

Textile Arts of Taquile Island, Peru

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Taquile is a small island in Lake Titicaca, on the Peruvian side, in the Andean *altiplano* (high plateau) at nearly 13,000 feet (3,815 meters), above sea level. This community's indigenous, Quechua-speaking inhabitants are renowned worldwide for their dramatically colored finely handwoven textiles and for their model of community-controlled tourism. Taquile is one of an ever-smaller number of Peruvian highland communities whose members both create and wear handwoven textiles as their daily dress as well as for special occasions such as festivals and marriage ceremonies. Taquilean dress and items of clothing that the islanders commercialized after 1968 have contributed to the extensive tourism to their community. Although by the end of the twentieth century, Taquileans had stopped making some of the garments they had commonly worn even in the 1980s and 1990s, in 2005 Taquile and its textile art were recognized by UNESCO as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. Several small museums have been established on the island, in which older textiles are sometimes exhibited.

BACKGROUND

Taquile is very small: only 3.5 by 1.4 miles (5.7 kilometers by 2.2 kilometers) in area. The closest large mainland city is Puno, Peru, about two-and-a-half hours away by motorboat. Taquile lies just above 16 degrees south of the equator and thus has tropical mountain ecology, with two seasons: wet and dry. During most of the year, days are warm and nights are cold. During the winter, June and July, the temperature contrast is greatest, and Taquileans, like other Andeans, take advantage of the extreme daily swings in temperature to freeze-dry food for preservation. Taquileans adapt to this distinctive climate by wearing layers of wool or, more recently, synthetic-fiber clothing. Like other native Andeans, Taquileans use headwear on a daily basis: women wear a distinctive long, dark-colored head shawl; men wear a knit cap or a hat. Headwear offers important protection against solar radiation, which is especially intense in tropical mountains due to altitude and latitude.

Taquileans are *runakuna*, or indigenous people. The island's population was estimated at nineteen hundred in the year 2000, an increase of four hundred since 1986. Rapid population growth during the past fifty years has occurred because of return migration and improved health and nutrition. The community is divided into two moieties, called "upper" (*Janaq*) and "lower" (*Uray*), as were communities in the Inka Empire. Taquile and its neighbor island, Amantaní, form the political district of Amantaní, in Puno province, region of Puno, on Peru's southeastern border

with Bolivia. Taquileans are almost completely endogamous (they marry within the group). The entire community shares nine surnames. The small island's rolling hills are heavily terraced, although only two-thirds of the land is arable. All Taquileans speak Quechua; a growing number speak Spanish, and a few know Aymara, the second-most-widely spoken highland Andean indigenous language, which is spoken in communities south of Taquile and in much of Bolivia. They are peasant farmers, growing primarily potatoes and other tubers, corn, and some vegetables, and raising sheep, chickens, and cattle. They fish from the lake, but since the 1990s, fishing stock has declined. Taquileans recently introduced a few alpacas onto the island so that tourists can photograph the animals, but the island is too small to support herds of llamas or alpacas. The island does not have potable water or sewerage, and



Petrona Huatta, preparing to dance for the first time as a young woman, 1976. She wears a white hat that is part of a costume for the festival of Saint James (Santiago), Taquile's patron saint. Her hat (*sombrero*) is adorned with a narrow band that holds dyed feathers. She also wears a head shawl (*chuku*), white shirt (*almilla*), wide belt (*chumpi*) over an underbelt (*tayka wak'a*), black overskirt (*aqsu*), and an industrially made shawl (*lliklla*). Factory-made shawls, purchased with then-scarce cash, were unusual in Taquile Island at the time. Photograph by Elayne Zorn.

has almost no electricity, and community members are very poor, although as a result of tourism and sales of textiles, they are better off than most people in neighboring communities.

Apart from occasional sales or trades to people in mainland Puno, before 1968 Taquileans very rarely sold their finely made textiles. They began to sell that year through a U.S. Peace Corps–inspired cooperative. When the cooperative collapsed a few years later, Taquilean men learned to market textiles not only in Peruvian cities but also abroad through contacts with foreigners in Peru. Tourism to the community started in 1976, following publication of a notice about Taquile in a popular tourist guidebook. Tourists were attracted in part by textiles, and Taquileans used the money they earned from selling textiles to finance community tourism projects, which have since become well known. For a decade, until the 1980s, Taquileans controlled nearly all aspects of tourism to and from their island. After that, although tourism expanded enormously, from a few dozen people to more than forty thousand visitors a year, Taquileans lost control of transportation to outsiders, and income from tourism declined. Today, most of the income from tourism comes from restaurants owned by Taquileans and from textile sales, and tourism has changed from stays of several days by backpackers to day trips by large groups.

