Tsou people, but in fact, the indigenous community which I have lived in the longest so far in my life was a place shared by both the Bunun and Tsou people. It was Mahavun Community in Xinyi Township, Nantou, where the Bunun call it Mahavun, while the Tsou call it Iuktu.

The Tsou people I have known usually share deep ties with the Bunun, for example, via interracial marriages or as classmates who have grown up together. To the outsider, the Tsou may be known for their attractiveness (pointy nose, big dreamy eyes, and long eyelashes), or the rigorous traditional rituals and cultural structure, but the most substantial connections I have shared with the Tsou were next-door neighbors, friends I went to church with, teammates, grandmas at the crossroads, and kids out on the playground; the non-significant everyday-life details. Sometimes, their relatives from Alishan would visit them at Mahavun, and I would sit quietly next to them while they shared which family from Mahavun and which indigenous community from Alishan were actually from the same family. Having lived in Mahavun for a decade, I got used to telling people that "I'm from Mahavun". I identify with my life living amongst the Tsou and the Bunun, and that I'm a child of a Bunun and an Atayal. I lived with such an identity for one-third of my life and slowly grew to learn the culture and social community of the Tsou people.

Although I no longer live in Mahavun, a beautiful part of my life was spent with my Tsou friends. There are bound to be differences among people in different indigenous communities and different areas. I will try to learn as much as possible, and understand as much as possible, and hope I will not offend. Looking forward to beautiful exchanges.

Written by Umav, the day before going into the mountain

Niahosa Community, a Tsou Utopia Up in the Clouds

Setting out from Provincial Highway 18 at the foot of the mountain, passing by the various signage and local specialty stores featuring Alishan, the winding road into the mountain expands before us. It is the road tourists are eager to embark on, and the route of migration the Tsou people took over a century ago, deep into the mountain.

With a little over 6,000 in population and ranking 10th among the 16 official indigenous groups in Taiwan, the Tsou people is mainly found in Alishan Township in Chiayi and Xinyi Township in Nantou. The layering ranges add a mysterious veil to this group with a small population. However, before “becoming” a mountain indigenous group, the Tsou ancestors used to reside in Anping, Tainan, where they hunted the Formosan sika deer for the Netherlands and left behind the geographic name ca’ahamü. During the Koxinga Period, with the influx of Non-indigenous people into Taiwan, the Tsou people first retreated from the coast to Veoveoana Community at the foot of Alishan before further migrating into the mountain during the Qing Dynasty, forming the two collective communities of Tapangx and Tfuya.

When the Japanese people occupied the islands of Taiwan, the Tsou people decided to co-exist in harmony with the Japanese. The Japanese colonial government introduced to Tsou indigenous

Mo'o e Tapangx

Pasuya e Nuacachiyana

An 88-year-old
elder who has
experienced both
the Japanese
colonization and
Nationalist
Government ruling

Experienced hunter

Music artist

communities education, agriculture, and construction methods, fostering the first generation of indigenous elites with modern education. For the Tso people, the Japanese might have controlled rigorously the forestry resources, but still allowed them considerable autonomy in how they led their lives. When the Nationalist Government came along, however, everything changed.

In the early years after the war, everything was controlled, even the collecting of jelly-frog required application to do so. Tso elite Uongu Yata'uyungana, who received education via the teacher's education program and was educated on agriculture improvement, bravely proposed the idea of "mountain indigenous self-government" during his time as the township mayor and the establishing of the "Niahosa collective farm". He noted that their development in the mountain over the past century had led to a population increase in both collective communities, but they had no extra lands to farm on. Therefore, he applied to the State for reclamation and reorganized the collective communities according to their clans. Sending the clans into undeveloped areas in the mountain in groups, the new areas they relocated to were named later Saviki, Niahosa, and Chayamavana respectively.

The hardship of reclaiming new lands coupled with the political persecution suffered due to the idea of self-government proposed by township mayor Uongu Yata'uyungana during the White Terror, left the communities overshadowed with fear and endured government monitoring for a long time after, which only slowly faded after the lifting of the martial law. As modernization was introduced to the communities, roads were paved and electricity connected, changes occurred in traditional agriculture, farming, language, and culture, and many had to leave the community to work in the city to make a living. About 20 years ago, the idea of passing on the culture blossomed and Pasuya e Nuacachiyana, who has been greatly influenced by the older generation began operating a Warrior Camp that consisted of one-day hiking, turning the forest into a classroom to teach the traditional lifestyle and knowledge of the Tso. In 2018, the community development association established the Carving Workshop with local youth to revitalize traditional culture, and Niahosa Community began developing programs featuring the hunter's culture to shape the indigenous identity for their land and children.



