

FRONTISPIECE

CHIEF PUTUAN OF THE RUKAI TRIBE, BUDAI VILLAGE, PAIWAN AREA, WEARING WHAT IS PROBABLY A WOVEN COSTUME AND CROWN OF JAGUAR TEETH.

MUSEUM COLLECTION, DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY,
NATIONAL TAIWAN UNIVERSITY, TAIPEI, TAIWAN.

NOTES ON ABORIGINE TEXTILES OF FORMOSA TODAY
FROM A VISIT TO THE ISLAND IN 1954

by

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FORMOSA, OR TAIWAN, as the island is now called, has been for centuries, except for brief intervals, an occupied land with an aborigine population whose origin is unknown. As to the beginnings of these people opinions and records vary. Some authorities say that the aborigines have a history on the island of about two thousand years and that they are of proto-Malay stock. Variations among them doubtless are the result of successive migrations from the Pacific islands, the Malay peninsula and the continent.

Today these aborigines are divided into the following groups. Atayal in the north and east; Bunun in the central area; Tsou adjoining the western Bunun; Rukai, south of the Tsou; Paiwan in the extreme south; and Ami extending up the east coast beyond the Puyuma, where they border on the Atayal. The Yami, another group, inhabit a small island off the southeast coast, a region, unlike the others, which was not accessible to me during my stay (Plate I).

Published material on the subject of the aborigines is difficult to find and many of the anthropological and ethnological studies present difficulties for they are for the most part written only in Chinese and Japanese. Historical records likewise are limited and frequently the available data on a subject are controversial. The earliest mention of the island in Chinese books, according to George Kleinwachter, writing in 1883,¹ is in the thirteenth century when the Chinese at that time described the island as a land of vampire demons whose people wore no clothes and spoke an unintelligible language.

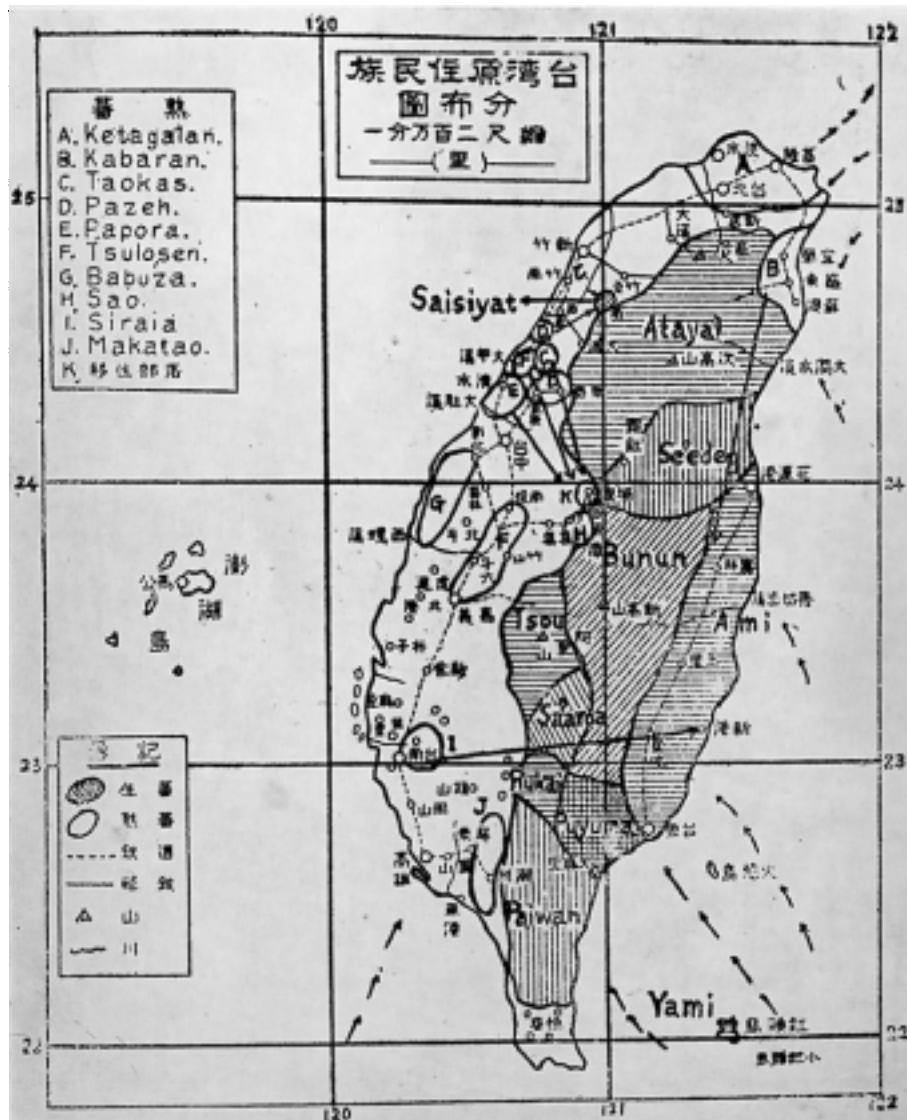


PLATE I
 MAP SHOWING LOCATION OF TRIBES ON FORMOSA.

Legend is more colorful. An old Chinese story,² for example, tells us that Formosa was first settled by dragons from Woo-Noo-Mun (Five Tiger Gate), identified as Foo-Chow on China mainland. The dragons glided under the sea making their ascent to the island by throwing up the high bluff at the northern harbor of Keelung, then writhing the length of the island, heaving the parallel ridges of high mountains into heights from twelve to thirteen thousand feet and shaking them then as now, from time to time, with convulsive earthquakes.

