

Living under Nature's Wing

Are you feeling adventurous? Then spread your wings and travel 90 km southeast of Taiwan, where you'll discover a part of the country unlike any other. Known as Lanyu or Orchid Island, this tiny drop of earth in the Pacific is home to the Tao, Taiwan's only ocean-dependent indigenous tribe. The Tao people are the people of the "alibangbang," or flying fish, one of Mother Nature's greatest gifts. The annual flying fish season is at the heart of Tao culture and comes with many traditions and taboos.

你渴望冒險嗎？那麼展開你的翅膀，往臺灣東南方飛行九十公里，在那裡你會發現不像這國家其他地方的一片土地。被稱為蘭嶼或蘭花之島，這個太平洋小島是達悟族的家鄉——臺灣唯一以海洋為生的原住民部落。達悟族是「阿里棒棒」民族，也就是飛魚民族，而飛魚是大自然最偉大的恩賜之一。一年一度的飛魚季是達悟族文化的核心，也伴隨著許多傳統和禁忌。

Spanning around eight months of the year, the flying fish season involves multiple customs and rituals. A special religious ceremony, usually held in February, marks the beginning of this important period and ensures a prosperous and plentiful season. Tao boat captains head to the beach with elaborate costumes on. There, they pray and make sacrifices to appeal to the flying fish spirits to bless their tribe, and to the gods for good fortune and courage on the dangerous seas.

飛魚季每年持續約八個月，包含多種多樣的習俗和儀式。有一場特別的宗教祭典通常在二月舉行，標誌著這個重要時期的開端，並確保能有豐收多產的一季。達悟族的船長們穿著精心製作的服裝走向海灘。在那裡，他們祈禱並獻上祭品，以懇求飛魚神靈保佑他們的部落，並且向神明祈求在危險的海上賜予好運及勇氣。

Although local fishers can catch flying fish between March and June, they are restricted to capturing only those found in shallow waters. During this period, netting any deep-sea or coral reef fish is not permitted. If the fishers didn't follow this rule, various species would not have the time needed to recover their numbers, and harmony with nature would be lost.

雖然當地的漁民們可以在三月及六月之間捕捉飛魚，但他們被限制只能捕捉那些在淺水區的飛魚。在這段期間，撒網捕捉任何深海或是珊瑚礁魚群是不被允許的。如果漁民們不遵守這項規定，各類魚種就沒有所需的時間來恢復牠們的數量，與大自然間的和諧融洽也將消失。

At the end of June, the annual sea harvest concludes with another ceremony to express gratitude and respect for nature's endless cycles. After the ceremony, flying fish can no longer be caught. Therefore, from July onward, only dried and stored alibangbang can be eaten. Furthermore, after the Mid-Autumn Festival, even these dried fish must no longer be consumed. This custom seems to be engraved in the locals' hearts and is believed to prevent ill luck and guarantee abundance in seasons to come.

到了六月底，一年一度的漁獲季節會以另外一場祭典作為結束，以表達對於大自然無止境循環的感激與尊敬。祭典結束後，就不能再捕捉飛魚了。因此，從七月起，只能吃風乾儲存的阿里棒棒。此外，中秋節過後，甚至連這些風乾的飛魚都不可以再食用了。這個習俗似乎深植在當地人們的心中且據信能避免厄運並保證在未來的飛魚季裡也能豐收。

Just as the locals are concluding their scaly harvest for the year, scores of tourists begin arriving on Lanyu for the summer season. To make sure you don't feel like a fish out of water, here are some basic guidelines to help you enjoy your stay while respecting local traditions. First, it is considered a taboo to touch or photograph the Tao fishing boats without permission since it would bring bad luck. Also, you should never enter locals' private gardens uninvited to view or sample drying fish. Additionally, avoid asking about future fishing trips, as locals believe that the gods may be angered and that the harvest may be spoiled as a consequence. Finally, as a sign of respect for the local community and environment, don't snorkel or dive in the island's traditional fishing waters during the flying fish season. Such activities can disturb the local ecosystem.

就在當地人要結束他們一年多鱗的豐收時，大量的觀光客在夏季開始抵達蘭嶼。為了確保你在陌生環境中不會覺得不得其所，這裡有一些基本的準則，幫助你享受在那小住同時，又能尊重當地傳統。首先，未經允許就觸摸或拍攝達悟族漁船，被視為一大禁忌，因為這可能會帶來厄運。而且，你也絕不應該未經邀請就進入當地居民私人的院子，去觀看或是品嚐魚乾。此外，避免詢問關於將來捕魚的行程，因為當地人相信神靈可能會被觸怒，而且會因此破壞了漁獲量。最後，作為尊重當地社群及環境的表現，在飛魚季節期間，不要在小島傳統的捕魚水域浮潛或潛水。這樣的活動可能會干擾當地的生態系統。

The customs and taboos mentioned above reflect the importance of preserving and cherishing natural resources and local culture. The ancient wisdom of Lanyu's Tao inhabitants thus appears to have given us much to learn about living in harmony with this planet. Everyone is, after all, in the same boat under nature's wing.

上述的習俗和禁忌反映出保存及珍惜天然資源和當地文化的重要性。蘭嶼達悟族居民的古老智慧因此似乎給了我們很多關於與這顆星球和睦相處的學習機會。畢竟，每一個人在大自然庇護之下，也都處在同一條船上。