While Taquileans have recently stopped making and wearing some garments, especially the voluminous and exceptionally time-consuming multi-yard overskirt (*aqsu*), and expanded their use of industrially spun wool or synthetic yarn, female weavers have been weaving increasingly elaborate warp-patterned-weave belts and coca-leaf purses. The belts and purses that Taquileans make for their own use contain many wide warp-patterned-weave bands full of complex design motifs.

DAILY DRESS

Taquilean dress, in white, red, and black, is spectacular against the brilliant blue sky over Lake Titicaca and the nearly treeless brown and green Andean high plateau. Taquilean dress conserves many Spanish peasant-style garments, especially the men's pleated shirt, vest, and pants, and women's full, pleated skirt (*pollera*), which people combine with Andean-type garments, including belts and coca-leaf purses. Textile production is the next most important activity after farming and tourism. All Taquileans, from the time they are very young children, make textiles. Andeans divide textiles into two categories: household or utility items, and clothing. Utility textiles include blankets, storage sacks, rope, slings, food- and coca-leaf carrying cloths, baskets, and, formerly, fish traps. Clothing includes Andean-type textiles of pre-Hispanic origin and Spanish-derived garments. Taquileans follow a strong gendered division of labor in cloth production: women make some textiles; men make others. No Taquilean makes all the garments needed for daily dress, so all wear textiles made by people of both sexes, either by the wearer or close family members. Some items, such as rubber-tire sandals or, sometimes, inexpensive earrings or rings, are made outside the community.

Since at least the mid-twentieth century, Taquilean men have worn items of cosmopolitan dress, particularly when traveling off the island, and, to a lesser extent, when relaxing at home or doing farm labor. Women and girls began more recently to wear cosmopolitan dress. Taquileans wear this style of dress because they want to wear it or because they hope that by doing so they will reduce the discrimination that is directed against indigenous

people, who are identified in part by their clothing. Because ethnic and racial identities are cultural, not biological, changing dress signifies changing these aspects of identity, albeit temporarily. Taquileans are relatively unusual in early-twenty-first-century Peru, in that they still wear traditional dress most of the time, although sometimes they do so because tourists expect them to dress “traditionally,” which some Taquileans find wearying. Young men in particular sometimes rebel quietly against constantly being the subject of the tourist gaze, by wearing cosmopolitan dress when going to Taquile's central urban square.

There is little seasonal variation in Taquileans' daily layered dress, except for the main color of belts. Taquileans wear their finest and newest clothing at festivals or ceremonial occasions, along with certain special garments. Taquilean female dress, with its many layers, gives girls and women the form of red-and-black triangles; the head forms the apex, as the navy blue or black head shawl (*chuku*) drapes over multiple skirts (*polleras*) with contrasting edge bindings. When worn, the elegant all-black *lliklla* (shawl or mantle) accentuates this impression, even as it covers the woman's shirt (*almilla*), which is white if she is unmarried or red if she is married. The woman's voluminous black overskirt (*aqsu*), no longer worn by the end of the twentieth century, accentuated her dramatic black silhouette. Male Taquileans appear as rectangles of alternating light and dark; their short navy blue or black daily vest (*chaleco*) contrasts with their white Spanish-peasant-style shirt (*almilla*), echoing their black wool pants (*pan-talón*), accented by knit cap (*ch'ullu*), wide red belt (*chumpi*), white scarf (*chalina blanca*, sometimes wrapped around the waist), and a red coca-leaf purse (*ch'uspa*).