As a matter of history the first Europeans to reach the island were the Portuguese who came in 1590, landing at Keelung like the legendary dragons. Their stay was relatively short, for some years later they were driven off by the Dutch who arrived in 1624. Although Taiwan, translated from the Chinese as Terrace Bay, is the Chinese name for the island, the title bestowed by the Portuguese has remained in use — Formosa, meaning beautiful.

Spanish colonizers attempted briefly to establish holdings on the island in 1626 and a mission was built in the north by the Dominicans.³ But in 1642, like the Portuguese, the Spanish were forced from their holdings on Formosa and driven off by the Dutch.

The Dutch East India Company soon established colonies and trading centers⁴ on the island, where their extensive trade and exchange of goods from all parts of the world was carried on. Numerous references relating to the aborigines appear in Dutch records during this era.⁵ Both missionaries and Dutch officials describe the efforts exerted to subdue and convert the unwilling natives.

It seems, however, that those chosen to bestow the advantages of civilization and Dutch law on these hapless people were sometimes of dubious character. Dutch records cite their own schoolmasters and officials as persevering in wickedness and leading scandalous lives while teaching the law, the catechism, and the Latin alphabet. One was even beheaded for his crimes.

In contrast to this dark picture the aborigine women are described in a Dutch journal of 1629 as fair-skinned, remaining principally indoors and occupying themselves with fine weaving. One missionary remarks that the aborigines were of a fine class, both men and women, and that they were proud and haughty.

In 1644, during the Dutch occupation, Chinese from the mainland began fleeing to Formosa to escape the Tartar conquerors of their own land. Eventually, with the collapse of the Ming empire, the defeated

Ming supporters also sought refuge on the island. Thus reinforced by the growing influx from China mainland, the new arrivals, supported by their countrymen, joined in the struggle to wrest the island from its former conquerors. Finally, after years of savage warfare, the few surviving Dutch, starved, beaten and reduced in numbers, fled in 1661 in the one ship that still remained to them out of their once extensive sea force.

As for the unhappy aborigines, Chinese chronicles of the period refer to them as being subjugated, a process to which the Chinese, now in possession of the island, proved as devoted as had been their predecessors, the Dutch.

By 1727⁶ forty-two aborigine tribes out of an unrecorded earlier number are noted as subjugated and amalgamated with the immigrants from the mainland. Eleven tribes follow, then another fifty until finally a remaining ten are listed also as members of the Flowery Kingdom. The reclaimed "savages" are then described as having achieved, in ironic phase, the status of taxpayers.

The aborigines on the more accessible flat west coast lands were the first to be subjugated. Others were driven up into the less accessible mountain valleys. Those who were conquered and were willing to remain peacefully on the plains were called "tame savages" or "ripe barbarians."⁷ The residue who were tattooed or head-hunters were known as "unripe barbarians" or "savages."

A visitor to Formosa, one Father de Mailla, who in 1715 was engaged, with two hundred soldiers, in mapping the south of the island, pays tribute to the native inhabitants when he observes in his journal of that year that the "savages," as he terms them, were nearer to a true philosophy than a great number of the most celebrated Chinese sages, that they were superior in honesty and morality to their mandarin masters of that time, and that one never saw them cheating or quarrelling.

By the time of the next century the outside world had learned of the riches in timber and ore in the mountainous island. Would-be settlers met with resistance from forays of aborigine head-hunters, and navigators and crews of wrecked ships suffered violence and death when attempting to land. Despite this, Formosa continued to attract outsiders.

During the years from 1848 to 1867, which were known as the Era of Atrocity, armed forces, Prussian, British and American, landed punitive expeditions to combat the seacoast pirates and vengeful defenders of the island territories. Eventually the military forces opened ports which had



PLATE II
SPINNING IN AN ANCIENT FASHION STILL IN USE.
FROM A PHOTOGRAPH OF APPROXIMATELY 1911.

been closed for some two hundred years. Japanese troops, as well, arrived in the south and took up temporary occupation. Robert Swinhoe,⁸ the American consul in Formosa, travelled around the island by ship in 1857 and in that year writes, in describing his voyage, that he fears that the individual aborigine cultures will soon disappear. Five tribes of the native race of Formosa, he says, are fast disappearing, a sixth, he continues, has entirely vanished, and the last but one is completely amalgamated with the Chinese.

Various colonizing efforts were made more than once by the Chinese to settle the mountainous and precipitous east coast. Landings were made there in 1858, 1862 and 1866. Some years after this last attempt a European in charge of another colonizing scheme arrived on the same shore with a like scheme only to be confronted by the spectacle of thirteen skull-less skeletons arranged in a neat row on the sands, conclusive evidence of the failure of the last efforts to colonize on aborigine territory.

Under the "mandarins" so-called, the aborigines had not been much better off. Contemporary chronicles refer to the island as the scene, due to these mandarins, of utmost misery. Visitors at the time in their descriptions of this remote east coast comment on the sad demeanor of the aborigine people and the plaintive songs which they sang about their fate at the hands of their Chinese conquerors.

By 1870 the aborigines were a subject of international concern for it was charged that the Chinese rulers were unable to control them and that the island was no longer safe for foreigners and commerce.

