



But do orchids at least grow on Orchid Island? Indeed they do, in great profusion. The delicate flowers grow wild in soft shades of purple, yellow, and white, but are seldom marketed because of the scarcity of transportation. The other colorful wild life are exotic butterflies which are collected by the Yamis, pressed into frames, and sold to souvenir shops in Taipei and other Taiwan towns.

But Taiwan's Tourism Council is interested in more than the lepidopteran souvenirs from this green-carpeted island. Notched by calm lagoons where natives sail on azure waters of the tropic seas, Orchid Island will make a fine tourist attraction, the Council believes. Already they are looking around for someone to put up the first hotel there.

Pioneering travelers who make the trip now fly to the island by small chartered aircraft in an hour from Taipei or 25 minutes from Hualien, Taiwan's largest east coast port. Twice a month a postal boat from Hualien takes on passengers for an overnight trip, which costs about five dollars.

The Yami natives have regained their friendliness and hospitality toward visitors after a traumatic encounter many years ago which soured them on strangers for a long time. In the summer of 1903, an American merchant vessel, the *Benjamin Seal*, en route to Shanghai, was battered by a typhoon, forcing the crew to abandon ship. A lifeboat with five survivors made it to shore, but when the seamen saw the Yamis approaching, carrying

spears and knives, the frightened sailors took to the hills. The puzzled Yamis, bearing gifts of food and flowers, followed the Americans, wondering why their "guests" should run and hide from them in a hillside cave. The Yami welcoming committee persisted in trying to bestow their presents on the terrified seamen, who finally opened fire, killing several Yamis. The stunned natives then attacked with a vengeance, using their home made weapons on the unfortunate sailors.

The incident became an international affair when the U.S. Government learned of it and demanded that the Japanese authorities in Formosa (as Taiwan was called then) take action. The Japanese dispatched a punitive force which killed a score of Yamis and burned down many houses. Subsequent Yami hostility to foreigners was not overcome until recent years with the establishment of Taiwanese control over the island.

Apart from hungering for tobacco, Yami men occupy themselves mainly with fishing. Their picturesque red and white canoes with sharply pointed twin prows trailing long nets are a familiar sight off the pebbled beaches. The tall, sturdy men are excellent skindivers and great gatherers of driftwood, which they use for building and repairing their thatch-roofed huts.

In this sub-tropic climate, the Yami men cling to the traditional attire of their ancestors. Besides the abbreviated G-string garments, they sometimes wear conical beehive hats and "Mae West" chest protectors, both woven out of tough vines to fend off accidental jabs from the long bamboo spears which are still used by most men as a tool of-all-work.

The Yami women busy themselves tending little patches of vegetables and fruits. On festival days they love to frolic in the communal tribal dancing. Their long black dresses and strings of beads fly fast and loose as they gyrate and sing in a convivial circle. Self-made ornaments—headbands, "dog collars," and medallions, worn over brightly-dyed boleros and striped skirts, make the ladies the envy of any trendy dressers who happen to reach these shores.

In physical appearance, the Yami people portray a mixture of Polynesian and Mongolian features. Bronze-skinned and

(Bottom) Thatched-roofed huts of a Yami village nestle against the slopes of the island's green hill.