

# Origins of the Formosan Ethnonyms

Valdis Gauss

Department of English, National Taitung University  
369, Sec. 2, University Rd., Taitung City 95092, Taiwan (ROC)  
E-mail: gaojiajo@gmail.com

## Abstract

Taiwan's Austronesian aboriginal tribes have distinctive linguistically Formosan ethnonyms for which a wide variety of etymologies have been proposed. This literary survey offers a comprehensive review of said proposed etymologies and explores the historical and topographical influences which have shaped the tribes' names. Spanning nearly four centuries, data is sourced from works published as early as 1636 (see Blussé & Everts, 2000) and as recent as 2023 (see Council of Indigenous Peoples).

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## 1. Introduction

Taiwan is home to 23 million people. Of these, about 575,000 people belong to one of 16 officially recognized aboriginal tribes according to the Council of Indigenous People's 2023 census. Populations vary greatly among the tribes. The largest tribe, the Amis is composed of approximately 218,000 members while Taiwan's smallest tribe, the Kanakanavu has a population of just 412. Each of these tribes bears a unique Formosan ethnonym which may be derived from an endonym or exonym (Formosan or otherwise) which is identifiable with a unique three-letter ISO 639-3 identifier code. Officially unrecognized tribes which are linguistically extinct such as the Babuza/Favorlang, Basay, Trobiawan, Hoanya, Liulang, Kulon, Papora and Taokas, (Blust, 2013, p. 51-52) as well as others such as Pazeh are not included herein because there exists too little literature on such tribes. The purpose of this study is to aggregate and review all of the proposed etymologies for each of the 16 officially recognized tribes. This will provide researchers and other interested parties, especially those illiterate in Mandarin, with a single compilation of the historical and contemporarily employed Formosan ethnonyms with meticulously cited corresponding etymologies. While previous studies have proposed etymologies for single or limited numbers of tribes, the current work is the first of its kind to aggregate all of the proposed ethnonyms and their proposed etymologies into a single source. Moreover, this study may serve as a starting point for further research.

The following table provides population data, ISO 639-3 identifier codes, and currently recognized ethnonyms for each of Taiwan's tribes. It should be noted that membership of a tribe is unrelated to the number of native speakers of a tribe's Formosan language.

**Table 1**

*Taiwan's Aboriginal Populations*

	<b>Ethnonym</b>	<b>Population</b>		<b>Ethnonym</b>	<b>Population</b>
1	Amis - ami	218,261	9	Tsou - tsu	6,739
2	Paiwan - pwn	105,414	10	Saisiyat - xsy	6,839
3	Atayal - tay	94,674	11	Yami / Tao - tao	4,818
4	Bunun - bnn	61,087	12	Kavalan - kav	1,051
5	Truku - trv	33,654	13	Thao - ssf	837
6	Puyuma - pyu	15,099	14	Sakizaya - szy	1,051
7	Rukai - dru	13,694	15	Hla'alua - srx	459
8	Seediq - sdq	10,946	16	Kanakanavu - xnb	412
				<b>Apx. Total</b>	<b>575,035</b>

*Notes:* (1) Populations sourced from <https://www.cip.gov.tw/> (2) All population figures current as of April, 2023. (3) Each ethnonym is accompanied by a ISO 639-3 identifier code.

## 1.2 Aboriginal Tribes - Nomenclature

While articles 4 and 10 of the *Additional Articles of the Constitution of the Republic of China* identify "aborigines" and "aboriginals," the terms "indigenous" and "native" are completely omitted from the Constitution. Additional Article 10 includes three out of the four total uses of the cognates for "aboriginal" in the Constitution:

The State affirms cultural pluralism and shall actively preserve and foster the development of aboriginal

languages and cultures. The State shall, in accordance with the will of the ethnic groups, safeguard the status and political participation of the aborigines. The State shall also guarantee and provide assistance and encouragement for aboriginal education, culture, transportation, water conservation, health and medical care, economic activity, land, and social welfare, measures for which shall be established by law. The same protection and assistance shall be given to the people of the Penghu, Kinmen, and Matsu areas. (Taiwan, rev. 2005)

According to Taiwan’s Indigenous Peoples Basic Law, Article 2, paragraph 4, (amended June 30, 2018) “Tribe: refers to a group of indigenous persons who form a community by living together in specific areas of the indigenous peoples’ regions and following the traditional norms with the approval of the central indigenous authority” (The Indigenous Peoples Basic Law, 2018). The *Report of the Alliance of Taiwan Aborigines to the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations* which was drafted by the Alliance of Taiwan Aborigines clearly documents the Taiwanese aboriginal collective struggle for official recognition as *aborigines* which the tribes currently hold. “We raised the issue to the public of deciding who are the Aborigines of Taiwan, also developed the campaign to request to be called *Aborigines* in the official documents and in general usage, instead of the discriminative slangs like mountain people and mountain fellows” (Alliance of Taiwan Aborigines, The Activities of Taiwan Aboriginal Movement, par. 1). As such, with regard to nomenclature, it is particularly appropriate to employ the terms *aboriginal* and *tribe* with regard to the Austronesian peoples of modern-day Taiwan.

## 2. Gradual Changes

Historical documents indicate that the ethnonyms by which Taiwan’s tribes are known have evolved dramatically over relatively short periods of time. A cursory review of Blussé and Everts’ *The Formosan Encounter* reveals not only that spellings of villages which were synonymous with ethnonyms varied in official 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch records but that many village names were supplanted completely from year to year. For example, the spelling of the name of one Kavalan village changed four times within a period of 18 years according to VOC (Dutch East India Company or Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie) records.

**Table 2.**

Changes in one Kavalan Village’s Name

Year	1632	1644	1647	1650
Name	Quimiabolás	Pinabarat	Quipeña Boerath	Kipenabouradt

*Note:* Blussé & Everts, 2006, p. xxxvii

The review of Peter Kang’s 2004 map of the Seventeenth Century Cavalan (Kavalan) plain published in *The Formosan Encounter* (Blussé & Everts, 2006, p. xxxvi) compared with modern maps of Kavalan (now officially recognized as Yilan) indicates that the village recognized in 1632 as Quimiabolás was located in the vicinity which is currently occupied by National Ilan University (established 1926). Archaeological remains of Quimiabolás were unearthed in 2022 during excavations according to news reports (Chin, 2022). As such, there is no modern name for Quimiabolás because it no longer exists. This issue of constant flux and eventual disappearance is common for the majority of villages which were recorded in VOC, Qing, and Imperial Japanese official records during Taiwan’s three centuries of colonization by these nations. Formosan oral histories further attest to a vast number of otherwise vanished tribes.

The names of some villages continue to be spelled in a number of different ways. For example, one Amis village that is currently known in Mandarin as *Dabalang* (大巴壠) is often transliterated as *Tavarang*, *Taibalang* or *Tafalong*. Reflecting this lack of uniformity, the names of Taiwan’s 16 officially recognized tribes have undergone dramatic changes as is chronicled in the following sections.

