

# Taiwanese edible plants and indigenous knowledge systems

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# The team

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# National Chengchi University

- Taipei, Taiwan
- Sister university of the National University of Malaysia
- Liberal arts university
  - Foreign languages
  - Ethnic and social studies
  - Austronesian studies
- Cooperation with the Council of Indigenous Peoples, Taiwan



# Indigenous minorities in Taiwan

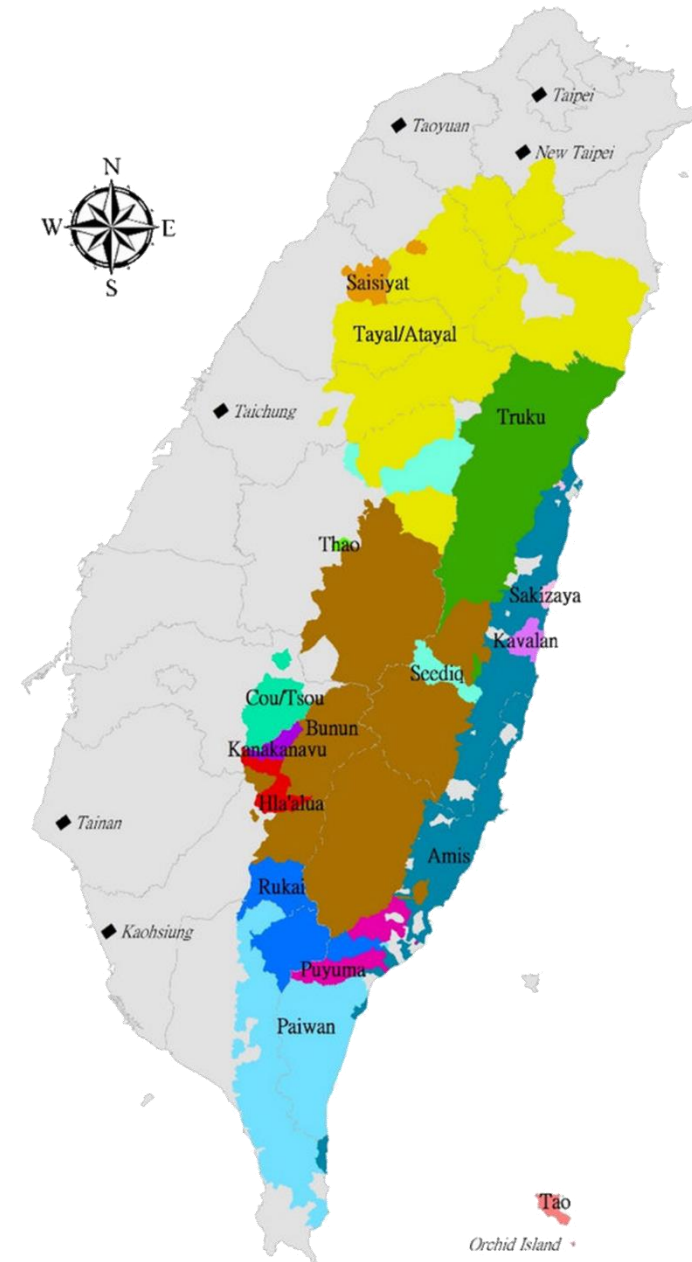
- 16 officially recognized indigenous groups / languages
- 4~5 unrecognized groups
  - Recognition is often related to evidence of active indigenous language use
- Pre-1989: Martial Law Era
  - Relatively isolated
  - Official and unofficial discrimination
  - Efforts to eradicate languages / 'civilizing' program
- Post-1989: democratization
  - Indigenous rights
  - Displacement to cities (already started in the 1970s and 1980s)





# Map of Indigenous territories in Taiwan

prepared by Hsu, Y.Y. and Bayrak, M.M., National Taiwan Normal University, based on Dept. of Household Registration



# Indigenous minorities in Taiwan

- Relatively large linguistic and cultural diversity
  - 'Formosan' languages, but not a language group
  - Different societal structures
  - Different importance of agriculture and wild plant use



