

Coping with Marginality:
The Bunun in Contemporary Taiwan

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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with how the Bunun, an Austronesian speaking indigenous people of Taiwan, deal with changing historical conditions brought about mainly, but not solely, by colonialism. I explore how the Bunun engage and negotiate with the state, the Han-Chinese and Christianity; how a colonised people like the Bunun sustain an active role in their relationships with powerful others; and how they ‘cope’ with — read, endure, work through, break apart and transcend — the predicaments of marginality. I do not approach these questions by reconstructing a bounded Bunun tradition, and see how this tradition is influenced and transformed by the impact of external forces. Instead, I examine the subtle and complex ways in which the past, the state, and the Bunun culture itself are constructed in the present. I also criticize the romanticized notion of resistance which has dominated the studies of marginality, and the implicit assumption that we can only find the agency of the colonized under the rubric of resistance. Rather, I explore the various possible ways in which the Bunun can create ‘agentive moments’, a shift in the sense of oneself being acted upon by the world to a subject acting upon the world, for themselves. In attempting to understand how the Bunun can play an active role in making and transforming the world in which they live, I do not forget that their effort may fail and at times they experience themselves as powerless, displaced and lost. To exclude or erase such experiences is to adopt an anodyne view of history which denies the violent and destructive aspects of colonialism. The studies of death and the decline of spirit mediumship demonstrate vividly how the Bunun cope with the loss of life and power, and how such experiences contribute to the ways in which they understand and comment on their own existence at a particular historical moment. By taking into serious account the sense of powerlessness, loss, and displacement, I aim to convey the affective qualities of the Bunun’s living experience which give the sense of a period, that is, what Raymond Williams (1977) calls ‘structures of feeling’. I suggest that ‘structures of feeling’ are powerful expressions and evocations of how the Bunun experience the history of their colonisation, which give shape to local historical consciousness.

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Contents

Abstract	1
Acknowledgements	2
List of illustrations	7
Glossary	8
Introduction	10
Previous studies of the Bunun	11
Confronting the present: marginality, empowerment and experience	15
Fieldwork and locations	18
When Anthropology is at home	23
Preview of the thesis	24
1. The Bunun in Historical and Contemporary Contexts	27
People of the mountain: mobility, fluidity and autonomy	27
How do the Bunun became a marginal minority? colonialism and assimilation	34
Contemporary contexts	40
Summary	43
2. Dealing with government officials and imagining the state	45
The government as the agency of 'progress' and change	47
Identity card : paper person and citizenship	54
Dealing with government officials and imagining the state	56
<i>Saspinal</i> and political leadership	63
Compliance, <i>saspinal</i> and mediating the relationship with the state	66
Elections: rituals of unity and division	70
The symbolism of money and the changing political imaginations	73
Conclusion	75
3. Engaging with the present by remembering the past	77
The multiplicity of historical narratives	79
The fight for Lamatasinsin	82
Lamatasinsin Memorial Park and the official narrative	84
The 'root-searching' project	87
A journey to the past	90
<i>Mapulaun</i> : the celebration	100
How the past is remembered and represented	102

The making of <i>mamangan</i> and the gender of history	105
The past as an authentic tradition	108
Into the future: the problem of historical agency and forgetting	110
4. Popular cultural performances and the recreation of tradition	122
From ‘superstition’ to ‘tradition’: the state, the church and the objectification of Bunun culture	124
<i>Malahtangia</i> : Shooting-the-Ear Festival	127
Recontextualising <i>Malahtangia</i>	135
The remaking of <i>Tomuk</i>	137
The development of ethnic tourism	140
Intercultural encounters and the romantic ideology of the primitive	145
The politics of tradition and the production of locality	147
The transmission of tradition	150
The loneliness of the singers: displacement and loss	153
5. Spirit mediumship through time	156
Bunun concept of the person	158
Etiology and basic healing rituals	162
“The power comes from dreams. No dreams, no power”	169
<i>Pistahu</i> : the annual séance of spirit mediums	172
“These things are all alive. They have <i>is-ang</i> , they are <i>is-ang</i> ”	173
Relational person, relational power and moral imaginations	180
Why is the power of spirit mediums weaker now? The ambiguity of decline	184
Conclusion	188
6. Christianity, identity and the construction of a moral community	189
Missionary activities among the Bunun	192
Why Christianity and Bunun religion are <i>maszan</i> (the same)	194
Taboos as sins and sins as taboos	197
Healing, protection and power encounter	199
Christian love, Christian person and a good heart	206
Conclusion	210
7. Death, emotions and social transformation	212
Making death peaceful	214
There is nothing we can do: the inevitability of death	217
The wake: pity, taking care of the dead and keeping the dead company	221
Death, money and social status	224
Historical transformations of death ritual	226
Bad death, suicide, and the ambiguity of death	230
Emotional responses to death	236
Conclusion	240

Conclusion	241
Reconsidering marginality	244
'Structures of feeling' as historical consciousness	247
Bibliography	250

Illustrations

Maps

1. Taiwan: typography and river systems	28
2. The Geographical Distribution of Taiwanese Aborigines	29
3. The Geographical Distribution of Bunun Subgroups	32
4. Proto-Austronesian and the Major Austronesian Subgroups	35
5. Stages of Land Settlement on the Island of Taiwan	38

Diagram

The differentiation of subgroups within the Bunun	31
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Figures

1. Welcoming the arrival of government officials	112
2. Lamatasinsin Memorial Park	112
3. Clearing the couch grass at Lamatasinsin's <i>mailumah</i>	113
4. Telling the story about Lamatasinsin to be filmed	113
5. Celebrating the trip to Lamatasinsin with a pig feast	114
6. The Monument of the Aisaka Event	114
7. Squeezing the millet wine for <i>Malahtangia</i>	115
8. Preparing the meat for <i>Malahtangia</i>	115
9. <i>Papanah uvaz</i> : encouraging small boys to shoot with a bow and arrow	116
10. The jaws of wild boars (<i>vahvah</i>) hanging on a cliff at the ritual ground	116
11. <i>Mapatus</i>	117
12. The Han-Chinese tourists flocking to Vulvul	117
13. Performing for the tourists	118
14. Bunun Princess Beauty Contest	118
15. The spirit medium, Cina Avus, performing a healing ritual (<i>lapaspas</i>)	119
16. <i>Pistahu</i> : the annual séance of spirit mediums (Vulvul)	119
17. <i>Pistako</i> : the annual séance of spirit mediums (Ququaz)	120
18. Closing the coffin for the last time	120
19. Funeral procession	121
20. Visiting the grave one month later after the funeral	121

Glossary

amin-amin	magical substance
bunun	human
cici	wild meat; wild animals
Cina/Tina	mother or aunt
dehanin/dekanin	sky; celestial phenomena
hanitu/kanitu	spirits; 'devil'
hanup	hunting
hanupan	hunting ground
havas	the past
hulas/kulas	grandparents
ikula	bad death
is-ang	breath; heart; will; 'soul'
is-amaminang/mamomo	spirit mediums
kamisama	god (from Japanese)
kavian	phratry; friend
lapaspas	healing ritual
lavi-an	the military leader
liskadan lus-an	the ritual leader
lumah/lumak	house; family
lus-an	rituals, especially annual rituals
ma-ahvon	fierce; violent; hot-tempered
macilumah	a wordless song which is sang to inform the family of one's safe return from hunting or garden work
mahusil/makusil	ritualistic distribution of meat
mailumah	old house; abandoned house; lit. 'was a house'
makavas/makakavas	headhunting
maladaigaz	big ones/old ones; elders; ancestors; members of mother's patri-clan
malahtangia	shooting-the-ear
malastapan	mild; gentle; kind; humble
malonlon	telling heroic deeds (in headhunting)
mamangan	warrior; brave man
mamantuk	true; sincere; authentic
mangan	power; strength

mapatus	make a fire, the main part of <i>Malahtangia</i> ritual
mapinaskal	make other people happy and satisfied; to please the others
mapintasa	achieve consensus; lit. 'becoming one'
(ma)samu	taboos; norms
masial	good
masumsum	pray; perform a ritual
matimva	to bewitch; witchcraft
mavala	affines
ngan	name; fame; calamous root
palihawasan	history; lit. 'telling what happened in the past'
papanah uvaz	let children shoot; encourage children to shoot
papatusan	the ritual ground
paspas	healing rituals
patihaul/paci-aul	magical stone; magical pebble
pinaskal	living in harmony; everyone is happy, satisfied and bless each other
pislai	to empower; to bestow power
pistahu/pistako	annual séance of spirit mediums
pazan	couch grass
saipuk	to feed; to foster; to adopt; to take care of; to rule; to govern
sasaipuk	feeding; looking after; the state
saspinal	strong and powerful protector; government officials; political leaders
sidoq	clan; lit. kind
sinkulakula	work; ways of doing things
taisah/vahe	dreams
talokan	hut; field hut; hunting hut
Tama	father or uncle
Tama Dehanin/Dekanin	Christian God; lit. 'heavenly father'
Tomuk	appointed 'chief' or head man
vahvah	jaws

Introduction

This thesis is concerned with how the Bunun, an Austronesian speaking indigenous people of Taiwan, deal with the changing living conditions brought about mainly, but not solely, by the contemporary politico-economic context. Based on the present-day experiences of the Bunun in two settlements, Vulvul and Ququaz, I explore how a colonised people like the Bunun sustain an active role in their relationships with powerful others; how various structural and historical forces come together in their attempt to make and transform the world in which they live; and how they ‘cope’ with — read, endure, work through, break apart under, and transcend — the predicaments of their situation.

The Bunun of Vulvul and Ququaz are self-consciously marginal in several senses. Both settlements are geographically remote and relatively isolated, an inconvenient condition which they attribute to their being neglected by the state. They perceive themselves to be marginal not only in terms of spatial location but also in terms of the distribution of power and resources. Being marginal also means being under constant pressure from the dominant ethnic group and mainstream Han-Chinese culture, as the Bunun have a strong sense that their culture is disappearing quickly. Therefore, in contrast to previous studies of the Bunun which tend to associate their geographical locale with a bounded, close-knit culture (see below), this thesis, although written from a local point-of-view, aims to take into serious account the larger political environment within which the Bunun have to negotiate their own position.

Very early during my stay with the Bunun, I was made aware of the extent to which external power is implicated in their life. Two months into my first period of fieldwork in Vulvul, a pig feast was held by the Ispalidav patri-clan to celebrate the marriage of the daughter of one of their out-married women (*picilain*). The pig was sent from the neighbouring village of Rito to Vulvul as a gift for *maladaigaz* (members of the mother’s patrilineal clan, lit. big one/old one) after the bride’s family received it from the groom’s side, but it was distributed to every household in the settlement. I was told that it was not a common practice to distribute the pig for *maladaigaz* so widely in other Bunun villages. When I asked Tama Lian why Vulvul was special in doing so,¹ to my great surprise he said, “We distributed the meat to the whole of Vulvul because

¹ Tama means father or uncle in Bunun.

we're united. We people of the Republic of China should unite together".

What struck me most in this incident was the 'intrusion' of nationalist ideology into the domain where notions about kinship and relatedness are constituted and acted out. The distribution of pigs in weddings and other life-cycle rituals is not only an important occasion in which the constituents of the person are revealed, it is also a rare traditional practice which flourishes rather than diminishes in the process of modernisation and commoditisation. Moreover, eating and drinking together designated the participants to be 'living in harmony' (*pinaskal*, everyone is happy, satisfied and they bless each other), and the pig feast is an embodiment of the community. Tama Lian's remarks make clear not only that the unity of Vulvul is sustained under their acceptance of being part of the state, but also that the Bunun are living in a world where power is implicated even in the place you least expect to find it.

The Bunun have an acute sense of themselves as a marginal minority under the rule of a modern state. Their structural position in the wider Taiwanese society is a result of a colonial history, a history in which various colonial powers tried to made them subjects. However, the focus of this thesis is "more orientated to elucidating contemporary processes emergent or unfolding than to locating present issues within a past" (Marcus 1998: 5). I have decided to take this route to avoid falling into the trap of reconstructing a bounded, reified tradition or culture. As will be explained shortly, the reconstruction of traditional culture has dominated previous studies of the Bunun, which, I will argue, is a position no longer tenable. Rather than displacing contemporary issues and problems to the past, this thesis aims to convey how the Bunun cope with their present predicaments with the hope of refashioning the future.

Previous studies of the Bunun²

Before the Japanese colonised Taiwan in 1895, the Bunun were mentioned sporadically in the official documents and archives of Ch'ing China, but very little was known about these 'raw savages' who resisted incorporation into its administrative system through headhunting and by retreating into the mountainous areas. At the beginning of Japanese rule (1895-1945), largescale investigation on the Bunun and other aboriginal groups was carried out in order to provide useful information for the colonial government. In about

² This is not an exhaustive review, but aims to highlight the theoretical trends and problems in previous studies of the Bunun.

1900, Torii Ryuzo published the earliest report on the Bunun. These essays focus on the classification, migration and distribution of the Bunun, and are more concerned with ethnohistory than ethnology. Similar attempts to map out the migration processes and the distribution of Bunun subgroups, based on the collection of oral histories, can also be found in Utsushikawa et al. (1988 [1935]).

In 1919, Sayama published the first book on the ethnology of the Bunun. It covers a very wide range of topics, such as social organisation, legend, religion, life-cycle rituals, annual rituals, division of labour, headhunting, dwelling, marriage, body decoration, myth, etc. Sayama's book is not an ethnography based on long-term intensive fieldwork in one settlement, but on short-term expeditions to dozens of settlements across every subgroup of the Bunun. He does not discuss any theme systematically, and the book aims to provide general rather than in-depth knowledge for the colonial government. Nevertheless, he provides the richest collection of Bunun myth.

Among the Japanese scholars who conducted research among the Bunun, Mabuchi is the most important figure. He was the first to introduce social theory in the study of the Bunun, and was influential in the development and establishment of modern anthropology in Japan.³ In his works, many of which will be quoted in the following chapters, he pursues a variety of topics such as clan organisation, marriage rules, land tenure, agricultural rituals, the distribution of meat, etc. through the lens of descent theory and structural functionalism. Mabuchi regards the principle of patrilineal descent as the structural principle of Bunun social organisation, which is also seen to dominate other aspects of social life. The patrilineal clan is considered to be the most important social unit which regulates kinship, marriage, the ownership of land, feud, and ritual activities. Following Mabuchi, other Japanese scholars also focus on the study of kinship, social organisation and agricultural rituals.⁴

The close relationship between Japanese anthropologists and the colonial government has influenced the way anthropological knowledge was produced. Most research expeditions were directly sponsored by the colonial government, and indeed were impossible to carry out without the protection of the Japanese police due to the persistence of headhunting among Taiwanese aborigines.⁵ Since most work was carried

³ His research is considered representative of Taiwanese aboriginal studies during the Japanese period (Shimizu 1999: 160).

⁴ For example, Okada (1999[1938]) and Masuda (1986[1958]) focus on marriage and family, and Hirotsuke (1988[37]) on agricultural rituals.

⁵ One anthropologist was beheaded by the Amis (Liu 1986:76). Among all Taiwanese aborigines, only

out for the purpose of providing useful information for colonial officials (Liu 1986: 77-78), many publications took the form of reports, statistics or surveys. This does not mean that Japanese anthropologists' research only reflected the needs of the colonial government, or that they agreed completely with colonial policies.⁶ Nevertheless, their work presents aboriginal societies as closed and bounded entities isolated in time and immobile in space, an image that coincided with the aim of the isolationist policy of the Japanese colonial administration. The impact of colonial encounters on the Bunun, and how they responded, were totally ignored. Such an orientation towards the static and coherent aspects of 'primitive societies' shares premises with salvage anthropology (Shimizu 1999: 136). Some Japanese anthropologists also held the 'myth of the inflexible tradition' (Errington & Gewertz 1995: 5) in the negative sense that it is very difficult, if not impossible, for the Japanese to educate and transform these 'savages'.⁷

The earlier scholars under the Chinese Nationalist government held a view that aboriginal cultures were disappearing because they would inevitably be assimilated by the Chinese culture. They considered it their mission to "salvage the vanishing Taiwanese aboriginal culture".⁸ Consequently, the studies of Wei (1957, 1972) and Chiu (1962, 1964, 1966, 1975) all focus on the historical reconstruction of certain established topics, such as kinship organisation, land tenure, agricultural rituals, life-cycle rituals, etc. Like the Japanese scholars before them, they ignore the wider political environment, and pay no attention to the social and cultural changes of the Bunun.

Such a situation only began to change in the 1970s, when Ying-Kuei Huang started his research among the Bunun. Unlike all his predecessors who carried out expeditions and short-term fieldwork in many settlements, Huang's study is mainly based on long-term fieldwork in one settlement — Taketonpu. At the same time, he is very sensitive to the issue of social, economic and religious change. As he himself writes, his early works (1975, 1976, 1982a, 1982b, 1983, 1985) show "the impact of external forces on Bunun culture and society; such as the impact caused by the external political

the Tao (Yami) of Orchid Island did not practise headhunting (Furuno 1988[1975]).

⁶ For example, many anthropologists objected to the resettlement policy (Nagata 1995: 85-86). The relationship between anthropology and colonial administration, as pointed out by van Bremen and Shimizu (1999: 7), is characteristically ambiguous.

⁷ For instance, Sayama (1988[1919]: 211, 213) described the Bunun as 'ghosts from hell' or 'a herd of animals', and considered it extremely difficult to transform them into 'civilised people'.

⁸ In fact, this was the official aim and purpose for the Institute of Ethnology, the most important research centre of anthropology in Taiwan, when it was established in 1955. For a ferocious attack on Han ethnocentrism and what he calls 'nationalist anthropology', see Y. L. Chiu (1999).

forces, Christianity, the encroachment of the capitalist market economy, etc.” (Huang 1988: 15). He also attempts to introduce Marxist theory to analyse the dynamics and structural causality of change.

This is undoubtedly an important breakthrough in studies of the Bunun. However, the problems of historical reconstruction remain unchallenged. In these essays, Huang begins with the reconstruction of traditional Bunun culture, and then moves on to look at how it continues or changes under the impact of various kinds of external forces. Thus, he actually leaves intact the assumption of Bunun culture as a bounded, self-contained entity, and maintains its dichotomy with ‘external’ forces and the wider political environment. Huang also makes the mistake of essentialising certain cultural characteristics which acquire particular salience at a particular historical moment as the structural principle of Bunun society. For example, he disagrees with Mabuchi that patrilineal descent is the structural principle of Bunun society. Rather, he considers that among the Bunun “the social position of a person in the social unit is determined by his/her personal achievement through successful, practical group action” (Huang 1988: 15). I suggest that the contrast between these two models of how the Bunun society are organised relates to the way the Bunun are at particular historical moments. When Mabuchi visited the Bunun in the Japanese colonial period, the patrilineal clan system was very strong, which gave the impression that the principle of patrilineal descent was dominant. Moreover, the resettlement policy and isolationist policy restricted the movement of the Bunun and the tendency of social groups to dissolve and reform (more in the next chapter). On the other hand, in the 1970s Bunun society was undergoing rapid changes, and the patrilineal clan had lost its central importance. In their attempt to adjust to the capitalist market economy, competition and individual achievement were encouraged and emphasised. Both Mabuchi and Huang try to describe their research subject truthfully; both, however, essentialise the socio-cultural characteristics they see at different historical periods as the *structural principle*.

In his later works (1988, 1989, 1995, 1998, 1999), Huang leans toward ‘cultural’ rather than ‘social’ interpretations, and looks at how social changes acquire cultural meanings through the discussion of what Durkheim (1995[1912]: 8-18) calls ‘categories of understanding’ (person, space, time, etc.). According to him, the basic symbolic classificatory systems of the Bunun are of central importance to their understanding of external forces, and in regulating and formulating their responses to these forces. Therefore, these essays also begin with a reconstruction of the traditional symbolic

system derived mainly from the Bunun concept of the person. I agree with him that the experience of encountering these different historical forces must be symbolically mediated. However, I am not convinced that the Bunun perceive their living conditions through symbolic classification and categorisation, for they are usually uninterested in constructing and promoting a dualistic symbolic structure (see Chapter 5).⁹

From the above, it should be clear that the problem of reconstructing traditional culture has always dogged previous studies on the Bunun. This leads to the reification of a bounded, essentialised traditional culture. As a result of this predilection for historical reconstruction, certain contemporary phenomena, such as the ‘invention of tradition’ and the emergence of cultural self-consciousness, are dismissed or devalued; while other aspects of the present are taken to represent ‘traditional life’ — the way things were before Japanese or Han-Chinese influences.¹⁰ I argue that facing up to the ethnographic present and seeing how the present comes into being, rather than reconstructing a tradition and seeing how it changes or continues through time, is a better way to contextualise and to historicise the culture under study. It also helps to raise questions of relevance and to develop the useful kind of ‘empirical reflexivity’ (Herzfeld 2001: 45) which will make anthropology more socially engaged. We can no longer avoid these questions, but must rise to the challenge of postcolonial critiques and rethink what anthropology has to offer, especially when the indigenous people themselves are beginning to record their own traditional culture and to question the way anthropological knowledge is produced.¹¹

Confronting the present: marginality, empowerment and experience

How should we understand the dynamic relationships between the Bunun and the wider political, historical contexts in which they find themselves? How should we interpret their status as a marginal minority in the wider Taiwanese society without overestimating the power of the state and creating the impression of the Bunun’s

⁹ However, the lack of symbolic elaboration does not mean the lack of cultural depth, as Rosaldo (1989: 20) very rightly points out.

¹⁰ The predilection for the reconstruction of tradition is also a widespread problem in studies of other Taiwanese indigenous peoples. The past is often considered as more ‘authentic’ and thus a more valuable research subject. I propose that we should cease arriving ‘after it’s too late’, and develop an ethnography of the present (cf. Sanjek 1991).

¹¹ In 1993, the Bunun published their own journal *Buan Mais Asik Tu Sinpas Tu Havi* (The Tale of the Palm and the Moon, named after the Bunun myth of shooting the sun), which aims to preserve their culture and to enhance the unity of the Bunun as a whole.

permanent victimisation? The challenge lies in understanding how the Bunun are at once constructed in conflicting ways as subjects yet also find the means through struggle to realise themselves in coherent and subjectively centred ways as agents. The studies on marginality can shed light on the problem and provide some inspirations.

As Spivak (1993) tells us, there has been a recent 'explosion of marginality studies'. The concepts of marginalisation and marginality have been employed by various writers to explore the interplay of multiple forms of asymmetrical power relations in the production of human conditions. Not only is marginality understood as a theoretical concept which offers a comprehensive understanding of the multiple dimensions of power relations, rather than their reduction to any single dimension along the lines of race, class or gender (Chuengsatiansup 2001: 32-33), the concept has also become an idiom for contesting and negotiating the politics of cultural identity (Nugent 1999: 181-183).

In its close connection with subaltern studies and postcolonial studies, marginality is seen less as a disadvantageous or unprivileged structural position, and more as a source of resistance, critique, autonomy and empowerment (Seremetakis 1991, Herbst 1994, Stewart 1997, Day et al. 1999). Seremetakis (1991), for instance, looks at the struggle of marginal women of Inner Mani in patriarchal Greek society to resist domination by men, the church, the state, and medical rationality. Through the weaving together of diverse social practices, such as dreaming, lament improvisation, caring and tending of olive trees, burying and unburying the dead, these women compose an 'empowering poetics of the periphery' which challenges the dominating centre. In a sensitive study, Day et al. (1999) also show how various marginal groups can turn their marginality into freedom and autonomy through their active choice of 'living in the present'. The Hungarian Gypsies, London prostitutes and Aegean Greek peasants are people who commit to living each day as it comes. Through an exceptional inversion of mainstream practices, they transform the short term into a transcendental escape from time itself, and use the present as a source of empowerment and the means with which dependence can be translated into autonomy.

The theoretical attempt to bestow on the marginalised power, agency and autonomy is a prevalent one in recent Southeast Asian studies (Tsing 1993, Steedly 1993, George 1996, Chuengsatiansup 2001). Tsing (1993), in particular, uses the concept of marginality to begin discussion of unequal subject positions within fields of power and knowledge. In her study of the Meratus Dayak in the deep rainforest of

Indonesia, she analyses how Meratus marginality is shaped by the intersection of three discursive processes: state rule, the formation of regional and ethnic identities, and gender differentiation. Rather than treating the margins as sites of exclusion, she argues that they offer creative possibilities to destabilise cultural authority and powerful centres. Similarly, Chuengsatiansup's (2001) study demonstrates how the Kui of Thailand, a marginal indigenous group seen by the state as 'wild', standing outside the definition of the nation and thus in need of being domesticated and brought within the agenda of national integration, transform their political predicaments into the basis for forging a 'subaltern counterpublics' within which official discourses are called into question and their legitimacy contested. The recent elaboration of the perspective of the supposed margins, whether Tsing's 'out-of-the-way place', Steedly's (1993) 'out-of-placeness' or Spyer's (2000) 'run-away topographies', is innovative in mapping new pathways across the shifting landscape of power, cultural difference, and historical memory. Such an orientation is particularly significant in a region where state rule has been seen as emanating from the concentrated potency of 'exemplary centres' which extend toward more and more unruly peripheries (Anderson 1972, Geertz 1980, Tambiah 1985, Errington 1989).

While I share with these studies the common concern of bringing marginalised social groups/societies/peoples into the centre of arguments and recovering their subjectivity, power and agency, I am cautious about the problems such a theoretical stance may entail. As Nugent (1999) warns us, the concept of marginality can become a descriptive marker that serves to confirm otherness and that slips back to an essentialist reading of difference (see also Spivak 1996). He also criticises the literature on marginality for assuming that the response of the subaltern has only two trajectories: accommodation or resistance. As shown in the above, there is indeed a strong overall emphasis in recent marginality studies on resistance to the mainstream, the state and the dominant group. However, a convincing ethnographic demonstration of resistance, or the evidence that such a stance is central, are not always provided. Moreover, the concept of resistance is sometimes vaguely and endlessly expanded until, as Cooper puts it, "it denies any other kind of life to the people doing resisting" (Cooper 1994: 1532). The worry that there is a danger of falling back on a rather one-dimensional portrait, what Ortner (1995a) calls 'ethnographic thinness', is not unfounded. Thus, I will be careful not to romanticise resistance and what Herbst (1994: 15) calls 'oppositional consciousness', but attempt to explore various possible ways the Bunun

employ to create 'agentive moments' (Daniel 1997: 191), a shift in the sense of oneself from an object being acted upon by the world to a subject acting upon the world, for themselves.

In attempting to understand how the Bunun can play an active role in making and transforming the world in which they live, it is important not to forget that their effort may fail, and that at times the Bunun experience themselves as powerless, displaced and lost. To exclude or erase such experiences is to adopt an anodyne view of history which denies the violent and destructive aspects of colonialism. As my intention is to provide a more thorough and nuanced analysis of how the Bunun engage with and manage the problem of marginality, an important concern of this thesis is to convey the affective qualities of their living experience. This is a significant theme whose theoretical implications I will return to in the Conclusion.

Fieldwork and locations

In the winter of 1991-1992, I carried out four months' fieldwork in Vulvul, a Bunun village in Southeast Taiwan, for my M.A. thesis *Gender, Kinship and the concept of the Person* (Yang 1992).¹² The reason for choosing Vulvul as a fieldsite was mainly to do with the fact that most studies on the Bunun are conducted in Nantou County, Western Taiwan, the Bunun's 'place of origin', but very little research had been carried out in Eastern Taiwan. Vulvul was located in the frontier of Bunun expansion, before the process of migration and opening of new land was forcefully put to an end by the Japanese colonial government. Also, the area surrounding Vulvul was the last place in Taiwan to be conquered by the Japanese (Asano 1988[1933]). I was attracted to Vulvul's special location, history, as well as the sense of the place.¹³

Vulvul is surrounded by extremely beautiful mountains, at an altitude of 800 metres. Its name means swamp or marshland in Bunun. Local legend has it that the place was discovered by their ancestors more than two hundred years ago when they

¹² My first contact with the Bunun goes back to 1986, when I stayed in the Bunun village of Gia-na. I was part of a team of volunteers from National Taiwan University who worked in five Bunun villages, including Vulvul, during winter holidays. The purpose of our work was to help aboriginal children improve their performance in the primary and secondary schools, and to help the Bunun to be better adjusted to the ways of the encapsulating Han-Chinese world and the demands of economic development. Although it had good intentions, I soon realised the project was ill-conceived and very patronising. In the early 1990s, beginning with Rito, each of these five villages declined to be on the receiving end of such voluntary work.

¹³ I made expeditions to about twenty Bunun settlements before deciding to live in Vulvul.

were on a hunting trip, led by a deer they were chasing. This lush marshland attracted abundant wild animals to graze and drink here, and became a favourite spot for Bunun hunters. Nowadays there is no trace of this ancient landscape, and Vulvul has become a plain covered by houses lined on one road, with a primary school at the top end of the road, a church, plum orchards, vegetable gardens, and a hidden graveyard. It is a small settlement of 34 households and about 240 people, most of whom belong to the Bubukun (Ishbukun) subgroup.¹⁴ Administratively, Vulvul belongs to Haitun township, Taitung County. The people of Vulvul make frequent trips to the local administrative centre of Haitun, and to Kuanshan, the nearest town, in order to obtain certificates, register land, report births and deaths, ask favours from local officials, as well for shopping, paying electricity and telephone bills, banking, seeking medical treatment, attending junior and senior high schools, etc.

During the whole period of my stay I lived with a three-generation local family into which I was gradually incorporated as an adopted daughter of the senior couple. Through the experience of eating together, sharing the same living space and working together, I was transformed from an outsider into a member of the family. The establishment of a kinship relationship with my foster family provided me with the protection I needed, when initially my presence in the settlement provoked suspicion and hostility in many people. Moreover, it was essential for me to be accepted eventually as a member of the community, which entitled me to a share of meat whenever a pig was distributed to the whole settlement.

After this first period of fieldwork, I made several subsequent visits to Vulvul, two months in total, between 1992 and 1995. I felt my relationship with the people of Vulvul had improved a lot after two subsequent visits, because they were satisfied that I was committed to maintain a long-term relationship with them. In the summer of 1997, I returned to Vulvul for further fieldwork, and was warmly received by most people. Over the years I developed a network of friends and foster kin whose houses I would visit regularly on an informal and relaxed basis. Besides my foster family, another family also treated me as their adopted daughter, and with them I was able to join in any conversation, argument, fight, gossip, laughing or crying. Outside this intimate kinship network, I was also close to about half the households of the settlement, and was able to talk to them about most things. As Vulvul is a small settlement, I was able to know a lot about the situation of every family, even those I was not close to. However, there were

¹⁴ The population was 238 at March, 1999 (Haitun Household Census Centre).

some people who did not like me, and some I found hard to like. Also, sometimes my foster family was involved in disputes with other households and I would be discouraged from visiting them.

Between June 1997 and June 1999, I also carried out fieldwork in another village — Ququaz, which is located in the central mountainous area of Western Taiwan, the Bunun's 'place of origin'. The reasons for choosing another fieldsite were several. Firstly, I was very interested in Ququaz when I first visited there for a short time in 1991. Since Ququaz is a big settlement, it was not a practical option at that time. However, there were certain things about Vulvul that reminded me of Ququaz. These two settlements have very different histories. While Vulvul area was the last place in Taiwan to be conquered by the Japanese, Ququaz was made an 'exemplary settlement' by the colonial government because the people there were cooperative. I was interested to see whether their responses to the predicaments of marginality would be different. Secondly, the people of Ququaz are predominantly Taketudu, a Bunun subgroup which has been little studied. Most ethnographies of the Bunun have focused on the Bubukun. Finally, I was often anxious about 'not doing much' or 'being lazy' in Vulvul, as everyday life is slow and fairly routine in such a small community. Although in recent years anthropologists have placed huge emphasis on the significance of everyday and practical activities (Bloch 1992, 1998; Jenkins 1994; Comaroffs 1997: 29-35; Overing & Passes 2000: 7-13; Gow 2000: 59-61), I have to admit that I was often bored by the repetitiveness of daily life, and after some time I would long for a change of social scenery or something new to happen.