For some years after the opening up of Japan to the outside world and to commerce by American forces under Commodore Perry in 1853-54, Japanese travelers had been coming to Formosa. The subjects of the Emperor, after a long period of seclusion practiced by Japan as a national policy, were now allowed to settle abroad; thus many of them came to Formosa. Japan soon claimed that foreign peoples now on Formosa were being ill-treated by the aborigines.

In 1874 the long struggle for overlordship of Formosa entered a new phase when three thousand Samurai warriors of Japan were dispatched to protect Japanese subjects on the island⁹ which was described by contemporary observers as consisting of a remote forest interior inhabited by ferocious head-hunters with a seaboard overrun by buccaneers from various lands. But despite adverse conditions, the island obviously was coveted by the modern world.

The long process of subduing the aborigines was concluded in 1895

by ceding Formosa to Japan as a possession in order, it was reported, to prevent a land of cannibals being forever established on Formosa.¹⁰ After fifty years as a colony of Japan, during which the history of the island was changed by Japanese programs for development, in 1945, at the close of the Second World War, Formosa was returned to China and all Japan nationals were ordered from their former possessions.

At this time of hope revived, the aborigines and the Chinese-stock inhabitants, considering themselves now as Formosans or Taiwanese, brought forth a plan to obtain independent status for the island. However, at this crucial moment for the Formosans, past history reenacted itself on the China mainland when a national regime again collapsed, driving exiles once more to Formosa. Chiang Kai-shek and some two million followers began to arrive on the island and take steps toward permanent establishment.

The movement for independence by the Taiwan people was put down in 1947 and great numbers of the population, including aborigines, were killed and executed. When I visited the island in 1954, the aborigines were controlled by a corps understood to be under the direction of the son of Chiang Kai-shek. A program of resettlement and education for the aborigines, called the "Life Improvement Movement," was in effect.

Considering the history of Formosa, it was surprising to find that the native inhabitants still carried on traditional arts. Although it is said that year by year various arts and skills have ceased to exist, weaving still remains in all the tribal areas except one, a small section of the Tsou people.¹¹

However, few of the fine and intricate weaves which formerly distinguished the handsome costumes of various tribes are being made today. Appliqué, cross-stitch and embroidery, as a simpler substitute, are being carried on in certain areas. The southern tribes are exceptionally skilled in these arts. The weaving of ramie cloth, however, persists in all centers where weaving is carried on.

This fabric, called aborigine, or savage cloth, has been woven from the time of earliest records. It was obviously the material described by the Dutch in 1628 as a summer dress of cotton. Later accounts refer to hempen cloth, comparing the fabric to cloth woven by savages in the Malay area on similar back-strap looms from similar fiber.

Formosan ramie is made from home-grown, hand-spun ramie fiber which comes from a shrub-like perennial of the nettle family which occurs in Malay regions, Japan, China and East India. This plant yields a fiber

which is extensively used in place of cotton or linen. It is said that ramie was not indigenous to Formosa, and that one form cultivated in mountainous places is a variety common to Malay areas, and that another type was introduced from China.

The woven cloth is called by various names: hempen cloth, flaxen cloth, linen, and grass cloth, as well as ramie cloth.

E. C. Taintor,¹² a visitor to the island in 1869, describes weaving and spinning of ramie. His description gives an excellent account of methods still in practice. He writes, "Spinning is done on a reel (spindle) which they twirl in their hands, a ball of thread being held in a small basket on the arm (Plate II). The cloth is a very strong, durable, woven material of a fiber resembling hemp." The weaving method is laborious, he continues, with the weaver seated on the ground holding by means of her feet the stick which supports one end of the web (the warp threads which run lengthwise). This type of loom is still in use (Plate III). There is as well a loom with a hollowed out log which is used as the warp beam, against which the weaver braces her feet (Plate IV). Each thread of the weft is pushed home with a thin sharp-edged piece of wood called the beater-in or sword. The cloth is woven in a continuous or endless belt, twelve to fourteen inches wide and five to six feet long. The belt is tied or spliced together so that it is woven into a single piece, which is then cut open when it is finished (*see* Plate IV). The cloth is used for blankets, or as a garment. Strips are sewed together. A square piece is draped across the body, tied at one corner over the shoulder (Plate V). Sometimes a piece is used as a skirt, tied at the waist, or thrown over the back as a cloak.

A very general use of this cloth has been for men's tunics or sleeveless jackets. These are made by sewing two pieces of the ramie through half of its length to form a seam at the back, leaving the sleeveless tunic open at the front. In the past tunics were woven into intricate patterns out of wool and ramie. E. C. Taintor described tunics which were "worked" (meaning woven) around the lower edge in neat and tasteful patterns in red and blue. The red in the old pieces was obtained by ravelling red wool Chinese blankets, and the blue was indigo-dyed ramie.

A description of a visit by J. B. Steere in 1869 states that the tamed barbarians in the south wore the tunic with the short loose trousers worn by Chinese in addition to a large square piece of cloth, the two adjacent corners of which were tied in a knot over the shoulder or at the back of the neck. In some places the aborigines wore then, as they do now, a piece of this cloth tied about their loins. The chiefs formerly wore one or two



PLATE III
WEARER HOLDING WITH FEET THE STICK SUPPORTING ONE
END OF THE WEB. THIS TYPE OF LOOM IS STILL IN USE.



PLATE IV
ATAYAL TYPE OF LOOM SHOWING END-
LESS BELT OF WARP TIED TOGETHER.