Sayungu e Yatauyungana

Voyu e Toska

Yumi e Yakumangana

Pass on the
Tso culture with
leather carving

Community Chef

Handyman

Founder of the Taso ci cou Organic
Agriculture Development Association at
Niahosa Village, Alishan Township

Hunting and Winemaking, the Traditional Life Nourished by the Forest

The forest and rivers sustain the lifeline of the Tsou while forming their culture and order. When men hunt in the mountain on special occasions, women would make wine at home to show their appreciation for the hardworking men.



A cup of rice wine and a leaf. After praying, spill the rice wine over the leaf.



Ritual Performed Before Entering the Mountain in Respect of the Land

Before entering the mountain, hunters will pray to the mountain spirit for a safe journey and notify of their intent, if they mean to hunt or patrol the traps, they will also ask to be given some of the “things kept by the mountain spirit”, for the Tsou believe that animals such as the boar, the goat, or the Formosan Muntjac, are all raised and kept by the mountain spirit. In addition to the spirit of the mountain they are entering, when praying, the hunters will also invite nearby mountain spirits to come and enjoy the offerings as well.

The Mark of Hunters is Basic Etiquette

The hunter's mark is set to notify other hunters that “this spot is already taken by someone else's trap”, and generally placed somewhere obvious at the entry to the mountain. Hunters who see such marks will have to find somewhere else to set up their traps. This is the einu (etiquette and rules) of the Tsou.

The hunter sharpens a long piece of bamboo and sticks it into the ground, cuts openings at the top and side of the bamboo and inserts leaves or bamboo slices into the opening to signify the scope of the trap set. In the early days, each clan had its own hunting grounds, and such marks were not required since everyone understood that one should not trespass into the hunting grounds of other clans. However, with modern society and culture changing, the boundaries of hunting grounds are blurred, thus giving rise to such marking to prevent conflicts. If you would like to set traps further into the mountain from this trap, you must obtain approval from the owner of this mark.





Hunters generally patrol their traps once a week, and the next time they visit, they would refresh the leaves inserted on the mark to indicate that they are “still tending to the traps”. If you see leaves that have not been refreshed for a while, it means that this hunter has not patrolled the trap for some time. According to the norms of the Tsou, the hunter’s mark can only be moved or removed by the person who placed it, no one else has the right to do so. If you touch the marks of other hunters, you might get into a fistfight. So, the hunter must remove one’s own mark if traps are no longer to be set.

Good Location and Suitable Material Rely On the Experience of the Hunter

The hunter would seek paths that the boar generally takes and set up traps along the easy slopes. There are mainly two types of traps, one is the leg snare for large games including the boar, the sambar, and the Formosan Muntjac, and the other is the noose for the goat, which is often set up on the cliff.



Women were not supposed to touch men’s hunting knives in the past, only the hunters’ wives may touch them. Nowadays the Tsou has female hunters who mostly picked up their skills while hunting with their husbands in the mountain, and the women tend to have a higher success rate than men.



Some indigenous groups reveal part of their traps, but the Tsou people like to bury the entire trap to make it harder for the animals to detect.



When a hunter sees animals caught in others’ traps, he will ask around whose trap it is or bring the game back to the village to look for its owner. If the game is brought back, the owner will share half or a thigh with the hunter in appreciation.

Although we all have mobile phones now, we’re still used to knocking on people’s doors to ask. We pretty much know who will set traps there, plus it’s difficult to pinpoint the location over the phone.



Seek nearby for unelastic bamboo sticks, what the hunters call “the rude stick”. The lack of elasticity will cause the stick to bounce once the animal steps on it and will not fix in shape due to extended bending.

Build the Hunter's Hut According to the Wind Direction

Hunting is no short trip, sometimes it may even take a few days. In the old days, hunters would rest where the rock caves in under the cliff. Nowadays, they build a simple hunter's hut to shield them from the wind and rain. Remember to build the hunter's hut on a flat surface close to a water source so you can gather water to drink or cook, but also remember to keep a distance away from the river, in case it floods.



At night, the wind blows down from higher up in the mountain, so the opening to the hunter's hut should face downhill at a comparatively higher location, making it easier to start a fire in front of the hut.

Once the canopy is secured in place with rocks, Formosan palm leaves will be used for cover (sogon grass can also be used, depending on which is more accessible), overlapping in layers on both sides of the hut as densely as possible, which can keep the light out while serving as camouflage.



Drink the Wine Made by Women

Winemaking is the women's job in the Tso community. It is usually made for the Millet Ritual and War Ritual, or when the hunters travel far in groups for hunting. The women will start making the wine early to show their appreciation for the far-traveling hunters.