Like Vulvul, Ququaz is located at an altitude of about 800 metres, in a fertile valley cut into the mountains by a big river. Ququaz means rattan in Bunun, as this plant used to flourish in the surrounding area. At present most of the population of Ququaz live in Simau-an, the 'new settlement', where they resettled in 1949, and Ququaz became the 'old settlement'. Simau-an acquired its name in remembrance of warfare that took place here between the Bunun and another indigenous group — the Qalavang (Ataiyal); it means 'five (Qalavang heads) were taken' in Bunun.¹⁵ The Bunun had acquired the surrounding area from the Qalavang after successful headhunting raids. Although they had the upper hand in the relationship with the Qalavang until the end of Japanese rule, today the situation is very different due to the administrative classification of the Nationalist government. Administratively, Ququaz belongs to Ren-ai township, Nantou

¹⁵ Simaun-an comes from *ima*, which means hand or five.

County. Unlike Haitun township, where the Bunun are the predominant group, Ren-ai township consists mainly of the Qalavang. Among the fourteen villages, only three are Bunun ones. In a democratic politics based on direct election, the Bunun's minority status means that they always lose out to the Qalavang in the control of local government and councils. Therefore, the administrative separation of the Taketudu subgroup from other Bunun makes them feel further marginalised. They often exclaim they are like orphans, abandoned and helpless; or joke that if all the Qalavang went to pee at the same time, the Bunun would be drowned.

Ququaz is a much larger settlement than Vulvul, with 150 households and a population of around 900.¹⁶ Although I lived in both settlements for about the same amount of time (12 months in each), my relationship with the people of Ququaz was less intimate. During the early phase of my fieldwork, I was mistaken by some people as a Bunun from Taitung because of my Bunun name and Bunun accent. My previous connections with Vulvul seemed to provide a referential point of my identity, of who I was. Also, I felt more attached to Vulvul than to Ququaz.

At the beginning of my stay in Ququaz, I lived with a rich and influential family. The father of the family was an elected representative in the local council, and his daughter and his brother who lived next door were officials in the local government. Two of his sisters and one Han-Chinese daughter-in-law were primary-school teachers. Although I rented a room from this family, my relationship with them remained more on the formal side during my stay. There was no attempt, except from the mother of the family, to incorporate me as kin. After three-and-a-half months, a son of the family returned home after serving two years of national service. He needed the room I rented, so I moved to an old house owned by a Bunun pastor who ministered the Presbyterian Church in another village. I established a close relationship with his daughter and son-in-law who lived nearby, and they treated me as a younger sister.

In such a big settlement, I was unable to know every household well. I was close to about ten families whose houses I visited regularly, and was on familiar terms with fifteen more. Some families I only visited once, and it was hard to meet those who migrated to the cities for work, and who only returned home occasionally during holidays. However, the Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Church were more active than those in Vulvul and had many activities, so I was able to have contact with more

¹⁶ The population of Ququaz was 890 in March 1999 (Ren-ai Household Census Centre). However, some people transferred their household registration to Puli, the nearest town, for the convenience of work and education.

people besides those I visited regularly. Nevertheless, some people remained hostile or indifferent to my existence throughout, and I was often anxious about not knowing Ququaz as well as I did Vulvul.

During my fieldwork, I attempted to minimize the distance between myself and those who I was to study, to integrate myself as far as possible into village life, and to live among the Bunun much as they themselves lived. I was more successful in Vulvul, although sometimes I was caught up in domestic processes and spent much time performing household chores. However, in both settlements I occupied no privileged positions. I tried to distinguish myself from the Bunun's Han-Chinese 'bosses'. I did not hire research assistants, and collected all the materials myself. Most things I learnt about the Bunun and their social life came from daily, informal conversations and everyday practical activities, rather than formal interviews. Except on such occasions as the annual séance of spirit mediums and cultural performances, I didn't use a tape recorder or a camcorder because most Bunun were uneasy with the idea. Many people were also uncomfortable with the idea of my taking notes in front of them, except for genealogies, so most of my fieldnotes were written down afterwards.

Occasionally a friend would act as an interpreter when I interviewed the elderly, but most of the time I communicated with the Bunun directly in a mixture of Bunun and Mandarin. I consider my Bunun far from fluent, but the people of Vulvul regard me as *masial malas Bunun* (speaking Bunun well). They were very tolerant of the mistakes I made and very encouraging, since nowadays the younger generations are unwilling to speak Bunun. Apart from those over seventy, every Bunun spoke some Mandarin. The common situation of language use is that those who are over forty use Bunun as the everyday language; those who are between twenty and forty can speak Bunun well but usually prefer to use Mandarin among themselves; and the youngest generation can understand some Bunun but cannot, or refuse to, speak it. Of course there are individual variations. In Ququaz, they speak Bunun with a different accent and intonation, which took me some time to get used to. There are also differences in vocabulary. However, in Ququaz most of the people are familiar with the dialect of Bubukun because it is into this dialect that the Bunun Bible and hymn book are translated.

Both in Vulvul and in Ququaz I was able to participate in almost all the activities I wished, except for the men's hunting trips which they refused to take me on. Some still considered it a *masamu* (taboo), but more often the reason for not taking me was the inconvenience of having me around in a hostile and unfamiliar environment. As I

discuss in Chapter 3, on one occasion I did participate in a hunting trip for six days. After that, some Vulvul men proposed to take me with them hunting, but I was engaged in some other activity at that time. Generally, I never felt that my gender or age significantly affected the knowledge or activities I had access to. The more sensitive issue was my status as a Han-Chinese, as I will explain shortly.

When anthropology is at home

In the above, I have referred briefly to the hostility and suspicion I faced in the field. Although such hostility was mainly expressed through long faces, silence and avoidance, it was sometimes verbalised directly to me. At the end of my first month in Vulvul, I was told off by two drunk, elderly women when I was chatting with some community leaders in front of the local shop. Cina Valish and Cina Iving questioned my motive of studying the Bunun, suspected whether I was some sort of spy or informer, and asked me why didn't I study the Han-Chinese. They also grabbed the patrol police who happened to pass by, and asked him to investigate me and to send me away. I tried to explain to them that anthropology was conventionally interested in other cultures, but they were not moved. Members of the Community Development Council, whom I was talking to, explained to them that I was sent by my supervisor in the university to study the Bunun and thus could not run off to a Han-Chinese community. The police also told them I had applied to do research here legally and had every right to live here, but they were still not satisfied. In the end Cina Valish and Cina Iving were dragged home by their children who were embarrassed by such a scene. Several Bunun comforted me saying that I shouldn't care about what drunk people said, but obviously I was very distressed. Upon hearing about this incident from other villagers, my adoptive father talked to Cina Valish and Cina Iving immediately after they were sober, and said that since I was living in his house and was like a daughter to him, he would not have any such rudeness towards me.

Such public challenge was not to be repeated during my stay in Vulvul (and Ququaz), although I was often teased about whether I was a 'spy' at the earlier phase of fieldwork. Since I was a Han-Chinese, the Bunun naturally associated me with the state (see Chapter 2). Some people had suspicions; others questioned whether my research would help the Bunun get more government funding and subsidies — in other words, what was in it for the Bunun if they helped me to finish my thesis.

By the time I finished my M.A. thesis and gave it to the people of Vulvul, I was slightly apprehensive about how they would react to it. However, very few people were interested in reading it. They were much more concerned about when I was going to kill a pig to celebrate my graduation, and, as local custom dictated, to thank them for teaching me about the Bunun. The only criticism I got was not from the people of Vulvul but from a Bunun official from the neighbouring settlement of Evago. When he visited my foster family, my adoptive father showed him my thesis. Without reading more than half of the first paragraph, he jumped to the conclusion that a Han-Chinese could never understand the Bunun or write anything remotely valuable about them, therefore he was not going to read any more of it. He assumed that only natives could understand natives, and that only natives could be the proper judge of ethnography; they are the only people who have the right to represent themselves.¹⁷ He was not alone in thinking in this way. On one occasion, another Bunun official, who was originally from Vulvul but had moved to Haitun for nearly twenty years, asked me to give him a copy of all my fieldnotes because he thought that as a native he was entitled to them.¹⁸

This attitude represents a growing trend that ‘anthropology at home’ has to confront (Peirano 1998: 115). Facing such criticism, some anthropologists have turned to social movements and political activism for a solution. Taiwanese indigenous people are regarded as vulnerable, powerless victims of colonialism who need the help of (Han-Chinese) anthropologists in their struggle for justice. I had also hoped that I could be helpful to the Bunun in their resistance, so that they knew I was totally on their side. However, the people of Vulvul and Ququaz have made me realise the naivety of such a moral stance (see Chapter 2). Therefore, this thesis is an attempt to critically engage in the issues raised by postcolonial critiques through refashioning the practice of ethnography.

Preview of the thesis

This thesis will move between different contexts in which the Bunun experience, reflect, negotiate and attempt to work through the predicaments of marginality. I begin with the dynamic historical relationship between the Bunun and the colonisation processes in

¹⁷ I later learnt that he is in fact a Maipud (a clan name, lit. ‘used to be Han-Chinese’). His grandfather was a Han-Chinese who was adopted by the Bunun.

¹⁸ I considered this an unreasonable demand and refused, but obviously he was not going to make my life in the field easy.

Taiwan, and highlight the importance of the Bunun's relationship with powerful others and the state. In Chapter 2, I look more closely at the issue of how the Bunun conceptualise the state through the examination of their response to government policies, their interaction with government officials, elections and the symbolism of money. I argue that compliance can be an effective political action, through which the Bunun attempt to establish a long-term moral relationship with the state. Then I move on to discuss how the Bunun respond actively to the state's objectification and appropriation of their history and tradition. In Chapter 3, I explore the interplay between two different ways of representing the past, one of which is employed by the Nationalist government, and the other of which is distinctively Bunun; one of which is expressed through the building of monuments and the construction of official narratives, and the other of which is experienced through bodily practice, singing and landscape. In Chapter 4, I investigate how the Bunun recreate their 'tradition' in cultural performances to meet Han-Chinese expectations, in an attempt to win government recognition and to reap the benefits of ethnic tourism. The revival of certain objectified 'traditions', however, does not ease the Bunun's concern over the loss of the ancestral ways of life. It raises questions about multiculturalism, and the possibility of further displacement.

In the second half of the thesis, I address the depressing experiences of displacement, loss and powerlessness more directly, as well as the place of Christianity in shaping the ambivalence of Bunun relationships to their ancestral religious practices. Chapters 5 and 6 examine the Bunun's attempt to incorporate Christianity as a source of additional power, while distancing themselves from Han-Chinese religions such as Taoism and Buddhism. Despite such efforts, Chapter 5 will show that the power of Bunun spirit mediums is weaker now, and suggests that such a decline echoes the position of the Bunun in the contemporary world. Chapter 6 argues that Christianity has provided the Bunun with an important means to maintain an identity apart from the dominant Han-Chinese culture, and to construct a moral community. However, conversion to Christianity also renders problematic their relationships to traditional religious practices such as healing, taboos, and rituals. In Chapter 7, I look at the moment when the Bunun are most powerless and vulnerable, the moment of death when they are forced to confront their own transient existence, and suggest that the Bunun's emotional responses to death have been transformed and complicated by the colonial process. Finally, in the conclusion, I return to the attempt to rethink the issue of marginality, and argue that 'structures of feeling' are of central importance to the

understanding of how the Bunun experience history and how they engage with and manage the problem of marginality.

Chapter 1

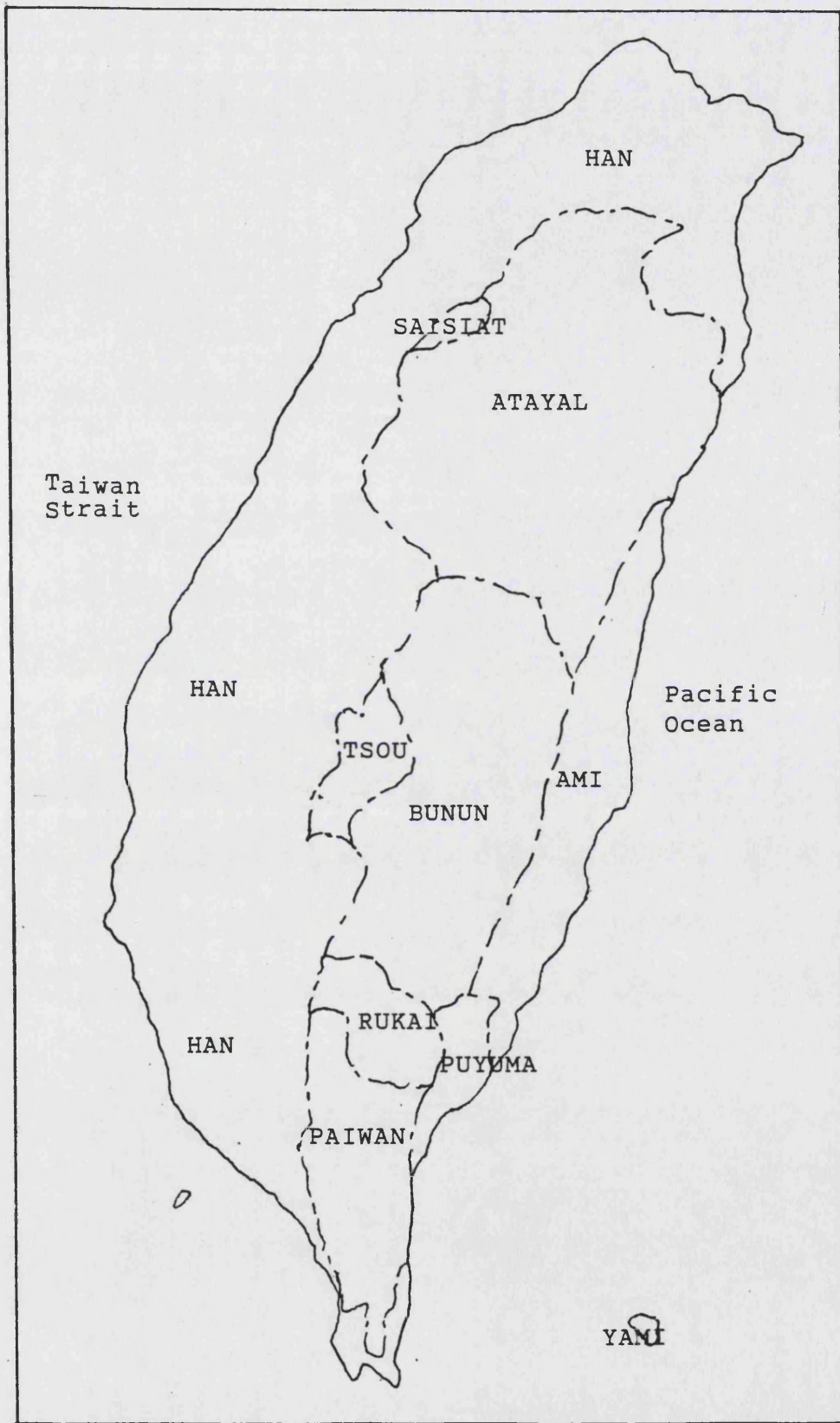
The Bunun in Historical and Contemporary Contexts

During my stay with the Bunun I was often alarmed by their comments that their way of life is becoming more and more like that of the Han-Chinese, and that Bunun children will become no different from the Han-Chinese in the not so distant future. At the same time, the Bunun see the value of my research largely in terms of the preservation of their disappearing culture, and some decades later their descendants could learn from my book what the life of their ancestors was like.

Although I do not assign to myself the task of salvaging the ‘vanishing’ Bunun culture, and I perhaps have more faith in the tenacity of culture, it is nevertheless instructive to ask why the Bunun consider themselves to be becoming like the Han-Chinese. Such a perspective is born of their long interactions with the dominant ethnic group, the mainstream culture and the colonial state. Thus, this chapter is concerned with the dynamic historical relationships between the Bunun and the colonisation processes. I will present the general background and the basic socio-cultural characteristics of the Bunun, and highlight the fact that the Bunun cannot be seen as a bounded group who lived in blissful isolation even before they were forcefully incorporated into the administrative system of the colonial state. At the same time, I will use ‘localizing strategy’ (Fardon 1990) to situate the Bunun in the cultural area of Southeast Asia. Then I move on to the historical processes of how the Bunun became a marginal minority on their own land. The chapter concludes with the present-day situations within which the Bunun have to negotiate their own position.

People of the mountain: mobility, fluidity and autonomy

The Bunun live in the Central and Southern mountainous areas of Taiwan (see Map 1 & 2). The Bunun themselves regard their relationship with the mountain as one of the defining features of their identity, especially in contrast to those who live in the plain areas (such as the Han-Chinese) and the coastal areas (such as the Amis). Although the Bunun now consider the mountains as their ‘natural habitat’ and no other groups are more at home in the mountains, this is not an essential aspect of their existence but a



Map 2. The Geographical Distribution of Taiwanese Aborigines
 Source: C. L. Chen (1988[1968]: 9)

result of their interaction with other ethnic groups. In their oral histories the Bunun trace their origin to the Western plain areas of Taiwan. They were forced to move into the mountains by tribal warfare with the 'plain aborigines', and by the expansion of the Han-Chinese migrants (Utsushikawa et al. 1988[1935]: 71, Mabuchi 1984[1953]). However, the Bunun adjusted brilliantly to living in the mountainous areas, and became the best equipped group among all Taiwanese indigenous peoples in terms of mobility and expansion. As a result, Bunun settlements were very scattered. They were situated at high altitude and were small in size. According to a survey conducted by the Japanese in 1929, the average elevation of Bunun settlements was the highest among all aboriginal groups: 68.2% of Bunun settlements were located above 1,000 metres, and the highest was 2,306 metres (Kano 1938, quoted from Chiu 1966: 5). A 1938 survey reports that an average Bunun settlement contained 13.67 households with 111.22 people. Among aboriginal settlements this represented the smallest number of households and the third smallest in population (Okada 1938: 13).

Movement and expansion were important features of the Bunun not only because of the tribal warfare between different groups, but also because of the needs of shifting cultivation and hunting. Because of the constant search for virgin lands and better hunting grounds, as well as successful headhunting and tribal warfare, the Bunun had acquired a large territory. Hunting, gathering and the cultivation of millet, maize, sweet potato, and beans provided the Bunun their subsistence. The emphasis of traditional economic activities was not on trade but on consumption and sharing. Land was not a resource monopolised by any particular social group but was accessible to every household. Apart from the hoarding of millets, there was little economic differentiation and accumulation of wealth.

The house (*lumah*) was the basic social and economic unit. As with many Austronesian groups, the Bunun house was both a kinship group and a ritual entity (Carsten & Hugh-Jones 1995: 21-22). It was organised mainly according to the principle of patrilineal descent, but it could easily incorporate members from different patrilineal clans through various ways such as adoption and marriage, or simply through the sharing of space and activities. Life-cycle rituals and most annual rituals were performed inside the house, and there was a continuum between the dwelling house and the religious building.

Lumah was the most important social unit of everyday life, and it also operated as

a metaphor for the descent group.¹ In Bunun notions, the patrilineal clan was the extension of the house. *Tas tu lumah* (one house) was used to refer to the patrilineal clan (Mabuchi 1987d[1974d]: 20; Utsushikawa et al. 1988[1935]: 6, 62; Okada 1988[1938]: 7). Many subclans could trace their genealogical relationship back to one house, and in some localities the house and the subclan were identical (Mabuchi 1987d[1974d]: 16, 22). Since the patri-clan was regarded as the extension of the house, marriage within the same patri-clan and phratry was prohibited (Okada 1988[1938]: 73-74). Most patrilineal clans were not localised due to the mobility and movement of the Bunun. However, within a settlement or locality, different families of the same clan could easily share their hunting grounds and lands through negotiation, and they usually performed their annual rituals collectively and followed the same taboos.

The clan system provided a framework for the differentiation and segmentation of subgroups among the Bunun. There were six subgroups: Bubukun (Ishbukun), Takepulan, Takebanual, Takebahka, Takevatan and Taketudu (see Map 3). Takepulan was segmented from Bubukun, the largest subgroup. Takevatan and Takebahka were segmented from Takebanual at different times, and Taketudu was later segmented from Takebahka. Thus the Bunun were mainly constituted of two different systems which were of heterogeneous origins. Takebahka and Taketudu considered Bubukun as of Qalavang (Atayal) origin, and headhunting and warfare took place between them (Utsushikawa et al. 1988[1935]: 70). There are also some differences in dialects and cultural practices between these two systems. Nevertheless, they share most of the socio-cultural characteristics which distinguish the Bunun from other ethnic groups.

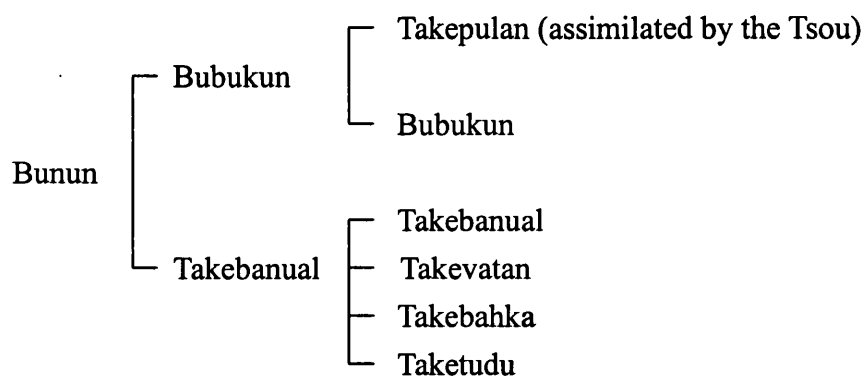
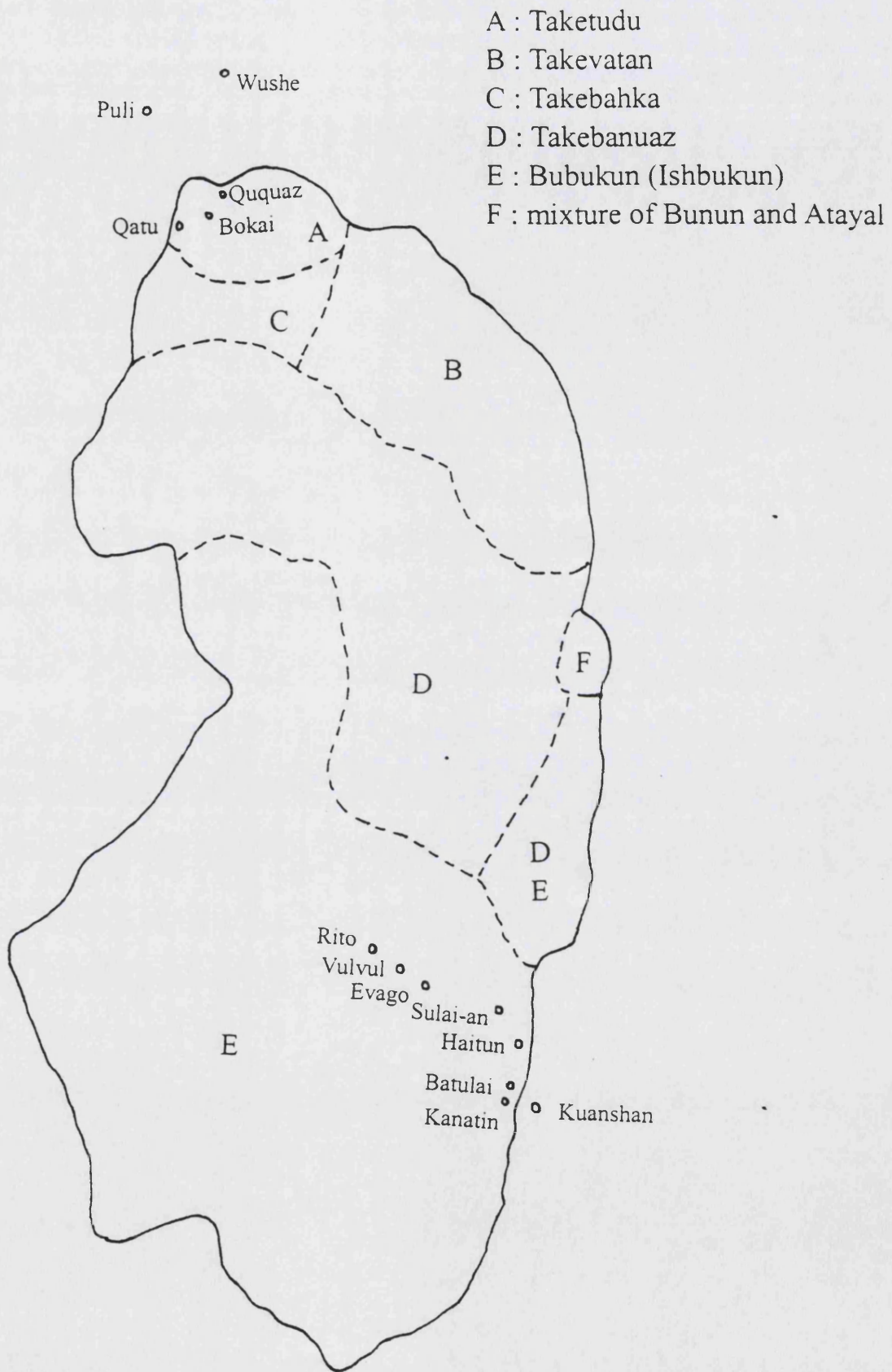


Diagram: The differentiation of subgroups within the Bunun

¹ This is a feature documented in other Austronesian societies (Fox 1980: 10).



Map 3. The Geographical Distribution of Bunun Subgroups
 Source: Wei & Wang (1966: i)

Besides segmentation and differentiation, the clan system also offered a way to incorporate outsiders among the Bunun. For example, some Qalavang were incorporated into the Taketudu subgroup and constituted the Qalavang-an clan of the Qalats phratry. Similarly, some Han-Chinese were incorporated into the Bubukun subgroup as the Maipud (lit. 'used to be Han-Chinese') clan.² The boundaries between clans, settlements, subgroups, and even between the Bunun and the other ethnic groups were not absolute but fluid. They could develop and change over time.

The fluidity of boundaries was in accord with the Bunun's mobility and constant movement in the mountainous areas. As described by Mabuchi (1974: 195), among the Bunun 'political closedness' and exclusiveness were very weak. This was associated with the dynamic relationships between the Bunun and other groups, as well as the lowland Ch'ing China state which was lurking in the background. Like the Buid of Mindoro (Gibson 1986), the Illongot of Luzon (M. Rosaldo 1980, R. Rosaldo 1980), the Wana of Sulawesi (Atkinson 1989) and many other highland societies in Southeast Asia which managed to escape from the control of lowland states, mobility was probably an important means of sustaining political autonomy, an active choice of the Bunun rather than the result of military defeat and passivity.

The Bunun's relationships with others and the lowland state were influenced by, and had implications for, the way they constructed their sociality. On the one hand, the Bunun valued equality, autonomy and sharing within their social group very highly. There was no institutionalisation of leadership and hierarchy other than that based on age and gender. Like the Buid who resisted incorporation into the political, economic and ideological systems of the lowland Philippines (Gibson 1986), the Bunun showed a clear tendency of downplaying hierarchy. They constructed an egalitarian form of solidarity which implied that social actors came together as autonomous agents to pursue a common goal. Communities formed in this way were fluid, easy to join or dissolve. On the other hand, although hierarchy was not structural, it could come into being in events or practical activities such as tribal meetings and headhunting raids. When the relationship between the Bunun and other groups in a particular area was tense, several Bunun settlements would unite together to form a tribe and to defend themselves against their enemies. A tribal committee constituted by clan elders would elect a man with knowledge and valour as their common leader, *saspinal* (lit. strong and

² The Bunun did not only incorporate others, they were themselves incorporated by others. The smallest subgroup, Takepulan, was assimilated by their powerful neighbour, the Tsou.

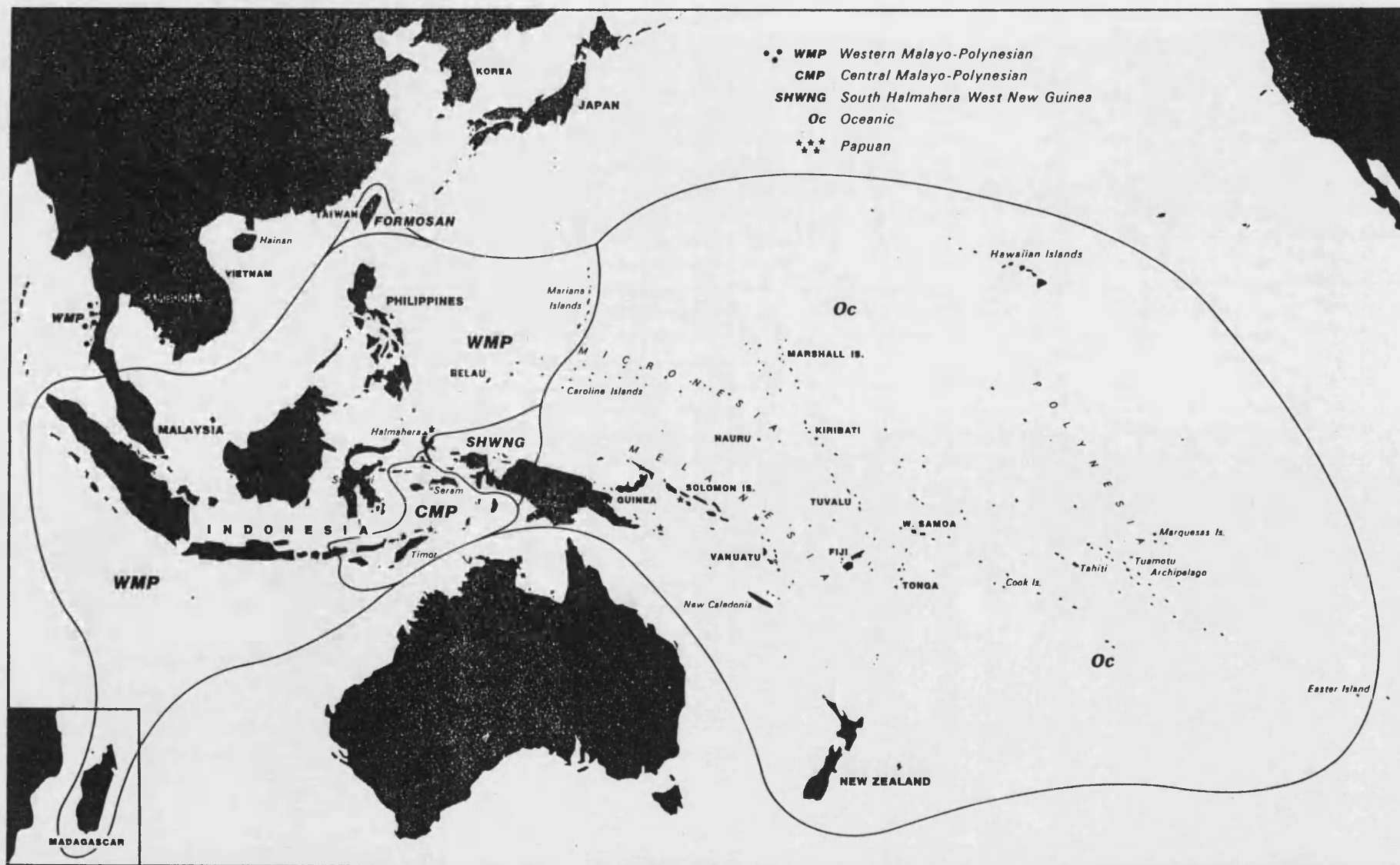
powerful protector), who acted as the guardian of customary law and military leader (*Lavi-an*). *Saspinal* had a certain authority and command over both internal affairs and external relations. However, when there were no external threats from other groups, the tribe would dissolve and each settlement would assert its independence and autonomy.³

The *saspinal*'s authority was based on the recognition of the others and their willingness to follow him, rather than on precedence, descent or wealth. Thus he was very much a Southeast Asian 'man of prowess' whose leadership relied on ever-shifting popular support, as described by Wolters (1999[1982]). At the same time, following such a 'man of prowess' was not viewed by the Bunun as diminishing their own autonomy in any way, for the leader had to obtain their support through negotiation rather than imposition. Moreover, the Bunun constructed a cultural representation of leadership and hierarchy as 'looking after'. It was emphasised that those with greater power should protect, and show compassion and love to those who were weaker (Mabuchi 1987a[1974a]: 232). As will be suggested in more detail in Chapter 2, such a perspective on leadership not only situates the Bunun in the Southeast Asian theoretical world of power, potency and 'exemplary centre' (Anderson 1972, Errington 1989), but also provides a historical connection between the past and the present.