PLATE V

TATTOOED WOMAN WEARING RAMIE SQUARE AND
BUTTON-TRIMMED BREASTPLATE. TYPICAL ATAYAL PIECES.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, WASHINGTON, D. C.



PLATE VI
PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN PRIOR TO 1915 SHOWING ATAYAL WOMEN WEAVING AT TYPICAL ATAYAL LOOMS.



PLATE VII
CHIEF'S COAT OR TUNIC MADE UP OF
ELABORATE WEAVES RARELY SEEN TODAY.

of the "embroidered" (woven) coats in addition to the traditional square of ramie cloth.

The "embroidered" chief's coats or tunics in reality were made of elaborate patterns which are rarely seen today. The old pieces often had wide woven borders or woven bands at the waist or sometimes they might be composed entirely of bands of intricate patterns (Plate VII). This particular type of tunic was made only in the north by the Tsou, Bunun and Atayal tribes.

A small square of unknown origin which is found as well in other islands of the Pacific, and called a "breastplate," is worn by all the tribes on Formosa. It differs in size and type from the large square of ramie cloth since it is the distinguishing mark of the family of a chief. The breastplate illustrated is modern (Plate VIII). The square is worn on the chest as seen in Plate V, with two tapes at the top which go around the neck and two others which fasten around the waist. This piece is woven in a diamond-shaped pattern in magenta, purple, green and red made from commercially available yarns. It is trimmed with white buttons, a traditional mode of decoration in Atayal, Bunun and Tsou breastplates.

The patterned bands of black and white ramie edged with green and red which are fastened to this piece are older than the example itself; bands of this type are woven on tiny looms of bamboo. The tassels at the ends are made of old red yarn used together with blue and black beads and tiny brass bells. Bands such as these once were worn over the blouse of an Ami woman's traditional costume. They fell from around the neck over the shoulders and hung down over the breast to the wide woven belt or sash which was worn with a sheer skirt with a small brocaded diamond pattern spaced regularly on the cloth. The Ami belt (Plate IX) is an old piece which illustrates an intricate interlocking pattern which is usually considered typically Chinese and which today can be found in upper Laos. The Ami no longer weave the brocaded skirts of thin "linen" (so labeled in a museum collection) and the weaving of the belts also is said to be a lost art.

An Atayal chief's daughter in a village on the east coast was weaving a new costume for her father at the time of my visit. She was making a traditional short wool and ramie tunic with a complicated geometric pattern. The piece was much coarser in design than earlier examples and its bright garish colors were a contrast to the soft dark reds and blues in former use. The bright pink, magenta, green and purple yarns were of

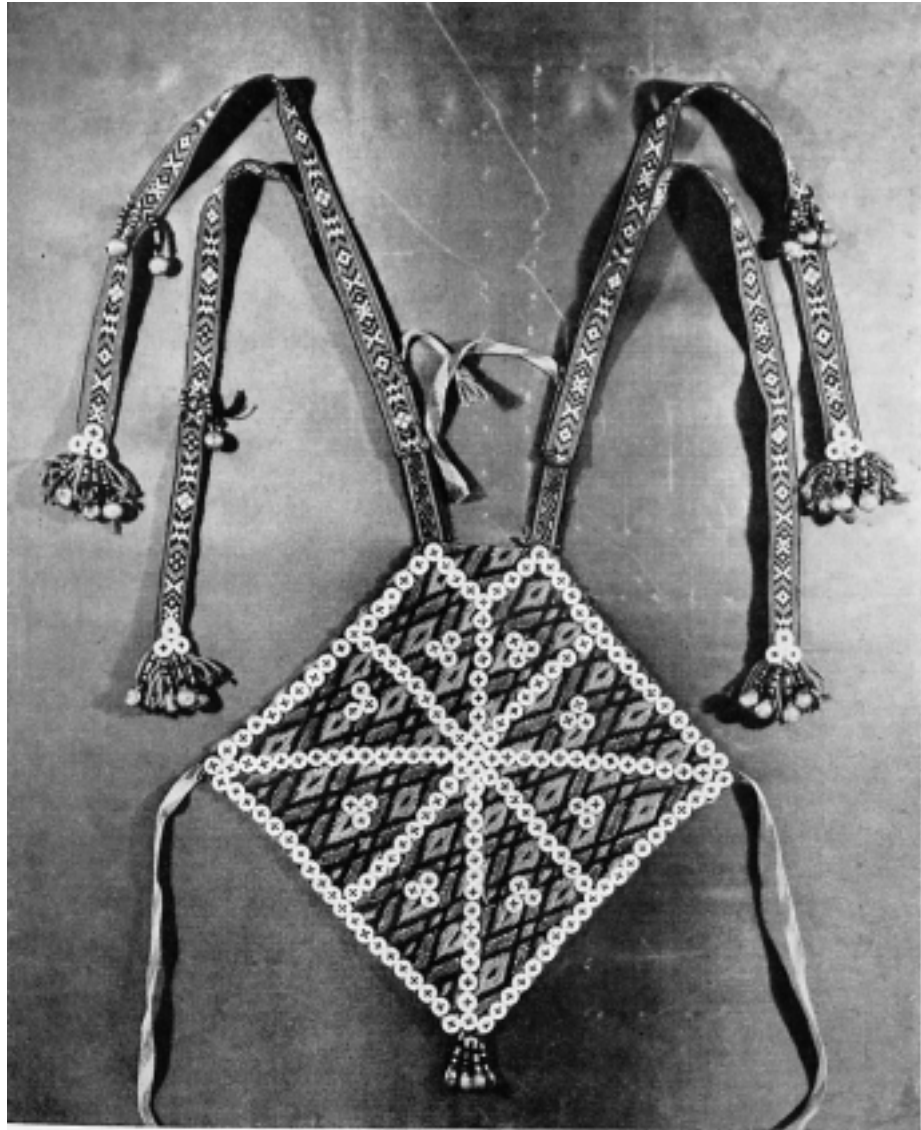


PLATE VIII
BREASTPLATE INDICATIVE OF A CHIEF.