### 2.1 Toponyms

Zeitoun and Cauquelin point out that some of Taiwan’s tribal ethnonyms are based on physical locations. “In the Formosan languages, toponyms/ethnonyms are usually chosen in relation to environment” (Zeitoun & Cauquelin, 2006, p. 659). Indeed, the findings of the present literature review reveal that the Kavalan, Puyuma, Rukai, Saisiyat, Truku, and Yami/Tao ethnonyms are derived from topographical or geographical features related to the traditional homelands of these tribes. (See Table 3).

### 2.2 Research Questions

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the proposed etymologies for contemporary Formosan ethnonyms?
2. What historical Formosan ethnonyms exist in related literature?

It may be necessary to point out that many of the ethnonyms listed herein refer to individual villages, rather than to the modern concept of “the tribe at large”. Also, that the historical modification to accepted orthographic systems compounded by phonetic variation both over time and between different phratries noted by Zeitoun and

Yu (2005) have resulted in “different writing systems (alphabetic, syllabic and logographic) (having) been adopted to transcribe the Formosan languages during the past four hundred years” (ibid. p. 171) which are the underlying cause for the tremendous variety in spellings of village and tribe names.

### 3. The Ethnonyms

#### 3.1. Amis

*Alternate Names: Ami, Amia, Pagcah, Pangcah, Pangtsah, Bakurut, Lam-Si-Hoan, Maran, Sabari, Tanah* (Grimes et. al, 1995, p. 127); *Pangcaq* (Chen, 1987, p. 1).

Taiwan’s most populous aboriginal tribe, the Amis is “mainly distributed in the east of the Central Mountain Range and the plains area south of the Liwu River, covering two eastern Taiwan counties: Hualien and Taitung, and the Hengchun Peninsula in Pingtung County” (CIP-Amis). The Amis of Hualien self-designate as *Pangcah* or *Pang-tsah* meaning *people* and *kinsmen* (CIP-Amis). However, southward in Taitung, when introducing themselves to non-Amis people, members of this tribe self-identify as *Amis* and it is by this ethnonym that they are most widely recognized.

Since the tribe settled north of the neighboring Puyuma tribe it is theorized that the Pangcah came to be known as *Amis* meaning “northerners” or “people in the north” because of their relationship with the more dominant Puyuma (Chen, 2000, p. 162; Kim, 2003, p. 32). Other sources maintain that Pangcah means “person” while Amis is a Puyuma loan word meaning “northern people” (Winkler, 2016, Vol. 1, p. 17). Further support for this theory is that the Proto Austronesian term *qamis* meaning *north* may have been bestowed upon the people by “Malayo-Polynesian speakers of the islands to the south, who remembered the Amis as their ancestral relatives” (Ross, 1995, p. 102).

Historically the Amis-Puyuma relationship was conflict riddled and due to Amis’ repeated loses in battles against the Puyuma, many Amis willingly submitted themselves to be slaves to the Puyuma (Pu, 2012, p. 371) because slavery was considered to be a more desirable outcome than the alternative, decapitation. As such, the Puyuma name for the Amis was historically *Papian* meaning *slave* (Kaneko & Tsuchida, 1982, p.112).

In contrast it has also been proposed that the Amis ethnonym originated with ancestors who came from the north, rather that moved there from a previous southerly region. This second theory may be a reference to the flood myth, some versions of which indicate that the survivors of the flood landed on a mountain, to the north, where they found refuge during the deluge. However, it should be noted that the Amis deluge myths, of which 28 versions have been chronicled (Gauss, 2022, p. 57,) make reference to at least 16 locations where the Amis ancestors landed after the great flood (Gauss, 2022, p. 190). The most northerly landing place of which is in Hualien; the most southwesterly of which is in Hengchung, Pingtung approximately 250 km. from Hualien; the most easterly of which is on Orchid Island off the coast of Taitung, approximately 85 km from Hengchung.

These facts notwithstanding, the entire tribe was first referred to as *Amis* in official Qing Dynasty documents (Kim, 2003, p. 32). The five major Amis phratries, Nan Shih, Hsiu Ku Juan (Central), Hai An (Coastal), Puyuma (location name), and Heng Chun (peninsula name) are all named after local topographical features and take these Mandarin names based on the Mandarin names of the areas where they reside (Kim, 2003, p. 32).

Based on a rendering of all the aforementioned cited sources, *Amis* may be understood to mean “Northerners.”

#### 3.2. Atayal

*Alternate Names: Tyal, Taiyal, Tayal, Ataiyal, Attayal, Taijyal, Bonotsek, Shabogala, Takonan, Tangao, Yukan* (Grimes, et. al, 1995, p. 130); *Mohawks of Formosa* (Vosburgh, 1950, p. 147)

Traditionally, the Atayal were known to “occupy a large area in the northern mountains” of Taiwan’s Central Mountain Range (Ferrell, 1969, p. 29). An assortment of etymologies for the term *Atayal* have been proposed including *mountaineer* (Alvarez, 1927, p.254), *true human* or *people in the same tribe* (Wang, 2008, p.8), *upright man* (Martin, 2006, p.31), *people* (Yan, 2009, p. 113), and simply *man* (Kim, 1980 p. 52). However, according to Ferrell the Atayalic words for “man/human being” are *squliq* (Squliq) and *c’uli* (C’uli’) (Ferrell, 1969, p. 173), not *Atayal*.

Prior to the Japanese colonization of Taiwan the Atayal were known by the exonym *Yukan* which likely derives from the Japanese *yukanna* meaning “brave”, a term employed in reference to “American Indians” (Kai, 1974, p. 79). Taintor’s 1874 *Comparative Vocabulary of the Kabaran (Pepo) and Yukan (Savage) Dialects of North-Eastern Formosa* defines *taial* as “savage name for themselves” (Taintor, 1874, p.43) indicating that the Atayal endonym predates any Japanese colonial era ethnographic expeditions by over two decades at least.

Like many of Taiwan’s indigenous groups, traditionally, the “Atayal believed themselves to be the only perfect people in the world and call foreigners *Yugai* (yungay) or monkeys” (Ishii, 1917, p. 116). A year prior, Ishii (Japanese himself) had likened the Atayal use of the word *yugai* to the way in which the Germans regarded the Japanese (Ishii, 1917, p. 14). Ironically, in 1646 VOC merchant Gabriel Happart sought out the uncontacted

Atayal phratry known by the exonym *Parrougearon*. The *Parrougearon* were rumored to be nomadic, skilled climbers, fierce warriors, having tattooed faces with tooth ablation practices and described as “people with monkey heads and tails” (Blussé & Everts, 2006, p. 75). This illustrates the prevalence of certain groups to regard other groups as simian in nature including Dutchman J. Struys who, in 1681, attested to “the existence in Formosa of men with tails” (Lacouperie, 1886, p. 453).

The wide-ranging consensus among the etymological sources indicates that Atayal means “human” or “person”.