How do the Bunun become a marginal minority? Colonialism and assimilation

The population of the Bunun was 41,150 in 1997, the fourth largest among the Taiwanese indigenous groups. Together with eight other groups, the population of officially recognised aborigines constitutes only 1.9% of the total population of Taiwan (414,488 of 22,339,536 in June 2001). However, the indigenous peoples made the island their home much earlier than the Han-Chinese migrants, the current dominant majority in Taiwan. Probably as early as 6000 years ago, Austronesian languages were spoken in Taiwan, the possible homeland for the first Austronesians (Bellwood et al 1995, see Map 4). The earliest report of residents in Taiwan appeared before 1000 A.D. When Taiwan first came officially to the attention of China, during the Ming dynasty, some

³ Such an example could be found in Vulvul area. When the Bunun first migrated to this area in the late 18th and early 19th century, it was the territory of the Tsou who used it as hunting ground. During their fight for the territory, the Bunun formed tribes to combat the Tsou, and the leader of the clan that took precedence in the area was elected as *Saspinal*. However, when the Tsou were defeated and completely moved away from the area after the mid 19th century, the tribal organisation dissolved and every settlement was again autonomous and independent (Ma 1985).



Map 4. The Geological Range of the Austronesian Family
 Source: Bellwood, Fox & Tryon (1995: 18)

aboriginal tribes were known to be living near the western coast (Barclay 1954: 3). At the turn of the seventeenth century, some Han-Chinese migrated to Taiwan from Southern China, and scattered among aboriginal settlements. Some of them married into the aboriginal groups. However, these migrations were impeded by the widespread headhunting practices of Taiwanese aborigines (Chen 1979: 27).

At this time, the expansion of maritime commerce throughout East and Southeast Asia made Taiwan the object of rivalries among some of the most powerful nations of the world. The strategic location of Taiwan on the trade routes off the coast of China, between Japan and the Malay Archipelago, attracted the attention of the Spanish, the Portuguese and the Dutch. Each of them occupied some coastal areas for a short period.

Between 1624 and 1662, the Dutch colonised the southwestern part of Taiwan. Under the administration of the Dutch East India Company, Taiwan became a meeting ground for Dutch, Chinese and Japanese merchants. Raw silk, silk goods and porcelain were imported from China and exported to Japan and Java. European merchandise also found its way to Japan and China via Taiwan. In this period, some aboriginal tribes who lived in the western coast plains began to trade with these outsiders, with whom they exchanged deer hides for firearms and other valuables (Ho 1978: 7-8). However, the influence of the Dutch on the Bunun was extremely limited, because large areas in the central mountains still lay beyond Dutch control (Shepherd 1993: 38-39).

The most important development in the Dutch period was the growing Han-Chinese migration. In order to cultivate cash crops such as sugar cane, pepper and spices for trade with Europe, the Dutch recruited many Han-Chinese labourers. There was an increasing influx of Hakka migrants from the Canton Province of China. They did not settle permanently but worked the land seasonally until 1636, when the Dutch pacified the rebellions of aboriginal tribes in the plain areas. After 1636, Chinese migrants began to settle permanently and to develop intensive cultivation of wet rice (Chen 1979: 28).

The nearly forty years of Dutch rule came to an end in 1662, when the Dutch were driven out of Taiwan by the Ming loyalist Cheng Ch'eng-Kung and his followers, most of whom were from the south coast of Fukien. After the capitulation of the Ming loyalists to Ch'ing China in 1683, Taiwan became a prefecture (*fu*) of Fukien Province. However, the rule of the Ch'ing dynasty in Taiwan was weak. In 1887, in response to the French threat to Taiwan, the Ch'ing government altered its indifferent attitude to the

island and elevated it from a prefecture to a province.⁴ These events were followed by the continuous migration of the Han-Chinese. Consequently, the population of the island rose rapidly: from 100,000 in 1650, to 220,000 in 1680, some 840,000 in 1777, and 1.7 million in 1824 (Chen 1979: 18-20, Shepherd 1993:161).

With the expansion of the Han-Chinese population, aborigines were increasingly marginalised. Plain aborigines' hunting grounds were gradually transformed into agricultural land, especially wet rice fields (see Map 5). Facing intense competition from the Han-Chinese, the plain aborigines suffered a disadvantaged position. Therefore, the Ch'ing government introduced decrees to protect the land rights of plain aborigines (Shepherd 1993: chap.9). In contrast, those who lived in the mountainous areas maintained their autonomy. As far as the Bunun were concerned, the Ch'ing dynasty had never successfully incorporated them within its administrative system.






The situation was to change dramatically after the Japanese colonised Taiwan. In 1895, Taiwan was ceded to Japan after the Sino-Japanese War. In contrast to previous regimes, the Japanese were able to gain island-wide control and to establish a pervasive administrative system. The existence of aborigines ('savages') and their widespread headhunting practices were considered a unique problem for the colonial government. Therefore, all matters pertaining to 'savages' and 'savage territory', including education, trade and welfare, were transferred to the police authorities (Bureau of Aboriginal Affairs 1911: 6).

The initial phase of Japanese colonialism began with military conquest and pacification. Systematic extermination campaigns reduced the aboriginal population from about 150,000, more than 7% of some two million Han-Chinese settlers at the time of the takeover, to less than 2% of the colony's residents (Tsurumi 1984: 280). Most of the remaining aborigines were confined to mountain 'reserves' which were not created out of the colonial government's recognition of the sovereign rights of those who occupy the land, but out of its isolationist policy. This policy aimed to prevent aboriginal headhunters from going to the plain areas, and to protect them from 'harmful' outside (Han-Chinese) influences (Nagata 1995: 80-81). In fact, it cut down the anti-Japanese cooperation between aborigines and Han-Chinese, and prevented aborigines from acquiring supplies of gunpowder and other goods (Fujii 1989).

Besides the isolationist policy, the removal of mountain aborigines into the foothill

⁴ Since the mid-nineteenth century, Britain, Germany, the United States and Japan had attacked Taiwan separately on several occasions. But the French threat after the Sino-French War in 1884 was the most serious one (Yanaihara 1985: 5-6).

土地開拓之經過
STAGES OF LAND SETTLEMENT

-  荷蘭人以前臺灣之佔領 (1621+、+前)
Chinese colonization prior to the Dutch
-  荷蘭人佔領時期 (1621—1661+)
Dutch invasion
-  鄭氏統治時期 (1662—1683+)
Cheng's occupation
-  清朝統治時期 (1684—1895+)
Tsing dynasty
-  日本統治時期 (1895—1945+)
Japanese occupation



Map 5. Stages of Land Settlement on the Island of Taiwan
Source: S. H. Chen (1963: 52)

and plain areas was carried out from the beginning of Japanese rule, another example of how the state always seemed to be the enemy of 'people who move around' (Scott 1998: 1, Trouillot 2001:125). The Japanese colonial government considered the resettlement policy as an effective means of control and assimilation, and state power was wielded to enforce displacement. Police stations were widely established as the administrative, educational and trading centres in the resettlement areas. The police were responsible for surveillance and punishment, they also had the legal right to appoint political leaders in each settlement regardless of objections from the natives. At the same time, the aboriginal people in most resettlement areas were forced to plant wet rice instead of practising traditional shifting cultivation, which led to a change of ecological and economic conditions.

The resettlement policy was a controversial one in its time, with some disastrous results. Many resettled areas showed an alarming decrease in population, and the high infant mortality and malaria among the adults were suspected as the cause for the decrease (Nagata 1995: 84-87). However, the Japanese colonial government insisted on implementing this policy, and all aborigines were displaced to the resettlement areas before the beginning of WWII.

Both Vulvul and Ququaz were formed under the resettlement policy. Before the Bunun hunters arrived at Vulvul, the area was already used as hunting grounds by another indigenous group, the Tsou. The Bunun expelled the Tsou to the mountains of Kaushiong County and took over the area. When the Japanese colonised Taiwan, Vulvul had only one resident family, who belonged to the Ispalidav clan. In 1914, the Japanese killed many members of this family and several other families who lived nearby, in an event known by the Bunun as Vulvul Massacre (discussed in Chapter 3). After this event, Vulvul was abandoned by the Bunun. However, in 1927, the surveillance line advanced to Vulvul, and the police station and the artillery base were built here (Asano 1988[1933]). Eleven Bunun families were forced to resettle in Vulvul, and an elder of Ispalidav clan was appointed as the *Tomuk* ('chief'). Due to the insufficient water supply, the people of Vulvul were not forced to cultivate wet rice but were able to continue the practice of shifting cultivation. Nevertheless, they were under the constant control of the Japanese police and were unable to move around freely as before.

A similar attempt to put an end to the movement of the Bunun was also successfully implemented in Ququaz. As I have mentioned in the Introduction, the land of Ququaz used to be in the hands of another indigenous group, the Qalavang, who

relinquished the area after they were defeated by the Bunun in headhunting warfare. However, the Bunun did not reside in this area but only used it as hunting ground. The perennial hostility between the Qalavang and the Bunun influenced the latter's attitude towards the Japanese. When the Japanese arrived, the Bunun sought their alliance against the Qalavang. The Japanese quickly manipulated the situation and instigated the Bunun to kill more than one hundred Qalavang, who were induced to attend a peace-making meeting in 1903 (Fujii 1989: 157-158).⁵ In 1913, a police station was established in Vaqlas to control the surrounding areas and to implement the policy of assimilation. In 1922, more than one hundred households from Vaqlas and several other settlements (Tuqul, Ludun, Kukus and Saiku) began to be resettled in Ququaz. The forest was cut down and transformed into wet rice terraces. The rice produced here was of such high quality that it was presented to the Japanese Emperor as tribute, a past glory the elders of Ququaz still remember with pride. In 1931, due to the building of a dam downstream, the Bunun were resettled again in Tisau (Sipaz). Although the wet rice agriculture was very successful, the population of Ququaz dipped from 823 in 1925 to 448 in 1943, mainly due to malaria (Tien n.d.). Consequently, the Bunun decided to move away from this inauspicious land to Simaun in 1949.

The migration of the Han-Chinese to Taiwan after the seventeenth century had turned the indigenous peoples from the sole inhabitants of the island to marginal minorities. However, before the Japanese colonisation the Bunun were able to maintain their autonomy through movement and expansion in the central mountains. The incorporation of the Bunun into the administrative system of the Japanese colonial regime not only put an end to such mobility and 'fixed' them to a bounded location, but also laid the foundation of incorporation and assimilation for the Chinese Nationalist government which took over Taiwan in 1945.

Contemporary contexts

The Nationalist government followed many of the Japanese colonial policies concerning the aborigines. It continued to nationalise forest areas, and to prevent aboriginal peoples from opening new lands or establishing new settlements without government permission. However, the policy was not strictly implemented until the land registration

⁵ This event led directly to the submission of the Qalavang in Wushe area to the Japanese later in the same year (Fujii 1989: 158).

scheme which began in 1957. Before this scheme, the Bunun continued to open new land. After the land registration, private land ownership was firmly established and the amount of land each household could own was regulated by law. Under the Aboriginal Land Development and Management Regulations published in 1990, each person can own 0.6 hectare of wet rice field, 1 hectare of dry land, and 1.5 hectare of forest land. A household is not allowed to own more than 20 hectares of land in total.

Although the issue of land has become politically contested after the highly publicised Return My Land Movement organised by the urban aboriginal elite in the 1980s, it was not regarded as a big issue by the people of Vulvul and Ququaz. Most households had more land than they could use. This was particularly the case in Vulvul, where the population was small and land was abundant. After the land registration, some people in Ququaz lost their lands to banks and Han-Chinese merchants, or sold them to fellow villagers when they needed cash. However, it is possible for them to rent a certain amount of forest land from the local government, and after five years of cultivation, to acquire the ownership of the land. Also, it is still possible to borrow land from relatives for free, although such cases are getting rarer. Therefore, the people of Vulvul and Ququaz do not protest against the nationalisation of their ancestral land by the government. Their main concern is the growing Han-Chinese appropriation of their land and the decline of agriculture as an economically viable mode of livelihood.

In Ququaz, five families were involved in land disputes with a Han-Chinese shopkeeper who married to a Bunun woman. The shopkeeper claimed that these families owed him money so they ceded some plots of land to him. However, the Bunun thought they had been duped. They deeply resented that the shopkeeper manipulated their drunkenness or illiteracy to grab their land unlawfully. Similarly, the Bunun are displeased about the way other Han-Chinese use the land they rent from the Bunun. For example, they complain about how the Han-Chinese use chemicals and fertilizers heavily and exhaust the productivity of the land within three to five years, or they dig the land improperly and cause landslides. The people of Ququaz are particularly unhappy about the building of a Buddhist temple inside the village (see Chapter 6).

Along with the development of land as scarce private property, agriculture as a mode of livelihood is becoming less economically reliable or viable. Under the Nationalist government's policies of economic development and modernisation, the Bunun were gradually incorporated into the capitalist market economy and became dependent on cash income to sustain their daily consumption. They no longer relied on

shifting cultivation or the production of wet rice, but became producers of cash crops such as vegetables (cabbages, green peppers, cucumbers, tomatoes, and beans), fruit (mainly plums) and tea. However, as the Bunun often describe it, growing cash crops is like gambling, for it does not guarantee a secure income, and luck is very important. In a good year, they might have excellent returns for their investment and hard work. In a bad year, they might earn nothing and even become deep in debts. Therefore, many people opt to migrate to the cities and become wage labourers.

The economic migration to the urban areas began in the 1960s. At first, such migration was short-term and seasonal. Most Bunun worked in factories or on building sites, but few worked in large farms or orchards. There were also cases of teenagers being sent to work in factories for a few years, while their parents stayed in the village and worked the land. Gradually, some people established good relationships with their Han-Chinese bosses, and settled in the cities for long periods. It was a common arrangement for the younger members of a household to migrate to the cities and become the main source of cash income, while the older generation stayed in the village to look after the fruit trees, grow some sweet potatoes, maize and cash crops. However, the introduction of cheaper foreign labourers from other Southeast Asian countries (mainly the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia) in the 1990s has seriously dented the aboriginal peoples' prospect of finding long-term employment. Many of them are unable to afford the high cost of living in the cities and have to return home. Thus, unemployment is a serious problem nowadays.⁶ Young men are particularly affected by the situation, as many of them are not used to, or dislike, working the land. At the same time, the absence of a regular cash income diminishes their prospect of getting married.

Not only are aboriginal societies incorporated into the capitalist market economy, they are also more involved in wider social forces and political relations. Unlike in the Japanese period, the administration of aboriginal reservations is no longer under the authority of the police. Instead, it is incorporated into normal administrative systems. Since 1952, local elections are held in reservation areas. The governor of the local township office, the representatives of the local council and the village head are all directly elected. The governor has the right to appoint several section chiefs in the

⁶ According to statistics published by the government in May, 2001, the unemployment rate nationwide is 3.89%, whereas the unemployment rate among aboriginal peoples is three times the national average, nearly 12%. Also, the average income of aboriginal peoples is only half the national average (7 May 2001, Central Daily, international edition).

township office. Therefore, although about half the officials in both Haitun and Ren-ai townships are Han-Chinese who have passed the national exams, decision making is in the hands of indigenous officials. However, as will be shown in Chapter 2, the Nationalist Party continues to be the dominant force in controlling elections in reservation areas.

Despite the Nationalist government's recognition of the full citizenship of the aborigines, until very recently reservations were still governed by special policies which aimed to 'civilise' them. Education was an effective means of assimilation. Schools in reservation areas taught exclusively in the national language (Mandarin) and used the same national curriculum. A large part of the curriculum aimed to cultivate national consciousness and to transmit 'authentic' Chinese culture. However, the dominance of the Nationalist Party and its ideological preoccupation with 'authentic' Chinese culture was seriously challenged by the political movements of the 1980s, which led to the abolition of Martial Law in 1987.

Aboriginal elites in the urban areas became actively involved in these political movements. In 1983, an aboriginal journal *Gau Shan Ching* (in Chinese, lit. high mountain green) was published by the aboriginal students of National Taiwan University. The basic position of the journal was that aboriginal peoples were facing a "deadly crisis of genocide", therefore, they were in need of a self-rescue movement (Liu 1994: 276). Consequently, in 1984, the Association For the Promotion of Aboriginal Rights was established in Taipei. The founders of the association viewed aboriginal peoples as victims of history, who had suffered and lost their traditional culture and faced the crisis of existence and identity, and were in urgent need of cultural revival and political action. The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, of which half the members are indigenous peoples, also played a significant role in these aboriginal movements (Liu 1994). As a result of the wider political changes in Taiwan, the policy of assimilation is gradually being replaced by that of multiculturalism. This policy is welcomed by most Bunun, although some find the change of policy confusing. The issue of multiculturalism will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

Summary

In the above, I have outlined the dynamic historical relationships between the Bunun and the colonisation processes. I highlighted the self perception of the Bunun as a

people in constant movement, and the importance of mobility in maintaining their political autonomy under the threat of the lowland state. This characteristic was not undetected by the Japanese colonial government, hence the resettlement policy aimed to 'fix' them on a permanent, bounded location for the convenience of surveillance and control. This fixity, however, was short-lived. As a result of the Nationalist government's policies for development and modernisation, agriculture is no longer an economically viable mode of livelihood, and nowadays the Bunun have to migrate between their village homes and the cities in search of work and opportunities to make money. The changes in the Bunun's living conditions, however, are not dictated by the vicissitudes of government policies. In the next chapter, I will discuss the Bunun's experience of government policies, as well as how they strive to play an active role in their relationship with the state.

Chapter 2

Dealing with Government Officials and Imagining the State

One hot, sunny spring day in Ququaz, I was helping Tina Bahin and Tina Niun dig up the weeds in their cabbage garden.¹ As we sweated and chatted during work, they mentioned that they were deeply impressed by a Taiwanese television programme about a ‘primitive people’ somewhere in the world. They were not sure where it was, Africa perhaps (I read about the programme in the newspaper, it was about New Guinea). These primitive people wore no clothes! Men covered their penis only, and women wore skirts made of banana leaves, while their breasts hung to their waist and swung when they moved. Both of them shook their heads in disapproval and continued to describe excitedly for me how hostile these people were when they first saw the television crew approaching their village. Men held their spears in an attacking position and surrounded the strangers. The presenter was terrified and started to scream. Fortunately, when these savage men realised that the visitors were only interested in filming them, their hostility transformed dramatically into hospitality. The guests were invited into the village compound and were treated with roasted pigs. Tina Bahin and Tina Niun were very interested in the way the pigs were cooked. The men dug a hole in the ground, made a big fire, covered it with banana leaves and then placed the pigs on top. It looked very delicious! However, they didn’t like the way these people kept their pigs in the house. Also, they were lazy, and they kept no gardens like the one we were working in now.

Tina Bahin and Tina Niun were astonished and puzzled about the living conditions of these primitive people. They asked me: “Why are these people so backward? Don’t they have a government?” I said that they did, but that their government was probably weak and didn’t intervene much. And Tina Bahin was even more puzzled:

How can it be possible for them to live like that if they have a government? We Bunun used to be like them, we kept pigs in the house. We fought with the Qalavang and chopped each other’s heads off. But since the government came we no longer do so. Our life is not backward anymore.

I was struck head on by the way in which Tina Bahin and Tina Niun perceive

¹ Tina/Cina means mother or aunt in Bunun.

others as primitive, and by their notion that the government is the agency of 'progress' and change. What a long way the Bunun, a people sometimes described as 'ghosts from hell' or 'a herd of animals' by an early Japanese ethnographer Sayama (1988[1919]: 211, 213), had travelled on the 'route to civilisation'! Now they can look back at their past and see how backward they were, and be satisfied that they are not like that any more. Now they can laugh at those 'primitive' people who are still backward, as they had been laughed at by their colonisers in the past themselves, and even now, though more implicitly and on more limited occasions. However, if the primitivism of these two ordinary middle aged women shows how much the Bunun are influenced by the way they are seen by the government, there is also some ambivalence and disquiet in the way the Bunun cast the 'colonial gaze' on themselves and their past.

Most people I met in Vulvul and Ququaz held the notion that the government is the main agency of 'progress' and change. Although many of these changes are not to their liking, and the government is often criticised in private, most Bunun describe themselves as cooperative, compliant and in tune with the government. Tama Taugan once depicted their relationship with the state in the following terms: "We Bunun are like cattle led by the government, very obedient. The government wants us to go east so we go east, the government wants us to go west so we go west".² The Bunun are also seen in this way by government officials. The officials often praise the people of Vulvul and Ququaz as good cooperative citizens who are in tune with the government in official meetings and electoral rallies. In private conversations with me, they say similar things but perhaps in less complimentary terms. Once an ex-policeman Han-Chinese official put it to me bluntly: "The Bunun are a nice people, very pristine. In other words, they are easy to rule".

This easy-to-ruleness echoes what my friend Vuya, a Bunun official in Haitun, said about the Bunun. When I told him that I was interested in studying the relationship between the Bunun and the state, he thought that I had chosen a very boring topic. As he said, there was nothing to be studied because their relationship with the state could be easily summarised in one Chinese proverb: *zhong-tang-ai-guo* (loyal to the [Nationalist] party and love the state). The way the Bunun describe themselves as in tune with the government, and the taken-for-grantedness of their unproblematic relationship with the state in Vuya's statement, imply that they see their relationship with the state as

² Cattle were introduced to Ququaz together with wet-rice cultivation by the Japanese, and thus provides an appropriate metaphor for expressing the hierarchical relationship with the colonisers.

straightforward, non-confrontational and depoliticised.

This chapter will look at the relationship between the Bunun and the state. I am interested not so much in what the state wants to do to the Bunun and how the state establishes its rule and power, but in how the Bunun perceive the state, and how they act accordingly. I will begin with the Bunun's experience of government policies, and emphasise their active role in the process of socio-cultural transformation. Then I describe how they conceptualise bureaucracy and interact with government officials, in a fashion that is not only influenced by, but also constitutive of, their culturally specific ways of imagining the state. I suggest that the Bunun view compliance as effective political action, and challenge the recent theoretical preoccupation with resistance.

The government as the agency of 'progress' and change

The people of Vulvul and Ququaz maintained very different relationships with the Japanese colonial government at the early stage of its rule. The former resisted fiercely, but the latter came to be incorporated into its administrative system without bloodshed due to the perennial hostility between them and the Qalavang. This is expressed in the way they refer to the Japanese. The people of Vulvul call the Japanese *Nipon*, as the Japanese refer to themselves. In contrast, the people of Ququaz (and other Taketudu) refer to the Japanese as *Qaiyal*, a positive term which is suggestive of being posh, orderly and smart. As Tama Qancuaz explained to me, their ancestors were very impressed by the Japanese police and army who dressed in smart uniforms and marched in orderly formation. However, towards the end of Japanese rule, their relationships with the colonial government became the same. Both settlements were under constant police surveillance and nurtured resentment and hatred toward the Japanese beneath the surface of submission and obedience. The elders of Ququaz remember clearly how their ancestors once besieged the police station and a serious conflict almost erupted, as the constant and unreasonable use of violence by the Japanese police pushed them close to the edge. Even cattle had tempers. They let the Japanese off that time, but they plotted revenge in a less confrontational way. On one occasion the police station was mysteriously set on fire and burned down during the night.

Despite all the efforts made by the Japanese police — who were also teachers and 'doctors' — to implement the assimilation policy, it seems that relatively little was

achieved.³ Although the people of Vulvul and Ququaz remember how the colonial policies aimed to transform the Bunun into the Emperor's loyal subjects by various disciplinary methods, in their view they were not much changed by Japanese colonial rule. During the Japanese period the Bunun strove to maintain their own way of life by incorporating new things into their world.

Even Tama Taugan, an elder in his seventies who was recruited by the Japanese police force, and who continued to work as a policeman for several years after the Nationalist government took over Taiwan, was struck by the limited effects the Japanese colonial policies had on the people of Ququaz. When Tama Taugan, who was originally from Isin-an, was transferred to Ququaz in 1949, he was shocked that the people were so 'backward'. In his preconception, Ququaz, being an 'exemplary settlement' under the Japanese colonisation, should have been well ahead in the process of 'progress' and development. Far from it. Instead, the people of Ququaz still ate rice with their bare hands! No chopsticks, spoons or bowls were used, as taught by the Japanese. Tama Taugan found himself in an uneasy situation:

When I was transferred to Ququaz, at first I was not used to the life here. I didn't know how to live with these people who were so backward. Once a family killed a chicken in their hut at Qoqolu and invited me over for a meal. I didn't know how to eat with them! They used no spoons or bowls or chopsticks, but grabbed hot rice from the cooking pot with their hands! I didn't know how to do it or how they managed to do it, so I pretended that I had already eaten and only had some chicken.

Tama Taugan surmised that the people of Ququaz abandoned what the Japanese had taught them and returned to their old customs and habits (*tailupa-an*) after the Japanese left Taiwan.⁴ Or that they had never really been changed by the colonial policies but only pretended to follow the rules set up by the Japanese, for the Japanese police were very strict and harsh. The notion that the Japanese did not achieve much of what they intended is widespread, and there is a sense of irony in the way people talk about it. On one occasion the Japanese arranged for the elders of Ququaz to go to Puli,

³ A growing number of historical studies on the impact of the Japanese colonial policies on the aboriginal peoples have appeared in recent years (Tsurumi 1984; Fujii 1989; Nagata 1993; Hu 1996; Li 1997, Lin 1998). However, I find the implicit tendency in many of these studies to derive a new political, social and economic order from the Japanese colonial policies problematic.

⁴ Cf. Kondo (1988:47). He has pointed out that Japanese officials have described the difficulty of transforming the aboriginal people. For example, after aboriginal children finished their primary school education, they were assimilated back into the old environment and returned to old aboriginal ways of life. It showed how powerful was the ability of tribal societies to incorporate external cultural influences.

the nearest town, to worship at a Sintoist shrine and to show how well they had learnt to be Japanese by performing Japanese singing and dancing in front of the government officials. Afterwards, everyone received a rice cake as reward. When the elders tell this story, what they draw attention to is the rice cake and not the Sintoist worship or whether they acted as proper Japanese or not. Similarly, the people of Vulvul love the story about the trip to Japan made by the *Tomuk* ('chiefs' appointed by the Japanese). On one occasion all Bunun *Tomuk* in Taitung were sent on a tour to Japan because the Japanese thought they would be impressed and inspired by its civilisation and would aspire to become civilised themselves. However, according to Tama Kila, they were only impressed by two things:

When my grandfather Hulas Vua and other *Tomuk* went on a tour to Japan, they were brought to stay in a hotel. The Japanese distributed soaps to each of them so they could clean themselves. The *Tomuk* of Rito had never seen soap before and mistook this white, square thing for a rice cake and ate it. Afterwards he asked other *Tomuk* why they hadn't eaten theirs? It was hilarious! Another time the Japanese took them to visit a hospital. My grandfather and other *Tomuk* were shocked to see the specimens of human organs displayed in bottles; they thought the dried fish intestines they exchanged with the Amis (an indigenous fishing people) were taken from dead people, and stopped eating them when they returned home.

Although the people of Vulvul and Ququaz do not attribute irresistible transforming power to the Japanese colonial rule, some practices, especially the use of new technology and manufactured goods, are recognised as having been introduced by the Japanese. The Bunun loved the convenience of new material goods when it suited them. Stable exchange networks between the Bunun and both Han-Chinese and other indigenous peoples existed long before the Japanese colonisation. The Bunun exchanged the dried wild meat, deer hides and antlers, and other goods they gathered in the mountains for salt, cloth, needles, threads, cooking pots, metal tools, food, guns, gun powder and other things. Exchange was the main reason for trips to the lowlands.⁵ The Japanese soon took the matter into their own hands and monopolised all exchange since they found it an efficient means of control. Only submissive tribes were allowed to exchange and trade with outsiders through the Barter Office set up by the Japanese (Bureau of Aboriginal Affairs 1911: 6-7).

⁵ Cf. Lin (1998:24). Before Japanese colonisation the Bunun also went to the lowlands in order to visit relatives and friends who were married into Han-Chinese families, to seek medical help and for sightseeing (ibid: 24-25).

Material goods and objects play an important part in the Bunun's relationship with the outside, and they figure significantly in the narratives about government policies, especially after the Nationalist government took over Taiwan. The Nationalist government continued to implement the assimilation policy, and was more successful. In Vulvul, I got a chance to look at all the official documents in the village office, which record all policies from the late 1960s to the early 1990s, and I was struck by the plethora of government policies. However, the people of Vulvul remembered very little about them, and they are not greatly concerned about government policies in their everyday life. The situation in Ququaz is almost the same, and the narratives about government policies very similar. People talk about government policy as a project they can fulfill or frustrate. However, they also think it is better to be pragmatic about it, especially when reward and government subsidy are involved. The policy the people in both settlements remember most clearly is the 'Living Improvement Policy for Mountain Aborigines' which started in 1953. Its aim was to assimilate aboriginal people into Han-Chinese, 'to promote the national language; to improve clothing, diet, dwellings, everyday life; and to reform customs and habits' (Hsu 1992: 15-17).

The people of Vulvul and Ququaz are impressed by the 'Living Improvement Policy' precisely because it involves the terrain of everyday life. It was a process characterised by adding what the Bunun 'lack' and what the Han-Chinese possess, on the one hand, and by removing 'backward habits' and 'superstitions', on the other. In the narratives about government policy, the Bunun were constantly ordered by the government to obtain new material objects and goods, especially a wide range of household goods and domestic items. As they recall, they were told to eat with chopsticks and bowls rather than with their hands; to learn how to cook Chinese dishes rather than just boiling vegetables and meat; to sit by the table and on chairs rather than on the ground at mealtimes; to remove the hearth from the living room and replace it with a gas oven; to use duvet covers rather than fires for warmth in cold weather; to wear clothes bought from the market or travelling merchants rather than clothes made from deer and goat hides; to store household wares and clothes in wardrobes and chests; etc. Another important theme concerned cleanliness, hygiene and order. The Bunun were required to clean themselves and the house regularly; to wash their face and brush their teeth daily; to sweep the floor and front yard everyday; to clean the tableware, cooking utensils and clothes often; to kill rats and to keep domesticated animals from entering the house and to restrain them from leaving dung inside the settlement; to build

bathrooms and toilets rather than using the streams and woods; to 'beautify' their houses and living environment; etc.