# Indigenous minorities in Taiwan

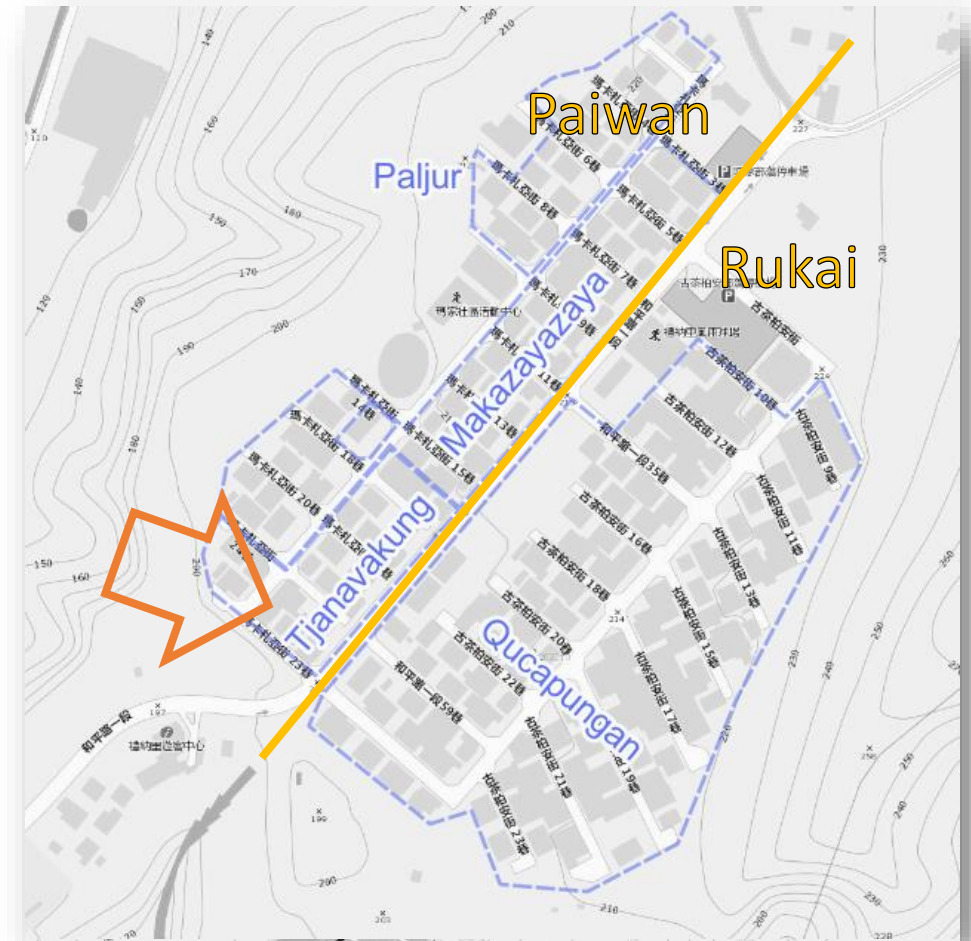
- High-mountain tribes (e.g. Bunun, Atayal)
  - Egalitarian societies
  - Small family settlements
  - Hunting, less varied agricultural tradition
- Lowland tribes in Southeast Taiwan (e.g. Amis, Paiwan, Rukai)
  - Stratified societies
  - Larger villages
  - Diverse use of cultivated and edible plants





# The Paiwan community in Majia / Rinari

- Resettled village
  - Combination of at least 4 traditional Paiwan villages and 1 Rukai village
  - Forced to relocate after the typhoon Mekarot in August 2009
  - From mountains to high plane
  - Focus on Tjanavakung, one of the Paiwan villages







Tjanavakung, old village







Rinari, new village





# Indigenous plant knowledge today

- Relatively well-preserved knowledge of traditional plants
  - Advanced knowledge present in monolingual Paiwan speakers
  - Operational knowledge of wild plants in people of 40 years and up
- Community interest
  - Interest in creating a knowledge repository of agricultural and culturally relevant plants
  - Preserving traditional knowledge
  - Real-world (commercial) applications
  - Plants as markers of cultural identity and traditional territory







Ljavaus picking some edible/medicinal plants for soup and compress





qavai

pakecang

cinavu





# Our plan

**LandWisdom**

Kinateveteveljan a Pakatua  
kinacaquan tua Kadjunungan



- Preservation and modern use
  - Personal, cultural, commercial (?) settings
- Contrasts
  - Modern agricultural plant use vs. traditional edible plants
  - Old village vs. new village
  - Commercial value vs. culinary value vs. cultural value vs. political value
- Relations
  - Geography and plant use
  - Plants and meaning of space
  - Traditional agriculture / gathering and land claims



# Long-term

- Knowledge generation
- Practical applications of traditional plants
- Ritual and cultural value of plants
- Extension of the project to other indigenous groups
  - Bunun
  - Amis