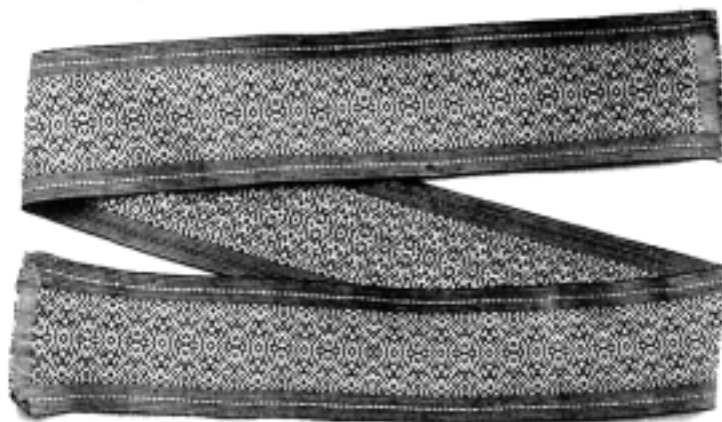


PLATE IX

AMI BELT OR SASH FORMERLY WORN OVER TRADITIONAL AMI COSTUME.

the intensity that is common taste of today.

Each tribe had distinctive patterns to decorate a typical article of common use, as the tobacco pouch which is slung at the wearer's side or from the front of the waist. The weaving in many of the early tobacco pouches is as fine as needlepoint. In the old pieces the colors were dark red, indigo blue and natural white ramie. The pouches made today in the central, western and southern parts of the island are woven in black and white and blue and white cotton in more or less typical patterns which are variations of the star design (Plate X). Today it is used infrequently in garments although formerly the Rukai and Paiwan tribes wove robes and blouses from it. It appears today in yokes and cuffs and trimmings for Rukai and Paiwan robes.

The pouch worn by a Rukai woman shows this pattern in blue and white ramie (Plate XI). It rests on her back, suspended ingeniously across her shoulders and held in place by a finely woven strap worn diagonally over one shoulder. This type of pouch is found in all parts of the island. This particular size is known as "millet" size to distinguish it from a smaller and grimmer type, described with simplicity by an early missionary as a "netted little bead bag," used in reality for the most treasured of trophies, the head of an adversary.



PLATE X
COTTON WEAVE. TYPICAL STAR DESIGN IN BLACK AND WHITE.
PHOTOGRAPH BY CHEN CHI-LU.



PLATE XI
TOBACCO POUCH IN STAR PATTERN WORN BY RUKAI WOMAN.

Patterns such as that shown in the pouch and used to trim robes among the southern tribes bear a resemblance to similar types found in Mexico and South America, introduced there originally by Spanish padres.

A remarkable example of weaving from the central plains is found in the museum collection at the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology at National Taiwan University in Taipei. It is a skirt woven by a woman of a small tribal division in that area, known as Peipohoan (Plate XII). The extraordinary design is enhanced by the deep rich shades of indigo blue, yellow and red with bands of white. The materials used are ramie, straw, and cotton. A skirt of this type occurs in the Philippines woven in an ikat pattern from ramie.

The patterns in this Peipohoan weaving show a relationship in design to those woven in Assam, Burma, north Indo-China and Hainan island. The university anthropologists were encouraging the one old woman familiar with these patterns and weaves to teach the younger women of the tribe.

The so-called "aborigine cloth" or ramie which is most commonly made throughout the island, according to travellers, was woven previous to 1947 of natural undyed ramie with strips of vegetable-dyed brown (Plate XIII). Black was sometimes used, though rarely, instead of brown, this dye apparently imported from China or Japan. The traditional striped patterns with the rich browns against the creamy-white undyed ramie ground which are woven by native women on primitive looms are both distinctive and handsome. The restraint and simplicity of the stripes and weaves compare favorably in design and technique with fabrics made today in the modern world by professional weavers.

The Rukai weave a pure white ramie sometimes edged with a thin line of black to wrap the bodies of the dead. The Paiwan sometimes wove a coarse cloth with a diamond-shaped pattern in black and white or a simplified form of the star pattern greatly enlarged. There were no contemporary examples of the black and white weaves available at the time when I was on the island.

The Bunun weave a fine twill from a rare variety of ramie which grows in warmer areas. A tunic of this soft silken type may sometimes be decorated at the waist with woven bands in red and black.

The rich warm brown was the color most often used with the undyed fiber. It is still obtained from a locally grown tuber called the dye yam. This bulb has long been a chief article of trade of the aborigines, who have grown it for generations in the high mountains. Its juice has been used



PLATE XII

SKIRT OF RAMIE, STRAW AND COTTON WOVEN
BY WOMAN IN PEIPOHOAN AREA.
MUSEUM COLLECTION, DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY,
NATIONAL TAIWAN UNIVERSITY, TAIPEI.