These government policies attempted to instill in the Bunun a new sense of want and need, especially the need for self-improvement. The police, the school and the medical dispensary all worked together in implanting these notions. However, according to the Bunun I know, these policies did not have immediate effects. In the early years of implementing the 'Living Improvement Policy' and before the road was built, government officials walked to the village roughly once a month to inspect the effects and results of the policy. It was the time the people of Vulvul and Ququaz really paid heed to the policies, as they had to prepare themselves and their houses for inspection and to avoid criticisms from the visiting officials. In the first month of my stay in Ququaz, I was told by a Han-Chinese school porter about how much the Bunun's living conditions were improved by the government in the past three decades. He gave me an illustration of Bunun 'backwardness' by describing the way some people (still!) ate hot rice porridge with their bare hands in the mid 1960s, when he first came to the village. Tableware was reserved for the occasions when important guests came to visit. This was confirmed by several Bunun. Similarly, in Vulvul I was told how they had to hide 'bad looking things' in the mountains from being seen by visiting government officials, such as children without nice and clean clothes to wear, lest the name (fame) of Vulvul was damaged.

At least once a year, a competition was held by the government to decide who had been following government policy closely and was thus worthy of being regarded as a role model by other villagers. It was treated seriously by the Bunun, especially by political leaders who wanted a good name for themselves and for the settlement. Bunun leaders accompanied the visiting Han-Chinese government officials who inspected every household and awarded marks. Winners would be honoured in public and received some reward, usually domestic items such as soap, plates, bowls, or blankets. These occasions also provided good opportunities to get the officials to promise more subsidies for the village.

The Living Improvement Policy was a 'civilising' project and a 'revolution in habits' which involved not only material aspects but also spiritual ones. Bunun rituals and taboos were regarded as 'backward habits' and 'superstitions' and had to be abandoned. Indeed many of them were in conflict with government notions about cleanliness and hygiene. For instance, washing faces and bodies as well as sweeping the

floor were forbidden during many Bunun ritual contexts, such as funerals and harvest rituals. The Bunun also regarded excessive washing as detrimental to the body and health. When I had a bad flu during my first winter in Vulvul, I was kindly told by several people that it was because I showered too often.

Christianity, which was first introduced in the mid 1950s and gradually gained most people's support within a decade, had a complementary role to play in the 'civilising' process. The government initiated this process and was largely responsible for it, but the Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Church were unwitting partners of the state in the process of modernisation. The two churches supported most government policies, especially the need to relinquish traditional rituals, taboos and 'superstitions', which were seen as the act of the devil (see Chapters 4 & 6).

It must be stressed that although the government initiated the process of 'progress' and change with the help of the two Christian churches, the people of Vulvul and Ququaz also played an active role. As I have said above, government policies did not have immediate effects and did not matter much when no officials came to inspect. However, the tide was turning. The building or improvement of the road in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and intensified interactions with the Han-Chinese, contributed to what I will call, following Kelly (1995: 264-265), the 'enticement of modernity', which significantly facilitated the process of social and cultural transformation.

By this time, the nearest towns, Kuanshan for Vulvul and Puli for Ququaz, were undergoing some dramatic development. In the early 1960s, the economic structure of Taiwan was transformed from an economy based on agriculture to an economy based on industry (Cheng 1975: 119), and was incorporated further into the global capitalist market economy. The wealth in rural towns like Kuanshan and Puli quickly increased, and the people of Vulvul and Ququaz felt that they were increasingly deprived and left behind compared with the Han-Chinese. Many middle aged people in Vulvul recalled that when they were kids, Kuanshan, with lots of empty space covered with couch grass, looked more like a big village than a town. In the 1970s, a large number of new cement houses were built and Kuanshan had grown into a town, a materialised expression of modernity.

The people of Vulvul and Ququaz found themselves more and more allured by the new commodities and 'modern' things they found in the town. Going to the town was an important occasion and an exciting experience. Usually they would carry something they could sell in the market (wild meat, rice, millet, red beans, peanuts, bamboo shoots,

etc.), and with the money they had earned, bought other things (clothes, shoes, food, domestic items, tools, duvet covers, etc.). Even with things to carry, they would try to look their best so they would not be laughed at by the Han-Chinese. Preparations beforehand included washing themselves, putting on nice clothes, shoes and, in the case of women, make-up — when it was available. In this sense, to dress well and to look good is to put on a protective layer which shelters one from possible shame and humiliation (cf. Cannell 1999: 213). Listening to these going-to-the-town stories, it is also obvious to me that the Bunun showed great effort and boldness in trying to look 'modern'. Besides make-up, they were eager to have their hair done in the most fashionable style. Even men rushed to the new hairdresser in town and had their hair curled! As my adoptive father told me, they were competing to look the most fashionable at that time. The fashion fever has now died down a bit, especially among men. But even today, the care, attention and interest the Bunun pay to their appearance when they go to the town never fail to catch my notice.

The acquisition of new manufactured goods brought influence and social standing to their owner. The first radio, television, fridge, motorbike, and car in the village attracted a large crowd eager to look at and admire it. Some people even took loans they were unable to repay to buy these commodities, and, as a result, lost their land. Having said that, I do not presume that manufactured goods and commodities have an irresistible magnetism that compels the Bunun to adopt them irrespective of the cost to their culture and autonomy, as Thomas (1991: 83-124) has very rightly warned us.⁶ However, due to the limit of space, the issue of how the Bunun perceive and appropriate new commodities cannot be discussed here.

The fact that most Bunun took to consumerism without much hesitation, together with the need to pay bills, motivated them to become wage labourers in national forestry reserves, factories and especially in construction works during the 1960s and 1970s. In these workplaces the Bunun interacted closely with the Han-Chinese. They became increasingly familiar with Han-Chinese notions and adopted some of their customs and life style. The people of Vulvul and Ququaz are very conscious that these intensified interactions with Han-Chinese and their cultural borrowing are important factors in bringing new social and cultural changes into their communities.

The role played by the state and the colonisation process in transforming the Bunun into what they are today — more and more like the Han-Chinese as they see

⁶ See also Hugh-Jones (1992).

it — should not be denied or underestimated. However, it is clear that the Bunun themselves are not passive recipients and followers of government policies. They have weighed the historical conditions they have found themselves in the past and the present, and tried to create a beneficial situation for themselves. Although their aspirations to become ‘modern’ and to create a respectable self-image are not always successful, nevertheless, they value immensely their own effort and creative ability to adapt to the ever changing world.

Identity card : paper person and citizenship

The narratives about the Living Improvement Policy centre on how the government ordered the people of Vulvul and Ququaz to acquire a wide range of material goods. By using them properly and regularly, they were expected to acquire a new set of habits and to achieve self-improvement. The ultimate aim of this policy is to create civilised citizens of the state by assimilating aboriginal people into Han-Chinese. The incorporation of local communities into the expanding capitalist market economy is also conducive to the process of redefining and reconstructing subjects through the possessive relationship between persons and things.

As pointed out by Foster (1995) and LiPuma (1995), the trope of possession provides various ways of imagining the state. The way that states regulate and adjudicate possession through law and the police force is mediated by the trope of possession itself: the nation-state has (possesses) laws (Foster 1995: 19). The notion that the “state has laws”, which give it the authority and power to define the rights and duties of its citizens, is often mentioned by the Bunun as something extremely important but beyond their knowledge and understanding. For them, law is intimidating because “nobody understands the law”. Moreover, the law, which the Bunun have very limited knowledge about, and do not participate in its making, seems to make them and their land possessions of the state. The state can declare their ancestral hunting grounds national forest reserves, and can ban hunting. It can also command the Bunun to do national service; to attend school; to pay tax; to do communal labour and to assist the police in looking for tourists lost in the mountains; to register their land and thus also stop them opening up new land; etc. In the name of the law, the Bunun feel that they, as a minority group, do not have many of the ‘privileges of citizenship’ (Kelly 1995) but lots of restrictions and obligations.

For the people of Vulvul and Ququaz, the extent to which they are incorporated and encompassed by the state and its legal system as individual citizens is objectified by the identity card, which seems to possess agency independent of the person it represents. On the one hand, one needs an identity card to make an action count on numerous occasions: to pay tax; to vote; to register land; to open a bank account; to enrol in higher education and the army; to register a marriage; to find employment; to apply for government subsidy; etc. Moreover, one cannot legally assert these actions without the identity card. There are lots of irritating or amusing stories of how people make a long trip to the local government office but cannot get the things they made the trip for done because they have forgotten to bring their identity cards. Or, someone returns home from the city just for the election, but cannot vote for the same reason. Amazingly the identity card seems to have its own will and the ability to disappear when it is needed. I remember my adoptive mother often went through all the drawers and bags in her room looking for the identity card, because it was very important and she hid it so well. On the other hand, the Bunun are aware and wary of the situation that someone else can act on your behalf and do you harm when they get your identity card, such as writing a tax report for the wage you never get, tying you to exploitative working conditions or making you the guarantor of their bank loan. The 'paper person' (Comaroffs 1997: 370) seems to be more 'real' than the one with flesh and blood when a legal situation is involved, and the people of Vulvul and Ququaz find it perplexing. As pointed out by Kapferer (1995: 84), in bureaucratic practices the individual is a disembodied abstraction, which is shown perfectly clearly here by the identity card.

My attention was first brought to this issue by a confusing and frustrating conversation with Tama Bukun, an elder who usually lived in his field hut and seldom came down to the settlement. I went to visit him in his peanut garden and was hoping that he could tell me something about the history of his patrilineal clan and the settlement. However, our conversation soon lost its shape as he went on and on about how the Bunun should never forget about the Republic of China, and how good the Republic of China was because everybody got an identity card which they didn't have under the Japanese rule. The Republic of China was too kind to the Bunun, according to him, better than any Christian Church or other religion, for you didn't get an identity card by believing in any religion. Therefore Tama Bukun said he didn't believe in Christianity, Buddhism or Taoism, or he believed in all of them.⁷ It was morning, and I

⁷ A contrast with the favourite anecdote about the identity card of a Karo storyteller Pak Tua, recorded by

could tell that Tama Bukun wasn't drunk, so why did he go on and on about something so apparently trivial or ideologically loaded? Later I discovered that his obsession with identity cards was well known. The people of Vulvul think it is funny, but they all know too well that they should not take the identity card lightly. It is, after all, a very important possession for a citizen.

Dealing with government officials and imagining the state

Like the person in bureaucratic practices, the state also appears as an abstraction. Its distant existence must be mediated (Gupta 1995). For the people of Vulvul and Ququaz, the most immediate context for encountering the state is provided by their relationship with government bureaucracies at the local level. The interaction between the Bunun and government officials is the key to the actualisation of state power in everyday life.

There are two main occasions when the people of Vulvul and Ququaz directly encounter and interact with government officials: when they go to the local administrative centre and local government offices, and when government officials come to the village. The former is more formal, bureaucratic, and usually involves legal regulations. Many Bunun are uneasy and even feel intimidated in such circumstances, especially those who are illiterate and/or do not have a good grasp of the national language. For those who are competent in both, it can still be a frustrating and alienating experience. I had my share of such experiences, too. When I did my first fieldwork in Vulvul, I wanted to obtain a copy of all household registrations since the Japanese colonial period. However, the experience of trying to obtain them from the Haitun Household Census Centre, which belongs to the police system, was extremely frustrating. Despite two official references issued by the Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, that I presented to the Head of the Household Census Centre, and the phone calls local governor made on my behalf, there was no success after several visits. When I still came home empty-handed after I had tried everything I could think of, my adoptive father asked me if I had extra money? He told me the reason I had so many difficulties was probably because the Head of the Household Census Centre "wanted to

Steadly (1993: 207-212), soon comes into my mind. Whereas Pak Tua refused to choose one of the five religions recognised by the Indonesian government and thus does not have his identity card, Tama Bukun takes the identity card as more important than any religion he knows and a sign of the kindness of the state. However, Tama Bukun and other Bunun have no choice on this matter, they must have an identity card. It reflects a difference of government policy in Indonesia and Taiwan, and the various degrees of state intervention.

eat”, as he judged from his previous experience of dealing with government officials.

After my own deeply unpleasant experience, I heard many similar instances from the Bunun. The request for a feast, whether implicit or explicit, imagined or actualised, could come from government officials irrespective of their ethnic background. For instance, a proposed pay rise for nursery teachers was boycotted by the council of Haitun township, composed entirely of elected Bunun representatives, not for the lack of sufficient funding but because the teachers had failed to ‘express gratitude’ to them. After the nursery teachers, all of whom are Bunun, paid for the council members to have a feast in a restaurant, the proposal was finally granted.

There is a widespread distrust of officials in the management of government funding. Ordinary people in Vulvul and Ququaz often complain that they don’t get enough subsidy and help from the government. There is said to be plenty of money, but it is used elsewhere or it is in the pocket of the government officials. A direct and vivid expression of their suspicion is that government officials “eat money” (*mon sui*). For example, a middle aged widow, Cina Vaci, complained to me, with a gesture of putting food into her mouth, that she didn’t get any government subsidy to help raising her nine children because local officials ate all her money. However, unless someone is drunk, such accusations are never made in front of the officials but only behind their back, in daily conversations and gossip.

When government officials come to visit the village, they are well received and entertained, mainly but not exclusively by local political leaders. Chickens, ducks and other livestock are killed for them. Rice wine, beer and other drinks are also a must. When it’s available, wild meat is provided and is particularly welcomed by the guests. This can be a burden to the village head and other local leaders, especially to their wives, who are responsible for preparing and cooking food. My adoptive mother used to complain to me about how my adoptive father killed all the goats she kept (more than forty) to feed the visiting officials when he was the village head, and how she cooked and cooked all day because these officials never stopped eating. Other wives of local political leaders make similar complaints. However, helping their husbands to feed and treat the visiting officials also gives these women public recognition of their work, and sometimes leads them to become the leader of the women’s association or a member of the village development council. An able man without a wife, or the support of his wife, has much less chance to become a local political leader. When I wondered why Tama Kila, a very capable middle aged man in Vulvul, never became, or was interested in

becoming, the village head, he quickly pointed to the fact that he was widowed for more than ten years. He wanted to become the village head, but without a wife he was not suitable for the job.

The contrast between the hospitality shown to government officials and criticism of them behind their back is not contradictory. It is based on the underlying notion that the state is a provider and a source of wealth, which can be tapped if the right means are used.⁸ The road, the village office, the medical dispensary, the school, the television transmission tower, the running water supply, etc. are all built by the state. The stable and enviable salary of the officials, police and schoolteachers are provided by the state, too. There is plenty of money in the government and the people of Vulvul and Ququaz want it for their region and for themselves at a personal level. To tap the wealth of the state and to bring development to the local area is regarded as the main responsibility of government officials and local political leaders. When they do not carry out the job properly and bring in enough funding and subsidy, they are subject to the suspicion that they eat money.

There are various means which can be used to tap the wealth and resources of the state: applying in writing through the bureaucratic procedures; making requests to the officials in person; or protest and public demonstration. The first option is regarded by most Bunun I know as beyond their knowledge and ability or at least very difficult to accomplish by themselves. I am struck that even those who have graduated from the high school and have sufficient writing skills often choose to rely on government officials or local political leaders for this task, because they don't think they have enough ability and experience in dealing with the bureaucracy. It requires courage.

Making requests to government officials in person is the most popular option and is also regarded as the most effective. Therefore, the people of Vulvul and Ququaz always emphasise how important it is to have someone from their village or someone they know personally in the government and local council. They often encouraged me to take national exams and to become an official in their area not only because I was regarded as very good at writing, but also because they want someone they know personally in the local government. However, most government officials are not relatives or neighbours, and great emphasis is placed on building personal relationships with visiting officials.

Eating and drinking together play an important role in the establishment of a

⁸ See Jacobsen (1995) on a similar notion among the Dom people of Papua New Guinea.

relationship with government officials. For the Bunun, sharing food and drinks often creates an intimate, and more importantly, equal relationship among the participants. It can mitigate differences in status and enhances communication. Drinking together helps to achieve an ideal harmonious state called *pinaskal*, which means that everyone is satisfied, happy, and that they bless each other. At the same time, intoxication takes one's reservation and shyness away, and makes it much easier to make requests (cf. Donner 1994: 251). It softens the heart (*is-ang*) and moves the listener to show pity and compassion. I heard several stories about how newcomers in Ququaz acquired land just by requesting it from those who had plenty, not necessarily their patrilineal clan members or affines, when they drank together. I was also very surprised to see Tama Dahu, a man in his late forties who recently obtained a qualification in word processing through adult education, phone the governor of Haitun township directly and ask for a temporary post in the township office after he was drunk, an unusually bold action for a shy guy. When he was rejected and started to cry in front of me, I felt terribly sorry but didn't know how to comfort him.

Tama Dahu's feeling of frustration and indeed humiliation highlights the hazards faced by the disadvantaged in attempting to overcome or to negotiate an unequal relationship. He failed to create a situation within which he and the Bunun governor were in a more intimate and equal situation before making his request. According to my observation, if he had done so he would not have been rejected so bluntly. Officials would often promise to try their best to help, even though in the end the outcome was the same.

The people of Vulvul and Ququaz regard protest as the worst way of making their requests and demands known to the government. They never organise any protest themselves, although a few people have participated in protests organised by the neighbouring Qalavang villages or other associations, such as the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan. Moreover, they don't like to be identified as protesters. Protesters are seen in negative terms, as lacking sufficient communication skills, and as destroyers of social order. When the people of Vulvul and Ququaz talk about going to protest, they readily reject the idea and laugh at themselves. The following example shows clearly their preference for negotiation over protest.

The road that connects Ququaz and two other Qalavang villages to the outside is very busy from late October to mid January, when the maple leaves turn red in a nearby mountain resort. Tourists come in thousands, even tens of thousands, to admire the

beauty of the late autumn forest. The traffic on the narrow mountain road is inevitably very slow due to the unusual amount of vehicles. The people of Ququaz and the neighbouring villages suffer much inconvenience. At the end of 1998, the leaders of three villages organised a meeting among themselves and decided to express their resentment collectively to the National Forestry Bureau, the owner of the resort. No quick solution was offered by the officials in charge but they promised to do their best to solve the problem, or to see if the villagers could be compensated. One week later, the traffic situation had still not improved. About one hundred and fifty people from two Qalavang villages blocked the entrance of the resort for two weekends and demanded employment and compensation from the National Forestry Bureau. The traffic improved a lot as tourists were deterred due to the publicity the protest generated in national newspapers and on television. Despite being invited, nobody from Ququaz participated in the protest. Moreover, they found the action of their Qalavang neighbours unreasonable. As the village head said to me :

These Qalavang! They love to quarrel! They protest all the time. We Bunun are different, we like to sit down and talk things over nicely. When we village heads and representatives went to express our dissatisfaction to the officials of the National Forestry Bureau, they already agreed to look into the problem and to try to find a solution. We should be patient and give them time. Now these Qalavang protest and destroy our relationship with the government. Who will be willing to listen to and talk to us in the future?

This preference for negotiation and communication over protest and resistance has its root in the past. In Vulvul area, when the Japanese first arrived there was fierce resistance and the people learnt a harsh lesson when they were pacified and massacred by armed Japanese police. Until the end of Japanese colonisation, Vulvul was under the threat of artillery bombardment. In Ququaz, the Bunun discovered the benefits of negotiating with the Japanese before their Qalavang enemies did, and are still proud of their better relationship with the authorities. As I was often told: “the Japanese found us Bunun easy to communicate and cooperate with. They loved us and hated the Qalavang.” Historical experiences have taught the people of both settlements that when the colonisers cannot be got rid off it is better to negotiate and cooperate with them.

For the people of Vulvul and Ququaz, being compliant and cooperative, at least when the government officials are around, is part of the attempt to have more say in their relationships with the state. By accepting rather than confronting the power of the

state, they try to create a 'condition of listening' (Burghart 1996) so that their voice can be better heard, and their requests better met. Such a strategy of maintaining their agency is closely bound up with the Bunun notion of power, and with how they conceive and imagine the state.

The state is usually referred to by the Japanese term *koku* or the Mandarin term *kuo-jih*. When asked about the Bunun term, some people say the state can be referred to as *taulu* --- the Bunun term for the Mainlanders who came to Taiwan with the Nationalist government after 1949. It shows that the state is associated with the ruling ethnic group and is related to the political transformation and ethnic interaction in Taiwan more generally. However, some elders pointed out that *taulu* is not the most pertinent way of referring to the state in Bunun, because it refers to China specifically. The state or the government, which are not distinguished by the Bunun, is better addressed as *sasaipuk*. *Sasaipuk* comes from *saipuk*, a word with multiple meanings. It means 'to feed', 'to raise' and 'to take care of'. 'To adopt' or 'to foster' is *saipuk*, too. Adoption is *saipukun*. *Saipuk* also means 'to govern' and 'to rule', hence the state and its rule is *sasaipuk*.

Sasaipuk also indicates the expectations the state is supposed to meet. As mentioned above, the Bunun see the state as a provider and a source of wealth. It is expected to feed, to nurture and to take care of them. The meaning of *saipuk* is demonstrated in a literal way when the road is severely damaged and blocked by typhoon, earthquake or torrential rain for several days or longer, and the government helicopters bring rice, instant noodles, milk powder and canned food to the village. By providing food, subsidy and services to its people, the power and authority of the state are recognised and accepted. The image of the state as a provider is produced by the historical process of interaction between the Bunun and the colonial state, as both sides use the model of kinship to construct their relationship.

When the Japanese first colonised Taiwan, they met fierce resistance from the Han-Chinese in the lowland. The colonial government was occupied with the task of pacifying the Han-Chinese uprising, and took a conciliation approach to the aboriginal people. Material goods and gifts were used to attract aboriginal people into peaceful contact with the colonial authority and to win over their support, followed by an attempt to assimilate and to 'civilise' them. The provision of goods proved to be the most popular policy among the Bunun (Lin 1998:10). The Japanese deliberately presented themselves as a provider, linked to the patronising notion that despite their ignorance

and stupidity, these 'raw savages' were also the children of the Japanese Emperor (Asano 1988[1933]: 56). By providing material goods and new technologies, the Japanese colonial officials could claim that they had taken good care of the Bunun.⁹

The Nationalist government also presents itself as a provider and a caretaker, and demands credit for it. During election campaigns, the Bunun are constantly reminded that they have been fed with the 'milk' of the Nationalist Party, and that it is time to reciprocate. Like parents looking after their children, the Nationalist government has done a lot for the Bunun. Since the Nationalist Party have given them so much, they must vote for its candidates.¹⁰ If they fail to do so, government funding and subsidies will stop flowing to them in the future. Such campaigning strategy usually works very well.

The emphasis on feeding, nurturing and looking after is also central to the Bunun notion of kinship and the establishment of relatedness more generally. However, there are significant differences between the political implications of kinship as perceived by the Bunun and by their colonisers. For a society like the Bunun with a strong egalitarian tendency, kinship is less about the construction of superiority and debt, which is what the Japanese and the Nationalist government attempt to do, and more about intimacy, protection and reciprocal moral commitment. The Bunun strongly emphasise that those with greater power should protect, and show compassion and love to those who are weaker (cf. Mabuchi 1987a[1974a]: 232). The provision of food, money and other things, both in everyday life and on ritual occasions, objectifies such love, sympathy and protection. Also, the hierarchy such provision may entail is discouraged and downplayed by the Bunun. The acceptance of such provision does not lead to the loss or diminishing of autonomy. Therefore, the Bunun recognise and accept the government's responsibility toward them without perceiving it to diminish their own autonomy.

The use of a kinship idiom by the state and the Bunun themselves has created a dialectical integration between the two, an intimacy that gives power its efficacy (cf. Mbembe 1992). Although such intimacy can be unsustainable and short-lived, it is perhaps not surprising that the people of Vulvul and Ququaz, in spite of their frequent

⁹ Tama Qancuaz of Ququaz, a pastor of the Presbyterian Church who is over seventy years old, went to Japan for a conference a few years ago. When he gave a short speech in Japanese to the crowd, he said that the Japanese were like the parents of Taiwanese aboriginal people and won huge applause. In fact, Tama Qancuaz thought the Japanese were violent and treated the Bunun very badly. However, he felt he was compelled to hide his true opinion in front of the Japanese out of politeness.

¹⁰ See Stafford (2000) for a discussion of the debt children owe to parents for their provision, and the obligation to reciprocate in Chinese kinship.

criticisms of government officials and the state, hesitate to confront them directly.

***Saspinal* and political leadership**

Bunun expectations of the state, as expressed in the Bunun notion of *sasaipuk*, also apply to government officials and local political leaders. As representatives of the state and mediators of the relationship between local people and the state, they are subject to similar moral evaluations. Government officials and local political leaders, are both addressed as *saspinal* in Bunun. They should behave in a generous, caring, sociable and helpful way. Good *saspinal* are said to be attentive to ordinary people's needs and always willing to help them in various matters, ranging from giving them a lift to the town, visiting them in the hospital, mediating disputes, to assisting in the application for bank loans or government grants. They should be sociable, willing to eat and drink with 'nobody' (someone without any title) from the same bowl and cup without hesitation, and to enjoy mixing with them. Also, they should be generous in using their own money to buy food and drinks for others. Certainly one of the most common criticisms against *saspinal* is that they are selfish and stingy because they seldom use their own money to buy food and drinks for others. Moreover, such stinginess indicates their lack of care and concern for ordinary people. One important way in which the *saspinal* can show their generosity and care is to donate money in public, and usually in a conspicuous fashion, to all sorts of communal activities. This money is mostly used to buy food and drinks.

As mediators between the Bunun and the state, local political leaders should also possess certain abilities, such as fluency in the national language and literacy. Being assertive, articulate, knowledgeable and confident in dealing with higher government officials on important occasions are essential, too. The establishment of the Nationalist Party at the grass-roots level in the village means that there are certain external influences or top-down intervention in the process of electing local political leaders. Consequently, those who have good connections in the Nationalist Party have huge advantages.

The term *saspinal* literally means 'strong and powerful protector' or 'someone to rely on'. There are two interpretations of how it came to be used to refer to political leaders and government officials. One is that *saspinal* was established under the threat of headhunting and the need to organise defense and tribal warfare more efficiently.

Under such conditions, several settlements would form a 'tribe' and a *saspinal* was elected by the tribal committee composed of clan elders. Men from the precedent patrilineal clan in the tribe had more advantage in gaining support and being elected. However, personal ability and experience was also essential. A *saspinal* was the guardian of customary laws and was responsible for calling and chairing tribal meetings. The decision of tribal meetings was executed under the supervision of *saspinal*. *Lavi-an* (military leader) and a group of *mamangan* (warriors or brave men) were responsible for warfare, defense and the training of young men (Ma 1985: 39-44). While a *saspinal* was still physically strong, he also led in headhunting as *Lavi-an*. When he became old, another strong man was elected as *Lavi-an* (Chiu 1966: 156). The other interpretation links it to the advance of colonialism in Taiwan. The Bunun had no official position for a settlement leader and things were decided by the elders of patrilineal clans. Under Ch'ing China, every Bunun settlement started to establish a leader called *saspinal* who was responsible for internal and foreign affairs. Under Japanese colonial rule, every settlement had more than one 'official' or *saspinal*, including one *Tomuk* and several vice-*Tomuk* (Sayama 1988[1919]: 51, see also Huang 1998: 133).

Both versions point to the connection between the establishment of political leadership and external threat. I think the former better explains the emergence of *saspinal* as a 'strong and powerful protector'; while the latter shows how the role of *saspinal* was transformed under the advance of the colonial state. From being political leaders who were responsible for mediating in internal disputes and foreign relations, such as warfare and peace covenants, *saspinal* have transformed into government officials whose power comes not only from internal support but also from the state.

The abolition of headhunting and the top-down intervention in Bunun political leadership by the state brought about certain shifts in the role of *saspinal*. However, there are also some continuities. Until today *saspinal* are still subject to similar moral evaluations by the Bunun. As in the times of headhunting and tribal warfare, *saspinal* should have courage, valour and confidence in dealing with the outside. When it comes to their relationship with ordinary Bunun, they should demonstrate love, care, compassion and protection toward them. It is emphasised that without the latter a *saspinal* is not truly strong and powerful. Although the official position provided by the state has a certain authority, a *saspinal* is not really influential without the support of other people. In this sense, the establishment of political leadership among the Bunun continues to hinge on the notion of 'exemplary personhood' or the 'exemplary centre'

which features significantly in Southeast Asia, as discussed by Anderson (1972) and Errington (1989).

Gossip, inaction and elections are the means that ordinary people can use against *saspinal*. Moreover, if a *saspinal* is regarded as trying to impose himself upon others, he may place himself in danger of witchcraft attack. In Ququaz, I was told such a story by Nasin. Nasin became the village head in 1986, when he was only 29 years old. Young and energetic, he was eager to put his new ideas into practice and to create a stronger sense of honour and unity in the village. He spoke to the villagers and issued instructions over the loudspeaker every week, and did not hesitate to rebuke certain kinds of behaviour, such as gambling, public drunkenness or quarrels between co-villagers. He was popular among many villagers but some were resentful of his assertiveness and rebuke. Two years into his term of office, one day his knees suddenly gave way to incredible pain when he was preparing the villagers for a dancing performance that would soon be held in the township. He went to the hospital in Puli and his condition was diagnosed as gout. However, he knew he had been attacked by witchcraft (*matimva*) due to the suddenness and seriousness of his condition. At its worst, he could hardly walk even though he had been to the hospital in Taipei and received better treatment. He went to consult several spirit mediums in other Bunun villages, and they confirmed that he had been attacked by witchcraft and treated him. Fortunately, although the process was slow, he made a good recovery. When his term of office came to an end after four years, although many people urged him to stand for another term, he decided not to.

In the above, I have discussed some aspects of the relationship between the state and the Bunun of Vulvul and Ququaz. I have tried to highlight the importance of the culturally specific way in which the Bunun conceive and imagine the state. Through their own idiom of kinship and power, the Bunun have tried to transform the state, initially an external and imposed authority, into a caring provider that they can negotiate with, and demand from. The state had also drawn on a similar, but not identical kinship idiom to incorporate the Bunun, the pitiful children in the infancy of civilisation, into its rule. As a result, there is a dialectical integration between the two. Despite their marginality, one cannot describe the present-day Bunun as “both outside and subject to state power” (Tsing 1993: 26). The people of Vulvul and Ququaz cannot be, and no longer want to be, outside state power; instead they are making a moral discourse about

the state that holds it accountable in terms of the delivery of material and social goods.¹¹ In the following, I will demonstrate further how these ideas about the state and government officials are put into action through the discussion of a particular activity.

Compliance, *saspinal* and mediating the relationship with the state

Early one August morning in 1997, Tama Dahu, the leader of the Bunun Traditional Music Troupe, reminded the people of Vulvul over the loudspeaker to gather in front of his house at noon. They were going to Sulai-an to perform singing and dancing for visiting government officials. As it was the high season for cash crops, people still went to work in the vegetable gardens. At noon, they rushed back from work and got ready quickly. At 1:10 p.m. we arrived at the Processing Centre for Agricultural Products of Haitun township at Sulai-an, where the annual inspection of the Social Development Project for Aborigines was going to be held. The Centre, a new building with a large concrete front yard and fences, was decorated with colourful flags, banners and sculptures. Most officials of Haitun township office and all the village heads were already there. They had been preparing for the presentation since early morning. Everyone was serious and nervous. The arrival of the people of Vulvul did not attract their attention much. I greeted my friends and acquaintances, and several officials told me that they had been working flat out for a whole week.

This annual inspection was also a competition, and marks would be given by a team of officials from the central government. The first three from all the aboriginal townships would be awarded big prize money. The First Prize was NT\$ 1.2 million, the Second Prize 1 million, and the Third Prize 0.8 million. More significantly, all local officials thought this was an important opportunity to impress the central government, so that Haitun would find favour in terms of the distribution of government funding and subsidy in the future.

The people of Vulvul went to the side of the building and changed their clothes by a ditch. Women put traditional costumes on top of the clothes they were wearing, and painted their faces with make-up. Some complained about the awfully hot weather, and enviously watched the men, who were wearing traditional short black skirts. When they were ready, the Vulvul village head instructed them to gather under the tent of the

¹¹ In this aspect, it can be compared with the caring-society model in some Southeast Asian States discussed by Ong (1999).