Slightly pre-soak the rice for a better crushing effect.

2



When crushing the pre-soaked rice into flour, remember to add the rice bit by bit to prevent inconsistent quality in the rice flour due to uneven force.

3



Add half of the flour into hot water and cook slowly until it thickens to a paste.



4

Feels like I'll get told off for grabbing the rice with bare hands.



Once the rice paste cools, knead the paste by hand while adding gradually to it the other half of the flour. Nothing else is added. As the dough becomes more solid, place it into a jar, cover it with a piece of cloth, and let it rest for 3 to 5 days, then the wine is made.



Millet Goddess of the Tsou

The Tsou works in silence because we believe that spirits can be found anywhere around the family house. The Millet Goddess lives in the barn of every family house. Since the Millet Goddess is weaker in power, there are guardians keeping the barn safe, much like the Door Gods of the Han culture. Also, the Millet Harvest Ritual of the Tsou is not a celebration, but rather to thank the spirits for their protection, and to communicate with them, so we tend to avoid clamoring, talking loudly, or scolding our children. The Millet Goddess doesn't like fish, spring onion, or garlic, so we used to keep food from the mountain and rivers separate with different pots and pans.

Atypical Urban Indigenous, Shaping the Indigenous Identity Via Constant Moving

How did the experience of moving between the indigenous community and the city shape your identity?



In terms of indigenous communities, I have lived in Bunun and Seediq indigenous communities, but the longest I have spent in was the Mahavun Community co-habited by the Tsou and Bunun peoples. Growing up in different indigenous communities taught me from a young age that I'm indigenous, and that there are other indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. But it was only after I moved to the city when I realized that indigenous peoples were the minority. It took me some time to adapt to life in the city, and when I moved back to the mountain, I had to learn again what life is like in the indigenous community. During my ten years living in the city, I identified myself as from Taichung. I knew that I am indigenous, but I would say that I am from Taichung. When I moved back to the indigenous community, I had to tell people instead that "I am from Mahavun". Explaining to people again and again where Mahavun is, I slowly identified as from Mahavun as well. Now I have moved to Luluna, the indigenous community my dad was originally from. It is now a Bunun indigenous community, but formerly resided by the Tsou people, so I have always had a close relationship with the Tsou.

Growing up, I got to know myself by moving again and again. I realized that my experiences have been interwoven and layered with questions such as "are you from the mountain?" "Are you not from the mountain?" They have been a large part of my life. I do have experience in traditional rituals, indigenous languages, and forestry knowledge, but I do not highlight such experiences to my non-indigenous friends. I usually take them to places I have lived before, for example, to experience my daily life at Mahavun. They would be very surprised that we drink coffee instead of millet wine in the morning. Once, I brought a friend to Luluna Community during New Year. When nighttime came, we just went to bed. My friend had expected some kind of party, but things were just quiet in the community like always. Sometimes, a few friends would gather in the plaza nearby and chat, and end things by 9 at night. But if someone brings out a guitar, this gathering might extend for a while. The non-indigenous have a very "rustic indigenous" imagination of us, for example, they would ask, "do you have A/C at home?" But we live 1,000 meters above sea level, why would we need A/C? The first time I heard the question, I found it hilarious.

Since I constantly move from place to place, I consciously remind myself not to stereotype any group, I consider it very offensive. Also, my father has always taught me, "you identify with wherever you live." So, when I lived in the Seediq indigenous community, I joined the Seediq traditional song choir. The first traditional song suite I learned was in the Seediq language.

How did it feel setting the trap and building the hunter's hut today?



I had no prior experience because, for one, I have no use for such experience, no one would expect Umav to hunt. Also, I have no such interest. Setting the trap and building the hunter's hut today somehow connected me to my experiences learning to weave and spinning the ramie thread. I understood how essential these skills were in traditional society, especially in one with a gendered division of labor. For example, when we were making wine today, I asked, "does this give me extra credit?" The answer was, "no, everyone should be able to make wine." But in contemporary society, not knowing such skills have no impact on my life. I can learn them, but I do not need to master them.

While setting the trap, I knew well that I needed to steer clear as much as possible and try not to cause people more trouble. When it comes to "asking questions", having spent time in indigenous communities, I knew that

elders believe “children should observe more and ask less”, so I tend to wait for a break before asking questions. They are setting a trap, after all, I was worried that I might get in the way.

When you were making wine, you mentioned that it looked a lot like the rice-pounding musical instrument of the Bunun people, what kind of music were you talking about?