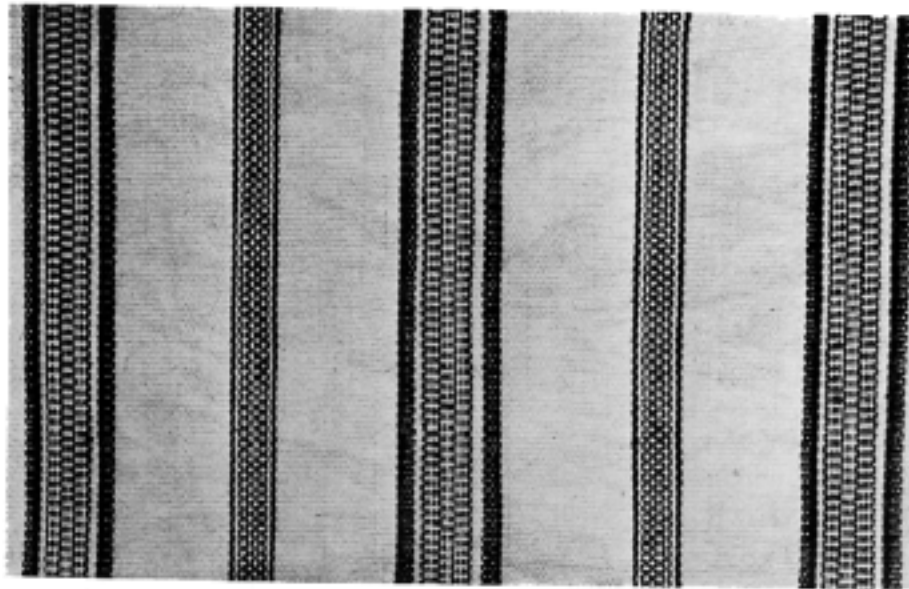


PLATE XIII

BROWN AND WHITE RAMIE WOVEN BEFORE 1936.
COLLECTION OF GEORGE H. KERR.

as a proof against rot. Fish nets, sails and other cloth were dyed with it.

It is regrettable that a coarser, colored ramie is becoming more popular than the vegetable-dyed brown and white. Today ramie cloth is woven from fibers which have been dyed in yellow, pink, green, purple, orange, blue or gray. Often the color combinations are unusual and attractive, but the cloth lacks the distinction of the traditional patterns. Often the lengths are decorated with appliquéd figures and mottoes with tourist appeal reading "Welcome to Taiwan" "Visit Taipei" etc. The colored lengths appeal to tourists and are popular with the wives of American military and mission personnel, hence the brown and white is woven less today than formerly.

A modern example of east coast Atayal ramie cloth is a large piece, fifty-four inches wide and sixty inches long (Plate XIV). Here the village weaver has brocaded the dyed green ramie in a bold pattern in yellow. The cloth is made up of three eighteen-inch wide strips sewn together with pink thread. Fine stripes at the edge of the strips are in pink, red, yellow and green. A braided fringe completes the piece.

In one northern Atayal village I photographed the only weaver left in the village. The Atayal woman sat on a mat inside her hut which was a crude typical Atayal thatched dwelling made of rough slabs of wood, with a dirt floor several feet below the level of the earth. She fastened the back-strap around her waist, braced her feet against the warp-beam, and threw the shuttle. The beating resounded in the hollow beam like a wooden gong which was heard throughout the village. In former days, the loom was the pride of a family, and the reputation of a woman was said to rest upon her weaving skill.

The Bunun tribe use a similar loom with a warp-beam made out of a hollow log, but instead of tapering to the top, as the Atayal loom does, the beam is rectangular.

The Paiwan and the Puyuma use a simple portable back-strap loom with a slender slat of wood for the beam against which the weaver braces the soles of her bare feet as in Plate III.

Another type of loom is used both in the north and south. The weaver sits on a low platform or bed, and fastens the warp to a slat which is braced between posts at the foot of the platform. The loom is held by a back-strap at the weaver's waist (Plate XV).

The most beautiful loom that I saw was in an Ami village where weaving was no longer done because the tribe had been relocated in a locality where proper ramie could not be grown. The loom parts were