'traditional carving class', where some wooden carvings were displayed. In the other tents 'traditional weaving', agricultural specialities, and a television showing a video of festivals and rituals, were displayed.

We waited for the visiting officials for about an hour. When they finally arrived at 2:20 p.m., local officials asked the people of Vulvul to stand in two rows, with women in the front, and to welcome the guests with applause (see Figure 1). Without paying much attention to the ordinary Bunun, the guests went directly into the building where the presentation would be held. The meeting room was carefully decorated with posters promoting development projects. At the back, there was a long table exhibiting 'Bunun cultural objects' (baskets and more carvings) and local agricultural products (millet, cabbages, green peppers, and passion fruit). Every official received two pamphlets, one introducing the programme for the afternoon, and the other explaining the implementation of the Social Development Project locally. Nevertheless, the governor of Haitun and other local officials still made formal oral presentations.

I looked at the pamphlet with great interest. I was struck by how much money the Haitun township had spent on economic development in the last year alone: more than NT\$ 100 millions! This was in sharp contrast to the amount spent on 'cultural projects': less than a million. Although the decoration and exhibition of the entire space focused on displaying Bunun 'traditional culture' and reflected some changes in government policy about aboriginal people (from assimilation to multiculturalism after the abolition of Martial Law in 1987), the very purpose of the Social Development Project was still "to improve the relatively backward living conditions of aboriginal people" and "to bring progress to aboriginal societies" (Haitun township office 1997: 6).

After the presentation, the visitors moved to the tents outside to watch Bunun singing and dancing performed by the people of Vulvul. They were treated to local specialities, such as rice cakes (*muci*), rice wine, passion fruit, pickled prunes and prune juice. It was not Tama Dahu but an articulate Bunun official, Haisul, who introduced the meaning of each song to the visitors through a microphone. Haisul modified the meaning of what the people of Vulvul were actually singing to suit the changing political situation brought about by government policies so as to please the visitors. For example, when the men of Vulvul were chanting *malastapan* about their ancestors' valour in fighting the Japanese and their own bravery in hunting, he added a few things such as "we fought the communist bandits for the country in the August 23rd War" and

“now the government has banned hunting so we plant green pepper”.¹²

On the whole, the performance did not attract much attention from the visiting officials, who were very busy eating, and occasionally clapped their hands before the people of Vulvul actually finished singing a song, which I found very offensive. The performance lasted about an hour. Then the guests set off to inspect development projects in another village, with their car loaded with rice cakes, cabbages, passion fruit, pickled prunes and other local specialities. None of the people of Vulvul got to taste these things.

After the performance, the people of Vulvul went back home with one pig and two boxes of alcohol (forty bottles) which was given to them by the local government as a reward for their cooperation and help. The pig was slaughtered in front of *Tomuk Tama Mui*'s house, as the activity today was defined as a 'cultural' one. A Bunun official, Anu, came as the representative of the township office, and gave a short speech to thank the people of Vulvul. The meat was distributed equally among those who participated in the day's performance, but four shares were set aside for Anu to take away for himself and other officials. The entrails and some meat were cooked immediately so that everyone present, including those who had just come back from their agricultural work, could share and drink together. Tama Mui's wife, Tina Niun, told me that she was starving because they had been in such a hurry that noon to go to Sulai-an after working in the cabbage garden, that they didn't have much time to eat lunch. She commented: “We people of Vulvul are very compliant and cooperative. The government called us and we rushed down (the mountain) immediately”.

During the day's event, the people of Vulvul actually had very little direct interaction with the visiting officials. Local Bunun officials acted as mediators between them and the visiting *saspinal*, and interpreters of Bunun 'traditional culture'. The performance of traditional singing and dancing was part of the attempt to please and impress central government officials, along with the provision of all kinds of food and local specialities. The guests were also treated to two restaurant feasts at lunchtime and in the evening. All the effort was to create better opportunities for tapping more money and resources from the state.

The people of Vulvul were impressed by the work of Haitun local government, and were satisfied that local *saspinal* had shown their care and appreciation for them by providing them with the pig and the drinks. Some young people who didn't go to

¹² *Malastapan* literally “telling bravery deeds” (in headhunting), discussed in the next chapter.

Sulai-an but stayed to finish their work in the vegetable gardens were curious about the afternoon's activity, as they joined the pig feast. When they learnt that none of the ordinary villagers got to share the home made rice cakes because they were all taken home by the visiting *saspinal*, they began to criticise these officials as greedy and neglectful. As a young woman, Maidal, said:

These *saspinal*! It is not enough for them just to eat here, they also want to pack and bring food home. Ha! The Han-Chinese criticise us aboriginal people and say we're dirty, but they eat our food more than we do every time. The *muci* and other things which were given to them by the township office, I wonder whether it is a kind of 'bribe'?

The notion of bribery has only developed recently. When my adoptive father suggested I host a feast for the head of the Household Census Centre, as mentioned above, he did not think it was a kind of bribery. Rather, it was a means ordinary people could use to make things easier for themselves. To eat and to drink with the officials can help create a suitable context in which to make requests and negotiate, and hopefully a long-term amicable relationship. As I will show below, the pigs, food and drinks provided by candidates in elections are not considered as bribery either. Rather, feeding and sharing are seen as the right means of constructing a social relationship.

The way in which the visiting *saspinal* pack rice cakes and other food into their cars, instead of asking the people of Vulvul to share with them, demonstrates their lack of care and love. They fail to meet the Bunun expectations of how *saspinal* should behave, and are criticised. In this activity, the Bunun ideal that those who have greater power should protect, and show compassion and love to the weaker ones, is fulfilled only among the Bunun themselves, between local Bunun officials and the people of Vulvul. It is not realised where the visiting Han-Chinese officials from the central government are concerned. The notion of bribery points to the limitations of their attempt to transform the power discrepancy between themselves, government officials and the state into reciprocal moral commitment. Such attempt and difficulty also manifest in the specific ways in which elections — the very institution by which *saspinal* are produced in the contemporary context — are conceived and organised among the Bunun.¹³

¹³ In describing elections among the Bunun, a very complex social phenomena, I can only highlight some aspects that are relevant to the issues discussed here.

Elections: rituals of unity and division

The first thing I learned about elections among the Bunun is that a single candidate for a single office is regarded as good (*masial*), if not the best. This seems to be at odds with the very purpose of electoral politics itself, that is, choice. However, to be able to choose from among several candidates presents dilemmas for the people of Vulvul and Ququaz. Who are you going to vote for during local elections? A member of your patrilineal clan or your affine? Your good friend or your next door neighbour? Your fellow church member or the one who seeks re-election and has more experience in dealing with the state? As election to them is less to do with political views but more about social relations; choice all too often means conflicts, division, competing loyalties and difficult decisions. Thus, it is not pursued by the Bunun.¹⁴ Many of them complain about the difficulties they face in deciding who to vote for when there are several candidates. Some families solve the problem by distributing votes equally to each candidate. Others are so overwhelmed by the competing loyalties, that they deliberately go hunting or visiting relatives elsewhere to avoid voting.

Despite their dislike of competition in local elections, after the abolition of Martial Law in 1987, it was usual that more than one person would show interest in standing for an election several months, or even a year, before it takes place. Therefore, it takes great effort to persuade some of them to stand down. As I was frequently told, negotiations before the (Nationalist Party) nomination are more important than the election day itself. This is what decides an election. This is definitely true when only one candidate nominated by the Nationalist Party stands for one seat, and which is what the pre-election negotiations aim to achieve.

A wide range of social relations and connections are mobilised in pre-election negotiations, such as kinship, church fellowship, friendship, party membership, neighbourhood and so on. Among them kinship is the most important, as most people in Vulvul and Ququaz still take social obligations toward kin seriously. The requests from affines are particularly hard to turn down, as I was told repeatedly. When my adoptive brother Nihu intended to stand as village head in the election in 1990, another man from Evago also showed interest. A member from my adoptive family's patri-clan, whose sister married into Evago, went to persuade his *mavala* (affines) to stand down and

¹⁴ The people of Vulvul refer to elections as *manhahan* or *mansupaz*, which means "to stamp" and indicate nothing to do with choice.

succeeded. The compelling quality of the *mavala*'s request is to do with the fact that affinal relationships are considered harder to mend when they are damaged. It is also related to the possible harm it may bring — misfortunes and bad death — when the taboos (*masamu*) against disrespect between affines are broken. The Bunun also think that children's health relies significantly on protection from the members of their mother's patrilineal clan (*taikanai-an*), whose blessings or curses are considered to be the most powerful and effective.

Although the Bunun place much emphasis on consensus in electing *saspinal*, a process they call *mapintasa* ('becoming one'[voice or opinion]), it is very difficult to make a unanimous decision when they no longer live in small clusters of large extended families. These pre-election negotiations sometimes do fail, and more than one person might insist on standing for one office. The Nationalist Party will assess the ability and popularity of each person and decide to nominate one candidate, or not to nominate anyone and to 'open' the election to competition. In local elections (at village and township level), there is a strong sense that the person who gets nominated will eventually win the election. In Haitun township this is true without exception. In Ren-ai township, where the 'protest-loving' Qalavang are the dominant majority, very occasionally things do go wrong for the candidates of the Nationalist Party. Still, they are regarded as having huge advantages; at least they get considerable funding from the political party.

Elections cost a lot when there is more than one candidate. This is another reason why the Bunun prefer a one-candidate-one-seat situation. It is clear to them that when candidates spend a lot of money on their campaign, they will try to earn it back through the mismanagement of government funding, or by receiving bribery from construction contractors after they have been elected. They easily become selfish and greedy, and being so busy making money that they neglect their responsibility and obligation toward those who voted for them. When this happens, it is the ordinary people who have to suffer the consequences.¹⁵

¹⁵ The amount of money spent on elections is unreasonably high nowadays. For example, in Ren-ai township, it is said that it costs about NT\$ 10 millions to be elected as governor when there is competition. In the election for governor in 1998, there were five candidates: four Qalavang and one Bunun. Talum, a man from Ququaz lost his campaign despite spending more than NT\$ 3 millions. Tama Tiang, a representative who has been elected five times as a member of Ren-ai council by the people of Ququaz and three other villages, spent about NT\$ 0.8 million in the 1994 election, and the cost went up to NT\$ 1 million in 1998. In the small Haitun township where elections are much less costly, it still took Vion a solid NT\$ 2 millions to be re-elected as governor due to the competition from another two candidates. It was a sharp increase compared with the NT\$13,500 Tama Masan spent in the election of 1990 when he was the sole candidate.

Even when there is just one candidate, elections do not proceed quietly. Various formal meetings and electoral rallies are held to ensure good support, or a 'good performance', in the words of some Nationalist Party workers. However, these meetings and electoral rallies are considered dull occasions, and what happens in the feasts afterward is much more important and exciting. As the head of the Haitun Nationalist Party office told me: "Meetings are not important. What is important is that after the meetings we send the women home and drink together". Social networks are more effectively mobilised and decisions are usually made in these drinking sessions.

On the election day, every adult in the settlement will turn up to vote. Even those who spend most of their time living in their field huts will come down to the village specifically for the election. The people of Vulvul and Ququaz feel strongly that they must vote because "if you don't vote it means that you don't love the state". They always disapprove of my decision to stay in the village and see what happens on election day, rather than go home to vote and to fulfil my obligation as a citizen. Moreover, to choose deliberately not to vote is regarded as a kind of protest, something they want to avoid. I remember vividly when my adoptive sister-in-law Apas expressed her reluctance to vote during a provincial election, because she had just turned twenty and felt unconfident doing something she has never done before, my adoptive father was adamant that she must vote. As he said to her: "if you don't want to vote you have to hide in the mountains in advance. Now you are at home and you must vote, otherwise you will be criticised by others as protesting against the state". So Apas went to the polling station to cast her ballot.

Several times during the election day, the village head repeatedly reminds the villagers of their duty to vote over the loudspeaker. A small group of people, usually men, gather outside the polling station and drink together since early morning. They greet everyone and drag those who have come back from the cities just for the occasion, to have a few drinks with them. Several such drinking groups are formed in the village, in the front yards or inside the house, as the election brings migrant workers home. There is a kind of hustle and bustle in the village. The festive atmosphere reaches its peak in the evening, when the 'election pig' provided by the elected candidate is slaughtered and distributed.

It must be stressed that food, cigarettes, betel nuts and drinks provided by the candidates at their campaign offices and distributed by their assistants when they tour around the villages are not considered as bribery at all. They are just part of the

everyday give-and-take which is intensified during the election, and an indication of the candidate's generosity. Nor is the election pig promised by the candidate beforehand and distributed after the election, a form of bribery. The election pig is distributed and a feast held in the manner of *mapinaskal*, a traditional Bunun way of expressing thanks, love and blessings. It creates a reciprocal moral commitment between the *saspinal* and his followers. A relation, in Cina Malas' words, in which "*saspinal* help and take care of us, and we respect and support him".

An election can be an occasion for consolidating social relations and community sentiments. Much emphasis is placed on unity, especially in Ququaz where people are intensely aware of their own marginality. However, when there are several candidates and the competition heats up, a lot of tensions, divisions and conflicts could break out as well. Even when the candidates from Vulvul and Ququaz are elected, people look closely at how many votes 'escape' or 'run away', and how many people do not vote for their candidate. When the number is small and insignificant, the people of Vulvul and Ququaz explain it away by concluding that it must be due to some drunks or illiterate old people who don't know how to vote properly. However, when there are too many 'escape votes', which indicates that there is a plot against their own candidate, accusations and blame are expressed in public and occasionally result in fighting. Those who are suspected are labelled as traitors. Also, they are accused of taking bribes, that is, money, from the candidates of other villages.

That money is counted as bribery, and food, pigs and drinks are not, is an extremely important distinction. Whereas the former is inimical to the unity of the social group by tempting its members to betrayal, the latter strengthens kinship and other social relations. In fact, the food, pigs, cigarettes, betel nuts and drinks provided by the candidate during the elections are bought from the market with cash. So why do the people of Vulvul and Ququaz maintain such a strong distinction between the two? To answer this question, it is necessary to understand the symbolism of money.

The symbolism of money and the changing political imagination

For the Bunun, money means different things in different contexts. First of all, it is seen as an agent of change and a prime symbol of commodity exchange. I often heard the Bunun lament the loss of the good old days, when they were self-sufficient and did not rely on money and the market. They grew enough food and the wild animals were

abundant. They were happy because they did not have to worry about money. These good old days are gone since now you have to pay for everything, and often you find yourself struggling with a shortage of cash. The market recognises only money and not persons; when you have no money you are nobody. In this sense, money represents the impersonal relationship in commodity exchange.

At the same time, when it is not properly shared and some family members act selfishly to hide their earnings from others, money is also regarded as a major reason for the division and segmentation of big extended families. Money erodes social unity because it encourages the development of self-interest, calculation and conflict. The impersonal character of money and the threat it poses to social unity make it a pertinent symbol for short-term individualistic relations.

However, for the Bunun, what is wrong is not money *per se*, but how it is used. Money is not intrinsically divisive. In fact, it is incorporated into the domain of kinship and social relations in a way that is highly desirable and constructive. In life-cycle rituals marking birth, marriage and death, money is contributed as a gift, which is carefully noted down in a book. It can substitute for pigs, food, clothes, cooking pots and machetes, or be transformed into these things in life-cycle rituals without causing any problem. On these occasions, money is a sign of mutual assistance, love and blessings between kin, friends and neighbours. Money as such also commonly appears in day-to-day social interactions. Parents and grandparents regularly give money to their children and grandchildren to buy candies and snacks. *Maladaigaz* (members of mother's patrilineal clan) show their love to the children of their out-married women in another village by giving them money when they bump into each other in the town. When properly contained in the domain of kinship relations, money is morally valued because it facilitates the reproduction of long-term reciprocal commitment and social order (cf. Carsten 1989, Toren 1989).

As Parry & Bloch (1989) have pointed out, the symbolism and moral evaluations of money are closely linked with the articulation between the long-term reproduction of social order, and short-term individualistic cycles. The Bunun distinction between money as bribery, and pigs, food and drinks as not, is an attempt to keep these two cycles apart so that the long-term moral commitment is not threatened by the short-term utilitarian relation. Moreover, it is part of the political imagination that seeks to define their relationship with *saspinal* and the state as one of long-term moral relation, and to transform the power of the state from a potentially and historically dangerous foreign

force into something positive and benevolent to their community and social wellbeing.

However, as I have shown above, their attempt to transform the power discrepancy between themselves, government officials and the state into a long-term reciprocal moral relationship is not always successful. At the same time, the status of money is more ambiguous and shifting in reality. The Bunun distinction between money, and pigs and other goods, has also been challenged by the political changes in the post Martial Law era, and the mainstream debate about corruption and bribery in the mass media. Recently, some young people have started to question whether the food they give to the government officials is bribery, as the visiting officials act in an immoral way. The recognition of the immorality of government officials in various contexts has led some people to think that their support, compliance and cooperation are in vain, and that their relations with government officials and the state are short-term and individualistic. To take bribery in elections is the best they can get out of such a relationship.

At present, most people of Vulvul and Ququaz still try to establish a long-term moral relation with government officials and the state. Therefore, they decry those who accept bribery and turn away from their social obligations. In Ququaz, people worry about whether their village will become like the Qalavang villages, which are full of conflicts and have very little social unity, and where people are individualistic and selfish. Such a situation is regarded by the Bunun as very sad. In their view, the Bunun village of Qatu has already become like that. It is a place where not even Bunun candidates can gain support by fulfilling their social obligations; rather, they must bribe to get votes. Moreover, you can never trust the people of Qatu, for they will take bribery but still feel no obligation to vote for the candidate who gives them money.

Interestingly, like the Qalavang, the people of Qatu are also seen as protest-lovers because they are not bound by a long-term moral relation with the state. Given the conflicts, division and disintegration in these villages that the people of Ququaz have witnessed, resistance, far from being the 'weapon of the weak' (Scott 1985, 1990), is seen as a weapon that can work against the weak.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the ways the Bunun encounter and imagine the state through their interactions with government officials. These interactions with local bureaucracies mediate the abstract existence of the state, and invite the Bunun to

construct a personalised notion of the state. Through their idioms of kinship and political leadership, the Bunun try to incorporate and transform the power of the state from an external and potentially dangerous force into something positive and benevolent for themselves. The attempt to establish a long-term moral relationship with the government and officials through a kinship idiom has created a dialectical integration between the Bunun and the state. Consequently, the Bunun are very reluctant to confront the state directly through protest.

The Bunun case shows that compliance, instead of being passive accommodation, can be a kind of 'quite effective agency' (Ortner 1997: 148). This presents a challenge to the recent theoretical preoccupation with resistance. Since the 1980s, anthropologists have earnestly tried to recover the subjectivity, experience and agency of those who are at the periphery of power through the discussion of resistance. Resistance has become a central theme in the study of social life to such an extent that it is described by Brown (1996: 729) as the 'theoretical hegemony' today. The moral fervour the rhetoric of resistance projects has made it particularly appealing for social scientists after the postmodern turn (ibid: 729-730). However, the 'theoretical hegemony' of resistance has prevented anthropologists from a more thorough and nuanced analysis, as it is implied that we can only find the agency of the colonised or the disadvantaged under the rubric of resistance (cf. Kaplan & Kelly 1994).¹⁶ The Bunun case exposes the over-simplified character of such a theoretical assumption, and suggests that it is very important to take seriously the way different cultures, at different historical moments, construct their own forms of agency, rather than willfully attributing resistance to them. In the next chapter, I will show how the Bunun's resistance to the Japanese has recently become a politically contested issue, and examine how they respond to the Han-Chinese's appropriation of their past.

¹⁶ Although the problems of the study of resistance have been pointed out by many scholars (O'Hanlon 1988, Abu-Lughod 1990, Mitchell 1990, Ortner 1995a, Brown 1996), it is still a very dominant theoretical theme.

Chapter 3

Engaging with the present by remembering the past

During the time of the Japanese, the Japanese tricked the Bunun in Vulvul area into entering a house by giving them clothes, duvet covers, matches and other things. Then they started to shoot the Bunun. Half the people died. While the Japanese were distributing the goods, a Han-Chinese who spoke Bunun warned them of the bad intention of the Japanese, but the Bunun didn't believe him. After the shooting started, three Bunun men who heard the gunshots went to a vantage point by the river near Evago, and killed all the Japanese police on their way down from the mountain. Their blood turned the river red... One day we are going to make a film of this event and let all the people in Taiwan know of the greatness of the Bunun, and we will let all the people in the world know how bad the Japanese were.

On the fourth day after my arrival in Vulvul in 1991, I was told this story about the Vulvul Massacre and the Bunun's encounter with the Japanese by a group of men as we drank together after the Harvest Festival of the Catholic Church. The story attributed what happened to the cruelty of the Japanese who used material incentives to trick the Bunun and killed them for no reason.¹ Its emphasis, however, is not the victimisation of the Bunun, but their resilience, and the way they used their knowledge of the surrounding landscape to get their revenge. According to Japanese police records, the event at Vulvul, which happened in 1914, was brought about by the policy of confiscating the guns of the Bunun (Asano 1988[1933]: 8-9). Although the people of Vulvul remembered clearly how unpopular and unreasonable this policy was, and how their ancestors had resisted it fiercely since it would have deprived them of an important means of hunting and self defense, it was not seen as the direct cause of this event.

I was fascinated by the heroic image of resistance, and by the possibility of seeing the discrepancy between the Japanese and the Bunun interpretation of history as a critique of the colonial oppression. Moreover, I was very impressed by the vigour and passion these stories aroused among those who told them. This was one of the important first impressions I had about the Bunun: they were really interested in, and concerned about, their history. This impression was deepened by hearing about the effort made by the people of the Takevatan subgroup later in the same year to visit the remains of their

¹ This seems to be a common experience among the Bunun. Fang (1998: 96) also describes a similar situation at Izukan, where the Japanese pretended to give the Bunun gifts and tricked them into going to the police station. Then the Bunun were beaten, and some were even burnt to death.

old settlements, which they were forced to leave collectively under the Japanese resettlement policy (Tseng 1991; Wu 1993, 1995). This activity of ‘searching for one’s roots’ by returning to ancestral villages was the first to have been undertaken among Taiwanese indigenous peoples, and it has become popular since then.²

When I returned to Vulvul to do more fieldwork in 1997, I was excited to know that the local government had organised a ‘root-searching’ trip to Lahlah, an old settlement which became an important local centre under Japanese rule but was later abandoned due to the resettlement policy. I asked my good friend Vuya, who was the Bunun government official responsible for all ‘cultural’ activities, to show me the data they collected from this two-day trip in the winter of 1996. To my surprise, apart from a video tape of poor quality (‘full of leaves’ as the Bunun said), there were no written records, such as historical narratives about Lahlah and the life there, or a map of the layout of the settlement. Vuya explained to me, slightly embarrassed, that this was because they were busy hunting or drinking in Lahlah. My initial reaction was disbelief and resentment: how could these government officials and the Bunun elite have made the effort to climb the mountains and cross the river on foot to reach Lahlah, a remarkable thing for them to do, and do bloody nothing but hunt and drink? My frustration increased when Vuya told me that the local government planned to organise another trip to Iqanovan, the home of the famous Lamatasinsin (about whom more below), but it all depended on whether they could get money from the higher government or not.

My disillusionment that the Bunun probably do not care so much about their history after all reflects more my own assumptions about what history is made of, than theirs. This chapter will look at how the past is remembered and represented among the Bunun. I will begin with the phenomena that while some events in the past are straightforward and unproblematic to the Bunun, others are controversial and contested. This raises the question of how historical knowledge is transmitted and how historical narratives establish their authority, which I will discuss through the emergence of a historical figure — Lamatasinsin. Throughout this chapter, the central concern is to illuminate how the Bunun engage with the present by remembering the past.

² It relates to the importance of landscape and places in social memory, which will be discussed later in the chapter.

The multiplicity of historical narratives

I heard the story of the Vulvul event many times later from different people, both men and women. Although they varied in details, and emphasised the involvement of the ancestors of the speaker, the narratives were highly consistent. However, when I asked the people of Vulvul about the Dakuanshan event, which was depicted by the Japanese as the last resistance among all Taiwanese aborigines, there was no consensus at all.

According to the Japanese police (Asano1988[1933]), the Dakuanshan event happened in September 1932. Three Japanese police were attacked by the Bunun when they were out checking telephone lines near the border of Taitung County and Kaushiong County; two of them died on the spot, and one was shot but survived. The event itself was not special or unusual, but it was an important turning point in Japanese colonial policy in Vulvul region. After the Vulvul event of 1914, the Japanese police in this area took a softer line and emphasised conciliation, partly due to the fact that they were unable to establish efficient rule. As a result, this area attracted many Bunun from other regions who were unwilling to live under direct police surveillance and control. Among them, Lamatasinsin was regarded by the Japanese as the most crafty and intelligent, and hence the most dangerous and troublesome. He and his family moved from Evago to Iqanovan after the Vulvul event, a place far away from any police station which was very difficult to get access to. He was also involved in most resistance and killed several police.

When the Dakuanshan event happened, the infrastructures of Japanese colonial rule (the road, police stations, cannons, schools, electric fences, etc.) were well established in the area, and the constant resistance of the Bunun proved that the conciliation policy had failed. After some debate, the Japanese decided it was about time to get tough with the Bunun and to sort them out once and for all. After three months of investigation, Lamatasinsin's two sons, Sausavu and Sovale, along with a blacksmith, Talum, and three of his family members, were held to be directly responsible for the attack on the Japanese police. Lamatasinsin was regarded as the brains behind this action, planning not only the attack but also how to mislead the police investigation. Because the police had already decided to get tough this time, not only were those who were held directly responsible arrested, so too were those who were considered indirectly involved. In total, eleven men from these two families were later executed in Kuanshan. Lamatasinsin's house was burned and his gardens destroyed so

that no one would live in Iqanovan again.

For the Japanese, the pacification of Lamatasinsin symbolised the ultimate triumph of colonial power. The Bunun finally understood how powerful the Japanese were and were frightened. As a result, they no longer despised the police and colonial officials. They stopped treating them with disrespect, and making threats, but showed their submission and obedience in every respect. Many 'escape settlements' showed their willingness to move to where the police stations were, and the rate of school-attendance increased dramatically.³ Headhunting stopped and many rebels returned the heads and knives of the Japanese police they had killed to the police station.

When I tried to find out what the people of Vulvul knew about Lamatasinsin and this event, I was struck by the divergence of interpretation. I asked my adoptive father first, and his face brightened when he talked about Lamatasinsin:

Lamatasinsin was a very famous person, so famous that even small children have heard about him. He was killed by the Japanese because they said he killed police. In fact, he didn't kill anyone. He was just a guy who loved to live in the mountains and refused to move to where the police station was. Because of that, the Japanese accused him of something he didn't do and killed him and his family. It was wrong of the Japanese to do that.

This is a common version of what happened to Lamatasinsin that I later heard many times. It stressed the innocence of Lamatasinsin, that he was wrongly accused because of his refusal to move to where the police station was. The colonial policy to resettle the Bunun and to constrain their movement was a focal point of complaint and critique by the Bunun, since they were precisely the kind of people who loved to live in high mountains and moved around in search of new hunting grounds. However, if the Bunun refused to resettle, the Japanese would threaten to burn their houses. This measure certainly did not help matters. Lamatasinsin is seen as a victim of such a policy.

There were some people, especially those belonging to the same clan as him, who did remember Lamatasinsin as a brave man who resisted the Japanese:

Lamatasinsin belonged to Istanda clan, the same as mine. He lived in the mountains and refused to move near the police guard line. In the past, the Bunun moved to where wild animals were abundant. Lamatasinsin killed a lot of Japanese police,

³ Some old people remember that when they were little their parents hid them in a pile of hay whenever the police approached the settlement, so that they wouldn't be found and forced into attending the school.

who were also teachers and doctors. Sometimes he did not kill the police for a few days, then after a while he killed again. He went to many different places to kill the Japanese. The Bunun were like eagles: when they were sober they went secretly to kill people, just as eagles kill rats, flying squirrels and other animals. When they were drinking, they boasted about how many people they had killed. Because Lamatasinsin was very proud and despised other people when he was drunk, the others were jealous and tipped the Japanese off about him. People's *is-ang* (hearts) were different, some were bad. Lamatasinsin was tricked by a Bunun who pretended to give him a blanket, and killed by the Japanese police. I heard from some elders in Evago that his grave is in the mountains, in a place called Maha-ivan.⁴

In contrast to this version, Lamatasinsin was described by some as nothing, a nobody. Moreover, he was criticised as a villain:

Lamatasinsin was not a hero at all, he was nothing. In Japanese time, he was just a local villain, scum. He didn't respect his own elders, nor did he respect his other relatives and *mavala* (affines). Therefore at that time it was his relatives, as close as a cousin, who tipped the Japanese off about him. The Japanese paid lots of attention to Lamatasinsin because he knew how to make guns and refused to live by the police station, but he didn't kill the Japanese. Now Lamatasinsin seems very important or great only because the Japanese police were afraid of him, so people now hold him in high esteem as a 'national hero'.

This 'villain' version sometimes goes as far as to say that Lamatasinsin is like Mingjintang (the Democratic Progress Party, the main opposition party in Taiwan) who disobey the government and try to destroy Taiwan.⁵ It is of great significance that all the people who criticise Lamatasinsin are the descendents of *Tomuk* (the appointed 'chief') Vua, who is said to have assisted the Japanese to arrest Lamatasinsin. However, those with different opinions try to discredit the interpretation by pointing out that those *Tomuk* were spies of the Japanese and traitors.

The narratives about Lamatasinsin are multiple and contested. The narrators are aware of all three versions and their political implications, and their self-positioning is an important factor in deciding which representation they go for. This multiplicity of historical narratives not only relates to the historical situations of the ancestors of the

⁴ Lamatasinsin was born in Evago, where the narrative about him is much more consistent. He is regarded as a remarkably brave man. While Sinsin is his true name, I am told by the people of Evago that Lamata means "brave and powerful". However, most people in Vulvul do not know what Lamata means; some say it is a Japanese surname.

⁵ Mr. Chen Shui-Pian, a candidate from the Democratic Progress Party, was elected as the new president of Taiwan on 18 March, 2000. This is the first time the central government is not controlled by the Nationalist Party. Whether or not this will affect the dominance of Chinese Nationalist Party among the aboriginal people remains to be seen.

people of Vulvul, but also to their present position under the Nationalist government. In the following, I will discuss how the political dimension of the past is further developed in the present.

The fight for Lamatasinsin

No matter how the people of Vulvul think about Lamatasinsin, and whether or not he killed Japanese policemen, he has become an objectified symbol of Bunun resistance to the Japanese through the romanticising writing of a Chinese novelist. Wang published his *About Lamatasinsin and Dahuali* in the spring of 1992 in a newspaper.⁶ In 1995 it became part of a book with the same title, and it won him a literature prize.

In this historical novel, there are two narrators; both are anthropologists. The story begins when a young anthropologist is given an old diary written in Japanese by an old man in Evago, and starts to translate the diary and to solve the mystery of why the old man's father wrote such a book. Gradually, the identity of the writer is uncovered. He is a Japanese anthropologist, Mori, who was thought to have disappeared in 1926 on a ship sailing from Taiwan to Japan.⁷ In fact, he did not get onto the ship but hid in the mountains. This anthropologist was fascinated by the aboriginal people and decided to live in his utopia, to give up his old Japanese identity and to take a new identity as a Bunun. He settled in Evago and exchanged a rifle for a house and some land. He was even half-sold and half-given a woman because the Bunun were so hospitable!

Mori recorded his life among the Bunun and their resistance to the Japanese. He was very sympathetic to the Bunun. In his eyes, the Bunun were mild, kind and peaceful. They were forced to resist the Japanese because the colonial policy to confiscate their guns was wrong. The Japanese government did not understand how important hunting was to the Bunun and acted despotically. The Bunun have no literacy, therefore he was concerned to write history from their perspective and to do them justice, for he knew that their heroic resistance would become crimes in Japanese colonial history.