### 3.3. Bunun

*Alternate Names: Bunti, Vonun, Bunan, Bubukun, Vunum, Vunun, Vunung, Bunum (Grimes, et. Al, 1995, p. 148)*

The Bunun people historically lived on Taiwan’s western coast, but later were pushed into the southern regions of Taiwan Central Mountain range after the 1662 overthrow of Dutch Formosa. According to Bunun author Haisul Palalavi (海樹兒·发刺拉菲) (2016), antediluvian people identified themselves *Bunun* meaning “humans” in order to differentiate themselves from the animals that they lived and conversed with. The Bunun oral literatures regarding the golden age and deluge events describe amicable conversational relationships between mankind and various species of animals. However, after the great flood when the survivors dispersed from their mountain refuge, the Bunun began to refer to themselves as *Bunun tuza* meaning “true humans” in order to distinguish their group from the other tribes (Fang, 2016, p. 66). “The Bunun use this term to refer to themselves as *person(s)*; they also use it to refer to other peoples as *non-person(s)*” (Huang, 1995, p. 63). As an interesting twist however, both the Atayal and the Seediq regard themselves as *true humans* as well (See Table 3).

In the case of Bunun, all sources concur that Bunun means “human” or “person”.

### 3.4. Hla’alua

*Alternate Names: Saaroa, Saroa, Saarua, Rarua, La’alua, Pachien, Paichien, Sisyaban (Grimes et. al, 1995, p. 267) Southern Tsou Sa’arua (Pu, 2012, p. 79)*

Hla’alua people live in a small corner in the Central Mountain Range to the south of the Tsou territories. Historical records indicate that during the Qing Dynasty, the Hla’alua tribe was referred to as *Neiyou* or *Meilong*. Eventually, the name was simplified to *Dingsishe* meaning “top four communities” in contrast with the Rukai lower three communities of Maga, Tona and Mantaoran which the Japanese government adopted and manifested as *Shangsishe* (CIP-Hla’alua). The four Hla’alua communities are phratries known as the Paiciana, Vilanganu, Tararahluvu (or Talicia), and Hlihlala (CIP-Hla’alua).

Officially, the ethnonym *Hla’alua* is of unknown origin (IPCDC-Hla’alua). However, it is possible that clues to the origin of the Hla’alua ethnonym may be found in Hla’alua oral literatures. The earliest Hla’alua myths forego descriptions of anthropogenic origins and are set during the deluge. During the flood animals retrieved fire from the Negritos who survived the flood on a separate mountain and took it back to the Hla’alua on Jade Mountain. After the flood, the Hla’alua moved to Hlasunga to live with the Negritos. However, while the population of the Hla’alua recovered quickly Hlasunga didn’t provide adequate space to support both groups, so the Hla’alua ancestors moved on.

Saaroa (Hla’alua) content words are constructed of tri-syllabic combinations. The Hla’alua dictionary offers some clues about the etymology of the ethnonym *Hla’alua* which is composed of the three syllables *hla-*, *-’a*, and *-lua*. The prefix *hla-* is the most commonly employed prefix for place names in the Hla’alua language. In isolation *hla-* has three definitions; *with*, *so*, and *and* (Hla’alua Online Dictionary, 2021, p. 79). When employed as a prefix, *hla-* is found word initial on 26 place names including *hla’alunga*, *hlahlaruci’ihlia*, *hlakahlisi*, *hlakuluhlana*, and *hlakurapa* among many others. The prefix *hli-* is also commonly employed in place names and is found word initial on half a dozen place names while the less common prefix *hlu-* starts just one place name.

The Saaroa word *aluka* means *to marry each other* (Hla’alua Online Dictionary, 2021, p. 10). Each sound in the word *aluka* is voiced except for the penultimate /k/. As per the rules of naturalness, it could be that the voiceless stop /k/ was devoiced and eventually dropped entirely as unvoiced consonants between voiced vowels sometimes are or substituted with the glottal stop found at the beginning of *alua*.

Combining the prefix *hla-* with *aluka* could create a construction of *hla-aluka* meaning *place of marriage*, a reference to the place where the “lived with” the Negritos in their earliest oral tradition. If the /k/ were dropped the construction would become *hla-alua* which could indicate that the ethnonym Hla’alua means something like *marriage place*. To be clear, this proposed etymology is just one rendering theory.

### 3.5. Kakananavu

*Alternate Names: Kanabu, Kakananabu (Grimes et. al, 1995, p. 267) Kankanabu (Pu, 2012, p. 79)*

The Kakananavu tribe resides alongside the Hla’alua to the west of the Bunun territories. Kakananavu, sometimes spelled *Kakananabu*, *Saaroa* or *Sa’alu* (Lin, 2009, p. 66) means “people living in the Taiwan giant



bamboo forest” (CIP-Kanakanavu) or “people who live in the Kanakanavu area” (DMTIP-Tsou). According to another source, giant bamboo is transliterated as *kanavunavu* (Tsuchida, 2003, p. 129) which lends credence to the CIP definition.

The Kanakanavu are Taiwan’s smallest indigenous group by population with just 412 souls as of 2023. The diminutive size of the tribe is in keeping with historical records.

The Kanakanavu was first record on May 11, 1639 in the Day Register by Junior Merchant Maerten Wesselingh which names “Cannacannavo” in passing (Blussé & Everts, 2000, p. 232). Later, in 1647 it was recorded that the village of “Kannakannaroo” was home to 157 souls (Blussé & Everts, 2006, p. 183) but without providing context, VOC records indicate however that eight years later in 1655 the “Kannakanavo” population had fallen by more than half to just 72 souls (Blussé & Everts, 2010, p. 9).

Dramatic diminishments in population among Taiwan’s aboriginal tribes were common at that time due to the prevalence of epidemics such as that described by Missive Junior Merchant Jacob Nolpe on February 9, 1646 in which he reported that aboriginals in northern Taiwan had “suffered greatly from illness and death lately. As a result, the population and even the number of households of several large villages has been decimated” (Blussé and Everts, 2006, p. 51). By 2003, prior to their official recognition, researchers speculated that there were likely fewer than 200 living Kanakanavu (Tsuchida, 2003, p. 1). Most likely, ambiguity about the etymology of *Kanakanavu* is influenced by the tribe’s small population, the effects of which are fewer speakers to preserve linguistic data and fewer English language anthropological and ethnological studies on the Kanakanavu tribe.

Though possibly unrelated, it is interesting that the great Rukai hundred-pace snake spirit that all souls of the deceased join in death is known as *Kanavanan* (Pu, 2012, p. 28). Knowing the propensity for the morphological feature of reduplication in Formosan languages in which word stems are repeated, it seems plausible that the tribe’s name *Kanakanavu* could be etymologically related to a reduplicated form of *Kanavanan* (Kana-Kava-vanan becoming Kana-Kanavu through clipping or truncating the suffix -vanan into -vu as an effect of the word being lengthened through word initial reduplication). However, it could be also argued that these two forms are false cognates or some other kind of construction.

