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Journey in the Interior of Formosa. By Arthur Corner, Amoy.

[P. 515] During a recent visit to Formosa, with a view of making some notes and sketches of the country occupied by the Aborigines, I landed at the British settlement of Takao, lat. 22° 37' N., long. 120° 16' E., on the S.W. coast, intending to proceed eastward to the mountains extending (some 40 to 50 miles from the coast) in a northerly and southerly direction, and inhabited by the savage races.

The harbour of Takao is shallow, and the part where vessels lie is becoming daily more contracted, as the drift-sand fills up the lagoon and is carried out by the tide to the entrance. On passing the bar we enter the harbour by two heads, having a passage apparently not more than 30 yards wide. To the northward is a rocky bluff composed of limestone masses rising towards Ape's Hill, and the south point, called the Dragon's Head, is a high cliff of fossiliferous limestone, the strata of which would apparently lead to the conclusion that these beds have formed a continuous line with Ape's Hill. From a sketch of the cliff which I made from the bar, it is seen that the strata indicate two different periods, if not more, of terrestrial change, and from a fossil mollusk (*Monotus Hawni*) I picked up on the top of the cliff, it would appear upon reference to the very limited resources to which I here have access, to belong to the latter period or Permian period of Palaeozoic times. Joining the Dragon's Head with the mainland, a long narrow spit of sand runs southerly for some 7 miles, separating the lagoon from the sea, and covered with banian and wild pine-apple, and cultivated with sweet potatoes. This bank is not, as one would imagine, of coralline formation, but appears to have been formed by the action of the sea, as I found no traces of recent coral growth on it; the lagoon also may have formerly extended inland for a much greater distance, perhaps to the foot of the range of slate hills to the east-ward, some 40 miles, being gradually filled up by the drift-sand to its present limits. The sand of the river-beds which I have traversed in journeying towards the mountains, appeared to be composed of slate fragments, the stones being water-worn slate, rounded by marine action probably. A northerly breeze fills the air with a dense quantity of fine sand, so as on a clear day to entirely obscure the distant country. Ape's Hill is a mass of ancient coral limestone, and contains some curious caves and rifts, filled with shells and bones of fishes. I explored one of these for some distance, and found the vertebrae of a fish and other bones not fossilized.

A journey of two days nearly due east of Takao, over a country highly cultivated with rice and sugar, brought us to the village of Calipo, about four hours' walk from which, and after ascending the mountains for some distance by a very narrow and precipitous path, we reached the savage village of "Kao Siah," which my barometer

showed to be about 1700 feet above the sea-level. The tribe occupying this position is called the "Soah ma hai" people, who are a fine type of aboriginal race. Of middle height, broad-chested and muscular, with remarkably large feet and hands, the eyes large, [p. 516] forehead round, and not narrow or receding in many instances, nose broad, mouth large, and disfigured by betel. The women are pleasant-looking, and their children pretty; but the teeth of all are spoiled by betel. Their appearance and habits would lead one to imagine them to possess some connection with the Malayan race, although the dress and arms bear no resemblance. The men wear a kind of short cotton petticoat, and some have jackets of woollen material in stripes, red, green, and orange, but most have none; some are tattooed on breast and arms. They carry a spear from childhood, and a straight, short sword in a wooden scabbard open on one side; the sword is used for many pacific as well as warlike purposes, such as chopping wood, in which they use it very dexterously, and it seems to be their only implement for that purpose. The women wear a short jacket just covering the breast, with long, close sleeves, are bare round the waist to the band of the petticoat, which reaches to the calf of the leg; from knee to ankle cotton gaiters cover the leg, and the feet are bare. Their cloths are made of cotton of various shades of blue. The head-dress is generally a red turban twisted in with the hair, and a wreath of wild flowers or leaves, which when fresh has rather a picturesque effect. The men's head-dress is a black turban, the ends of which are spread out in a fanlike shape and embroidered. Some of the men wear a kind of leather scull-cap with a curtain behind covering the neck; the front of the cap is often ornamented with the teeth of wild animals arranged in a star-like form. There is a race which is said to be identical in origin with these mountaineers, who inhabit the plains, and are called the "Pe pa whan" by the Chinese, while the hill savages are called "Chè whan," or green savages; the former have many characteristics of the hill people, but are under the domination of the Emperor of China.

The village of "Kao Siah" is built on the edge of a deep ravine facing the east and opposite a mountain of some 9000 feet, with the dry bed of a torrent in between, which in the rainy season must pour down a large body of water on the plains. There is no water on the site of the village, and supplies are brought from a place at some distance, which we passed in ascending, in large bamboos about 5 feet long, carried by the women. The place seems to be almost inaccessible from any point but that by which we approached it. There is a kind of stockade surrounding the village, and the houses are built in terraces of slate, of which the surrounding country is composed. The roofs are about 4 feet high, very low inclined, and the slates are kept in position by large stones along the ridge. The door is a slab of wood, about 3 feet high, sliding in a groove; and each house has one or two windows closed by wooden shutters, and a fire-place. The outside court is paved with slate, and slabs of the same, set up edgeways, separate one house from another. In front of each house is an erection of bamboo, thatched, and supported by wooden piles, with round slabs of slate interposed to prevent the access of rats and vermin to the grain stored within. The interior of the houses presented much the same features in every case. On entering the door a wooden partition

separated a platform raised about a foot from the ground, on which the family slept; a row of large bamboos full of water rest against the wall, and a broad fire-place, with an iron cooking-pan of Chinese manufacture, constitute the savage *batterie de cuisine*. There is a kind of reed which, when dried, is used as a means of illumination both indoors and out.

These people are said to have a certain form of religion, and we noticed a curious custom before drinking, of putting their forefinger into the cup and throwing a few drops to the ground, but I have not been long enough among them to observe much on this subject. They are said to preserve the heads of their enemies, the Chinese, in certain houses in the village set apart for that purpose. I did not, however, see any. The place was remarkably clean and [p. 517] sweet, and, with the exception of the presence of the inevitable pig, bore strong contrast to a Chinese village of the same dimensions. The people are good-natured enough, although we were only two Europeans (myself and Dr. Krauel, German Consul at Amoy), our Chinese being too frightened to accompany us. From certain proposals which were made to us, it would appear that the social condition of the savages of Formosa is not encumbered with those prejudices regarding the moral obligations of married life which belong to some European nations.

One cannot fail to feel interested in these people, whose manners and appearance are so prepossessing; and it is distressing to contemplate that in the course of a few years they may probably be extinct. It is possible that, under different circumstances, these people might become as useful members of society as some of the African races I have seen, of whom these people in some particulars strangely remind me. The antipathy to the Chinese is so strong that warfare between them is constant; and the savage who fell into their hands, from the playful girl with laughing eyes, or boy who carries his light spear so gracefully, to the old man, would assuredly be decapitated if once in their power; and while this policy is pursued towards them the race cannot but yield to so numerous an enemy.

From the appearance of the slate at Kao Siah, I judge that if properly cut it would make capital building material, and the conveyance would not be very difficult, as country roads exist to the foot of the hills by which buffalo-carts bring down sugar-cane, and the rivers from some points would be available for boat navigation.

As to the bearing of travellers among savage people, there is little doubt that a free and even jocular manner is the safest, if we wish to disarm suspicion, always strong in the wild man. Regarding the carriage of water, I should think anything preferable to skin; the Formosa savages sometimes use bladders for this purpose, of which I had very disagreeable experience in the flavour of the water. Nothing, however, could be better than the large bamboo, as the slight evaporation through the pores would tend to keep the water cool.