Wang's novel interweaves Japanese records of several episodes of Bunun resistance, and his own historical imagination, to depict a picture of how Bunun culture and an ideal way of life were inevitably and tragically lost under Japanese colonial domination. Lamatasinsin and Dahuali, two important heroic figures who fought against

⁶ Dahuali was another famous figure who resisted the Japanese. The people of Vulvul do recognise him as a hero.

⁷ It was thought that Mori committed suicide (Liu 1986:77).

the Japanese, symbolise the Bunun's fight and struggle for their dignity and the right to live in the way they wanted. There is a strong sense of nostalgia in the novel, a sense that I rarely found the people of Vulvul shared when they talked about their past under the Japanese.

The publication of this novel has drawn some attention from the Bunun elite and local government, as it came at a time when aboriginal people were encouraged to be more conscious of their own culture and history. In the spring of 1997, the Tauyuan township of Kaushiong County built a Lamatasinsin Memorial Park and changed the name Zhong-Zheng Road (named after Chiang Jie-Shi) to Lamatasinsin Road to commemorate his heroic resistance against the Japanese. The governor of Kaushiong County officially opened the park at the Shooting-the-Ear Festival (*Malahtangia*, see the following chapter). The effort to commemorate Lamatasinsin has provoked some controversy locally. In Tauyuan township, Dahuali's descendents argue that Lamatasinsin is not the greatest Bunun hero, and that he is secondary to Dahuali. Also, Lamatasinsin lived in Taitung, not Kaushiong. So why is a monument built to honour him rather than Dahuali? It is because one of Dahuali's descendants campaigned to be the governor of Tauyaun township but failed. His main rival, the newly elected governor, wants to humiliate him by commemorating Lamatasinsin (Li 1998).

The Bunun of Taitung County also find the whole thing infuriating, for they think they are the ones entitled to claim that Lamatasinsin was one of them and is "theirs", not the Bunun of Kaushiong County. They feel that something that belonged to them has been taken away unjustifiably. Some propose that they should set the record right and go to Tauyuan to protest that Lamatasinsin belongs to Taitung. However, some Bunun government officials find it too radical since an election campaign is approaching. Also, as discussed in the previous chapter, the Bunun do not like to be identified as protesters. The better way to claim Lamatasinsin back, they decide, is to build their own Lamatasinsin Memorial Park. Moreover, they can no doubt outdo the Bunun of Kaushiong by making a 'root-searching' trip to Iqanovan, where Lamatasinsin lived before he was killed by the Japanese. As the elder Tama Anci vividly put it on our way to the place, which is now referred to by the people of Vulvul as Lamatasinsin:⁸

Why does the government want us to find where Lamatasinsin is? It is because

⁸ Iqanovan is the Japanese name for the place where Lamatasinsin used to live. As for the Bunun name for the place, some said it was Ihanupan, some said it was Mavandaz. However, now Lamatasinsin is used to refer to both the person and the place, an indication that person and place are mutually constitutive.

now everybody is fighting for Lamatasinsin. There are Lamatasinsins everywhere. Kaushiong has Lamatasinsin, Hualien has Lamatasinsin, even the Paiwan (another aboriginal group) has Lamatasinsin. Therefore we must figure out where Lamatasinsin truly is. Actually, who knows better than us? He belongs to Vulvul, Haitun, Taitung. If we find his old house, we can prove that he belongs to us, and other people won't be able to fight with us. Otherwise we could ask them to say where Lamatasinsin's house is. They cannot answer. Only we people of Vulvul know it.

As Bunun people in different localities are competing for the entitlement to make the claim that Lamatasinsin was one of them and is 'theirs', the history of headhunting and resistance to the Japanese have become a new genre of authoritative discourse and contested cultural resources.⁹ This is clearly shown in the official narrative inscribed on the monument of Lamatasinsin.

Lamatasinsin Memorial Park and the official narrative

In September 1998, the Lamatasinsin Memorial Park of Haitun township was officially opened (see Figure 2). It is located at the starting point of Trans-Southern-Taiwan Highway, which links Taitung and Kaushiong County, and is the main access from the lowland to about fifteen Bunun settlements. The park was built with funds from the Tourist Board of Eastern Taiwan, as part of an effort to use aboriginal culture and history to boost tourism and local development.¹⁰ It comprises a huge, 2.5 metres high, cement statue of Lamatasinsin, and a circular marble tablet inscribed with an account of his heroic resistance against the Japanese. The statue was made by a Han-Chinese sculptor from Hualien. It depicts Lamatasinsin as long-haired, heavy-built, very strong and muscular. He has a serious and fierce look on his face, clenching his fist and holding a big knife in his left hand as though he is about to challenge someone. The inscription is written by Vuya. It combines Japanese police records and the narratives of some elders of Sulai-an, which is the Bunun settlement nearest to the park and to where Vuya lives, in a particular way.

The inscription at the monument of Lamatasinsin

⁹ Cf. Hoskins's discussion of how the national history of Indonesia turns Wona Kaka, a Sumbanese headhunter of the early twentieth century, into a heroic figure in the national resistance against the Dutch colonial order. Yet in the historical view of some Sumbanese, he symbolises local resistance to encroachment and absorption of any outsiders, whether Dutch or Indonesian (Hoskins 1987, 1996).

¹⁰ It cost NT\$ 800,000 (about £16,000).

During the Japanese period, the Bunun dispersed among the mountains. Hunting was the main livelihood, complemented by the farming of millet. They were contented with their way of life. The Bunun had no permanent residence and moved frequently in search of hunting grounds. Since they lived in high mountains, they were physically strong and their character was fierce.

In order to put an end to the frequent resistance of the Bunun and to rule them more efficiently, the Japanese imposed a resettlement policy and forced the Bunun to move down the mountains and to resettle collectively. Those opposed to the resettlement were threatened with artillery. Although most people were obedient under Japanese oppression, there were still a few who resisted and fought for the dignity and continuity of their ethnic group. Among them Lamatasinsin was the most representative figure.

Lamatasinsin was unwilling to live under Japanese oppression, so he brought his wife Puni and three sons (the eldest one was Umas, the names of the other two were unknown) to live in Ikukunuth, which was near the border with Kaushiong County. The mountain was very high and covered with dense forest, so it was difficult for the Japanese to find them. In order to defend the pride of the Bunun, Lamatasinsin often came down the mountain to attack the Japanese, and he was regarded as a 'national hero'. The Japanese detested him and badly wanted to get rid of him. Afterward Lamatasinsin's wife was very ill and he invited the spirit medium Vilian Lankav to heal her for the price of one gun. However, Lamatasinsin asked the spirit medium to return the gun because his wife did not get better and died. The spirit medium was angry with him and bore a grudge.

In 1934, when Lamatasinsin went to I-Mahalivan to visit his relatives, the spirit medium gave the Japanese a tip-off about him. The Japanese police, led by the (Han-Chinese) interpreter Cheng Jian-Shui, arrested Lamatasinsin, his three sons and three brothers of another anti-Japanese hero, Talum. After many days of torture, Lamatasinsin and the others maintained that they would rather die than submit. Thereafter, they were persecuted in Kuanshan, Taitung. They sacrificed their lives heroically.

Lamatasinsin was a Bunun and belonged to the clan of Istanda. He manoeuvred the Dakuanshan Event against the Japanese, and was the last anti-Japanese hero in Taiwan. He was very important both in aboriginal history and in Taiwanese history for resisting the Japanese. He is a model for us all. Therefore this monument is built specifically in remembrance of him. June, 1998.

The story about Lamatasinsin told by some elders of Sulai-an is different from Vulvul's, and I suspect that there are different versions in Sulai-an, too. This is to do with how historical knowledge is transmitted among the Bunun and how historical narratives establish their authority, which will be discussed later in the chapter. Here I want to focus on the language this inscription deploys. Both the content and the style of the inscription are influenced by the Han-Chinese. The notion that since the Bunun lived in high mountains, they were physically strong and their character was fierce is a stereotypical impression about the aboriginal people which was taught in the school. Also, the inscription is very formal and reminiscent of Chinese nationalism. It

represents Lamatasinsin as a 'national hero' who resisted the Japanese and sacrificed his life for the country, in a way very similar to those official narratives about the building of the Republic of China, or about Chinese perseverance against Japanese imperialist invasion during World War II in the school textbooks. The political proclamation of such construction lies exactly in its moral grandeur (Anderson 1991:144). The incorporation of a nationalist narrative into Bunun constructions of history is also evident in the way that some Bunun government officials try to include Lamatasinsin among the nation-building martyrs, in order to promote the status of the Bunun.¹¹

Not surprisingly, the local government's attempt to commemorate Lamatasinsin is not well received by the people of Vulvul. No one said a nice word about the statue. For a start, Lamatasinsin is known to be a tall man, but the statue depicts him as strong but short. This is how other groups regard the Bunun generally, a fact the Bunun themselves sometimes refuse to recognise.¹² Secondly, the knife held by Lamatasinsin is not a Bunun one; it is too long and looks like a Taluko (Ataiyal) one. Thirdly, why is the Memorial Park located near Sulai-an but not Vulvul? These criticisms are above all an expression of their unhappiness at not being consulted by the local government before they hired a Han-Chinese sculptor to build the statue, and not being given the opportunity to decide what the image of the Bunun is like. After all, the people of Vulvul regard themselves as the experts on Lamatasinsin. Those who see Lamatasinsin as a villain find the statue outrageous because he is not a hero at all, so why does the government honour him instead of their ancestors who killed the Japanese police in the Vulvul event? Some young men even say that they want to cut off the statue's head. It is ironical in a way that while the government commemorates the Bunun practice of headhunting and their resistance to the Japanese, some Bunun youths use the headhunting metaphor to criticise the government's project.

¹¹ Some Bunun officials say that the number of nation-building martyrs is not seventy-two as the school history textbook records, but seventy-five, including Lamatasinsin and two other Bunun heroes. However, the Bunun had no writing so there were no identifications on their clothes. As a result, they were neglected and not recorded in the textbook.

¹² I often heard the Han-Chinese, the Amis, the Taluko and the Paiwan comment on how short the Bunun are. Once an old Paiwan woman who lives among the Bunun of Batulai told me that the Bunun's legs were so short, they were just the length of her arms. The Bunun are very aware of how other groups see them, and dislike it. Sometimes they claim they used to be tall but now they are short because they were forced to move down the mountains.

The 'root-searching' project

While Lamatasinsin Memorial Park is unpopular, the people of Vulvul are excited by the prospect of visiting Lamatasinsin's old house (*mai-lumah*, lit. 'was a house'). According to the local government's proposal written by Vuya, it was to take place at the end of October 1998. Four of Vulvul's elders who knew the area well would be the forerunners of the expedition. It was their job to find the way to Lamatasinsin, to cut down couch grass and to clear the paths. Then the government officials and people from six villages of Haitun township, fifty in total, would visit Lamatasinsin after a ritual was held in the house of Vulvul's elected *Tomuk* Tama Mui (Ma 1998).¹³ After returning from the journey, the local government would sponsor a pig feast in Vulvul to celebrate. The written records, photos and videos would be released to the media in order to gain attention and recognition from wider Taiwanese society.

Things did not go according to Vuya's plan. A strong typhoon hit Taiwan in mid-October. It destroyed parts of the unpaved forestry road and made it difficult to cross the rivers, so the project had to be postponed. Then the executive of the project, Atong, decided the date very suddenly after a meeting on the ninth of December. The forerunners would depart on the eleventh, and the rest on the thirteenth. It left very little time for people to prepare themselves and the date overlapped with other government activities, so many who had planned to go could not make it. Besides the four forerunners of Vulvul, only six men from the village of Haitun and two photographers (one Bunun and one Puyuma) from an aboriginal cable TV company participated. None of the government officials made it. Also, no ritual was held beforehand. Facing the criticism of rushing things and ruining the project, Atong defended himself by referring to the need to separate culture and politics:

The time I planned was in August, well before the election at the beginning of December. However, there were rumours that this activity had other purposes. In Haitun township, any activities before the election, even cultural ones which have no relationship whatsoever with the election, are suspected of being politically orientated and of serving certain candidates. This root-searching activity is an example. It is a cultural activity, but some people say it is to promote a particular candidate. In order to dismiss such speculations, and to separate culture from

¹³ Since the mid-1980s, the people of Vulvul were invited to perform their 'traditional singing and dancing' in many places. They have been to cultural centres of various counties, the National Theatre in Taipei, several European countries, Mainland China and Japan. When they performed their seasonal rituals, they felt that they needed one person to act as the ritual leader *Liskadan Lus-an*. So Tama Mui was elected as the 'chief' (*Tomuk*). See following chapter.

politics, I therefore decided to execute the project immediately after the election.

No one buys Atong's explanation, and neither, perhaps, the official version of what the activity is about put forward by Vuya. According to the official plan, this 'root-searching' activity has four main purposes: (1) To enrich documents and photo evidence of the Bunun anti-Japanese hero Lamatasinsin. (2) To use the data collected in Iqanovan to explore Bunun anti-Japanese accomplishments at that time. (3) To promulgate the data to arouse patriotism among the Bunun. (4) To promote the development of tourism and to make Lamatasinsin Memorial Park a tourist attraction (Ma 1998). The people of Vulvul have some idea of what the local government officials are up to and how they have to present the project to central government to get funding. However, they are interested in the proposal for very different reasons.

It is obvious from the beginning that the people of Vulvul see it as an unusual hunting trip. Lamatasinsin is very remote and the area is unvisited for several years, therefore the wildlife there is expected to be excitingly abundant. However, there are either no paths in the area, or they are covered with dense couch grass, and the signs on the trees indicating the direction must be unrecognisable now. The excitement this proposal stirs up comes mainly from the fact that it is dangerous and difficult to reach Lamatasinsin. It will take at least four days to pass through tough terrain, and to return. There are many steep mountains to be climbed and several rivers to be crossed. Moreover, the mountains are full of fierce and harmful spirits (*hanitu*). The reason why the area is deserted is that many people died there violently a few years ago. There used to be some men who set up huts (*talokan*) and lived in the area seasonally to collect wild *tavakai* fruit.¹⁴ Unfortunately, several died from falling from the trees as they picked the fruit. After all the troubles of carrying the dead down the mountain, this area has been avoided since then.

I wanted to go with the elders of Vulvul. However, my wish posed some problems for them. My safety was one of their concerns. My adoptive father immediately voiced his opposition and told me it was too hard and dangerous for me. If I wanted to go then he should go instead so I could stay at home. Many told me the same thing and tried to scare me off with the stories of dead people and of how *hanitu* would pull my legs when

¹⁴ *Tavakai* is a kind of creeping plant which grows on trees. It bears fruit, unfortunately, only on its tips and thus high above the ground. Monkeys eat *tavakai*, so people have to compete with them and pick the fruit before they are gone. It used to be an important source of cash income for the Bunun two decades ago. A significant proportion of the money used to build the cement houses in Vulvul come from selling dried *tavakai*. Many young people also tell me that it contributed to their school fees.

I slept in the huts. Tama Anci, who would lead the expedition, insisted that I should not go with them but with government officials after they cleared the paths and made the journey much easier. He tried to persuade me that it was all for my own good because he did not want me to die in the mountains. Besides safety reasons, I sensed that they were very concerned that bringing a woman with them could ruin their luck in hunting (*hanup*), which was what this trip was primarily about for them. Whether or not it is still a taboo (*masamu*) for women to go hunting, it was definitely true that hunting used to be men's work and women were forbidden from touching hunting equipment (Chiu 1966:143; Sayama 1988 [1919]:186, 188; Wei 1972: 2).¹⁵

I hesitated slightly after hearing all this, but my main concern was not to be a burden to them. I was not sure I could match their speed, especially when many men who had expressed their desire to go, now backed off saying that they were unable to because it was too difficult and their legs would not last for so many days. I was also worried that if the hunting was unfruitful I would be the one to blame. I was however very intrigued by the nostalgia and longing that the idea of going to Lamatasinsin evoked among the men. Tama Talum encouraged me to go and painted a wonderful picture of how all the dangers and obstacles could be overcome by cooperation and mutual assistance during hunting. I found this wonderful world of unity fascinating. In the end I finally persuaded Tama Anci, and I was able to go with the elders of Vulvul.

It should be stressed that while hunting is the topic of most talk in the settlement, to the forerunners, making money is an equally, if not more important, incentive. Hunting can be done at any other time and in any other area, but its result is unpredictable. To work for the local government as forerunners of the expedition is a secure and very good way of making money (*ka sui*). In 1998, one day's wage in Vulvul was still only NT\$ 800 (about £16), but the government offered NT\$ 1,500 a day. The forerunners successfully negotiated for this to be raised to NT\$ 1,800 by threatening to quit. And even better, it was as though the government was paying them to go hunting, an officially illegal activity. The idea that they could take advantage of local government, which relied on them to fulfill the project, was evident. As my adoptive father said:

¹⁵ Nowadays women do occasionally go hunting with their husbands. They cook and help to carry the wild meat. When the people of Vulvul talk about husbands and wives going hunting together, they joke that they must have lots of sex in the wild. There is only one woman I know who uses guns. She is the head of her household and her husband is married in, for she has no brothers and she has to stay at home to look after her parents.

If I go to Lamatasinsin as a forerunner for the government, I will go for twenty days or a month, pretending that I cannot find the place. Because we are making money from the government, in this way we can make a lot of money.

Making money was also the main motivation for those men from Haitun village to go to Lamatasinsin. It was because of the announcement made by the former village head and present *Tomuk*, Tama Idav, to the effect that those who participated would be paid by the local government, that the people of Haitun, and not of the other five villages, went there. Unfortunately for them, this was not true. It caused some resentment among the men, not so much toward Tama Idav who gave them the wrong impression, but toward local government officials who, in their eyes, acted in a stingy and inconsiderate manner to those who did the job for them. In the end local government officials partly solved the problem by presenting the elders from Haitun with an extra pig as a sign of their gratitude and respect.

A journey to the past

We set off in our galoshes after eight o'clock in the morning on 11 December 1998. Atong drove us in a truck up the unpaved forestry road. Tama Anci, Tama Tahai, Tama Lian and his younger brother Tama Dahu, all in their fifties, sat in the back of the truck and began to look for anything they could hunt. Atong told me excitedly that he and other officials expected our hunters to be successful and they could all share *cici* (the meat of wild animals) after our return. After one-and-a-half hours, we reached the point where the road was damaged by the typhoon and we had to get out of the vehicle. The elders tidied up their things and filled their guns with gunpowder and small steel beads. Few words were exchanged before we set off again on foot. We walked in a steady rhythm, and after roughly one hour's walking we would have a five to ten minutes' break to chat, drink water, murder a betel nut or smoke. However, whenever we came across an animal the rhythm was broken, and all but Tama Lian, who did not bring his gun because it was out of order, went after it.

Occasionally someone explained to me what kind of animal had trodden the mud, eaten the trees, or left their dung on the path, and what kinds of plant to avoid because they bit your skin. But most of the time we walked in silence so as not to disturb and frighten off the animals. Later I realised how important it was to catch something. The only food we had brought for this six-day journey was three kilograms of rice, one box

of instant noodles, sugar, ginger and salt. No catch, no dishes.¹⁶

We left marks for the people from Haitun to follow us by spraying red paint on the trees, or cutting off their bark with machetes. After four hours of walking, we reached an abandoned hut where we were going to spend the night. It was raining modestly, and this hut was without walls and roof. The elders worked efficiently to cover it partially, and fetched some firewood and water. There were some cooking pots and disposable bowls abandoned near the hearth for us to cook the lunch. After having the noodles, Tama Lian and I went to fetch more water while the others set out hunting. I washed my face in the stream and Tama Lian suddenly remembered the *masamu* that one should not touch water in a new place, otherwise typhoon and heavy rains might come. I comforted him saying that the typhoon season had now passed, but he still worried about the rain. The way in which Tama Lian suddenly remembered something he knew (about *masamu*, the landscape, and Lamatasinsin), but did not recall when I had asked him before, is very important and will be discussed later in the chapter.

Tama Lian and I cooked the rice for dinner, and some sweet ginger soup to ward off the cold. When the others returned empty-handed at dusk, we drank the soup together. Then Tama Tahai and Tama Dahu went out again and I was told to go to bed. Although I was the only one with a sleeping bag, it felt very cold when I was hungry. I dozed off listening to Tama Anci and Tama Lian's conversation by the fire. When I woke up, it was eight-thirty and we finally got two flying squirrels (*aval*) to eat. One was cooked quickly for we were all starving; the other was dried above the fire and saved for the next day. After dinner the elders drank together by the fire. Despite the fact that it was heavy to carry, alcohol was indispensable for a journey like this. I slept again and had a bad dream. I cried in my dreams and Tama Anci asked Tama Lian, who was next to me, to wake me up otherwise I would be taken away (by *hanitu*).

In the morning I woke up and was asked immediately what I had dreamt that night. Tama Tahai was dealing with a goat (*sidi*), which he killed before dawn. "*Mashial taisah* (good dream or good luck)", they said. Tama Tahai opened its belly and took out the inner organs, which could not keep for the remaining five days of our journey. Then Tama Dahu helped him to hide the goat in the stream (the 'fridge'), and covered it with stones. We would come back for it on our way home.

After breakfast we set off again. About an hour later the forestry road came to an

¹⁶ On another occasion I was told by Tama Itul that when he went on his first few hunting trips his father forbade him to eat if he didn't catch something himself, so he learnt quickly and mastered the skills after only six months.

end, and we walked on a path covered by dense couch grass or, at altitudes above 2,500 metres, by a particular kind of bamboo. The hard work of cutting couch grass and clearing the path began. When we stopped to rest, it was usually Tama Anci who started the chat by pointing to the forest around us and asking me : “Lagui, do you know who planted the trees (cut this branch, left this mark, etc.) here? It was me, twenty (thirty, forty) years ago.” The area used to be the hunting ground (*hanupan*) of Tama Anci’s family but had now become a national forestry reserve. Apart from Tama Tahai, who was originally from Evago, all the elders had worked for the forestry here since they were kids, one of the earliest sources of cash income.

Before we reached Tama Anci’s *talokan* (hunting hut), which he had not visited for a year, he slipped once, and he cursed the *hanitu* responsible for his fall. When we were having lunch at his *talokan*, he talked about the abundance of harmful and malicious *hanitu* in the wild. These *hanitu* did not bless people (*nian mihomis bunun*), because they never saw them and did not know you. However, harmful spirits can be turned into a source of blessing once familiarity and relationship are built. Ancestors (*maladaigaz*) and spirit companions of *is-amaminang* (spirit mediums) can be protective, and a source of power (see Chapter 5).

The landscape around Tama Anci’s *talokan* was different. There was no path in the forest anymore, and the problem for us became how to recognise the shortest route so as to save energy and time. Tama Lian and Tama Anci continuously discussed the references of orientation, recalled their memories and remembered the way together. We aimed to cross the Talun river to another *talokan* for the night.

When we passed through the forest and saw the river, Tama Dahu suddenly lowered his voice and asked us to be quiet. There was a pair of water deer (*halvan*) on the river bank about thirty metres away. Tama Anci’s gun was the best and he shot the male deer on the neck, but the deer quickly escaped. The men all dropped their bags and ran agilely after the deer among the rocks. The deer hid in couch grass, was shot again and finally fell down. It was a big deer with large antlers, and weighed about two hundred kilograms. It took four people to carry it down to the riverside. The men were all extremely excited, and repeatedly talked about how they got the deer. Tama Lian praised me for being *malai* (one who brings good hunting luck to others), and Tama Anci stressed that his grandfathers gave them the deer. It was not a coincidence that the deer was here when we passed by; the deer had been brought here by his *maladaigaz*.

First, the testicles and penis of the deer were carefully cut off. The Han-Chinese

regard these as a kind of medicine which enhances male virility and is worth more than NT\$ 10,000 (about £ 200). Then the men opened the deer's belly and took all the inner organs out. The deer's head was cut off, and the blood was kept in a pot. Tama Anci took a small piece of liver, the blood and the rice wine as offerings to his *maladaigaz*. He expressed his thanks to them, called the names of every male ancestor he could remember to share the wine and the deer, and asked them to protect us and continue to bring us good luck. Then Tama Dahu, who saw the deer first, also made food offerings to his ancestors.

After cleaning the entrails in the river, the elders began to eat raw liver and to drink the mixture of deer blood and rice wine. It was getting dark but they took their time until they were satisfied. Then the deer carcass was put in the river and covered with heavy stones. When we crossed the river, it was too dark to reach the *talokan* where we planned to spend the night. We stayed near the river, had dinner and prepared to sleep under the trees. Unfortunately, it started to rain. Tama Lian went out to find a place under the cliff that was big enough to shelter us and we moved there. A big fire was made to dry the genitals and inner organs of the deer. Tama Lian carefully cut the forehead and the antlers. This was a highly valued trophy which would be kept by the one who shot the deer.¹⁷ Then he opened up the skull and offered the raw brain on his machete (*sinhaili*) to me and everyone else.

Next morning, the deer antlers and dried entrails were wrapped in a bag and hidden under the cliff. I was asked to keep silence about the catch when we met the people from Haitun, for the elders did not want to share with them. The weight of the meat was never considered a problem, and throughout the day the elders tried to lure a roe (*sakut*) by blowing a pipe made from *tupai* (a kind of plant) to imitate its call. In the early afternoon we arrived at a *talokan* at Ikukunuth, near Lamatasinsin, where we would stay and wait for the people from Haitun.

After lunch, Tama Anci and Tama Dahu set out to hunt again. The others fetched water, firewood and prepared a place to sleep, for the *talokan* was again roofless and wall-less. The area used to be Lamatasinsin's *hanupan*, which was taken over by Tama Lian's grandfather after Lamatasinsin was killed by the Japanese. About two hours later, Tama Anci and Tama Dahu called us by singing. Immediately Tama Tahai knew they had caught an animal and needed help. He went to find them, judging their position by

¹⁷ Before the Japanese resettlement policy, the Bunun were shifting cultivators and were frequently on the move searching for new *hanupan*. The deer antlers (*vaha*) could be placed on the path to occupy new hunting ground.

singing and listening to their response. Half an hour later they brought back a big boar (*vanish*). Drying it over the fire kept them busy the whole evening.

The following morning we finally arrived at Lamatasinsin. It took some time to find the exact spot where the house used to stand, since it was totally covered by dense couch grass (see Figure 3). After cutting down the grass, the foundation (*hutun*) of the house and the hearth stones were revealed. It was a big rectangular house, about 9m wide and 6m deep. The elders looked around and soon had an idea of its spatial layout, as though they had a schema of the house in their mind. Here was the bedroom (*sapalan*)... here was the millet barn (*pacilasan*)... over there was the pigpen (*luluman saipukun vavu*)... and that was the hearth (*vanin*). I was surprised that they were actually quite excited, even though they had stressed before that they were here to work and to make money, rather than to see Lamatasinsin's *mailumah* just for fun, or because of strange research interests.

All the work had been done. We spent the afternoon relaxing and expected the people of Haitun to turn up at anytime. Tama Tahai and Tama Dahu went hunting and tried to lure a *sakut*.¹⁸ Tama Anci and Tama Lian made some wooden spoons and chopsticks while we had a chat. I kept wondering how could they sleep two or three hours a day and still be alert and watchful in hunting. I wondered how they experienced the encounters between themselves, *hanitu* and their *maladaigaz*; how they still felt restless and unsettled when they heard the call of wild animals, even though they already got so much *cici*; why they felt that the wild animals were calling the hunters to kill them. Most of my questions were met with the answer: "it was like this in the mountains (wild)", or "our ancestors were like this in the past". Every now and then, when they taught me how to do things in a particular way, they would explain to me that that was how the *maladaigaz* did it, so we should do the same. This taken-for-grantedness, which gradually became clear to me, was linked to how they remembered and experienced the past. Our journey was a journey to the past through our movement further and further away from the settlement and the present, into the realm of ancestors and an ancestral way of life. Three days into the journey, I was often asked by the elders what day it was and how many days there were to go, for they felt that we had been in the mountains for a long time and every day seemed the same. I had to give the answer by counting the number of *talokan* where we had spent the night. The

¹⁸ The persistent efforts to lure a *sakut* was to do with its market value. One kilogram of fresh wild goat and boar were worth NT\$ 250, but deer and *sakut* were worth NT\$ 500. Dried meat is more expensive than fresh meat. Also, the meat of *sakut* is more tender and is regarded as more delicious.

spatialisation of time, and the static, cyclical feeling we had about time, contributed to the sense of being 'in the past'. To live like ancestors in the mountains is, as it should be, the best way to remember the past.

The people of Haitun did not turn up before dusk as they were supposed to. Also, Tama Tahai and Tama Dahu did not catch anything that afternoon so the elders had no work to do. They were bored, especially as we had already run out of alcohol. Tama Lian borrowed a gun and set off alone to hunt, and the others killed time by telling the stories of *hanitu* by the fire. Tama Dahu told us a story he had heard from his father:

There was a guy who went hunting. He was after a monkey (*uton*) for a long time since daytime, but was unable to shoot it. After a very long time, the monkey suddenly stopped and said to him: "why don't you go to wash your face!" Then it disappeared. And he suddenly realised that it was dark already and the sky was full of stars. He realised that this monkey was a *hanitu* in disguise.

Monkeys and masked civets (*kukon*) are the two kinds of animals most likely to be disguised *hanitu*, and one should be careful when hunting them. It was said that they liked to tease and entice people into dangerous places. And we soon had an example. Not long after Tama Lian returned empty-handed, two torches approached us. It was the people of Haitun. However, only two young men, Nihu and Vava, arrived. The rest were still a two-hour walk away. Nihu and Vava complained about how slow the rest were, although they had abandoned most of their food and rice wine at the previous *talokan*. Also, they were disoriented and found themselves in a very uncomfortable situation. When they prepared to cross the Talun river before dusk, they called us to see whether they were close to the destination. They mistook the monkeys' response as ours, so they thought there was only an hour to go and left all their water behind. Now they were in the middle of nowhere and without water. They dug a muddy spot in which the wild boar wallowed and got a little bit of water to drink, but they were unable to cook rice. The elders of Vulvul were unsympathetic to their situation and had a good laugh. It proved how much more capable they were than the people of Haitun, who, in their eyes, were lesser than women.

Knowing that the people from Haitun still had a bottle of rice wine, Tama Dahu and Tama Lian went to find them and brought it back. Without hesitation, they drank it to the last drop. When Tama Idav and the others finally arrived the next morning, he was upset because the rice wine was meant to be a libation for Lamatasinsin. Tama Idav planned to hold *malastapan*, a ritualistic celebration in which every man (and men only)

told his origin and boasted about his heroic deeds, at Lamatasinsin's *mailumah*. Without wine they were unable to do that for it wasn't right or possible to cheat *hanitu*, though the photographer Kavas suggested doing so for the sake of filming.