Taquilean males weave yardage (*bayeta*) on a European-type treadle loom (*telar awana*); they cut and sew bayeta into Spanish-derived garments—shirts, vests, inner and outer pants, skirts, and headshaws. Men also knit caps (*ch'ullus*) of various types, change purses (*monederos*), and the front panel of the recently created “musician's vest” (*chaleco músico*). Knitting is one of the very few techniques that was not known to pre-Hispanic Andeans; today, the gender of knitters varies by community: women on Amantaní, men on Taquile. Taquilean girls and women weave the finest textiles on the Andean staked-out ground loom (*pampa awana*). These include Taquile's renowned Andean-type *chumpi* (belt), *ch'uspa* (coca-leaf purse), *lliklla* (mantle), and colonial-type poncho, as well as utilitarian blankets (*frazada*, or the black and white striped *chusi*) and carrying cloths: the *istalla* for carrying coca leaf and the *unkhuña* for carrying food. Taquilean females weave many of them—belt, coca-leaf purse, carrying cloths, and the special wedding shawl (*puka lliklla*)—using warp-patterned weaves (*pallay*) to create designs. Their preferred weave structure is a complementary warp weave with three-span floats aligned in alternate pairs with an irregular warping order (3/1 horizontal color changes and diagonals of two-span floats); they also use a float weave, derived from turned 2/1 herringbone, with floats forming squares. In the mid-1980s, Taquileans first learned to weave warp-faced double cloth.

Since the Colonial period, when Spaniards brought the first sheep to the Andes, Taquileans have made most of their clothes from sheep wool, primarily from their own herds. Wool is warm and thick, but somewhat scratchy; white wool is relatively easily dyed. The factory-spun wool or synthetic yarns that Taquileans increasingly have bought since the 1980s makes clothing that is lighter in weight and more easily washed, but less durable. Alpaca



Natividad Machaca and Francisco Huatta pose for a photograph, 2002. She wears a headshawl (*chuku*), industrially made sweater, and woven skirts (*polleras*). She did not wear a belt while at home. He wears a multicolored cap (*ch'ullu*), everyday-style short vest (*chaleco*), wide belt (*chumpi*) over an underbelt (*tayka wak'a*), black pants (*pantalón*), and rubber-tire sandals (*ujutas*). He wears the medal Peru awarded him in 1996 as Grand Master of Peruvian Crafts, and he holds sections of a musician's vest (*chaleco músico*) he was sewing. Their textiles are typical of Taquile Island, Peru. Photograph by Elayne Zorn.

fiber was probably always a luxury on a tiny island with limited pasture land, yet it is preferred in warp-patterned weaves for its brilliant and lustrous white. Alpaca fiber, obtained through trade with off-island herders, probably was more available in the past, despite Taquile's isolation as an island, before the collapse of the Andean agro-pastoral system at the end of the twentieth century.

Taquilean female clothing consists of a long, woven plain weave black or navy-blue headshawl (*chuku*) made from handwoven yardage (*bayeta*), decorated with a narrow, variegated crocheted edging and large multicolored tassels (*t'ika*); a long-sleeved shirt (*almilla*) of handwoven cloth or a factory-made sweater; and several woven wool or synthetic-fiber pleated knee-length skirts (*polleras*), worn in layers. Each skirt has an attached, woven waistband (*cintura*). The outermost skirt often is black, although by the late twentieth century even those of older women were sometimes brightly colored. Taquilean females often tuck the front of the outermost skirt into the waistband, making a convenient pouch that also reveals the contrasting color of the next skirt. Dressing up for festivals or ceremonial occasions such as weddings entails wearing many skirts: Twelve is the ideal number (although heavy and uncomfortable).

Women, as well as men, wear a finely woven, wide, predominantly red belt (*chumpi*) when out in public, and always at festivals. Belts vary by the individual, but not by gender. The elaborately warp-patterned belt is Taquile's most distinctive item of dress, although women and girls often leave it off when at home. For Taquilean wear (but rarely for sale), the belt is sewn to a heavy, stiff black and white striped warp-wrapped underbelt (*mama chumpi* in Quechua or *tayka wak'a* in Aymara); the underbelt allows the woven belt to lie flat and supports the wearer's back during heavy agricultural labor. Until the 1980s, Taquilean females usually went barefoot, even in the winter, but by the end of the twentieth century, they had started wearing commercially made rubber-tire sandals (*ujutas*), like those worn by male Taquileans.

