

# 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:

protection  
beauty

spiritual guidance

life events  
community

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

Image from "Okinawan Princess..." book

## Did You Know?

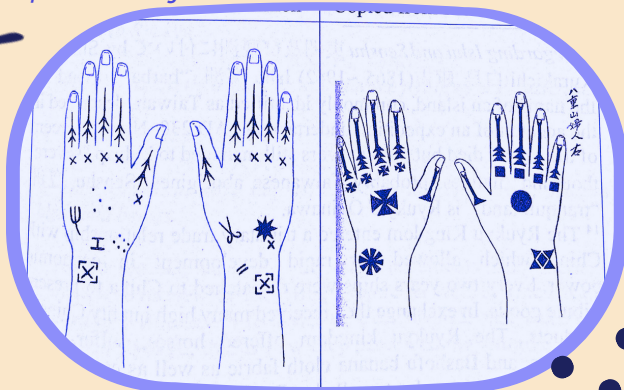
- Hajichi grew throughout a woman's life, with more added for events like having grandchildren
- It was banned and oppressed by law after Okinawa was annexed by Japan.
- The tattooers were called *hajicha* (ハジチャー) and used bamboo sticks, ink, and awamori alcohol to create the hajichi.
- Hajichi patterns vary by design across, ages, villages, and especially islands.

## "Da Legend of Hajichi Tattoos"

- The "Okinawan Princess Da Legend of Hajichi Tattoos" book tells one of the hajichi origin stories of a *kikoe-ogimi*, highest ranking chief 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.



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