When we all gathered at Lamatasinsin's *mailumah*, the elders of Vulvul, especially Tama Anci, took on the role of history teller (see Figure 4). They introduced to the people of Haitun the spatial layout of the house, the 'true' story about Lamatasinsin, and vindicated their story by explaining the relationship between Lamatasinsin and their *maladaigaz*. This relationship, to my great surprise, had never been recalled before but was only remembered on the journey. It was only when we were on Lamatasinsin's hunting ground, in a spot overlooking Lamatasinsin's house, that Tama Lian remembered something and asked us all to sit down to listen to the story. When he was a little boy and lived in the *talokan* at Ikukunuth, he was told by his grandfather Hulas Nihu about his negotiation with Lamatasinsin at that very spot.¹⁹ The *hanupan* here belonged to Lamatasinsin, which he had full use of. However, Hulas Nihu and Lamatasinsin were relatives, the members of the same *Kavian* (phratry, lit. friend),²⁰ so Lamatasinsin allowed him to *macipcih* (hunt with guns), but he could not *mala-ahu* (set up traps) there lest Lamatasinsin's hunting dogs were hurt. It was the first time Tama Lian told the others the story, not even his younger brother Tama Dahu had heard it before. Tama Anci also remembered at Lamatasinsin's *mailumah* that his grandfathers and Lamatasinsin's family were neighbours, and that they visited each other on the occasion of life-cycle rituals and seasonal rituals such as weddings, *masuhaulus*, *malahtangia*, *cinsan*, and *anthatha*. Whenever there was a celebration, Lamatasinsin went to call Tama Anci's grandfathers from a place on the opposite mountain, and they shouted back when they heard his call. Next morning, they would visit Lamatasinsin to join the celebration, and they drank together for two or three days.

The elders from Haitun were very polite and silent before the elders of Vulvul, although Vava and Nihu told us the night before about how they boasted about their historical knowledge about Lamatasinsin on their way here. Tama Anci had anticipated that they would be speechless today because what they knew was not true (*mamantuk*)

¹⁹ My adoptive father told me that he had been to Lamatasinsin. However, others said he had not, he had only been to a place about twenty minutes walk away from Lamatasinsin. So I asked my adoptive father again. He said that although he had not actually seen Lamatasinsin's house, he had passed it by during hunting and an elder pointed it out for him from a spot overlooking it. He still thinks he has been there because "you can see it from the path".

²⁰ Lamatasinsin belonged to the sub-clan of Takishuson-an, which was part of Istanda clan. Hulas Nihu and Tama Lian are members of Ispalidav clan. Istanda and Ispalidav are one phratry.

but lies (*taptapal*), and that they would not be able to beat what he said, for it was told by his *maladaigaz* who had drunk together with Lamatasinsin. Among the Bunun, the eyewitness oral accounts of the past are considered to be the most accurate version, therefore, they have authority and the advantage of moral persuasion (cf. Roseman 1996, Cole 1998). Even though Tama Anci and Tama Lian had never seen Lamatasinsin before, they heard the eyewitness accounts from their *maladaigaz* and felt that what they remembered was much more reliable than whatever the elders from Haitun, two were older than themselves, had to say.

It is this tendency to endow eyewitness oral accounts the power of truth and moral persuasion in the transmission of historical knowledge that explains why the narratives about the Vulvul event are highly consistent, but the narratives about Lamatasinsin are multiple and contested. In the Vulvul event, some survived the slaughter and those three men who attacked the Japanese on their way down the mountains were unharmed. They lived to tell the story. On the contrary, all involved or held as responsible for the Dakuanshan event were persecuted by the Japanese police, so no one had eyewitness accounts to relate, and no one had seen the whole picture. All of those who tell different stories about Lamatasinsin try to highlight the reliability of their version by stressing that their *maladaigaz* had witnessed what happened. However, with all directly involved killed by the Japanese, it is likely that the narratives about Lamatasinsin will remain contested.

Having said that, what struck me most is the way multiple narratives about Lamatasinsin became singular on this journey. On our way here, the elders mentioned him from time to time when we had a rest. The closer we approached Lamatasinsin, the more concrete the narrative about him became. I was surprised that they all agreed on the same version, even though I heard different stories from them in the village, that Lamatasinsin did not kill the Japanese or anyone else. He was not fierce or violent (*ma-ahvon*). Rather, he was a very nice person (*mashial tu bunun*). He was mild, gentle and honest (*malonlon*). The Japanese arrested him because he liked to live in the mountains and refused to move down. He disobeyed the Japanese so they got angry and fabricated a charge against him. It was wrong and unjust for the Japanese to do so. However, he was still a *mamangan* (hero, lit. powerful or with power) for he was very good at hunting. Lamatasinsin was also a man of influence because he knew how to make guns.

There are several factors, associated with the specific contexts of history-telling,

involved in the production of a singular narrative about Lamatasinsin. First, it relates to the unique way that egalitarianism and unity are constructed during hunting. At the very beginning of our journey, Tama Anci stressed that everyone was equal during hunting. Despite being the eldest, he would not, and could not, force other people to do things. Nobody gave orders, instead we were a united group in which everyone expressed themselves, did their best and helped each other. Everyone agreed that this was indeed true, and the way things were done testified to it. This was not to say that experience and knowledge did not play any role in decision-making, but every decision was indeed a unanimous one. The way that everybody expresses themselves fully and equally but the group is still able to reach a conflict-free agreement and unity through communication and negotiation, is regarded as ideal among the Bunun and is called *mapintasa* — “becoming one” (voice or opinion). I suggest that the way the elders agreed on one version about Lamatasinsin during the conversation was mainly an expression and result of *mapintasa*.

Second, it relates to the presence of the photographers and the recognition that we needed to produce an official account of Lamatasinsin. The local government hired two professional photographers and their expensive equipment so that, unlike the previous ‘root-searching’ trip to Lahlah, there would be good quality visual records of history to be shown to the central government and the media. As with the inscription on the monument of Lamatasinsin, there was no room for multiple or conflicting versions in the official narrative.

After showing the people from Haitun Lamatasinsin’s *mailumah*, we left them in the *talokan* of Ikukunuth to rest for a day to recover their strength, because they said they could not walk anymore. With the government officials waiting to greet our return the following day, we rushed back immediately without having lunch. The elders’ bags were heavier with the boar but we had to speed up. However, when I gasped for air and tried very hard to match their speed, often on all fours when it was necessary, the elders of Vulvul, unbelievably, were singing! It is not that it wasn’t difficult or physically demanding for them, as they admitted their legs were about to get cramp, but the harder it is, the more the Bunun sing. From the first day Tama Anci teased me, when I was unable or unwilling to speak due to exhaustion, that I should sing. “In the mountains one should sing. Singing makes you happy, otherwise it’s very hard”.

And it was indeed very hard, especially on the last day. I was woken up at four o’clock in the morning. We set off at dawn, when it was still dark in the forest. The

elders' bags were full of *cici* after we collected the deer carcass the previous night, and we faced six hours of steep uphill paths in the morning. The physical hardship was such that almost no one wanted to chat when we rested. But the elders still sang during trekking. When we arrived at Tama Anci's *talokan* for lunch, there wasn't much, or much time, to eat. We ran out of rice, and a pack of noodles was all we had. For most of the day, we were starving. My hope was to reach the *talokan* at Itami where the people of Haitun abandoned their food, but the elders were thinking about the rice wine. After we collected the goat from the stream at Itonku and finally arrived at the *talokan* of Itami, they drank four bottles, despite my urging them to go home all the time.

The elders were drunk, becoming very talkative and slowing down. It was unlikely that we could meet the people who were going to drive us down the unpaved forestry road before dusk. If they didn't wait for us then it would be an extra three hours' walk by the shortcut back to Vulvul from there. As night fell, we had to use the torches but their rechargeable batteries were weak by now. To my dismay, when we stopped at a small unattended shrine of the land god (*tudikon*) built by Han-Chinese forestry workers decades ago, the elders found more rice wine abandoned by the people of Haitun under couch grass and drank another bottle.²¹ Just before we reached the shrine, Tama Tahai saw an animal running away and insisted on looking for it for a while.

When Tama Tahai returned, we shouted from the shrine to see whether the truck was waiting for us in the place about forty-five minutes' walk away, and were overjoyed to hear some response. Then Tama Anci, Tama Dahu and Tama Tahai fired their guns in turn. Three shots would inform the people waiting for us that we had got a *vaha* (male deer), and it was a privilege not to be misused. Only bears (both male and female) and cloud leopards (already extinct) were more highly valued by the Bunun, and one could fire five shots on that occasion.

Knowing that there were people waiting for us, we walked in high spirits. The elders sang a polyphonic song *macilumah* all the way to the truck, the most beautiful sound I have ever heard.²² The people who waited for us were the township governor's nephew, Talum, and an official, Taupas. They offered rice wine to each of the elders as a sign of respect, then they also joined in the drinking. The elders told Talum and Taupas

²¹ The shrine of the *tudikon* is a small concrete house about 75 cm high. It is painted red, with no statue of the *tudikon* but a cement tablet with the name of the god written on it inside the shrine. In the front of the tablet, there is a small incense stove and three small cups for libation.

²² *Macilumah* is a wordless song sung to inform the people at home of one's safe return when coming back from work, especially hunting. People will respond by singing, and go to greet them on the path and to help carry things home.

excitedly and repeatedly about our remarkable journey. They had no intention to stop drinking and leave for Vulvul, where the governor and some ten government officials had been waiting for us since three-thirty that afternoon. Talum and Taupas urged them to go without success. It took lots of effort to eventually get them into the truck! Half way home, Tama Anci' youngest brother Tama Talum, who was also a government official, came to welcome us. With Tama Talum's car in the front to escort us, the elders truly felt like *mamangan* and started to sing again.

Mapulaun: the celebration

When we returned to Vulvul after nine o'clock in the evening, the government officials and the families of the elders greeted us happily. The celebration (*mapulaun*) was to be held at Tama Anci's house. A red banner of 'welcome back from the activity of searching for the roots of anti-Japanese hero Lamatasinsin' was hung from the trees in the front yard, with a poor black pig tied underneath the tree. The women soon came to take charge of what their husbands brought home. Tama Anci's wife Cina Avus took his bag to the back of the house. Tama Tahai's wife snatched not only his bag, but also dragged him home. And Tama Dahu's wife gave me lots of praises before she and her daughter took the bags of Tama Dahu and his widowed elder brother Tama Lian. The women were all afraid that their drunken husbands or brothers-in law would lose their minds and distributed the meat to the officials.

Because the people from Haitun didn't come back with us, the pig feast was postponed until the next day. Cina Avus and her daughter provided some dishes and the indispensable soup for the drinking. The governor of Haitun township, the highest official present, offered the rice wine with his praises and appreciation to our *mamangan*, and accepted what Tama Anci and other elders offered him in return. The officials all took turns to offer rice wine to the elders, with praises and compliments pouring out abundantly from their mouths. I was not spared either, although Tama Anci asked the officials not to force me to drink. Bunun officials would often force me to drink by saying that without drinking with them I would never truly understand their culture. This time the rhetoric was slightly different: I must drink because although my body is *put* (Han-Chinese), by going to Lamatasinsin my *is-ang* (heart, soul) is truly Bunun now, therefore I should drink like a Bunun to celebrate it.

The officials were eager to hear what we had seen and what had happened during

the expedition. Tama Anci was the most articulate and assertive, raising himself above Tama Lian and Tama Dahu and boasting about his knowledge of history and his contribution to this activity. The world of equality and unity during hunting was replaced by a mild competition for the officials' attention. Although the elders had many criticisms of how Atong had handled the arrangement of the expedition, and they wanted to raise their wages to NT\$2,000 a day because the people from Haitun got so much food paid by the government whereas they did not, they restrained themselves not to say a word about it.²³ Tonight was *mapulaun*, a time for everybody to drink together to reach the ideal state of *pinaskal*, a state in which everyone was happy, satisfied and blessed each other.

The people from Haitun finally returned late in the afternoon on the next day. The pig was killed and distributed by the men, and women helped to clean the entrails and to cook them (see Figure 5). The governor was drunk by noon and was unable to come, but he sent some officials. The officials took turns to offer rice wine to the elders, this was followed by a short speech to thank the *mamangan* for their hard work and their contribution to the understanding of Bunun history. They left after the meat was distributed, and all of them and those who came the night before received a share. After they left, the elders could drink without any formality, and some other men in the settlement also came to join the celebration. One of them was Tama Kila, who told me he had no face to see me any more. From now on he had to hide when he saw me because I went to Lamatasinsin whilst he did not.²⁴

When the elders were drunk they held *malastapan*, the *lus-an* (ritual) they were unable to hold at Lamatasinsin. They formed a circle; in the middle there was Tama Anci, who acted as the host of *malastapan*. Tama Anci poured a bowl of rice wine, offered it to Tama Idav, and asked him to tell of his achievements and heroic deeds. Then he asked everyone in turn. Questions and answers were put in chants; each sentence was composed of four syllables. Every sentence was repeated by all participants before the next sentence. Usually women stood in a circle behind the men and repeated what they chanted and cheered for them (*cishainan*), but not this time. The contents of *malastapan* have changed under different historical conditions. It used to be confined to the heroic deeds of headhunting. After the abolition of headhunting, it was

²³ The day before we set off for Lamatasinsin, Atong did ask the elders how much food we needed and said he would prepare them. The elders only asked for a box of instant noodles. However, they successfully got their pay rise by complaining about the lack of food we suffered in the mountains.

²⁴ A few months later some people in Vulvul still greeted me with "here comes the one who has been to Lamatasinsin".

mainly about success in hunting. However, this time the elders boasted about their achievement of having been to Lamatasinsin.²⁵ In the future, they may continue to boast about it in *malastapan* and whenever they do so, they evoke the memory of Lamatasinsin and this journey.

How the past is remembered and represented

In the above, I have contextualised the ways in which memories are evoked and reconstructed among the Bunun. The controversies surrounding Lamatasinsin and the attempts which the Bunun of different localities made to reclaim him as a form of empowerment show clearly that memory is always ‘occasioned’ (Middleton 1997). Now I will look at how the past is remembered and represented among the Bunun more analytically.

The local government’s effort to commemorate Lamatasinsin is a response to the changing political conditions in the wider Taiwanese society. The appropriation of Bunun resistance to the Japanese by the Han-Chinese has regenerated local concerns about the past in specific ways. As a result of the local understanding of Han-Chinese interests in Bunun history, the forms deployed by the local government to commemorate the particular event and the historical figure have been coloured with Chinese nationalism. The building of a monument, the production of a textual narrative about the past and the use of mass media, all means that play an important part in the construction of nationalism and ‘imagined communities’, as pointed out by Anderson (1991), are those favoured by local government officials. The messages are aimed more at the Han-Chinese, especially government officials and tourists, than at the Bunun themselves.

However, the dialogue between the Bunun and the Han-Chinese remains partial and the meaning of the past remains undetermined by it. For the ordinary Bunun, memories about the relationship with their colonisers are mainly constructed and contested in the conversations among themselves, and they don’t need the Han-Chinese to help them to recover or salvage their history. The Bunun notion for ‘history’ is *palihavasan*, which is literally ‘telling what happened in the past’ (*havas*). *Palihavasan*

²⁵ I was even encouraged to *malastapan* with them because I had been to Lamatasinsin as well. However, it was an idea I was not comfortable with. Also, *malastapan* ended by pointing out one’s mother’s patrilineal clan and identifying the kinship relationships between the participants, which I was unable to do.

is a very broad category, it includes myths, *masamu* (taboos and norms), stories, and the migration process of patrilineal clans. It also includes *laihaivan* or *linnahaiivan*, the places one has been to and the things one has done.²⁶ Narratives of *palihavasan* are told, or used to be told, in a prudent and discreet manner, and those present would discuss and check its plausibility carefully. It can be described as ‘conversational remembering’, a concept that addresses the social foundation and context of memory, as well as how the inferential links and argumentative basis of plausible versions of the past are developed and established in acts of communication (Middleton & Edwards 1990, Middleton 1997).²⁷

While in both official commemorations and conversational remembering, the past is used as a discursive resource, it is very different when one turns away from ‘history as representations’ to ‘history as an activity’ (Rappaport 1988: 736). When the people of Vulvul go hunting, they experience the past in a very different way. It is not narratives, but landscape and the body, that play the central role in mediating between present experience and ancestral past. The importance of landscape in encapsulating and transmitting memory has been emphasised by a number of authors (R. Rosaldo 1980, Rappaport 1990, Kuchler 1993, Santos-Granero 1998, Kenny 1999, Casey 1999), and I find the notion that kinship is implicated in landscape (Gow 1995, Morphy 1995, Toren 1995) most helpful and relevant in the Bunun case.

Like the Ilongot of Philippines described by R. Rosaldo (1980), the Bunun are generally uninterested in historical accounts that no one can verify out of personal experience or out of the experience of trustworthy persons known to them. As a result, genealogical memory is shallow, and the landscape and places where people settled at given times are of paramount importance to memory. The resettlement forced on them by the Japanese is often cited as the reason why they forget ancestral history. When Tama Anci and other elders pointed to a specific feature of the landscape, such as a stream, a tree, the remains of a house or a piled stone trap, and remembered something they did not recall before, it is as though the landscape is a mnemonic device which triggers memory. And it is not a memory of any kind, but the memory of one’s personal

²⁶ See also Yeh (1995: 227-228) and Huang (1999: 444-445). The distinction between *palihavasan* and *laihaivan* corresponds to the distinction made by psychologists between semantic and autobiographical memory, or the distinction made by historians between history and memory (Bloch 1998a: 115-116). However, the Bunun do not separate them rigidly. They are bound together or merge into each other in everyday activities (Fentress & Wickham 1992: 32, Bloch 1998a: 124).

²⁷ In Middleton and Edwards’ use (1990), the concept of “conversational remembering” also addresses the issue of how cognition is represented in narratives. However, in the light of Bloch’s (1998b) critique of the theoretical position of treating narratives as the basis of cognition, their attempt seems problematic.

experience and that of one's *maladaigaz*, that are intimately recollected.

With the topography lying before us, many more stories about the migration of one's patrilineal clan were volunteered by the elders than when I asked them before in the settlement. The evocation and recollection of intimate kinship memories are closely linked to the emphasis repeatedly placed by the elders on *re-enacting* the ancestral way of life on our journey. Connerton (1989) and Casey (1999) has eloquently argued that re-enactment of the past is sustained by bodily practices, which is clearly born out in a mundane activity such as hunting. By trying to live and act like their *maladaigaz*, the elders of Vulvul also strengthened their spiritual connections with the ancestors and with the land (the ancestral *hanupan*). The self-imposed lack of sleep during hunting helps to achieve a mental state similar to that of the annual *séance* of spirit mediums, that is, a state more susceptible or sensitive to the existence of spirits and ancestors.²⁸ No wonder there was so much talk about *hanitu* and *maladaigaz*!

In his seminal work, Bartlett has argued that social groups provide a basis for remembering in two ways. "First, by providing that setting of interests, excitement, and emotions which favours the development of specific images, and secondly, by providing a persistent framework of institutions and customs which acts as a schematic basis for constructive remembering" (Bartlett 1932: 255). Remembering is also a matter of feeling or affect (ibid.: 206-207, Shotter 1990). Although it may seem unlikely or counter-intuitive at first, I suggest that hunting, drinking and singing all provide the Bunun with such a basis for remembering. They help to achieve certain emotional states which bring to the surface ancestral memory. When the elders of Vulvul walked in the ancestral hunting ground, carried the heavy load of wild meat, got drunk and sang the polyphonic song *macilumah* together, they created a reality that is different from everyday experience in the settlement. As they listened to each other and synchronised the changes in their tones to achieve a harmonious chorus, they participated in "an interplay of recollections, retentions, protentions, and anticipations which interrelate the successive elements", and create what Schutz has called the inner time of music, which is different from measurable outer time (Schutz 1964: 170-171). For the Bunun, songs like *macilumah* are 'ancient' and passed down from the ancestors; singing them together creates a special form of 'simultaneity' with the past (cf. Steward 1997: 203), a kind of

²⁸ When I participated in the annual *séance* (*pistahu*) of spirit mediums, I was very impressed by the ability of the spirit mediums and novices to endure severe lack of sleep, which was a big problem for me. I was told that it was not a problem for them because they were used to it from hunting. I only realise now why hunting is connected to *pistahu* and why *pistahu* is held immediately after *malahtangian*, the main annual ritual to do with hunting. See Chapter 5.

‘reliving from within’ (Munn 1995: 84).²⁹ Of course I don’t know what kinds of images emerged in their minds when the elders of Vulvul carried loads of *cici*, got drunk and sang *macilumah* all the way home. Did they remember how when they were kids they happily went to greet their fathers and grandfathers on the path when they heard *macilumah*? Or did they remember the excitement, exhaustion and satisfaction when they first went hunting themselves? I could feel, though, that when their voices resonated in the mountains, they were bringing the past to the present and unfolding it into the future.

The making of *mamangan* and the gender of history

I have talked about how multiple representations of the past became singular in the hunting expedition to Lamatasinsin. The elders all agreed that he was a gentle, mild and modest person who would not and did not kill anyone. Although he was not a brave headhunter who resisted the Japanese, Lamatasinsin was still a *mamangan* and man of influence because he was a very good hunter. By identifying Lamatasinsin as a *mamangan*, the elders of Vulvul were at the same time asserting their own status as *mamangan*.

Indeed, with the giving up of headhunting in the 1930s, hunting became the most important way for a Bunun man to construct his masculinity and to establish himself as a *mamangan*.³⁰ Hunting was and is valued a great deal by the Bunun. According to a survey made by the Japanese scholar Segawa in 1933, hunting only contributed 6% of the income of the Bunun, while agriculture contributed 65% and gathering 13% (quoted from Huang 1992: 34). Gardening was mainly done by women, with the help of men in heavy work such as clearing the land and harvesting.³¹ However, hunting acquires more social prestige than gardening and gathering (ibid: 35). The importance of hunting lies not in its economic value but in its socio-cultural significance.³²

Hunting was a very important step to manhood. Boys first went hunting for several days with their fathers or other male members of the household when they were about

²⁹ Stokes (1997) also argues that the temporalities created through music constitute a form of engagement with experiences of time and history generated in the past.

³⁰ Headhunting (*makakavas*) and hunting are historically and symbolically linked to each other. The knowledge and courage required for both were similar; learning how to hunt was a preparation and precondition for participating in headhunting.

³¹ Women and children did more gathering, but men did it as well.

³² Note that the inscription on the monument of Lamatasinsin says: “Hunting was the main livelihood, complemented by the farming of millet”.

twelve years old.³³ The first hunting expedition was treated very seriously and the boys had to follow lots of *masamu*.³⁴ Besides acquiring a new social status, hunting was also an important occasion for knowledge transmission, for geographical knowledge and the history of ancestral migrations were inscribed in the topography and landscape.³⁵ Many men fondly remember how their fathers kept on *palihavasan* to them during the hunting expeditions, even though they were so exhausted, dropping off by the fire.

The importance of the sharing and distribution of meat within and between different social units (households, patrilineal clans, settlement), and its underlying magico-religious notions, have been discussed by Mabuchi (1987b[1974b]). Huang (1995) also points out how the exchange of food, especially meat, contributed to the establishment of political leadership among the Bunun. Here I am interested in the symbolic process by which hunting produced more 'value' than gardening. The Bunun regarded that the success of both headhunting and hunting could enhance agricultural productivity. It was related to the ability of these activities to obtain and incorporate spiritual power (cf. Mabuchi 1987c[1974c]). Whereas millets, the main gardening crop, was a symbol of patrilineal descent and was governed by strict rules not to be shared across phratries in annual rituals, meat had to be shared and distributed according to a complex set of rules, and those who failed to do so would suffer bad luck in hunting and other misfortunes. While gardening sustained the house, and symbolically, the patrilineal clan, and was associated with retention, hunting yielded more potential for the transformation of one's work into spatial-temporal extension, more 'value' or 'fame' in Munn's terms (Munn 1986). The distribution of meat was connected with remembering the existent social relations and was also a kind of re-remembering. Eating without sharing was to forget others and social relationships.³⁶

The construction of hunting as producing more potential for spatial-temporal expansion and hence for the establishment of one's agency has implications for historical memory. I am always struck by how relatively quickly and readily the Bunun

³³ Before that they had already learnt how to catch birds and small animals by using catapults and small traps.

³⁴ Such as remaining silent for the first few hundred yards away from the settlement, taking the first pee in a squatting position, not touching the stream in a new place, following bird omens, not referring to animals by their real names but by their nicknames, etc. In some areas, the boys had to be blessed by *Lavi-an* (the military leader, those who led headhunting) before they went hunting for the first time (Huang 1994).

³⁵ Mabuchi (1974a) has discussed the relationship between hunting and 'spheres' of geographical knowledge, as well as its implications for the 'closedness' and boundaries of socio-political organisation among several Taiwanese aboriginal people.

³⁶ Cf. M. Rosaldo's (1980:77) discussion on how the distribution of meat defines and alters social units, and Munn's (1986,60-67) discussion of exchange and remembering.

gave up the cultivation of millet and the related annual rituals, but refused to give up hunting, although it was made illegal by the government and could get them into lots of trouble. And by how minor the role played by women is, and how negative their images are in *palihavasan*, while in daily activities the Bunun emphasise the complementarity between men and women (Yang 1992: 12-51). The work of women is hardly remembered in the long term. The past the Bunun commemorate is mostly the deeds of men, and it is also remembered mainly through their action.

I wondered what had happened to the women in Lamatasinsin and Talum's families. They were not killed by the Japanese, so where are their eyewitness accounts? I put my question to the elders of Vulvul. They surmised that those women returned to their natal homes or married into different families. They were afraid to tell the story at that time, because the Bunun were scared of the Japanese after Lamatasinsin was killed. Also, women were relatively silent in *palihavasan*.

The recent spate of interest in the heroic headhunting past can be said to make history 'gendered' in another way. As I have said, there was a strong continuity between hunting and headhunting; both were of central importance to the construction of masculinity and manhood, and both worked as a moving force in the shaping of local memory and historical thoughts. Not only did men's work produce more 'value', this focus on the headhunting past is also connected to a latent aggressiveness towards women. During the journey to Lamatasinsin, I was taught all kinds of sexual languages. As an anthropologist, I was naturally eager to learn as much Bunun as I could. Unlike in the settlement, where improper languages were restricted and there was usually someone to protect me from embarrassment, here the elders could listen to me innocently repeating improper words which I did not yet understand, and burst into laughter. I wondered whether the sexual jokes were to do with my presence or just something men do when they went hunting, a men-united thing. Very often when I talked to a group of men about the past, they loved to tell me, or asked me to tell, the story of the Aisaka event, which goes like this:

In Japanese time, a family of Ispalilav and a family of Istanda lived in Hancisan on the opposite mountain of Evago. They went to the police station at Aisaka and pretended to give the Japanese police red beans. They tied the bags really tight. When the Japanese police bowed their heads and tried to open the bags, the Bunun took the chance to kill the police. All the police and their families were killed apart from one woman. She hid in the toilet and a Bunun young man, Vilian, went after her. He didn't kill her, instead he had sex with her. She thanked him for not killing her but Vilian thought she wanted to do it again. So he did. That's why he got a

nickname Vilian Muhna (Vilian once more). Afterwards they escaped to Hualien and were never caught by the police.

The story goes as far as saying that the Japanese woman brought lots of things to thank Vilian because she really enjoyed their encounter. What happened, or is thought to have happened, in the Aisaka event is in many ways the inversion of what the Japanese have done to the Bunun. This time it was the Japanese police who were tricked by the material goods (red beans) provided by the Bunun. This time it was the Japanese woman who was raped by the Bunun and not the other way round. In 1996, the local government built a simple monument by the side of the Trans-Southern-Taiwan Highway, near Aisaka, to commemorate the event. It is composed of a big stone post, about 1.5 metres high, with two smaller stones on each side, onto which an official narrative of the event is inscribed. As the people of Vulvul remark, the monument basically looks like a big penis and testicles (see Figure 6). When history is commemorated in this way, it is indeed a very male thing.

The past as an authentic tradition

At Lamatasinsin, *malastapan* was not held due to the lack of rice wine. However, Tama Haisul, an elder from Haitun, performed a Han-Chinese ritual. After the elders finished *palihavasan*, Tama Haisul took out incense and several kinds of spirit money from his bag, and went to the spot where the door of the house used to be. He burned the incense and asked Tama Lakas and Vava to worship with him. They hold the incense in their hands, bowing toward the inside of the house. Tama Haisul said his prayers to Lamatasinsin in a low voice which I was unable to hear clearly. Then they stuck the incense in the ground and burned the spirit money in front of the door. All the others watched at a distance. I asked them why Tama Haisul did this. The elders from Haitun said it was because he was a *tangki* (taoist medium), and the elders of Vulvul said it was because they were nuns. They obviously did not approve of this ritual.

After we left Lamatasinsin for home, the elders of Vulvul could speak their mind. They mocked Tama Haisul again, and criticised his action as inappropriate for the occasion:

Lamatasinsin was really a Bunun, he really belonged to the authentic Bunun tradition. He shouldn't be worshipped with incense and spirit money. Has he seen those things? No, he hasn't. He doesn't know money. He doesn't know how to use

it. What does he want that spirit money for? Can he spend it? Can he save it in the bank? He doesn't even know what a bank is.

Their reaction corresponds to the continuous emphasis on re-enacting ancestral ways of life on our journey. On other occasions, such as in the annual tomb-sweeping, they themselves would be perfectly happy to burn incense and spirit money for their ancestors. However, we were not in the settlement where changes are unavoidable and must be incorporated in positive ways to ensure a better future. We were in the past, the realm of ancestors and spirits, where changes were downplayed and intentionally blocked out. When we stopped to have a rest at the shrine of the land god (*tudikon*), I was the only one interested in it. I first heard about the shrine from my adoptive brother Nihu, who would worship the land deity when he passed by. However, the elders were all against the idea, and said that they are Bunun, and Bunun do not worship *tudikon*.³⁷

I had never heard them asserting their identity as Bunun so strongly in such an *exclusive* way. To be Bunun is to be a good hunter who follows the ancestral way of life. To be Bunun is to be at home in the mountains. To be Bunun is not to worship the deities of the Han-Chinese, or to worship your ancestors in a Han-Chinese way. Those who do so are mocked behind their back as less than women or nuns. The past is constructed as an authentic tradition, in contrast to the present where the Bunun are becoming more and more like the Han-Chinese.

The past has neither disappeared, nor is it irrelevant to the present, but it is confined to specific localities ('in the mountains') or ritual occasions. In the present, one must adapt to the changing historical conditions. As the Bunun often comment, what matters most now is making money. On *mapulaun*, the women came to take charge of the meat brought back by their husbands not only because they control domestic consumption but also because they control the money in their households. There is no longer an obligation to distribute *cici* to the relatives and neighbours; they consume it themselves and sell it for cash. The morning after our return, all the elders and their wives went to Haitun to sell *cici* to a Han-Chinese merchant. My adoptive family was very unhappy that I was not given a share of the meat. The norm was that all who went hunting together shared the meat fairly. Although I was a woman and played no part in hunting, I should be given a share without my asking. They criticised the elders heavily as stingy and selfish, for they totally forget that I had families who wanted to eat *cici* as well. Other villagers agreed with my family. The glory of being

³⁷ The Bunun do have the notion of a land spirit, but it is not a humanised deity like the *tudikon*.

mamangan faded quickly for the elders because they failed to act as such and to distribute *cici* to others.

There is also another danger in establishing one's status as *mamangan* and remembering the past through hunting. According to the law for the conservation and protection of endangered wild animals, the penalty for killing them is very heavy. If convicted, there can be up to five years imprisonment and heavy fines (up to NT\$ 1,500,000, about £30,000). More and more, the Bunun are caught and sent to court for illegal possession of guns and hunting. To live like the ancestors is ideal, only if the government would allow them.

Into the future: the problem of historical agency and forgetting

In this chapter, I have discussed how the Bunun engage with the present by remembering the past, how important hunting was and is to the construction of manhood and fame, and its implication for historical memory. The construction of historical agency through hunting is closely connected with remembering kinship and other social relationships. However, it is more and more difficult for the Bunun to do so, as hunting was made illegal by the state and surveillance is tightening in recent years.³⁸ The ancestral way of life is pushed away from the settlement into the mountains, where they still can and desire to live like their ancestors.