### 3.6. Kavalan

*Alternate Names:* *Kuwarawan, Kiwarawa, Kuvarawan, Kibalan, Kiwaraw, Kuvalan, Kavarauan, Kvalan, Shekwan, Cabaran, Kabalan, Kabaran, Kamalan, Kavanan, Kbalan* (Grimes et. al, 1995, p. 179), *Gemalan* (Faure, 2001, p. 12), *Kabalan, Kabelang, Komolan, Kap-tsu-lan, Gi-lan, Giran, Ilan* (De Beauclair, 1975, p. 185), *Komalan* (Taintor, 1874 p. 35)

The preponderance of etymological sources concur that the ethnonym Kavalan is a referent for *flatland people* (Martin, 2006 p.38), *the people who live in plains* (Chen, 2000, p. 68) or something referring to the regional topography of the historic village of Kalewan which the ethnonym is said to derive from (Shimizu, 1998, p. 31). The Kavalan language dictionary defines *kbaran* as *self-appellation, Kavalan* (Li & Tsuchida, 2006, p. 121). After conducting interviews with every Kavalan person living in Hsinshe, I-chun Chen determined that the term *Kavalan* is derived from the geographical location of the tribe’s ancestral homeland and that they have intentionally embraced this name in order to “prove the authenticity of their ethnic status” (Chen, 2000, p. 64).

However, Chen’s contention that “the name Kavalan is a new invention” (Chen, 2000, p. 62) and that it was first adopted by Japanese scholar Ino to refer to the people who lived in the Yilan plains in the 1890s (Chen, 2000, p. 67-68) is erroneous. Twenty-one years prior to the Japanese annexation of the island, in 1874 Edward C. Taintor cites the Customs Trade Reports of 1868 as stating that “The original inhabitants of the plain (are) a fine looking race of people calling themselves *Kabaran*” (Taintor, 1874, p. 5). Taintor’s work was published one year prior to the 1875 Yilan War between the Han colonists and the Kavalan which resulted in the southward diaspora into Hualien and Taitung. Moreover, Taintor’s English-Kabaran dictionary defines *kabaran* as “Pepo name for themselves” (Taintor, 1874, p. 43). Moreover, in 1875 Cuthbert Collingwood published his accounts of Formosa from 1866 saying “The people are called by themselves *Kibalan*, and are, I believe, known by the Chinese as the tame aborigines, in contradistinction to the raw savages which dwell on the mountains, and on the east coast more particularly” (Collingwood, 2001, p. 87-88). MacKay’s 1885 visit with the *Kap-tsu-lan* supports Collingwood’s account and further demurs Chen’s false claim on the origins of the adoption of the ethnonym Kavalan.

Although the term Kavalan was said to mean “the people who live in plains” in the local language in order to distinguish themselves from the highland group, the Atayal... no evidence so far can prove so. However, Japanese and Taiwanese scholars have continued to use the term in order to classify the people who inhabited the present Ilan plains. Because of misunderstanding, the term Kavalan has been transferred from a geographical term to the name of a people. Nonetheless, since the early 1990s, it has been adopted by a particular group of people whose ancestors used to live in those plains in order to reassert themselves as a recognizable ethnic group. (Chen, 2000, p. 68)

In addition to the alternative names offered by Grimes (1995), Komalan (Taintor, 1874 p. 35), the region

that was traditionally inhabited by the Kavalan has been known by the names *Kabalan*, *Kabelang*, *Komolan*, *Kap-tsu-lan* and other phonetic transliterations as well as *Gi-lan*, *Giran*, *Ilan* and eventually, *Yilan* (De Beauclair, 1975, p. 185).

### 3.7. Paiwan

*Alternate Names: Paiuan, Payowan, Li-Li-Sha, Samobi, Samohai, Saprek, Tamari, Kadas, Kale-Whan, Kapaingan, Katausan (Grimes et. al, 1995, p. 226)*

The Paiwan people occupy the southern most regions of Taiwan. Similar to the Kavalan whose ancestors were called *Avan*, according to oral tradition “When people first came to the world, the Paiwan called themselves *adidan* which means ‘friends of the land’ or ‘caretakers of the land’” (Winkler, 2016, Vol. 4, p. 42-82).

There are three prominent theories regarding the etymology of the ethnonym *Paiwan*. The first theory holds that *Paiwan* is a derivative of the name for an old village which the Dutch called *Paghiwagn* or *Pachiwan* (Ferrell, 1982, p. 1). Said village, also known as *se-Paiwan* is located near the Ailiao River (隘寮溪) near the Kaohsiung-Pingtung border (Lu, 2010, p. 169).

A second thesis that is argued by Tadasu Suzuki agrees that *Paiwan* is based on a physical location which is integral to the tribe’s origin myth and makes up the historical homeland. However, according to Suzuki the village from which *Paiwan* is derived from a location on the opposite side of Taiwan’s Central Mountain Range on Dawu Mountain (DMTIP-Paiwan). Advocates of the Dawu Mountain origin hypothesis speculate that after the tribe dispersed from Dawu Mountain, the place of origin, *Paiwan* was adopted as their ethnonym (DMTIP-Paiwan).

The timeline in the second hypothesis is disputed however by the false assertion that the extension of the place called *Paiwan* to include the speakers of the Paiwan language “almost certainly does not predate the Japanese occupation” which lasted from 1895 to 1945 (Ferrell, 1982, p. 191). George Taylor’s *Aborigines of Formosa* of 1885 predates Japanese occupation by a decade. Nevertheless, Taylor identifies “Paiwans inhabiting the extreme south” (Taylor, 1886, p. 67). Many of the Paiwan flood myths underwrite the latter theory. Regardless which village the Paiwan derive their name from, it is said that the location *Paiwan* is “where heaven is said to exist” (DMTIP-Paiwan).

The third theory is that, in calling themselves *Se-Paiwan*, the tribe is simply referring to itself as *mountain People* (Ho, 1995, p. 307) which is incidentally the same translation that Kim offers for the Truku tribe (1981, p. 209).

Despite the fact that the translation for *human* in the Paiwan language is *caucau* (Ferrell, 1969, p. 173), *Paiwan* has also come to mean *human being* (DMTIP-Paiwan). This semantic extension likely reflects the propensity amongst other tribes such as the Atayal, Bunun, Seediq, Tao, Thao and Tsou to employ Formosan lexical items meaning *human being* as ethnonyms. This illustrates the loss of original meaning in ethnonyms in favor of fictional, yet politically expedient, etymologies.

Like the western Rukai who call themselves *Kochapongane* meaning *Children of the Clouded Leopard* (MOC-Rukai), many Paiwan phratries refer to themselves as the *Children of the Sun* (Lai, 2010, p. 21) or *Alaq na qadaw*, an allusion to their most common origin myth which asserts that the first Paiwan were born from cosmic eggs (the Vungalid Paiwan believe that the eggs were all red (Chiang, 2007, p. 42)). The sun endures as a totem among the Paiwan who liken the countenance of beautiful people to the splendor of the sun (Early & Whitehorn, 2003, p. 317). One myth about a childless couple named Tjukutjuku and Pulalulaluyan (also spelled *Puljaljuljaljuyan* in some contemporary conventions) indicates that, in their grief these Paiwan ancestors transformed into butterflies, flew away, and begged the sun for help after which “the sun gave each of them one source of life, and they had a child called Kulelulelu” who wielded magic to “destroy all the songs of mourning” (Early & Whitehorn, 2003, p. 269-270).

