

HAJICHI: ハジチ Okinawan Women's Tattooing Tradition

What is HAJICHI?

- Hajichi is a hand tattooing tradition practiced by Okinawan/Ryukyuan women that symbolized:

beauty

protection

spiritual guidance

growth & life events



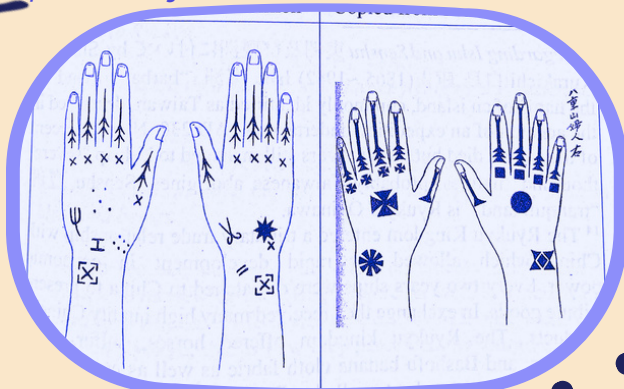
photo and hajichi from @hajichi_project instagram. Okinawa main island style hajichi designs



Image from "Okinawan Princess..." book

Did You Know?

- It was banned and oppressed by law after Okinawa was annexed by Japan and also discriminated against in Hawai'i.
- The tattooers were called *hajicha* (ハジチャー) and used bamboo sticks, ink, and awamori alcohol to create the hajichi.
- Hajichi patterns vary by design across, ages, villages, and especially islands.



Hajichi from Miyako islands and Yaeyama islands. Image from "Tattooing in Okinawa" Volume I

"Da Legend of Hajichi Tattoos"

- The "Okinawan Princess Da Legend of Hajichi Tattoos" book tells the story of a *kikoe-ogimi / noro*, powerful high priestess who was forcefully taken to the Japan mainland. To escape, she tattooed the backs of her hands knowing this would shock her captors, who freed and released her back to the Ryukyu kingdom.

Revival

- Even though hajichi practice faded due to the Japanese stigmatization of tattoos and colonization of Okinawa, today there is a revival of hajicha artists around the world. Now, hajichi can connect us to Uchinanchu identity and ancestors.