There are some cultural groups in Luluna Community, where my father is from, that are trying to revive the “pestle music” culture, performing music by creating music scales with the pestle. They have performed on the stage of the National Theater before, and Bulareyaung has worked with them as well. To the Bunun, who value greatly “collectivity”, our music is performed in the form of harmony. The pestle music cannot be made by one person only, it has to come from a group of people, together, it is a complete piece.

The last time I pounded a pestle was in an Atayal indigenous community, I was making mochi. The elders mentioned that there are songs they sing specifically for making mochi, that is why I asked Voyu if there are songs they sing when pounding the pestle. That is the difference between our cultures. A pestle is just a pestle, but the Bunun and Atayal peoples play music with the pestle while the Tsou does not.

Does the winemaking process remind you of any other cultures relevant to other indigenous groups?



We make wine with the whole rice grain, but here, they crush the rice into flour first, so that is new to me. We used to chew rice to make wine in the old days, but we no longer practice such traditions in recent years. We know that winemaking is essential to rituals, we only make wine for specific events, not just because we want a drink, which was a completely different drinking culture to the one developed after the Tobacco and Liquor Corporation came into the indigenous community. But it is not an indigenous “drinking culture”, but rather a “winemaking culture”. The entire winemaking process is aligned with the rituals and ceremonies, events in the village, and family ethics. It is all about the cultural structure of winemaking, and “drinking” is just the final step.

You have hunting gear and tanning lessons coming up tomorrow, have you had prior experiences?



No, I rarely took part in such activities unless friends specifically invites me or the opportunity arises, I am already busy enough learning the indigenous language and getting to know people in different places. Although I have no experience in tanning, nor can I make hunting gear, we have hunters in the family, so I am used to these things. I am just not expected to know how to do these things. I tend not to be surprised or overwhelmed emotionally by some occasional experience in the mountain because these things are part of my everyday life, people cannot tell so they just assume that I am from the city. Even my own people cannot tell that I am indigenous, nor can they tell whether I am Bunun or Atayal, I get this all the time. But once they talk to me, they know that these are things I am familiar with. This is why I tell stories and lectures over the internet and via Podcast, I believe that there are many out there who share similar experiences. I am not your typical indigenous youth, but that does not mean I am far removed from our culture.







Crop Restoration and Hunting, the Tsou Got It!

Hunting, agriculture, and fishing are the various sources of food for indigenous peoples. The forestry wisdom and ethics of life of the Tsou are displayed by the tangible tools and intangible culture.



Hunting Tools and Trophies

The Crossbow

When an animal steps on the trigger, the crossbow will shoot an arrow straight into the heart of the animal. In the old days, boundaries of the clans' hunting grounds were evident, there were no trespassers and owners knew where their crossbows were placed, and there would be no accidents. But nowadays with things different, to prevent accidentally hurting others, the Tsou no longer uses the crossbow.



The Feathers and Feet of the Swinhoe's Pheasant

The Tsou language for the Swinhoe's Pheasant is *toevosʉ*, meaning "the true bird". When the Swinhoe's Pheasant is caught, they will save two parts: the tail feather, which can be used as a headdress, and the feet, which are dried, tied and hung. Both are signs of the hunter's capability.



We can wear up to 12 feathers in the headdress, 4 from the Swinhoe's Pheasant (2 black and 2 white), 2 from the Blue Magpie, 2 from the Crested Serpent Eagle, and 2 from the Mountain Hawk-Eagle. We can only wear the feathers of the birds we caught, and even if we caught more we can't wear more. Usually, we wear 6 feathers and never more than what our elders wore.



Bow and Arrow



The earliest bows were made of wood, but since bamboo multiplies fast and is extremely elastic, many tools later used bamboo instead. The length of the bow generally does not exceed one's height. If the bow is too long, it can easily get stuck amongst the branches when moving in the mountain, which can cause great inconvenience.



The arrow point comes in two shapes: one is the arrow point shape, mainly used for large animals such as the boar. It can penetrate deep into the heart and cause the animal to bleed to death. The other is the three-pronged, mainly used to hunt small animals such as the flying squirrel, masked palm civet, squirrel, and bamboo partridge. Once they are shot, the arrow gets stuck in the body and cannot be easily shaken off. The animals cannot run far dragging the arrow behind them.

Before iron became accessible, the entire arrow was made with bamboo. The ones made with the skin of the Arrow Bamboo were extra tough and sharp.



Of all indigenous peoples in Taiwan, only the Tsou add feathers to the nock to help the arrow fly further with better stability, and we prefer the wing feather of the female Swinhoe's Pheasant, the male feather is too thick.