In determining the true meaning for *Paiwan*, it may be tempting to agree with Tadasu Suzuki and DMTIP which assert that *Paiwan* is associated with the place of origin chronicled in the primary anthropogenic myths. However, an exhaustive survey of 45 versions of the Paiwan origin myth definitively proves that the location of origin is never chronicled as “Paiwan”. Rather, Kapaiwanan, Chokaborogan, Tjuaalabus Rhuvaniau, Kadziaka, Kadumuan (Wutou Mountain), Idjeruau Tavalan, Kinabakan, Vangau, Kavurungan (also spelled Ka-vulungan, avulungan, ‘avulungan, Pinavavu’acan) (Dawu Mountain), Jiling (tjimu), Suchiruan na ada’o, Amawan and Pinabaokatasan are all named by different phratries as the location of primary anthropogenic origin. As for secondary anthropogenic origin myths, that is, those that describe the descent of the deluge survivors, all 24 deluge myths identified in Gauss, 2022 name Tuobamalai, tarimorao, idores, Paketjumlj, Kadumuan (also spelled Kavorongan and Cagaraus) (Wutou Mountain) and Taivuvu among others. Missing from both the primary and secondary anthropogenic mythic texts is any mention of a location called “Paiwan”. As such, this proposal must be rejected along with the erroneous assertion that *Paiwan* means “person” or “human” in any sense other than that granted by modern linguistic extension.

### 3.8. Puyuma

*Alternate Names: Pyuma, Pilam, Pelam, Piyuma, Panapanayan, Kadas, Tipun (Grimes et. al, 1995, p. 233) Pinuyumayan (CIP-Puyuma); Hashaban, Panapanajan (Schröder, 1966, p. 268) Papanayan (Song, Long-Shen in Pu, 2012, p. 94).*

The area around Taitung City on the southeastern coast of Taiwan is home to the Puyuma tribe. Referred to in Dutch East India Company records as *Pimaba*, a number of etymologies have been proposed for Puyuma including “gather together” (Martin, 2006, p.36), “send to the fields” (Zeitoun & Cauquelin, 2006, p. 661) and “unity or concord” (Teng, 2008, p.2).

Oral literature states that that ethnonyms originated when the seven original Puyuma villages around the base of Dulan Mountain in Taitung decided to move together to live at a village formerly known as *mayDadar*. “This event became known in the Puyuma Tribe’s language as ‘puyuma’ which means ‘coming together’ or ‘solidarity’” (Winkler, 2016, Vol. 2, p. 36).

In recent years, there has been a subtle push to abandon the ethnonym *Puyuma* in favor of *Pinuyumayan*, an ethnonym coined by Japanese researchers even though both terms are ostensibly synonymous. Both of the names *Puyuma* (Schröder, 1966, p. 268) and *Pinuyumayan* are toponyms denoting the village of Nanwang in Beinan, Taitung (CIP-Puyuma). According to Dominik Schröder, a priest who lived in Taitung during the 1960s, both *Puyuma* and *Hashaban* were employed to denote the tribe by the Fascist Japanese colonial regime (1966, p. 268). In Japanese, *Hashaban* means “natives of the eight settlements” which referred to the eight main villages of the tribe. Schröder claimed that the Japanese introduced the name *Panapanajan* because it was believed to be the name of the place of postdiluvian disembarkation, and therefore, secondary anthropogenic origin. However, since none of the Puyuma deluge texts designate *Panapanajan* as a location of disembarkation, the name has never been widely adopted. The most common location of postdiluvian disembarkation within the Puyuma compendium is actually *Revoaqan*, not *Panapanajan*. For the sake of clarity, it should be noted that the alternative spellings preserved from source texts *Panapanayan*, *Pinuyumayan*, *Panapanajan* and *Papanayan* all refer to the same location which is one in the same as Nan Wang, Beinan and Puyuma.

Now therefore, the consensus view promoted by researchers Martin (2006), Teng (2008) and Winkler (2016) is that Puyuma denotes something like “unified together”.

### 3.9. Rukai

*Alternate Names: Drukay, Drukai, Dyokay, Dukai, Rutkai, Tsarisen, Tsalisen, Sarisen, Banga, Bantalang, Bantaurang, Taloma, Kadas (Grimes et. al, 1995, p. 238); Kalees (Martin, 2006, p.34); Ngudradrekai (DMTIP-Rukai); Kochapongane (MOC-Rukai)*

Rukai territories boarder the northern reaches of the Paiwan tribe and the eastern flank of the Puyuma areas. In addition to *Kochapongane* (also spelled *Kucapungane*) as noted above, the Rukai groups have three endonyms for themselves. The western phratries self-identify as *Ngudradrekai* meaning “people living on the mountains” or “people from the mountains” and the eastern phratries self-identify as *su-Taromak* meaning “people who live in Danan” (DMTIP-Rukai). Other sources submit that the Taromak Rukai self-denote as *dradrekay* or *drekay*, terms related to “middle elevations in the mountains where the Taromak traditionally reside” (Portnoy, 2010, p. 23).

Previously, xenonyms such as *Kalees*, *Tsarisen* and *Tsalisen* have been used to refer to the *Rukai* which may mean “elevated” (Martin, 2006, p.34), “the high and cold place” (DMTIP-Rukai) or even “(populations living in the) high mountains” (Zeitoun & Cauquelin, 2006, p. 660).

Two alternative etymologies have been proposed which speculate that *Rukai* is derived from other Formosan languages. One theory is that *Rukai* is a toponym derived from the Paiwan language meaning “east, upstream, and deep mountains, where the Rukai people settled” while another theory is that *Rukai* is derived from the Puyuma language “referring to a tribe at the foot of the neighboring mountain” (CIP-Rukai).

Based on all of these proposed etymologies and the general agreement of meaning expressed by Martin (2006), Zeitoun & Cauquelin (2006), DMTIP and Ferrell (1982), the ethnonym *Rukai* means something like “people of the high mountains”.

### 3.10. Saisiyat

*Alternate Names: Saiset, Seisirat, Saisett, Saisiat, Saisiett, Saisirat, Saisyet, Saisyett, Amutoura, Bouiok (Grimes et. al, 1995, p. 239)*

The homelands of the Saisiyat are found in Wufong, Hsinchu and Nanchuang, Miaoli (Tsuchida, 1964, p. 43) which is just west of the Atayal territory. According to oral tradition the Saisiyat ethnonym was bestowed upon the tribe by the god *’oepoeh na boong* (also spelled *Opoh Na Bolhon* and *Oppehnaboon*) (DMTIP-Saisiyat) and means either “place with an arbor” (Tribe Introduction-Kahkahoe’an, 2021) or “living in Siyat,” (an unknown location) (Winkler, 2016, Vol. 9, p. 17).

Documents published in 1923 by Sayama Yukichi suggest that “the god of Sisubia” named the ancestors

*Saisiyat* (Chen & Cao, 2009, p. 296). Sisubia is one of the Japanese spellings for Papakwaka which is also known as Dabajian Mountain. Later in 1955, Li Hui recorded the Garawan deluge myth which corroborated Sayama's finding (Pu, 2012, p. 71) but in Winkler's version 'oepoeh na boong named each child individually rather than the tribe as a whole and reminded them of their names when they forgot them (Winkler, 2016, Vol. 9, p. 30).