When wearing the shawl, girls and women usually tuck one front corner into the wide belt; this helps keep the shawl neat and evenly balanced. Learning to wear the head shawl takes years because it threatens constantly to fall off and requires periodic adjustment. Young men and women often close the *almilla* (shirt) with one or more shawl pins, which are decorated with strands of fine, multicolored beads or adorned with coins, which make a pleasant tinkling sound. Although men continue to wear the handwoven *almilla*, many female Taquileans prefer lighter-weight industrially manufactured red sweaters to the heavier, hot, handwoven shirts.

Women carry coca leaves in a small, predominantly white, square woven cloth (*istalla*) and cooked food in a larger, square woven cloth (*unkhuña*). Females use the *lliklla* (mantle or shawl) to carry items such as a baby, groceries, or other cloths. To wear the mantle, they fold up two opposite sides over the burden, place the mantle on their back, and knot the remaining two opposite corners across the chest, sometimes securing the knot with a shawl pin.

Until the latter part of the twentieth century, Taquilean girls and women wore their hair long and braided into approximately forty tiny braids, which were sewn together at shoulder height with a red thread. Men also wore this style until approximately the 1940s. The braided hair, when sewn together, resembled the woman's shawl and one type of man's poncho, which are black except for fine red lines at the two side borders. Similar hairstyles of tiny multiple braids appear in the Peruvian archaeological record dating back more than a millennium. Starting in the 1980s, Taquilean females began to wear their hair in the general Andean highland style of two thick braids, and by the twenty-first century, few women wore the older, multibraid hairstyle.

Taquilean male clothing consists of a knit cap (*ch'ullu*), the color and design of which ideally vary according to the wearer's age and social status; a woven white long-sleeved shirt (*almilla*) finely pleated at the shoulder and cuffs; a navy blue or black and white woven short vest (*chaleco*); woven long white inner pants (*calzoncillo*); and woven long black pants (*pantalón*). Unless they are doing heavy work such as construction or loom weaving, men usually do not wear the belt and underbelt around the house. During the latter part of the twentieth century and the early twenty-first century, unmarried men wore a finely-knit cap (*ch'ullu soltero*) with a colored base and white top, without earflaps. Married men, especially those who had completed community service, wore a red and navy blue striped knit cap (*pintay ch'ullu*), filled with design motifs along its length. Some men wore a *ch'ullu oreja* (also called *nimri ch'ullu*), an Aymara- or Lake Titicaca-style knit cap that has earflaps, which usually includes numerous multicolored rainbow-like rows.



Wide belt (*chumpi*) woven by María Huatta, 2007. The belt is Taquile's best-known item of dress. Female Taquileans weave belts, which are worn by men, women, and children. Women and men usually sew the woven belt to a stiff, warp-wrapped underbelt (*tayka wak'a*), which keeps the belt flat and supports the back. Belts are usually worn with the dark side of the central band (upper right) facing outward. Since the 1980s, weavers have invented new images (*pallay*) and have increased the complexity and density of images in the belt's central stripe. Photograph by Elayne Zorn.

To be considered well-dressed outside the home, men wear a vest, cap, and belt. They usually carry a coca-leaf purse, which often is edged with a braided or tubular edge binding (*awakipasqa*) and decorated with large, multicolored tassels. For wear, its top is folded over and the long tie that serves as a shoulder strap is looped and knotted around the waist. During festivals, however, several purses are worn dangling from the shoulder across the chest. Into the 1980s, Taquilean men wore a long white fringed shawl (*chalina blanca*), either folded across the shoulders so that both ends draped down the back, or wound around the waist instead of or atop the belt and underbelt. By the end of the twentieth century, Taquilean men rarely wore the *chalina* across their shoulders, but even in the early twenty-first century they sometimes use it when working to provide back support. Men carry food in a carrying cloth or a second cap, caught in the belt or scarf at the waist. Men wear rubber-tire sandals, sneakers, or shoes, rarely going barefoot. Ponchos are less frequently worn in Taquile than in other Andean highland communities, even though nights are frigid. The daily poncho is gray with a group of narrow, colored stripes on each side. Ponchos are edged with a tubular edge binding. When worn at festivals, they are folded lengthwise over one shoulder or draped over both shoulders. Ponchos often are seamed closed and used to carry heavy burdens. Men wear their hair cut short and may wear a watch.