In the former days, hunters would bring the head of the animals for the elders to assess. The elders would close their eyes, feel the teeth of the animal, and determine by the abrasion of the teeth the age of the animal. The younger the animal, the sharper the teeth, elders would acknowledge the hunter who scored young animals. After the assessment, the hunter will debone the meat and present it to the elder along with some wine, which is a form of sharing as well as paying for the assessment.

Shrimp Fishing Equipment

Tube

Bamboo shrimp tube with a notch at the opening to easily remove the shrimp from the spear, convenient for single-hand operation.

Spear

Iron spear with prongs brought close to better catch the shrimp.

Catch Big Fish with a Fish Trap

This is a mid-sized fish trap, made with Formosan palm, used when there is smaller rainfall and the river is less rapid, roughly around November to the rainy season the following year. Place the fish trap where the riverbed has a height difference and secure it with a rock. This will allow the fish to swim into the trap following the flow, the smaller fish can swim away through the gaps while the larger fish will remain. The trap is usually left in place for one to two weeks.

The Tsou Ethics Embodied with Food Sharing

Traditionally, hunters share their harvest with members of the indigenous community. When sharing fish, they will first categorize the fish into heaps of large, medium, and small. If there are elders present, a few of the largest fish will first be given to the elders as a sign of respect, and the rest of the fish is evenly distributed to everyone on site. If game meat is shared, the loin is given to the person who stabbed the animal to death, while the rest is shared among all those present. Furthermore, people who discover animals caught in others' traps, help to carry the animals home, or even chance encounters in the mountain, all get to share meat.

Food sharing in the family follows a similar rule. After the poultry is treated, the meatiest parts such as the thigh and breast meat are given to grandparents and young children because they are not good at nibbling on the bone, and the rest is shared between the parent generation. However, with the refrigerator introduced to the indigenous community, food preservation became easier and the traditional culture of food sharing gradually declined.

Traditional Headlight—Silver Grass Torch

The shrimp comes out after it gets dark, and without artificial lighting in the old days, they would tie up dried silver grass in bunches, and place them by the riverside during the day at intervals of 50 to 100 meters. By night, they will light the torches to shine on the river, and that is lighting for shrimp fishing. By alternating the gap between the bamboo, you can adjust the size of the fire.

Wooden box

Functions much like the goggles, when the waves are big, it can be difficult to see into the water, press the wooden box onto the surface with the glass side down, and the hunter can easily see into the water.



If there are relatives in the community that cannot hunt, the hunter will make sure to share meat with them, which will be reciprocated with fruits and vegetables.

Strong Tsou People Restoring Native Crops

In addition to agricultural products such as bamboo, tea, and camellia oil, there is a group of indigenous people dedicated to restoring native crops on Alishan. Yumi e Yakumangana, the owner of Taso ci cou Organic Agriculture Development Association, grew up away from the indigenous community. Wanting to verify the traditional farming method of “growing the crops well without fertilizer”, and hoping to restore the Tsou’s native crop, she returned to the indigenous community over a decade ago to practice Shumei natural farming. Using no pesticide nor fertilizer, her farm currently has the largest variety of crops farmed with Shumei natural farming.

Taso ci cou is the Tsou language. Taso means “strong”, ci is a particle, cou means “man/person”, Taso ci cou means “strong Tsou person”.



Rice bean

Looks similar to red mung bean, it is the favorite food of the Tsou elders. Yumi e Yakumangana accidentally came across a native species and began its restoration. Traditionally cooked with rice, or in spare rib soup with Adlay millet and pigeon pea.



Adlay millet

Native Adlay millet, remove the skin and you have brown Adlay millet.



Chinese onion

Functions as a sterilizer, extremely popular during the pandemic.



Sweet potato

Native sweet potato species, white or purple white in color.



Pigeon pea

Come in black and red colors, native pigeon pea species is light grey and the only species with a fragrance. Mostly used in soups.



Berumuda arrowroot

Aka natural thickening flour. Wash, add water, and press, extract and dry the settled starch, and you have Berumuda arrowroot flour. Berumuda arrowroot is one of the dietary sources of Gerson Therapy and is used by many cancer patients. It can also be used to make liang gau jelly and tapioca pearls.

In addition to the above crops, the farm also grows wild bitter melon, turmeric, waterleaf, winged bean, creeping foxglove, and yuca.

Comparing Experiences Across Indigenous Communities, Never Stop Observing

While talking about culture, the instructors also shared their history of migration. Can you share with us the Bunun story?



According to the Bunun legend, we originated from Yushan, where 5 brothers migrated in different directions and thus formed the 5 major clans. Based on oral history and by cross-referencing with other indigenous groups, it is understood that the Bunun used to live on the plains and had once traded with the Taiwan plains indigenous peoples and Tsou peoples as well as engaged in conflicts with them. But as the foreign regime moved in, the Bunun relocated further up the mountains and, for the past 200 years, resided mostly in the mountains in Nantou, Kaohsiung, Hualien, and Taitung.