### 3.11. Sakizaya

*Alternate Names: Nataoran Amis, Sakizaya, Sakiray (Grimes et. al, 1995, p. 127); Sakiraya (Chuang, 2007, p. 4); Zakiraya (Yeh, 2008, p. 97); Saquiraya (Mateo, 2008, p. 239); Zacharya (Tsai, 2005, p. 3).*

The Sakizaya tribe can be found in the area surrounding Hualien City on Taiwan's central eastern coast. The geographic homeland of the Sakizaya lies north of the Amis and southeast of the Truku in Hualien. "The Sakizaya called the region (Hualien) Nararacanan, after raracan, an edible kind of shellfish" (Cowsill, 2008). Spanish conquistadors Esquivel noted *Saquiraya* as a village with gold and silver mines in 1632 (Mateo, 2008, p. 239). Unfortunately, like the ethnonym Hla'alua, Sakizaya remains of unknown origin (Liu, 2014, p. 61). The Sakizaya dictionary simply lists the Mandarin transliteration as a definition and offers the example sentence "I am Sakizaya" (Sakizaya Online Dictionary, 2016, p. 342).

However, according to some Sakizaya elders, the ancestors of their tribe originally inhabited western Taiwan and that were part of the Siraya tribe. It is said that the Koxinga's invasion in 1661 and subsequent reign of western Taiwan was the impetus for the tribes migration to the east side of Taiwan (Lin, 2012, p. 117). This position is supported by a modern fictionalized Siraya-Paiwan cosmogonic myth which states that in the ancient times, a giant mountain named *Sakizaya* was bifurcated by the creator as a punishment. This sacred mountain is known today as Mount Ki-lai which stands at 3607 meters in elevation (Tenn, 2017, p. 234). Reportedly, "Mount Ki-Lai...is named after the Sakizaya indigenous people in the plain of eastern Taiwan" (Tenn, 2017, p. 234). It is far more likely however, that the Sakizaya tribe is named after the toponym bearing the same name.

### 3.12. Seediq

*Alternate Names, Taroko, Sediq, Saediq, Seedik, Sejiq, Dedeq, Seedek, Seedeq, Shedekka, Sedek, Sediakk, Sedik, Sazek, Bu-Hwan, CheHwan, Daiya-Ataiyal, Hogo, Iboho, Paran (Grimes et. al, 1995, p. 257).*

The Seediq and the Truku tribes share "overlapping territory and population" with the Atayal tribe (Mona & Simon, 2011, p. 56) in north central and north eastern Taiwan. Seediq means "human being" (Wang, 2008, p. 16; Simon, 2015b, p. 78), "man" (*only for their own tribe-men*) (Asai, 1953, p. 47) or "true man" (Kim, 1980, p. 54). The Truku, Atayal and Seediq tribes exhibit a variety of cultural similarities including following the convention of employing their perspective words meaning "man" for members of their own tribe.

### 3.13. Thao

*Alternate Names: Sau, Sao, Shao, ChiuHwan, Chiu-Huan, Vulung (Grimes et. al, 1995, p. 261) Cou (Tung, 1964, p. 591) Caw (Blust, 2003, p. 343).*

The Thao tribe lives in the vicinity of Sun Moon Lake in Nantou County, central Taiwan. The lake has known many monikers including *Lake Candidius* by the English, *Tsui-Sia-Hai* (Dragon Foot Lake) by the Qing (Eve, 2012) and *Jitsu-Getsu-Tan* by the Japanese (Ishii, 1917, p. 24). Formerly, the tribe inhabited Lalu Island in the midst of the lake but they were forced to abandon it when the lake water level rose due to the installation of a hydroelectric dam in the early 1900s.

The ethnonym *Thao* means "person" or "human being" and is spelled *caw* in the Thao Dictionary. *Caw* can be duplicated as *caw-caw* to mean "all the Thao people" (Blust, 2003, p. 343). However, the Thao were previously dubbed *Tsui-whans* (Tsoui-houan) meaning "water savages" (Allen, 1877, p. 263) or "in-between barbarians" (Chou, 2015, p. 109) signifying the tribe's role as intermediaries between Chinese settlers and other mountain dwelling tribes such as the Seediq and the Tsou.

### 3.14. Truku

*Alternate Names, Taroko, Sediq, Saediq, Seedik, Sejiq, Dedeq, Seedek, Seedeq, Shedekka, Sedek, Sediakk, Sedik, Sazek, Bu-Hwan, Che-Hwan, Daiya-Ataiyal, Hogo, Iboho, Paran (Grimes et. al, 1995, p. 257) : same as Seediq.*

Truku people live in the vicinity of Hualien's Taroko National Park. Traditionally the Truku distinguished themselves as *sajek taruko* (Truku men) in order to contrast themselves from all other aboriginals which they regarded as *pais* denoting "enemy" (Kim, 1980, p. 8). Truku is a toponym and the origin of the word *Truku* can be traced to the locale where the Truku reside which is named Taroko. According to research by Teyra Yudaw Truku is an amalgamation of the words *Tru* and *Ruku*; *Tru* meaning "three" and *Ruku* meaning "the living place" reflecting the place of origin (Wang, 2008, p.16). Teyra Yudaw's proposal is partially supported by oral tradition which maintains that the original meaning of Truku was "going upward (toward the Suku River)" (NTU Formosan Corpus).



“Mountain people” (Kim, 1980, p. 209), “terraced land” (Simon, 2015b, p. 695), “platform in the mountainside” (Truku, 2021) and “habitable place” (Truku, 2021) are other proposed etymologies for the word Truku. Simon also translates *Truku* as “terraced steps in the mountains” and as “person from Truku (terraced land)” (Simon, 2015a, p. 695).

### 3.15. Tsou

*Alternate Names: Tsu-u, Tsou, Tsuou, Tsu-wo, Tzo, Tso, Namakaban, Niitaka, Tibola, Tibolah, Tibolak, Tibolal (Grimes et. al, 1995, p. 267).*

The Tsou people dwell in south central Taiwan in the vicinity of Ali Mountain with the Bunun to the East and the Kanakanavu to the south. The ethnonym *Tsou* meaning “humans” (CIP-Tsou) was previously transliterated *Cou*. *Cou* is defined as “people” in Tung’s Tsou language glossary (Tung, 1964, p. 591).

“Oral tradition says that the Tsouic group originated in Yushan. About 2,000 years ago, the group split into two, Northern Tsou and Southern Tsou. ... The latter further split into two, Kanakanavu and Saaroa about 800 years ago” (Li, 2004, p. 1035). This origin myth further indicates that mankind grew in the Earth after being planted as seeds by the God Hamo which “is why (Tsou) people are sometimes called *tsamuh tsojoua* ‘those who grew from the soil’” (Ferrell, 1966, p. 173). Nevertheless, it wasn’t until 2014 that either the Kanakanavu or the Hla’alua were recognized as officially distinct tribes by Taiwan’s Executive Yuan.