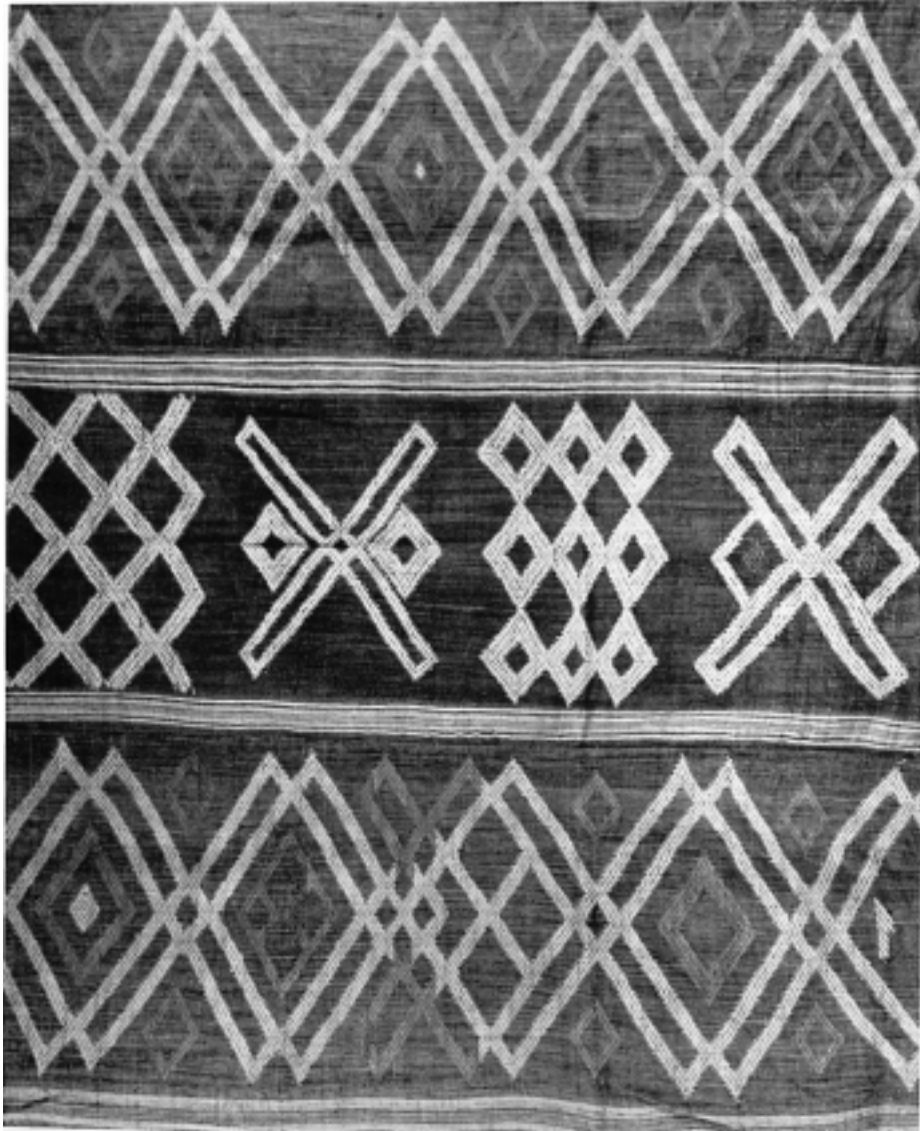


PLATE XIV
GREEN RAMIE PANEL BROCADED IN YELLOW.



PLATE XV

PUYUMA WOMAN WEAVING ON LOW PLATFORM OR BED.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHEN CHI-LU.

finely lacquered. The sword was paper thin and the other pieces were delicate. The loom had been carefully hidden away, wrapped in pieces of old cloth. As the weaver showed us her loom her expression brought to mind the story of those east coast people long ago singing their sad songs.

The southern tribes do exceptional embroidery, cross-stitch and appliqué along with weaving. Chief Putuan of Budai village of the Rukai tribe (Frontispiece), who wears so handsomely his embroidered costume worked in a typical Paiwan design of diamond-shaped motifs in yellow, light red, and gray-green silk floss on black cotton, displays on his hat a coiling snake and serpentine design as a natural heritage since the snake is considered the ancestor of his tribe. His costume is reminiscent of a dress which a visitor described in 1771 when he wrote that the village headman was clothed in a droll fashion, partly in the European manner with a sword by his side, a laced hat on his head and stockings made of cloth. It is not impossible that the present costume of the Rukai chief, with its tight-fitting jacket so far removed from native styles, may owe its origin to some European dress once seen on the island in days long gone by.

The serpent designs, similar to those motifs which occur as well on Hainan island, bear a close relationship to those on the robe of a Paiwan village chief's daughter, which she embroidered and cross-stitched herself (Plate XVI). On a ground of black cotton similar scrolling designs appear in the form of bands. The cuffs of this robe are worked in an old pattern of this region in green, yellow, orange and red with an occasional outlining in white. In older times this pattern was worked with ramie thread hand-twisted into two-ply strands; this is cotton (Plate XVII). The hands of this personable figure, resting on a rock, are delicately tattooed across the backs in indigo in accordance with the tradition of the southern tribes, a striking contrast to the style of tattooing the face, though the custom is now dying out, which is done by the Atayal women of the north, as seen in Plate V, where the dark indigo is like a mask.

The custom of tattooing appears more than once among reports written by European visitors. Father de Mailla, for example, who it will be remembered was engaged at one time in mapping the south, after stating that the tribes there wore only a piece of ramie cloth from waist to knee, adds that "our savage friends" made use of their own skins instead of using printed cloth, decorating themselves with animals, trees and flowers.

Over forty years ago, tunics and coats worn by the men of the south were appliquéd with animals, trees and flowers, those patterns once on the skin having been transferred to cloth or animal skin coats.



PLATE XVI

PAIWAN CHIEF'S DAUGHTER IN PAIWAN VILLAGE WEARING ROBE WHICH SHE HAS EMBROIDERED HERSELF.
PHOTOGRAPH BY MARGERY JENSEN.