I learned of our history of migration through family stories and my own research, my cousins would also study the history and share their findings with us. But what I am particularly interested in is the history of my own clan, the Ispalakan of the Isbukun Community. The Ispalakan clan can be found in Nantou, Kaohsiung, and Taitung, but to make a living and also because the ruling power wanted to manage us more concentratedly, they relocated us to Luluna in recent years.

Instructors mentioned a few times about how winemaking, and sorting of the crops would be occasions for gossip, do you have similar experiences in the Bunun community?



At Mahavun Community, there is Lusan Uvaz, the Baby's Day. We would perform the mat-haulus ceremony on this day by putting on the child a necklace, which is actually a rite of passage including naming and a blessing ceremony of sticking the ngan (acorus root) on the child's forehead. It is practiced between May to June each year to celebrate the newborns of the year and is an opportunity to introduce new souls to the community. When prepping for the ceremony, for example making necklaces with the hard Adlay millet, preparing the ngan and traditional clothing, and getting ready to slaughter a pig, all of which are occasions when our people would exchange news and information.

What have you noticed about the economic predicament and development in indigenous communities?



We have a production and marketing group and a Multiple Employment Development Program at Luluna, as well as things like camellia oil, coffee, and innocuous and organic agriculture, it is better when you have a production and marketing group. When the brand has yet to be known and channels are few, it is more difficult for farmers in the mountains as they tend to be exploited by wholesalers. Luluna has two main economic crops, the grape and greenhouse crops. The greenhouse development has been promising in the past decade, and the quality of production has been more stable. Aided by the climate, we have more varieties of fruits and vegetables, and anything we plant grows rather well. Other than agriculture, we have also been planning tourism, with accommodations and tourism, coupled with resources from the public sector, we should be able to develop a tourism business.



How would you recommend urban indigenous youth approach indigenous cultures? What have you learned so far?



Take part in camps like the one we did this time, something natural and not set up. For example, simple things like patrolling the field with Yumi, nothing fancy yet authentic. Or you can take part in those “very indigenous” events, but you have to understand that those are set up for the program, it is not everyday life. Some people need programs like that to quickly form a bond or an impression, doesn’t matter either way, but gradually you have to build up that kind of sensitivity.

Next is observation. People who stay in indigenous communities stay because they work here and because they do not like living in the city all that much. So, before you ask questions, try to observe “what is it that they spend time doing”. I have also lived in the mountains and have been asked some ridiculous questions by tourists before. It is alright to ask the wrong questions, you are outsiders, and it is only natural for you to ask silly questions.

What is your takeaway from the time spent here?



I really identify with the way Voyu, and his people live their lives in the indigenous community. They do not talk fancy, and they show their guests how they live their life in a very Tsou way. This is not easy, especially for someone like me who lives in the city and works to advocate indigenous issues.

When I asked Voyu when and why did he recover his indigenous name? His answer was it was only natural. I find this fantastic. His work involves culture revitalization, and he recovers his indigenous name. As an indigenous person, need he justify why he is using his own name or getting to know his land? He is the best example to call on all indigenous youth with atypical life experiences to learn about know themselves. He is a wonderful example, to me, he is living his identity. Although I recovered my indigenous name a long while back, I did it for my family. Voyu did it because he wanted to. He spoke his indigenous language at home and lives in the indigenous community, whereas I spent my time between the city and the indigenous community. it took me a long time to go from recovering my indigenous name to actually identifying as indigenous. when you compare us, you see that we are different.

Also, it really is quite far out from anywhere here. My indigenous community is only 10 mins from the nearest 7-11, the same for my other Paiwan friends. But here, we are deep in the mountain, and life is very simple.







Handicrafts Throughout Generations, Animal Skin, Wood, and Bamboo

From the unique tanning crafts to farming tools and toys, the Tsou source material and inspiration from the forest and turn different handicrafts into new community features, which in turn, is used as medium to display their culture to outsiders.

Processing Animal Skin

Tanning is the process of turning animal skin into clothing and ornaments, it is an embodiment of the traditional skills and culture of the Tsou. After hunting, the hunter will separate the skin from the meat and the skeleton while it is still “fresh”.



Expand

Expand the animal skin by piercing holes along the side of the skin with a knife at intervals of the width of a finger, then take four sticks of bamboo and skewer the four sides of the skin to form a bamboo frame that is larger than the skin itself. The bamboo frame formed by the four sticks of bamboo expands the animal skin with tension. It is then placed under the sun for 2 weeks until the skin is completely dry.