### 3.16. Yami/Tao

*Alternate Names: Tau, Botel Tabago, Botel Tobago (Grimes et. al, 1995, p. 278)*

The Orchid Islanders are widely known by two distinct ethnonyms; *Tao* meaning “Human” (Asai, 1936, p. 49) and *Yami* meaning “north” (Enn, 2015, p. 51) which is related to the word *qamis*, the proto-Austronesian word signifying “north” (Ross, 1995, p. 102). In 1897 R. Torii became the first Japanese anthropologist to visit the Tao, and when he asked them the name of their tribe, they replied “yami Kami” (we are Yami), but this was disputed as early as the 1930s by the islanders. A 1930’s ethnographic survey found that “the natives do not call themselves Yami and tell us the nomination of Yami was made by the Japanese” (Asai, 1936, p.1).

Over the past century, the proper traditional name of the tribe has been hotly debated both in academia and amongst the Austronesian people of Orchid Island. In *The Songs of the Ancestors* it is noted that between 1980 and 1982 “in all (my) recordings of myths, legends, tales and songs, the natives of Botel Tobago never called themselves Yami, but tawo” (Benedek, 1991, p. 10). Two decades later however, another study discovered that approximately 32% of the islanders preferred the ethnonym Yami, while 56% preferred the ethnonym Tao, and 12% had no opinion (Limond, 2002, p. 7). Some point to the traditional oral history sung in the song of the flying-fish which includes the lyric “Let us go to a rocky place, where they speak true things in the language of the *IYAMI*. There, let us bathe in the blood of the crowing cockerel, which drips like rainwater from the eaves” (Limond, 2002, p. 8). Complicating the issue, it has also been reported that student teachers from Orchid Island, “insisted that they be called *Yami* instead of *Tao*” (Rau, 2015, p. 34).

The island of the Tao/Yami habitation has been known by an intriguing number of exonyms yet the islanders call their home *Ponso no Tao* meaning “The Island of Men” (Hung, 2019, p. 263; Enn, 2015, p. 163; Limond, 2002, p. 10), *Do Irala* (Arnaud, 2013, 0:01:36) (also spelled *Pongso no Tao* in some modern spelling conventions) or *Irala* (Benedek, 1991, p. xi) meaning “Where One Lands” or “Facing the mountain” (Rau, 2015, p. 33). Sometimes, the islanders even refer to the island as *ma’ataw* meaning “floating in the sea” (Rau, 2015, p. 33).

The Japanese dubbed the island *Tabacco Shima* on a 1607 map (Asai, 1936, p. 2) and later *Kotosho* (Kotosho) meaning “Red Head Island”. A 1642 VOC document refers to the island as *Bottel* (Blussé & Everts, 2000, p. 298) while a 1720 map labels it *Botrol* and in 1792 another map changes the name to *Bottol*. These names originate from *Botol* and *Buturu*, designators which the Amis and Puyuma used to refer to the island (Del Re, 1951, p. 12). The Chinese called it Tobako, Tambako, An-tau-su and the toponym Hongtou Yu (also meaning “Red Head Island”). An English language map by cartographers Thompson and Alleman published in the February, 1950 issue of the National Geographic Magazine labels the island *Hungtou*. However, the nomenclature that the island was most widely known by in the century prior the 1980s was *Botel Tobago*; *Tobago* from Chinese origin via Japanese and *Botel* being of Formosan origin (Asai, 1936, p. 2).

The Yami tribe is not to be confused with Y’ami Island (also referred to as *Mavulis Island*) which is located just 100 km south of Orchid Island in the Batanes Archipelago. *Y’ami*, meaning “north”, is the northernmost island in the Philippines and its name being a Batanic word is linguistically related to the language spoken on Orchid Island.

Three proposed etymologies for the curious toponyms meaning “Red Head Island” have been documented. The first etymology speculates that the name comes from the hair color of the islanders which is supposedly slightly less black than that of other Taiwanese tribes (Del Re, 1951, p. 12) and is due to a vitamin deficiency (Smith, 1998, p. 15). Another proposed etymology relies on the legend that a number of Dutch Sailors settled

there in the 1600s and having red hair, the island came to be known because of their hair color and that of their progeny (Johnson, 2019). This theory is uncorroborated by Dutch records, but it appears nonetheless plausible that some Dutch could have managed to escape to the island in the aftermath of the pirate Koxinga's 1662 violent takeover of Formosa which perpetrated the "grievous massacre of more than five hundred captured Netherlanders" (De Beauclair, 1975, p. 90) especially since the Dutch were called the "Red-haired Barbarians" in 15<sup>th</sup> century Formosa (Blussé & Everts, 2006, p. xi) and two centuries later the British were often referred to as "Red-haired relations" (Pickering, 1898, p. 117). However, VOC records indicate that at first contact with the Tao, the VOC representatives stole two boats and four pigs before shooting an islander and making an escape in 1643 (Blussé & Everts, 2000, p. 353). During second contact in 1644, the VOC lured some islanders to the strand with gifts where they killed two Tao and kidnapped one in an attempt to kidnap all three men (Blussé & Everts, 2000, p. 426). Upon third contact with the Tao in 1645 the first VOC representative to step on the island was promptly killed by the islanders for which the VOC subsequently "set fire to all the houses and vessels that (they) could lay (their) hands on" (Blussé & Everts, 2000, p. 563). The violence that the Dutch repeatedly inflicted upon the islanders in the decades leading up to Koxinga's reign make the likelihood of the Dutch sailor refugee integration legend completely implausible.

With these historical facts in mind, the third and most convincing and likely etymological explanation is that the mountains of the island appear red during the setting of the sun and as such, mariners identified the island as *Red Head Island* (DMTIP-Tao). Indeed, the island's tallest precipice is named *Hongtou Shan* (Red Head Mountain) to this day and there is a *Redhead Village* on the Southwest coast to this day (Woods, 2017) which is also known as *Imulud* (also spelled *Imorod* in some modern spelling conventions).

### 3.17. Siraya - An Officially Unrecognized Tribe

Though the Siraya language is extinct (Blust, 2013, p. 52), cultural revitalization efforts which have been under way since the 1990s (Tenn, 2017, p. iii) have led to some serious efforts to educate the public regarding the cultural identity of the Siraya tribe. This manifested most significantly in Edgar L. Macapili's (2008) *Siraya Glossary and Gospel of St. Matthew in Formosan (Sinkan Dialect)*. Therein, (see pages xxxiv-xxxv) Macapili offers three proposed etymologies for the ethnonym *Siraya*. The most plausible candidate proposed etymologies "Peaceful people" and "People of the east" are based on linguistic renderings available through analysis on Daniel Gravius's notes and manuscripts which were written circa 1661. The third proposed meaning, "human" is qualified with the following explanation:

Nobody exactly know(s) (not in my knowledge) the origin of this (Siraya) word and what its actual meaning except 'human' as referred by some because of the implication that most Taiwanese aboriginal ethnic group's name connote 'human' and therefore Siraya having the same connotation is most likely. (Macapili, 2008, p. xxxv)

## 4. Conclusion

The proposed etymologies of the Formosan ethnonyms are highly diverse. Following is a summary of the ethnonyms of all 16 officially recognized tribes and the proposed etymologies for these tribal names. These etymologies showcase the creative and sometimes colorful meanings which have been attributed to the Formosan ethnonyms.