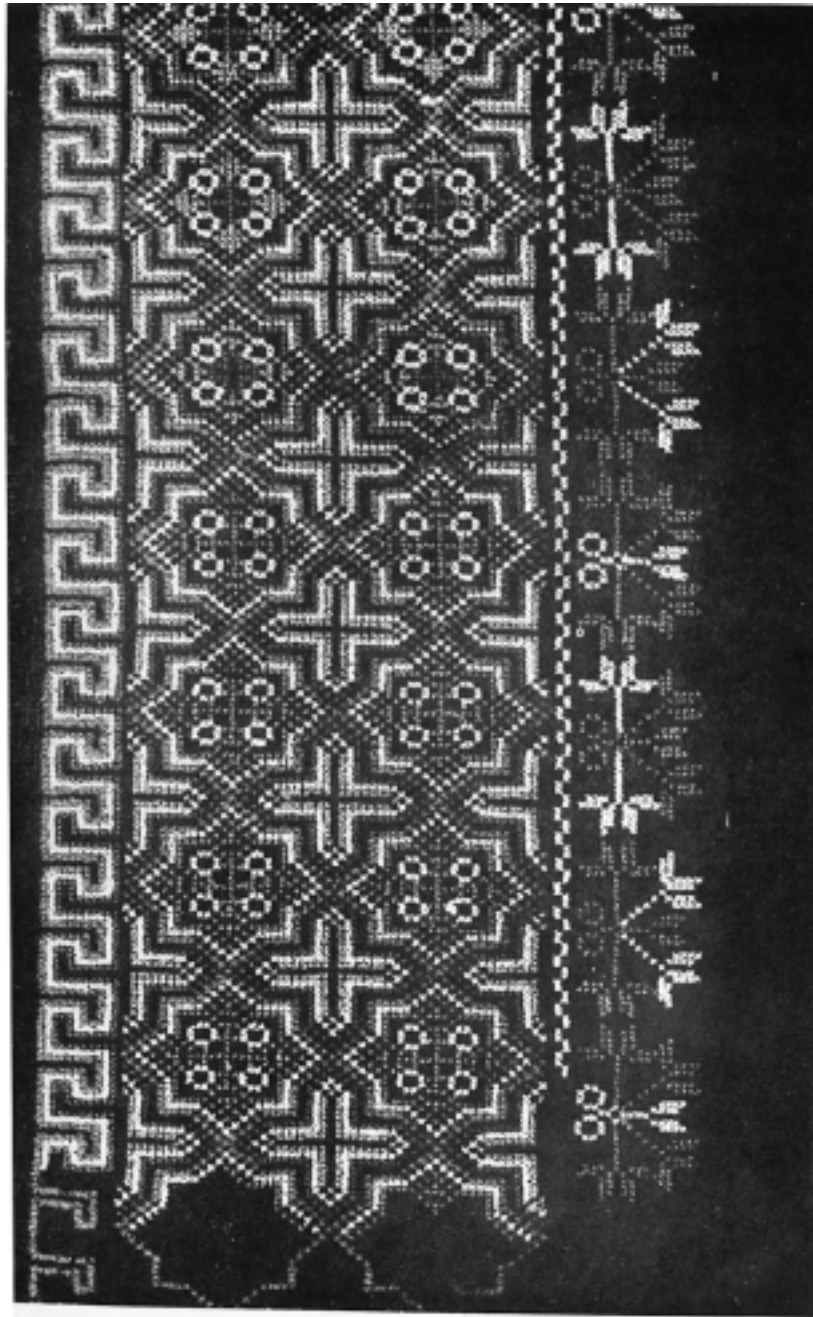


PLATE XVII

RUKAI TYPICAL CROSS-STITCH PATTERN.

MUSEUM COLLECTION, DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY, NATIONAL TAIWAN UNIVERSITY, TAIPEI.

Besides the snake motif of the south, human figures and heads or masks are important elements in design. A wooden panel, which is a typical decoration used under the eaves of a slate and stone house, illustrates these elements which are found in Rukai, Paiwan and Puyuma villages (Plate XVIII). These designs are used for appliqué made for several generations out of velvet on red cotton. Paiwan and Rukai village women showed me new appliqué made in this manner which incorporated heads or masks, snakes and human figures into the design. This was used on robes and the new style Westernized skirts.

The Paiwan chief's daughter embroidered for a visitor, as well as her own robe, bands and cuffs on which she worked serpents, heads or masks and stylized floral designs in bright red, yellow, green and white cotton thread on the bands of the familiar black cotton cloth (Plate XIX).

In a Puyuma village tribal communal house, I saw large carvings employing the same motifs. An interesting row of carved wooden heads which rested on a rafter had snakes carved as eyebrows.

Though weaving and embroidery and cross-stitch decline with the increasing prestige of manufactured cloth, these arts which for centuries have been fostered by ritual and tradition are still maintained by the women. In the southern tribes the priestess has exerted a powerful influence; in fact the first missionaries blamed her for their failures, and her influence in tribes where the woman has always enjoyed equality with the men, and frequently superiority, still exists. In several villages where the old arts were thought to be forgotten, we found that young women were still being instructed by accomplished elder women.

Old records voiced regret over the disappearance of aborigine cultures. Death and decay of these races seemed imminent to one writer in 1873. (Quoted but not identified by Janet McGovern.¹³) The history of these people today and the survival of their textiles demonstrate a remarkable courage and persistence. It is sincerely hoped that the aborigine people will be encouraged to continue their arts, which although in decline today, in many respects were still being carried on vigorously, at least up until the last war.



PLATE XVIII

WOODEN PANEL USED FOR DECORATION UNDER EAVES OF SLATE AND
STONE HOUSE SHOWING HEADS, MASKS, SNAKES AND HUMAN FIGURES.



PLATE XIX

DETAIL OF EMBROIDERED BANDS MADE FOR A ROBE BY THE DAUGHTER OF A PAIWAN CHIEF.

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