Tanning

The sun-dried animal skin is very stiff. They will work in a pair, each holding one side of the skin to rub it back and forth on rods made with wood such as Yellow Rotang Palm. This will soften the skin. The tanned leather can then be made into clothing and accessories based on the species of the animal and its size.

* The craft of turning animal skin into clothing is very time-consuming, therefore the team was not able to take part in the tanning process. But we can thus imagine how the significant investment of time and effort in traditional cultures can shape people's identity towards their indigenous culture.

Tanning requires two people to continuously tug the skin in both ways. It is extremely exhausting and is usually handled by the younger and stronger people in the community.

Fun Toys Made in the Mountain

Spinning Top

It is a toy played by the elders to kill time. The Tsou spinning top is unique in the fact that it has a waist. The spinning top is spun with a ramie string wrapped around the waist and tugged by a bamboo stick. People usually start from the largest and spin all the way down to the smallest spinning top.

Wind Whistle

The wind whistle began as an alerting tool. The bamboo slice makes a whizzing sound when cutting through the wind, which can travel far. When emergencies such as invasions of other indigenous groups occur, those guarding the higher ground will start swinging the wind whistle to alert people in the community that something is up. It later became a toy and a tool to chase away birds.



The main reason we do not have many songs or dances is because we are on alert all the time in the mountain, safeguarding our traditional territory.



When the wind whistle is swung.

Bird Chaser

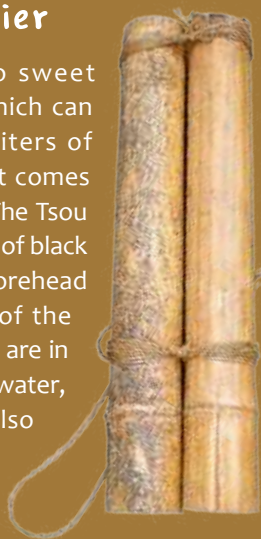
The bamboo tube is sliced down the middle and tapped against one another to make sounds. Farmers patrol the fields carrying the bird chaser, tapping it as they walk around the field to chase the sparrows away.



The bamboo slice is in the shape of an arrow, it is first sharpened and thinned, then a hole is drilled to loop the thread through. The thinner and smaller the bamboo slice, the sharper the sound it makes.

Water Carrier

Tie together two sweet bamboo tubes, which can hold approx. 20 liters of water combined. It comes in larger versions. The Tsou would wrap a piece of black cloth around the forehead to hold the strap of the carrier. The women are in charge of carrying water, and children will also help to collect water once they grow up.



Everyone used to have farming chores in the former days and had to take their young child with them to work, so they used to weave baby baskets with bamboo the height of one's waist, and the women will carry the baby basket while working in the fields. The bottom of the baby basket is padded with things and the child sits on top of them. This way, when feeding is required halfway through work, they can simply lower the baby basket and conveniently feed or comfort the child without having to bend down, since the child is already raised higher.

Getting to Know the Animals in the Mountain with Leather Carving

Sayungu moved here from Tapangx Community after she got married and combined her leather carving expertise with local features to create a community map and leather carved dolls. The accessible toys help visitors get to know the indigenous culture better.



Aerial view of Niahosa Community, including the hunter camp, elementary school, culture and health station, grocery store, medical station, church, and dump site, all depicted by Sayungu with her tools.

Oil Camellia, giving Niahosa Community the name of the Land of Oil Camellia.

The hunter statue, symbolizing the hunter's culture which the Tsou prides itself on.



Completely Different Lives In and Outside the Indigenous Community

Have you any handicraft experiences in the past? What impressed you most in the handicraft class today?



I am not very good at handicrafts and can barely handle things like sticking together pieces of wood to make a flying squirrel, ones with simple instructions. I do not have a lot of patience in handicrafts, so I am not good at it. Drawing is the only thing I like to spend time on.

But I was really good at shaving bamboo slices for the wind whistle today, I had no idea that I could shave! It's a good thing the flying squirrel leather ornament was not difficult, otherwise, the instructor would have had a very tough time working with me. Like when we have to pierce holes along the edges of the leather for tanning, I completely messed it up. It is not something I am used to, the force was applied wrongly, and that messed up the line of holes, it's a good thing Voyu could fix it in the end.

How did it feel processing animal skin?



Voyu is amazing, I worship him. I kept comparing myself to him along the way, because, in the past, similar cultural experience tours were led by elders, you rarely have youth my age leading very untouristy tours, which proves that Voyu really understands the essence of these things.

