

| People

On Display: Revitalized Taivoan Embroideries

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The special exhibition “Patah Ki Hima. Raan Ki Tara – Colorful Taivoan Needlework,” curated by the NTU Museum of Anthropology and the Siaolin Community Development Association based in Jiashian District, Kaohsiung City, will be on display until February 3, 2024. This exhibition showcases the beauty of traditional Taivoan embroidery and highlights the efforts of the Taivoan people to revitalize their culture.

At the opening ceremony for the exhibition, Associate Prof. Kai-shyh Lin, Director of the NTU Museum of Anthropology, affirmed that the museum actively displays indigenous artifacts as a medium through which the public may connect with the indigenous peoples and their culture, supporting the tribes’ cultural revitalization in the process. He shared that some Taivoan elders told him that making these embroideries with dedication encourages future generations to wear them with pride, thus taking pride in their own culture and passing it on.



Members of the Taivoan tribe praying at the opening of the exhibition.

The Taivoan is one of the Plains Indigenous peoples in Taiwan, originally settling around Tainan City. Since the 18th century, 29 additional tribes were established along the Wu Mountains due to influx of the Han Chinese and Siraya people. Today they mainly live in the hills and valleys of Kaohsiung and Tainan counties. Some of their ancestors later migrated eastward to Hualien and Taitung.

President Wen-Chang Chen remarked in his speech that NTU has had close interactions with indigenous peoples due to its long history, experimental forests, and farms. He observed that the languages, music, and handicrafts of Taiwan's indigenous peoples are invaluable cultural assets, and the Museum of Anthropology on campus has long displayed historical artifacts from indigenous tribes. He added that NTU will support exchanges between the Museum of Anthropology and museums in similar fields overseas so that people elsewhere can discover and appreciate Taiwan's unique indigenous cultures.

NTU Museum of Anthropology received a group of elders from the Siaolin tribe, originally located in Siaolin Village, Jiaxian District, Kaohsiung City, for the first time in 1999. The visit became the foundation of a cordial long-term partnership. In 2009, Typhoon Morakot devastated Siaolin Village. After reconstruction, the tribesmen faced difficulties in rebuilding their community in an unfamiliar environment, living separate lives. However, they have devoted themselves wholeheartedly to the revival of Taivoan culture and remain optimistic about the future.



Inspired by *Threads of Splendor - Taivoan Pingpu Clothes and Embroidery Collections* by Prof. Chia-yu Hu, Department of Anthropology, and personally encouraged by her, members of the Taivoan tribe began to rediscover their traditional needlework-- stitch by stitch integrating the beautiful culture of embroideries into their daily life and passing it on to the next generation.



Members of the Siaolin tribe visiting the Museum of Anthropology to inspect artifacts with Prof. Chia-yu Hu (third left), in 2015. (Photo credit: Siaolin Community Development Association)