Infants and small children also wear distinctive dress. Babies are wrapped in soft wool or synthetic-fiber fabric, and for most of the day and night they are swaddled tightly with a very long belt, which creates a snug little package. Infants and toddlers of both sexes are dressed in shirts with little skirts (*phalitilla*), usually tied with a narrow belt. Before small children are given their first set of miniature adult dress at the first haircutting ceremony

(*rutuchiy*), at age two or three, they wear a special knitted cap (*ch'ullu*) that has a pleated brim and a long back. The pleated area, which is known as *incas*, has colorful designs similar to those on men's caps; the plain back is white for boys and light brown (called *vicuña*-colored) for girls.

EARLY DRESS

Documentation of pre-twentieth-century dress styles and old textiles does not exist or has not yet been located. According to some elderly Taquileans that Elayne Zorn interviewed in the 1970s, around 1925–1930 Taquilean women wore a woven black or brown garment (similar to today's woven black mantle) over a woven shirt. The top was folded over the shoulders and fastened at both shoulders, Inka-style, with *tupus*, decorative, often spoon-shaped, straight pins. Women wore an overskirt (*aqsu*) that reached below the knees, which may possibly have been attached to the top garment. These garments are similar to others worn in the early twentieth century by people in communities around Lake Titicaca in both Peru and Bolivia. The woman's mantle was described as resembling one used in the late twentieth century on Amantani: black with several wide purple or navy-blue stripes. Such a shawl was observed on a few elderly Taquilean women in the 1980s during the Easter festival.

During the late 1920s as well, Taquilean men wore short calf-length pants woven of white twill fabric; they did not wear a short vest. Men wore a *t'ika ch'ullu*, a cap with earflaps that had a large, star-like design on each flap. A few men knitted that type of cap in the 1980s. Men, like women, formerly wore their hair in multiple long braids. According to Taquileans, in the mid-1940s, nonindigenous Peruvian schoolteachers working on the island



While dressing to attend a festival, Alejandrina Huatta contemplates handwoven, pleated skirts (*polleras*), to decide the order in which she will layer additional skirts over the many she already wears. The top layer will be a black alpaca overskirt (*aqsu*); she will also wear a wide belt (*chumpi*) over an inner belt (*tayka wak'a*), head shawl (*chuku*), and a shawl (*Iliklla*) over her white shirt (*almilla*). Her father or another male relative wove the fabric for the skirts, typical of Taquile Island, Peru, 1976. Photograph by Elayne Zorn.

urged Taquilean men to give up their multibraided hairstyle and to cut their hair short, either for improved hygiene during a cholera epidemic or because the teachers thought that long hair made the men look feminine and wanted them to look more masculine. Many families preserved the long, braided hair, which they sewed into wigs; today Taquilean men wear them in several festivals, including those for Candlemas (Candelaria, 2 February), Holy Cross (Santa Cruz, 3 May), and the island's patron Saint James (Santiago, 25 July).

Several Taquileans reported in the 1970s that around the turn of the twentieth century, their ancestors wore a tunic, which one person called an *unku* (tunic in Quechua, the typical Inka man's garment). The design of the *unku* was said to resemble that of the contemporary Taquilean marriage poncho, which has a plain-weave gray background and many wide white, red, and navy blue stripes. The tunic reached the knees and was worn over short, knee-length white pants. In 2002, one of Taquile's site museums exhibited a poncho that was quite different from contemporary ponchos: larger, more finely woven, and with colored, plain-weave stripes across its length; it is not possible to determine if it represented an idiosyncratic variation or an earlier style. According to some Taquileans, around the turn of the twentieth century, women also wore an ankle-length tunic, likewise called *unku*.

During the 1970s, Taquileans sold several small, extremely finely woven women's small shoulder mantles (*phullus*), having several plain-weave stripes and many narrow warp-patterned stripes. These were similar to *phullus* worn in the Lake Titicaca region, which usually are dated to the nineteenth century or earlier. Although it appears that no tunics have been preserved in Taquilean or other museums, a few other textiles have been preserved in Taquilean homes or in the public or private museums that Taquileans created during the late twentieth century. As occurred in other Andean communities, many or most of Taquile's antique textiles probably were sold to private buyers.