**Table 3**  
*Etymologies of the Formosan Ethnonyms*

<b>Tribe</b>	<b>Etymology</b>	<b>Source</b>
<b>Amis</b>	<i>People in the north</i> <i>Northerners</i>	CIP-Amis; Winkler, 2016, Vol. 1, p. 17 Chen, 2000, p. 162; Kim, 2003, p. 32; Chen, 1987, p. 1
<b>Pang-tсах</b> <b>≡Papián</b>	<i>North</i> <i>People, kinsmen</i> <i>Slave</i>	Martin, 2006, p. 30 CIP-Amis; Winkler, 2016, Vol. 1, p. 17 Kaneko & Tsuchida, 1982, p.112
<b>Atayal</b>	<i>Mountaineer</i> <i>True human</i> <i>People in the same tribe</i> <i>Man</i> <i>Upright man</i> <i>People</i> <i>Person, human 人</i>	Alvarez, 1927, p. 254 Wang, 2008, p. 8 Wang, 2008, p. 8 Kim, 1980, p. 52 Martin, 2006, p.31 Yan, 2009, p. 113 Atayal Online Dictionary, 2016, p. 233
<b>'taial</b> <b>≡Yukan</b>	<i>Atayal (endonym)</i> <i>Name for themselves (reported as endonym)</i> <i>Brave (ref. American Indian–Japanese exonym)</i>	Egerod, 1979, p. 794 Taintor, 1874, p.43 Kai, 1979, p. 74

Tribe	Etymology	Source
<b>Bunun</b>	<i>Human</i> <i>Person</i> <i>Man or Human</i>	Fang, 2016, p. 66 Huang, 1995, p. 63 Martin, 2006, p. 29
<b>Hla'alua</b>	<i>*Unknown Origin</i> <i>Marriage Place</i>	IPCCDC-Hla'alua Proposed by author
<b>Kanakanavu</b>	<i>People living in the Taiwan giant bamboo forest</i> <i>People who live in the Kanakanavu area</i>	CIP-Kanakanavu DMTIP-Tsou
<b>Kavalan</b>	<i>Flatland people</i> <i>The people who live in plains</i> <i>(endonym)</i>	Martin, 2006, p. 38 Chen, 2000, p. 68 Collingwood, 1875, p. 87
<b>Paiwan</b>	<i>Where heaven is said to exist (place of origin)</i> <i>Human being</i> <i>A plant used to make decorative head-wreaths</i>	DMTIP-Paiwan DMTIP-Paiwan Ferrell, 1982, p. 1
<b>Kat-tsalisi-an</b>	<i>Mountain-slope dwellers</i>	Ferrell, 1982, p. 1
<b>Se-Paiwan</b>	<i>Mountain People</i>	Ho, 1995, p. 307
<b>Alaq na qadaw</b>	<i>Children of the Sun (Endonym)</i>	*
<b>≡Ka-li hwan</b>	<i>Friend or comrade savages</i>	Ferrell, 1982, p. 2
<b>≡Adidan</b>	<i>Friends/caretakers of the land</i>	Winkler, 2016, Vol.4, p. 42-82
<b>Puyuma</b>	<i>Gather together</i> <i>Send to the fields</i> <i>Unity or concord</i> <i>Solidarity</i>	Martin, 2006, p. 36 Zeitoun & Cauquelin, 2006, p. 661 Teng, 2008, p. 2 Winkler, 2016, Vol. 2, p. 36
<b>≡Hashaban</b>	<i>Natives of the eight settlements</i>	Schröder, 1966, p. 268
<b>Rukai</b>	<i>Elevated</i> <i>(populations living in the) high mountains</i> <i>The high and cold place</i>	Martin, 2006, p. 34 Zeitoun & Cauquelin, 2006, p. 660
<b>Ngudradrekai</b>	<i>People living on the mountains (or) People from the mountains</i>	DMTIP-Rukai DMTIP-Rukai
<b>Su-Taromak</b>	<i>People who live in Danan</i>	DMTIP-Rukai
<b>Kat-tsalisi-an</b>	<i>Mountain-slope dwellers</i>	Ferrell, 1982, p. 1
<b>Kochapongane</b>	<i>Children of the Clouded Leopard</i>	MOC-Rukai
<b>lalake ki vay</b>	<i>Children of the sun</i>	*
<b>Saisyat</b>	<i>Place with an arbor</i> <i>Living in Siyat</i>	Tribe Introduction- Kahkahoe'an, 2021 Winkler, 2016, Vol. 9, p. 17
<b>Sakizaya</b>	<i>*Unknown Origin</i>	Liu, 2014, p. 61
<b>Seediq</b>	<i>Human beings</i>  <i>Man (only for their own tribe-men)</i> <i>True man</i>	Wang, 2008, p. 16 and Simon, 2015b, p. 78 Asai, 1953, p. 47 Kim, 1980, p. 54
<b>Siraya†</b>	<i>Peaceful people</i> <i>People of the east</i> <i>Human</i>	Macapili, 2008, p. xxxiv-xxxv
<b>Tao</b>	<i>Human</i>	Asai, 1936, p. 49
<b>Yami</b>	<i>North</i>	Enn, 2015, p. 51
<b>Thao</b>	<i>Person, human being</i>	Blust, 2003, p. 343
<b>Truku</b>	<i>Going upward (toward the Suku River)</i> <i>Mountain People</i> <i>Terraced land</i> <i>Platform in the mountainside</i> <i>Habitable place</i> <i>Person from terraced land</i> <i>Terraced steps in the mountains</i> <i>Three living places</i>	Song, 2009 Kim, 1980, p. 209 Simon, 2015b, p. 695 Truku, 2021 Truku, 2021 Simon, 2015a, p. 695 Simon, 2015b, p. 78 Wang, 2008, p.16
<b>Tsou</b>	<i>People</i>	Tung, 1964, p. 591

Note: 1. \*Informants for the present study within the Taromak phratry. 2. † Denotes an officially unrecognized tribe. 3. ≡ Denotes ethnonym of historical use, likely no longer used.

In many cases, the Formosan speaking tribes historically had no names for themselves as groups and simply

self-denoted with the Formosan words for *people*. Outside or other tribes were simply referred to as “enemies” as in the case of the Truku (Kim, 1980). In some cases, Japanese ethnographers used these Formosan words to coin ethnonyms for the tribes at large. In fact, *people* is a frequently employed etymology for the names of tribes around the world. Consider that the Ainu of northern Japan as well as the Patwin of California also hold ethnonyms meaning *people* (Boule, 1992, p. 26). It is therefore unsurprising that all of the Formosan ethnonyms include at least one proposed etymology referring to “people” or “humans” meaning some variant of people except for the Puyuma and the Saisiyat. Great efforts were made through the research process to establish proposed etymologies for the Hla’alua and Sakizaya tribes. Unfortunately, such etymologies remain elusive and it is hoped that future studies may illuminate these obscured details.

In Cuthbert Collingwood’s *Rambles of a Naturalist*, first published in 1875, he notes:

Thus, when I inquired of a man in the Chinese village of Sau-o, who I imagined had a dash of Kibalan (Kavalan) in his face, if he belonged to that race, he replied, “No, I am a *man*!” (that is, a *Chinese*, not a foreigner). (Textual enhancement preserved from source text) (Collingwood, 2001, p. 93)

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