The Bunun also has a tanning craft. In recent years, with people awakening culturally, some youths have started to revitalize this culture. I do not go back to visit as much, so I have not had much exposure to it. There are too many things to learn as a hunter, the skin is just a small part of the hunter's knowledge system. There is plenty more where we can't see. I admire people with a sense of mission and are willing to talk about it and share with people the traditional cultures.

Also, there is the "scent". When I visited my Atayal grandparents in my childhood, I always felt that the kitchen had a kind of scent that was never found in Non-indigenous kitchens, and I could always tell right away by the scent whether it is the kitchen of an indigenous person. But as a child, I did not know where that scent came from. I did not realize until just then that it was the scent of the game.

What did you have to play with as a child?



Tamagotchi, play catch, barbie dolls, cars...when you let a child go outside, they will play with whatever they can lay their hands on. I have never played with "traditional indigenous toys" in the past, I didn't have friends who played with them growing up.

After I transferred to a city school, I noticed that students there did not climb trees as much. When I was in first grade, I still lived in the mountain and there were always trees outside our houses. I loved climbing up high and just staring out in the open and contemplating or playing by myself. Sometimes when my dad came home to see that I was not home, he would assume that "Umay is probably on a tree again." My aunt nearby kept chickens back then, in addition to the broiler, there were beautiful and colorful bantams in many colors. These chickens did not like staying on the ground, they liked to spend time in the trees like me. I remember once sharing with my non-indigenous classmates about it, "I came home and saw all of our chickens on the tree, looking very happy." I told it very matter-of-factly, but everyone thought the story was weird. I later looked it up and found that not everyone's chicken enjoyed being on the tree.

I met and talked with 5 instructors in the short span of 3 days, and I cherish every moment of it. In the fields of Yumi e Yakumangana at Taso ci Cou, she patiently introduced to me all the plants before us and the corresponding farming knowledge, while I kept worrying about stepping in the wrong places and chopping on the wrong things. When I was harvesting sweet potatoes, I made fun of myself and said that I have eaten many but never harvested a single one. Yumi was very nice and said to me, "you are not alone, there are many like you," which makes me feel better about not knowing a thing about farming. I admire her for being able to operate an all-natural, organic, and innocuous farm in the mountain, work in the production and marketing group, and still be able to host study tours from the plains at the same time.

Sayungu moved to Niahosa after she got married and had always had an interest in leather carving. She likes to create with elements from her home surrounding such as landscapes or animals, and sometimes she teaches leather carving. But when it comes to commercializing her products, she smiled and said that she prefers to create as she is inspired, if she made products for commercial purposes, she would have to adapt to the preferences of the customers or invest greatly in manpower. As an illustration content creator, I can relate to her. Do we want to make more money, or do we want to create what makes us happy? That is the question. I complimented her on "being a true artist".

Pasuya, Grandpa Mo'o, and Voyu the home-returning youth, the three Tsou men from different generations also inspired me greatly. First of all, Pasuya's knowledge and his sense of mission for the Tsou culture are admirable, and I am extremely grateful to Grandpa Mo'o for being willing to spend time sharing their history and culture with me, someone who is not Tsou. I often compare what I learned here with my past experiences in Iuhtu/Mahavun community, or with the Bunun and Atayal cultures. From their stories, we heard the names Uyong Yata'uyungana and Lixin Wadan, and upon further inquiry, we learned that compared to the Japanese colonization, the real colonial harm done to the entire Tsou community was the authoritative party state ruling which ruthlessly deprived the Tsou of their lives and dignity. They did not deliberately stir up strong emotions nor avoid talking about specific details when mentioning the past, but with the history blatantly revealed before us, my heart throbbed with sentiments.

This place was renamed Niahosa when Uyong Yata'uyungana guided his people in relocation. According to oral history and archaeological data, this place was originally the old settlement of another indigenous group, which is the origin of the geographic name Niahosa in the Tsou language. Pasuya mentioned that the name of the indigenous group no longer in existence is "taqupu-aneu". From research, I discovered that this place was known as the former territory of Takipulan, the now disappeared Bunun community, and as a Bunun, I feel that fate has brought me here.

Inheriting the expectations and nurturing of his predecessors, Voyu picks up the cultural preservation work. He is a member of the local band which creates original music in the Tsou language and can converse with elders in fluent Tsou language with a level of confidence and firmness that people his age can only aspire to (even though he is always humble about his fluency). When I asked him why he uses his Tsou name on his official ID, he said that he does not expect the same of everyone, but for him, "this is my name, so I think it's only natural". That kind of natural confidence, humility, and never forgetting to honor the forest and ancestors are my most important takeaway from this journey.

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Passing the Baton >>