SPECIAL DRESS

In addition to marking gender, marital status, and political office, a few items of dress mark special activities. For example, ritual specialists formerly used a light brown (vicuña-colored) coca-leaf purse. Taquileans wear special dress at annual festivals and for ceremonies. For festivals, dancers and musicians wear costumes, while others wear their best daily dress, which ideally includes newly woven belts. For a teenage or adult female, a wide belt, many skirts, and a finely woven black mantle are marks of dressing well, as was the overskirt when it was worn. The well-dressed

male wears a finely woven and carefully pleated white shirt, a dark-colored vest, dark pants, a finely knit cap, a wide belt, a coca-leaf purse, and a white scarf (sometimes worn over the belt). Men also wear a gray poncho; at some festivals, they wear a finely woven black alpaca poncho with two narrow red stripes (similar to the woman's mantle), and with a fringe that has been woven separately and then sewn to the poncho.

In part, the expectation that new belts should be woven for each festival arose because particular tones of red—coral, dark, blood, burgundy—are associated with particular festivals. This ideal is not often achieved, especially when a woman has to create new belts for herself, her husband, and any adult unmarried son. However, most women manage to meet this expectation for the festival of Candlemas, which starts the annual festival cycle, and the patronal festival of Saint James, the eighth day of which ends the cycle.

Taquilean authorities (*jilaqatas*), all of whom are male except for women elected to a few specific committees, wear special dress that marks their status: a woven black long-sleeved jacket with buttons, and a black felt hat. The jacket often is embroidered along the front edges. In public, officials carry at least one large coca-leaf purse (for distributing leaves to each other and community members). In procession, they wear a folded gray poncho draped over the left shoulder; atop this they lay a folded, narrow woven red scarf (*puka chalina*). Male authorities use either the colored knit cap (*pintay ch'ullu*) or the Aymara-style rainbow cap. A traditional authority also carries a staff of office (*vara*) of wood and metal.

Special costumes are worn for each of Taquile's annual festivals, and some festival sponsors also rent costumes from the

mainland. Adult women wear a stiff peaked hat (*montera*) at the Saint James festival (25 July). Men wear a short red and white vest, a large red patterned scarf across the back, a coca-leaf purse dangling from the neck, and wigs of long braids for the Festival of the Holy Cross (3 May) when they perform as Sikuris, panpipe musicians.

For the festival of Pentecost (May or June), female dancers wear a stiff white hat adorned with multicolored feathers and ribbons. A set of feathers lies flat around the brim, and bunches of feathers stand up in the center of the hat; long ribbons flow down the back. Women wear a black jacket embroidered at the seams and cuffs (similar to jackets worn daily by Aymara women in Peruvian communities on the southern shore of Lake Titicaca). They adorn the jacket with stiff pleated multicolored fabric panels: one lying flat at the front of the neck, and two standing up on each upper arm just below the shoulders. They attach large red scarves at the waist and wear a large coca-leaf purse (usually worn by men) dangling from the neck. At Carnival, women wear pastel-colored skirts and a red shawl (*puka lliklla*). Men wear multiple scarves, criss-crossed, and a half dozen or dozen coca-leaf purses. Female dancers wear a stiff white hat, decorated with a red bandanna, and use the red shawl, supporting the overwhelming impression of red. Each male and female dancer carries a long, multicolored dance tassel (*wichi wichi*), looped around one wrist.

For a wedding ceremony, the groom is presented with a special wedding poncho, which is woven with many colored stripes and has a multicolored separately woven fringe. The groom wears a stiff white hat over a red knit cap (*pintay ch'ullu*). The bride wears



Taquilean male musicians play flutes (*pinkillus*) in the festival of Saint James (Santiago), patron saint of Taquile Island, Peru, 1976. The musicians wear a red vest instead of the usual black vest (*chaleco*). Over multicolored caps (*ch'ullus*), men wear hats made of a basketry frame, to which are attached long woven ribbons that hang down the back, dyed feathers, and a curtain of strands of multicolored beads that covers the face. Some add a mirror or gold braid to the hat. Photograph by Elayne Zorn.

a red warp-patterned mantle (puka lliklla), which is folded then draped over the back (rather than used for carrying). A second red mantle is pinned to the front of the shirt, covering the belt. The bride wears a stiff black flat hat adorned with multicolored tassels, or a higher-brimmed white hat similar to the groom's. Her female relatives also wear red mantles instead of the usual black ones.

Periodically, the Taquile community has passed regulations that oblige islanders to wear "traditional" dress when going to the island's urban center, though this "rule" is not always observed.

RECENT CHANGES IN DRESS

All traditions change, so it is not surprising that Taquilean dress has changed in the past decades. The desire of tourists to see Taquileans look like the photographs that advertise tours may have contributed to a "freezing" of Taquilean dress to conform to tourist expectations. Starting in the 1970s, Taquileans increasingly purchased factory-spun wool or synthetic-fiber yarn and less often spun fleece into yarn; this became a common practice in Andean communities in Peru and Bolivia. Such purchases responded to the decreased availability of fleece, the poor quality of dyes, the desire to reduce the time devoted to spinning and plying yarns (the most time-consuming phase in textile production), and increased access to cash. With the time saved, Taquileans increased textile production in the hope of selling garments to tourists. Taquileans also began to differentiate the quality of textile production; many who made lower-quality textiles for sale to tourists nevertheless continued to create and wear extremely finely woven textiles. There are several cooperative stores that cater to tourists; these stores are usually stuffed with textiles of varying quality, suggesting that production has greatly exceeded demand.

Taquileans have invented or modified items of dress intended for sale and sometimes have adopted the new versions for their own use. They developed a long vest that combined knit panels with handwoven fabric (bayeta), which they call the "musician's vest" (chaleco músico); once tourists became familiar with it, Taquilean men began to wear it for some festivals because tourists expected to see it in use. Taquileans have experimented with belts by varying their width and background color, although red remains the predominant color. While Taquileans have stopped weaving and wearing the woman's overskirt, and fewer wear the man's shawl, smaller textiles—in particular, the wide belt—have become more elaborate. During the 1980s, Taquilean women learned a new weave structure, warp-faced double-cloth, which they used to create new design motifs that were more representational and naturalistic than could be woven with the formerly preferred complementary-warp weave.

In the early twenty-first century, women have woven increasingly elaborate belts with very wide patterned stripes, which were intended for personal and family use but sometimes were sold after they had been worn. Taquilean warp-patterned textiles are characterized by bands of patterned stripes that alternate with plain stripes, with each patterned band alternating with one or more plain bands. Each textile includes several such wide, plain bands in the textile's predominant color, typically red. Each wide plain-weave area is called a *pampa* (field). Some belts and coca-leaf purses woven in the early twenty-first century, however, had several narrow plain-weave stripes in the *pampa*, which made a

startling change in the usual spatial organization; the wide space was now broken up by many colored stripes.

During the early 1980s, at least two groups of Taquilean women and men (one couple, and members of a folklore association) worked together to create what they called a calendar belt (*chumpi calendario* or *faja calendario*). This calendar belt is related to some older belts but differs from them in one main way: the designers changed the usual repetitive structure of design motifs in the central band into one with twelve distinct symbols, which represent the twelve months in the Gregorian calendar. At several points in time, Taquilean men sold a written text along with the calendar belt; this text may have been the first commentary on Andean textiles written by native Andeans. Runa have had very high levels of illiteracy and, until very recently, few have authored publications about their culture, so this text is very unusual. Taquilean women weave the calendar belt using either the traditional complementary-warp weave structure or the more recently learned warp-faced double-weave.

In 2005, UNESCO named "Taquile and Its Textile Art" a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. In 2007, Peru's National Institute of Culture (Instituto Nacional de Cultura), with Japanese government financing, began a project to strengthen the transmission of traditional textile knowledge. The project sent a field-worker to Taquile to inventory textiles and planned the subsequent development of workshops, documentaries, and educational materials. Taquileans hope that this recognition will increase tourism, sales of textiles, and opportunities to obtain good-quality fleece and other raw materials, all of which will help them continue to weave some of the finest textiles made in twenty-first-century Peru.

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See also Southern Highland Peru; Choquecancha, Peru; Snapshot: Aymara Women's Dress of La Paz, Bolivia; Cloth of the Sakaka of Bolivia; South American Headwear.