What is the future for them under such circumstances? It is a problem the elders of Vulvul talk and worry about a lot. They often lament that the young men in the settlement no longer know hunting, and do not have the ability to survive in the mountains for several days. They are able to set up traps and to hunt flying squirrels in the nearby region within a few hours walking distance, but they can never make it to the areas we have been to. There are several reasons for this. In the late 1970s, the boys started to attend the junior high school in Haitun after they finished their primary school education in Vulvul. As the traffic was inconvenient, they had to board there and only went home for weekends and holidays. Therefore they were not able to go hunting with their fathers for one to two weeks, as the Bunun used to, and to learn hunting skills and the *hanupan* well. There is a very substantial difference in hunting skills between those

³⁸ In 1928, the Japanese colonial government confiscated most mountainous areas as national forestry and banned largescale hunting by burning the forest. In 1948, the Chinese Nationalist Government continued the Japanese policy and announced the law for managing national forestry. Hunting in national forestry was made illegal. However, the policy was not strictly executed until recent years, and the people of Vulvul had good relations with the local police, who were mostly indigenous people, too.

who went to junior high school and those who did not, such as my adoptive brother Nihu. Of course the young men can still learn hunting after their teenage days, however, hunting is a dangerous activity and various accidents could happen. For instance, my brother Nihu died in the mountains when he went hunting alone in 1992. The elders are really ambivalent about teaching their sons more advanced hunting skills, as they regard some of the young men are not very bright and prone to accidents. At the same time, even though they want to teach the young generation, some of them are quite lazy and do not want to learn. After all, hunting is hard work.

The elders see that the ancestral knowledge is going to be lost in the future, and their own place in history is in doubt. When they are dead and are buried facing the ancestral *hanupan*, how long will they be remembered? Are their descendents going to remember them and call their names to offer them rice wine, blood and liver when they catch an animal? Are they going to sing *macilumah* and hold *malastapan* on occasions other than performing for tourists? How long it will be before the Bunun become no different from the Han-Chinese? The problem of forgetting, is also the problem of social reproduction. As it so often happens, forgetfulness of one's past is the price that so called indigenous peoples must pay for a legitimate place within the nation-state and a stake within a larger world (Spyer 2000: 37). However, as I will show in the next chapter, certain aspects of the past are now making a comeback and regain legitimacy after the change of government policy from assimilation to multiculturalism.



Figure 1 Welcoming the arrival of government officials



Figure 2 Lamatasinsin Memorial Park



Figure 3 Clearing the couch grass at Lamatasinsin's *mailumah*



Figure 4 Telling the story about Lamatasinsin to be filmed



Figure 5 Celebrating the trip to Lamatasinsin with a pig feast



Figure 6 The Monument of the Aisaka Event



Figure 7 Squeezing the millet wine for *Malahtangia*



Figure 8 Preparing the meat for *Malahtangia*



Figure 9 *Papanah uvaz*: encouraging small boys to shoot with a bow and arrow



Figure 10 The jaws of wild boars (*vahvah*) hanging on a cliff at the ritual ground



Figure 11 *Mapatus*



Figure 12 The Han-Chinese tourists flocking to Vulvul



Figure 13 Performing for the tourists



Figure 14 Bunun Princess Beauty Contest



Figure 15 The spirit medium, Cina Avus, performing a healing ritual (*lapaspas*)



Figure 16 *Pistahu*: the annual séance of spirit mediums (Vulvul)



Figure 17 *Pistako*: the annual séance of spirit mediums (Ququaz)



Figure 18 Closing the coffin for the last time



Figure 19 Funeral procession



Figure 20 Visiting the grave one month later after the funeral

Chapter 4

Cultural Performances and the Recreation of Tradition

Before I began to do fieldwork in Vulvul at the end of September 1991, I imagined that I would spend most evenings of the first month sitting in someone's house collecting genealogies, like a proper anthropologist. Instead, I spent most evenings in the Community Centre watching the people of Vulvul practising singing and dancing, as they prepared for the forthcoming performance in the National Theatre in Taipei one month later. Nothing written about the Bunun had prepared me for this. After a few nights I was bored of watching the same thing, and the initially exciting gathering turned into some kind of routine, a non-event. At the same time, I was increasingly anxious about what seemed to be the "folkloric reification of culture" (Thomas 1992a: 275). I was told that the Bunun had no dance, and no word for dance, which they had to invent since all aboriginal peoples were expected to be natural-born dancers. The newly composed dance was made by putting together bits and pieces of cheer squad dancing and the dances of other aboriginal groups, such as the Amis. I was not the only one who felt uncertain and ambivalent about the 'inventedness' or 'inauthenticity' of this 'tradition'. One night the practice was interrupted by the conflict between one leading man, Tama Kila, and a Bunun schoolteacher, Cina Nivu, over the best way to go about the business of inventing a new dance. Tama Kila accepted the fact that they had to invent some dances and agreed that dancing could make their performance more dynamic and attractive. However, he was not prepared to go as far as Cina Nivu asked, which was to modify their traditional singing to suit these new dances. Tama Kila felt that in doing so they were not enhancing but suppressing tradition with modern things. He eventually got the upper hand in the argument because he, his mother and his four brothers were the best singers in the settlement. However, when they went to rehearse with three other Bunun villages in the National Theatre, they had to follow the instructions of the Han-Chinese programme organiser and to put in some more new dance steps, whether they liked it or not.

And this was just the beginning. The people of Vulvul were on the threshold of a new era which has seen the proliferation of cultural performances, the development of ethnic tourism and an increasingly self-conscious and bureaucratised discourse of

'tradition'. Within a few years they have been to several countries in Western Europe, China (twice), and Japan to perform their 'world renowned' music, and still more invitations are coming in. In 1997 they also signed a contract with the newly built, nearby Sky Dragon Hotel to perform regularly for tourists. Moreover, at the beginning of 1999 they started to have tourists staying in their homes during the festival period. What is happening in Vulvul is not unique among the Bunun and other Taiwanese aboriginal groups; it is part of what Sahlins (1993a: 849, 1993b: 3) calls a "worldwide movement of cultural self-consciousness" that is developing among the erstwhile victims of colonialism. 'Tradition', or better still, 'culture', is now on everybody's lips. When I first started fieldwork in 1991, I had difficulties explaining to the people of Vulvul what I was there for and what I was going to study (gender, kinship and the concept of the person). But now they introduce me to other Bunun saying that I study their 'culture'.¹ Impressed by the fact that everyone seems to know what culture is now, I confidently explained to the people of Ququaz that I was there to study Bunun culture, and many people's first reaction was that they had no culture there or that their culture was all gone now. I was kindly told that another settlement, Isin-an, has more culture. By 'culture' they mean what distinguishes their way of life from that of the Han-Chinese, particularly those annual rituals which have recently been turned into popular cultural performances. What is perceived as absent or gone in Ququaz is precisely what Vulvul has plenty of, and it prompts the people of Vulvul to think that their settlement is the centre of Bunun culture now.

In this chapter I attempt to understand the meanings and impact of the 'invention' of tradition and the objectification of culture among the Bunun. I start with the question of how and why 'culture' and 'tradition' come to mean certain things to them, and examine the role played by the state and the church in this historical process. Then I move on to focus on cultural performances as a form of social action that constructs not only their self-image or the perception of their own place in the encapsulating world, but also certain social relationships. The contemporary context of the acquisition and transmission of 'tradition' will also be investigated. I conclude the chapter by returning to the issue of empowerment and marginality.

¹ Once in the Haitun township office, a Bunun official compared me and another student of anthropology in these terms: "Your study and her study are different. Her research is smaller, she studies the clans. Your research is bigger, you study 'culture'". Note that he does not consider kinship and the clan system as 'culture'.

From ‘superstition’ to ‘tradition’: the state, the Church and the objectification of Bunun culture

As discussed in Chapter 2, the people of Vulvul and Ququaz have the notion that government is the main agency of ‘progress’ and change. Under the assimilation policies of the Japanese and the Nationalist government, many Bunun traditional customs were regarded as backward or even barbaric, which should be discarded as soon as possible. The Bunun quickly learnt from the police, schoolteachers and government officials that their ancestral way of life, rituals (*lus-an*), norms and taboos (*masamu*) were ‘superstitions’ (M. *mising*). The introduction of Christianity in the 1950s reinforced such notions. As Tama Dahu said to me:

The government policy of the Living Improvement Movement was like the Cultural Revolution of the Communist Party, which aimed to get rid of all Bunun culture. The Christian Churches also cooperated with the government to ban the rituals and taboos passed on from our ancestors. The catechists and the foreign missionaries all said that these were superstitions and the doings of the devil.

Most people, like Tama Dahu, explicitly blame the state and the church for devaluing Bunun culture and for causing them to abandon their ancestral way of life. But many people also told me that they abandoned old rituals and taboos because they were ‘troublesome’, ‘tiresome’ or ‘difficult’ and hence a burden to them. At the same time, although Tama Dahu presented the attitude of the state and the church towards Bunun tradition as one of total prohibition, in practice there were various stances toward different customs, ranging from tolerance, to discouragement or prohibition. For instance, headhunting was outlawed by the government, but agricultural rituals were not. The Catholic Church forbade sorcery but tolerated the local healing practices of spirit mediums. The Presbyterian Church was much more hostile to traditional religious and magical practices and banned all of them.

However, certain Bunun customs were seen by the government and the church as harmless to their civilising mission and were not only tolerated but, under certain circumstances, also actively incorporated into their projects. For example, as early as the 1960s, the local government occasionally incorporated archery and wrestling into sporting events, which were organised as a kind of national ceremony and could be very patriotic. Among the Bunun, archery was part of *malahtangia* (shooting-the-ear) ritual and wrestling was part of the marriage ritual and a ritual called *pasuntamul* (throwing

fermented millets), but they were labelled as 'folk sport' or 'folk performance' by the government. Only a few years ago catching pigs and pounding millet also became 'folk sport' and a standard part of local sporting events. After the abolition of Martial Law in 1987, the policy regarding aborigines gradually transformed from assimilation to multiculturalism, and performances of singing, dancing and rituals by the aboriginal people are incorporated in various kinds of national rituals, such as the National Day Celebration and the President Inauguration Ceremony.

From the beginning of their missionary work among the Bunun in the 1950s, the Christian churches also incorporated some Bunun 'cultural' elements for their own purposes. The most salient case is the use of Bunun songs as hymns. Both the Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Church compose Christian lyrics for Bunun 'ancient tunes'. Bunun songs are seen as unthreatening folklore or tradition. This of course involves the historically contingent and shifting identification of what belongs to the sphere of religion and what is merely 'cultural' phenomena and thus acceptable (Shaw & Stewart 1994: 10). Recently the boundary between 'religion' and 'culture' has been reinterpreted, especially after Bunun pastors and priests took control of the local church. In the Presbyterian Church, some Bunun life cycle rituals such as *indohdohan* or *masuhaulus* were christianised and became part of the church service (cf. Huang 1988: 191-228).² Agricultural rituals were gradually redefined not as 'superstition' or 'real rituals' with efficacy but as 'tradition' or 'just performance' and thus could be tolerated. The Catholic Church went further to christianise the indigenous past and to develop a 'tradition-in-Christianity' discourse.

In Vulvul, the Catholic Church played a central role in the proliferation of cultural performances and the recreation of tradition. In 1983, the first Bunun priest, Vilian, was assigned to the Kuanshan Catholic Church. Vilian was not interested in converting more Bunun, but considered the improvement of their living condition his mission. He felt the promise of Heaven and eternal life was no comfort for people who were struggling with poverty. Therefore, in 1984 he established an economic cooperative in his parish, which aimed to help the Bunun to sell their cash crops without the exploitation of Han-Chinese middlemen and to acquire more government funding in developing their economic skills. Unfortunately, the cooperative failed totally due to a large amount of debt in 1988. So

² *Indohdohan* or *masuhaulus* is the ritual performed for the babies born within the last year. The purpose of the ritual is to strengthen the child's spiritual power and to establish his/her status as a member of his/her father's patrilineal clan. The ritual is said to make the child 'truly a person', not just a 'piece of torn cloth'. In the pre-Christian past, if a child died before this ritual, no funeral would be held for him/her (Yang 1992:20-21).

the priest turned to concentrate on preserving and reviving the Bunun tradition as a resource of ethnic tourism. In 1990, he started a weaving workshop in the Kuanshan Catholic Church to preserve Bunun weaving and to make traditional textiles into “modern” designs for a wider market. The products were sold to museums, hotels and department stores. In 1992, an exhibition room was set up in the weaving workshop, where handicrafts such as carvings and baskets made by other aboriginal groups (Paiwan and Tao), or imported from the Philippines and Indonesia, were displayed as traditional Bunun material culture. Since the mid 1980s, the people of Vulvul began to perform their traditional music outside the local township under his arrangement or the government requirement. In 1993, Vilian officially registered a Bunun Traditional Music Troupe at Taitung County government, which entitled the group to government subsidy. He registered himself as the leader of the troupe, and forty people of Vulvul as its members. As he said to me, they were going ‘professional’.³

The process by which the Bunun ancestral way of life has been redefined by the state and the Church from backward ‘superstition’ to ‘tradition’ or ‘culture’ is of central importance to the proliferation of cultural performances in Vulvul. However, it is also clear that what the state and the church encourage now is not a total return to the ancestral way of life, but certain objectified or ‘thing-like’ aspects of it, such as music, art, dance, ritual, ethnic dress, sport, and handicraft. When the people of Vulvul proudly state that they have more ‘culture’ or ‘tradition’ than other villages, and when the people of Ququaz tell me that they have no ‘culture’ now, they are mainly talking about these objectified aspects. However, the ‘thing-like’ quality of these aspects also make them vulnerable to appropriation by the state or other groups for their own purposes. For instance, the people of both Vulvul and Ququaz have discovered that their voices are recorded in several albums of Bunun music produced by various music companies without their prior knowledge or consent. Their singing is appropriated mainly in two circumstances: either it is recorded during a performance, such as the aforementioned performance in the National Theatre; or it is recorded by visiting ethnomusicologists who tell them the recording is for academic research. The people of Vulvul and Ququaz feel cheated and exploited in both situations, and begin to discuss the issue of copyright and intellectual property among themselves. In 1998, the people of Vulvul signed a

³ In 1994, Vilian left the Catholic Church under suspicious circumstances. The bishop was unhappy about what he was doing and considered he was failing his religious duty. However, some accusations about Vilian’s management of funding, and affairs with women, seemed to be the main reason for his departure. He is now married to a Han-Chinese from Shanghai and lives there with his wife. The job of managing the Music Troupe was taken over by Tama Dahu, the catechist of Vulvul.

contract with a record company to produce their own album, and are hoping to reap the financial reward themselves.

The impact of such cultural self-consciousness remains to be seen. At the moment, the actions the people of Vulvul and Ququaz take are still non-confrontational. The recreation of tradition among the Bunun is not derived from an oppositional dynamics of colonial invasion or motivated by anti-colonialism, as highlighted by Keesing (1982a: 300, 1982b: *passim*, 1993:588-589) and Thomas (1992a: *passim*, 1992b: 65). As I have discussed in Chapter 2, the people of Vulvul and Ququaz have a non-confrontational approach to the state, the main institution that subjects Bunun 'culture' and 'tradition' to appropriation. In the following, I will address this issue by discussing the best known Bunun ritual *Malahtangia*, for it is most frequently performed at the request of the government.

***Malahtangia*: Shooting-the-Ear Festival**

The Bunun were a people described by an ethnographer as "immersed in dense religious and magical atmosphere" (Chiu 1964: 73). They had the most elaborate and complicated calendar among Taiwanese aboriginal groups (Mabuchi 1987c[1974c]: 498), and ritual activities occurred on as many as one hundred and thirty days a year (Wei 1972:27). The Bunun lunar calendar was organised closely around agricultural activities, especially the production of millet. Headhunting and hunting rituals were an integral part of this calendar since in Bunun notions they could enhance agricultural productivity. *Malahtangia* was held when millet began to head in order to facilitate its growth. The ritual unit or group of *Malahtangia* was the patrilineal clan or sub-clan, as millet was the symbol of patrilineal descent, and it was tabooed to share consecrated millet (*hulan*) in rituals with members of other clans.⁴ *Malahtangia* was mainly to do with hunting, but headhunting was also implicated before it was banned (Chiu 1976: 60-63, Mabuchi 1987b[1974b]: 17-18). *Malahtangia* consisted of shooting deer or roe ears, distributing ritual meat and consecrating the jaw bones of animals (bear, leopard and wild boar) as well as human heads. Women were excluded from the main ritual procedure; only when men finished *mapatus* (see below) could they join in the feast. It was regarded as very dangerous and even life-threatening to women if they made

⁴ If someone accidentally ate the *hulan* of another clan, s/he had to join the clan the *hulan* belonged to and represented. Otherwise, both clans would suffer misfortunes and bad deaths.

contact with these ritual objects or ate the consecrated meat. If they breached the taboo, they would get a cough, asthma (*mamas-i*) or vomit blood (*muta haithan*).

In the 1960s, the government and the Church suppressed and discouraged traditional rituals. With the decrease in millet cultivation and the increasing reliance on cash crops and wage labour, agricultural rituals were abandoned, so was *Malahtangia*. Many patrilineal clans stopped *Malahtangia* due to the death of ritual leaders (*Liskadan Lus-an*) or the out-migration of clan members. In Vulvul it was also during this period that the local government started to include archery in sporting events as 'folk sport', as mentioned above. *Malahtangia* began to be held occasionally at the request of the government, initially as part of the performance for the sporting events; later it was held on its own. By this time *Malahtangia* was no longer based on the patrilineal clan but became an activity of the entire settlement. I have argued in my MA thesis that the reason the government encourages *Malahtangia* is to do with its attempt to justify its rule through the establishment of a public sphere that is symbolically identified with the male and its superior status in Bunun fertility ideology (Yang 1992: 74-77). Rituals like *Malahtangia* and *Makakavas* (headhunting ritual) are salient in the construction of the ideology that men are the ultimate source of fertility.⁵

The government now makes arrangements for *Malahtangia* to be held, and its timing is no longer decided by the moon but by the government. Although it is still performed in April or early May, it may not be in the period before full moon, when the ritual is said to be most effective. In the last five years, all six villages (but not every settlement) in Haitun township, even those which had abandoned *Malahtangia* for nearly thirty years, have held the ritual annually. The local government allocates different dates to each village so the officials can visit every one of them. However, the meanings of contemporary *Malahtangia* are very different from the old ones.

In 1998, I went to Sulai-an first for the *Malahtangia*. Their ritual took place one day before Vulvul's. On the evening of 24 April, every settlement of Haitun village participated in the Night of Shooting-the-Ear Festival and a competition of 'traditional' and 'modern' singing and dancing. Then the next day they gathered again in the primary school to participate in the official Shooting-the-Ear Festival organised by the local government, which was modelled on national ceremonies and sporting events. The ritual took place very early on the morning of the twenty-fifth, between these two

⁵ Such constructs can also be found in several Bunun myths, the taboos concerning pregnancy, and life cycle rituals such as marriage. Female sexuality is regarded as dangerous and impure in these contexts (Yang 1992:35-41).

activities organised by the government. Before dawn, the people of Sulai-an started to gather at the house of one of the ritual leaders. There are still two clans, Takebanual and Ispalidav, that continue their *Malahtangia*. Takebanual started the ritual first since they used to be the best hunters in the settlement when the order was established. It is also the only clan in Haitun township that never stopped *Malatangia* in all these years.

To my surprise as well as delight, I was invited by the ritual leader Tama Vava to watch *Malahtangia* and to take pictures from a spot close to the *papatusan* (ritual ground) of Takebanual clan, as long as I didn't step into the ritual ground itself. However, men made sexual jokes about my presence to amuse themselves, and half way through the ritual I was asked by a young man to leave. The cough I got a few days earlier was regarded as proof that the power (*mangan*) generated in the ritual was too strong for a woman. At the *papatusan* of Ispalidav clan, I had to stay about thirty yards away from the *lislis* tree under which the jaws (*vahvah*) of wild boars were stored. On these occasions I can see very clearly why men always tell me about the 'male chauvinism' in Bunun society.

That evening I discussed the ritual with my adoptive father. I worried about whether the next morning I would be able to see Vulvul's *Malahtangia* clearly. He assured me that not only would I be able to see all of it, I could even participate in the ritual. As he said: "*Malahtangia* is not a real ritual now, it is just a performance. If the government officials didn't ask us to do it, it would have already gone, like other rituals." And he was right.

Just after five o'clock on the morning of the twenty-sixth, the *Tomuk* Tama Mui asked the people of Vulvul to prepare themselves for *Malahtangia* through the loudspeaker. The settlement gradually woke up to a cool and rainy day. Some men and women put on their 'traditional costumes', and began to gather in the front yard of Tama Mui's house. For this big occasion, women wore a blue dress with colourful embroidery in the front, on the shoulder and the sleeve, a beaded head band, and lots of necklaces. Men wore plain black short skirts and black jackets embroidered with various colourful patterns in the front, on the sleeves and hem, or a white waistcoat with yellow and red stripes. Some tied a red band on their foreheads, but Tama Mui put on a hat made from the head skin of a roe, with the antlers pointing to the sky.⁶

⁶ The red band used to be the symbol of a headhunter. Only men who had beheaded an enemy could wear red head bands. However, the traditional costumes are undergoing modifications all the time (cf. Lai 1988), and they differ slightly from one another. Most traditional costumes the people of Vulvul wear now were made in the mid 1980s, when they were needed for performances. Women's clothes changed from black to blue at that time.

The village head, Ailu, used his truck to transport dried wild meat, a wooden wine jar and a bamboo sieve (*tukvan*) to Tama Anci's old house at the back of the settlement. The house was built with wood and couch grass in the 1950s, and in recent years it became the place where rituals were held due to its traditional appearance. It was decorated with some animal jaws hung under the roof. Tama Anci had already arrived with his registered guns, which he brought out from the police station the day before. Four guns were permitted to be used in the ritual by the police.

Tama Mui's wife Cina Niun, the mother of the village head, Cina Miku, and two other women started to squeeze the millet wine which they had made three days ago (see Figure 7). Together with some fermented millet (*supak*), the wine was sent to the ritual house. Besides brewing wine, the preparations for *Malahtangia* included building a tent for the visiting officials in front of the Community Centre, cutting the grass on the road to the ritual ground, cleaning the ritual house, and most importantly, ritual hunting (*panah lus-an*). Three weeks earlier, men had started to go hunting intensively and preserved the meat for the ritual (see Figure 8). The hunting period was longer than what the local government officially allowed for ritual hunting, but shorter than it used to be. Usually *panah lus-an* took a month; this year the local government announced the date late, so the hunting period was shorter. Also, *panah lus-an* used to be a collective *mapu-asu* (hunting with dogs) led by the ritual leader. Now men go hunting alone or in pairs, and most wild meat is sold to the Han-Chinese restaurants.

Around six-thirty, men, women and some boys gathered at Tama Anci's old house. It was still raining, so we crowded under the eaves rather than in the front yard. Men started the ritual with *mapa cipcih*: firing several gun shots into the sky. Then boys were encouraged to shoot *pinasah* (the back legs of wild animals) with bow and arrow from a very close range with the help of outstanding hunters. They were awarded the meat, and were blessed by the elders to become good hunters when they grow up. This is called *papanah uvaz* (lit. let children shoot, see Figure 9). After *papanah uvaz* men moved to the ritual ground (*papatusan*) under a cliff where the jaw bones (*vahvah*) of wild boar were kept. Tama Anci's hunting dogs followed them, so did I and Tama Anci's daughter Maidal. Maidal brought a V8 camcorder with her because she was asked to record the ritual by her out-married sister, who was unable to come home today.

At *papatusan*, Tama Mui and Tama Anci used three kinds of wood (*kanpatas*, *halup* and *halus*) to make a fire (*mapatus*). Other men started to put the roe ear on a stick above the ground, then took turns to shoot the ear with a gun (*malah tangia*, the

ritual is named after it). Whenever a gun shot was fired, the dogs barked excitedly and tried to fetch an animal. It felt like hunting with all the noise and excitement. When the fire was big enough, Tama Anci held the meat in the bamboo sieve and moved it in circles above the fire (*paka apaz sapuz*) to consecrate it. He prayed that all wild animals come to us (*minsuma aming cici*), that they be enchanted or bewitched (*cis-havis aming cici*) and come to be shot by our guns or fall into the traps, and he prayed that we have a very good year in hunting. In the prayer, the female sexual organ (*havis*) is used to refer to bewitchment and the strangest diseases (*cis-havis*). *Malahtangia* is one of the very few occasions when mention of the female sexual organ is not rude or forbidden. On the contrary, it is repeatedly mentioned in the prayers.

Meanwhile others said it was time to *mapa sautnul* (count). Tama Lian counted the number of participants, and Acai went to look for a couch grass stem. Then it was *Tomuk* Tama Mui who broke the grass stem into small pieces and distributed it (*kus*) to everyone, including me and Maidal. When everyone got a piece, he took the *kus* back and counted it again to make sure none was lost. If the number was wrong, it meant that someone would die from an accident in the coming year.

After *mapa sautnul* came the distribution of the consecrated meat (*mapa husil*). The meat was cut into small pieces by Tama Anci and was distributed to the participants by Tama Tahai. Maidal and I also got a share. When all the meat was eaten and the millet wine had been consumed, it was time for *mapatvis*: consecrating and empowering the jaws of wild boars (*mamangan vahvah*). Tama Mui distributed *supak* (fermented millet) to the men. Then they all faced the *vahvah* hanging on the cliff (see Figure 10), throwing *supak* at *vahvah* to feed them and praying for the abundance of wild animals (*minsuma aming cici, cis-havis aming cici*), and good luck in hunting. It was said that the animals would be empowered and would bring more of their kind to the hunter after *mapatvis*.

The above ritual at *papatusan* is called *mapatus* (see Figure 11). After *mapatus* we returned to the ritual house. Before entering the house, we had to purify ourselves by *daung kav sapuz* (jumping over the fire). Everyone swiftly grabbed hot charcoal from a fire made by women, jumped over the fire and prayed not to catch any strange disease (*kagik cis-havis-hah*), then threw the charcoal away. Inside the house, more people had come to join the ritual, including some men from Evago. Administratively, Evago is a part of Vulvul village, and *Malahtangia* is no longer performed there. The house was not big enough, so men had to take two rounds to *malastapan* (tell heroic deeds).

Malastapan was led by *Tomuk* Tama Mui. By this time some people were a bit drunk and were busy chatting with each other, so *malastapan* was held in a casual way and finished quickly. The whole ritual ended with *pisusling* (singing, the song was wordless) led by Tama Kila. During *pisusling* four camera crew from a TV studio arrived and tried to enter the already very crowded house. Tama Cian stopped them, and told them to wait for the performance later at the Community Centre.

It was nearly eight o'clock when we moved to the Community Centre. More preparations needed to be done before the officials arrived. It was still raining, so men built an extension to the tent to shelter the guests. Women were busy cooking millet porridge and roasting pork and fish. Led by their teacher Cina Nivu, schoolchildren from second grade to sixth grade dressed in traditional costumes, which were provided by the school, also gathered in the front yard of the Community Centre. There were not enough traditional costumes to go round, so the first grade students could not perform. My adoptive niece was very disappointed that she didn't get a chance to wear the beautiful dress and headband.⁷

Some officials and visitors from other villages, most of them Bunun, began to arrive. On their arrival, they contributed ('subsidised') money (usually NT\$ 1,000, about £20) for the festival to the village head. Their names and the amount of money were noted down on a board at the entrance of the square by the village administrator. To my surprise, several men from Vulvul who were not *saspinal* (government officials) also contributed money. I asked Tama Mui why he 'subsidised' money? And he answered: "Of course I have to subsidise money for *Malahtangia*, I am *Tomuk*". Therefore, contributing money publicly is not only a way in which visiting officials demonstrate their care for ordinary people and establish their authority, it is the same between the people of Vulvul themselves. Those who contribute money were either once *saspinal* or aspire to be *saspinal* in the future.⁸

The *Malahtangia* Festival only started after the arrival of the Bunun governor of Haitun township, the highest official expected that day. It was nearly nine o'clock, and the rain had stopped. Tama Dahu, the leader of the Bunun Traditional Music Troupe, was the presenter of that day's programme. The programme started by introducing every official, and was followed by the speeches of our village head, Ailu, *Tomuk* Tama Mui, and important visiting officials. By this time students all stood in rows according to

⁷ Each outfit costs about £80, and the school does not have enough money to make one for each child. Adults' costumes cost more.

⁸ More than twenty guests and *saspinal*-hopefuls contributed money this time.

their classes, as in the ceremony of hoisting the national flag which they perform every morning in the school. 'Tradition' and 'culture' were emphasised again and again in the speeches. The village head, Ailu, started by saying in the national language that *Malahtangia* was the culture of the Bunun, and had to be passed down the generations. As the 'chief of tradition', Tama Mui spoke in Bunun:

(Greetings...) Today we hold the activity that is passed on from the military leader (*Lavi-an*). There are norms and taboos (*samu*) regarding how it should be done, and I now explain to you so that you can understand the ancestral way of doing (*maladaigaz havas tu sinkulakula*). The ancestors rely on the cultivation of millet, and they take pride in the abundance of millet. *Malahtangia* is part of annual ritual to do with the growth of millet. The main procedure of *Malahtangia* is *mapatus*, and it is for the abundance of wild animals. We make a fire to bake the wild meat, and pray for the smoothness of hunting. Don't leave us empty handed, don't let us be short of food. Bring all your families and friends to us. And don't let us encounter misfortunes when we go to the mountains. In *Malahtangia* we shouldn't get too drunk and lose our manners. We shouldn't take lightly or disparage the teachings of our ancestors. Put them into your heads! Now the children are going to sing for us, as they have learnt a bit of the work. Let's enjoy! Thank you!

Among the officials, the governor Vion was the first to address the crowd in the national language:⁹

(greeting all *saspinal*)...This morning it was raining, and I worried that *Malahtangia* would be affected. But when I arrived, not only did the rain stop, the sun also came out. We can see how important *Malahtangia* is, so the sky (*dehanin*, also refers to the Christian God, see Chapter 6) gives us good weather to proceed with this solemn activity. The Vulvul village and the school here always work hard to promote the traditional culture. The centre of Bunun tradition in Haitun township is Vulvul. Due to the effort put in by the people of Vulvul to preserve traditional culture, those villages that abandoned their *Malahtangia* long ago have began to recover it. The credit is to Vulvul. The invisible efforts of all these years finally paid off. I hope every one of us keeps working to enhance and glorify our traditional culture. We Bunun are one among many ethnic groups and are part of the modern society. We cannot forget our own culture. Culture is the root, without culture we cannot survive among all these ethnic groups. Therefore the township government takes culture very seriously, we are in the process of building the Haitun Museum of Cultural Artefacts...I hope we can celebrate its opening with *Malahtangia* next year.

⁹ Vion was born and grew up in Vulvul. He moved to Haitun after he graduated from the university about twenty years ago. However, he is still considered as being from Vulvul, and two of his brothers live in Vulvul.

The relationship between tradition and modernity was also emphasised in another two officials' speeches. One of them was given by a former official and the pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Vulvul:

(greetings...) *Malahtangia* has three aspects of meaning: Firstly, it's about diligence. It shows that the Bunun are a diligent people who work hard in hunting. Secondly, it's about social harmony. We get together and enjoy the happiness of the gathering and the feast. Thirdly, it shows that we respect the elders and receive their teachings. In the modern life, we should preserve and promote these cultural aspects and work hard on what we do. Students study hard, and adults work hard to make money. We should keep the indigenous *Malahtangia* from being destroyed by modern life, and make our lives better with the help of modern technology.

After the speeches, children performed singing and dancing to entertain the guests. Then there was *papanah uvaz* (let children shoot). However, government officials got to shoot the wild meat (*cici*) first, with the crowd cheering and applauding them. When they hit the target, the meat was presented to them as a gift. When the officials finished shooting, every boy was encouraged to practise shooting with a bow and arrow, but they did not receive any meat as a reward.

The performance of the adults was the next item. When the women were singing, a female Han-Chinese presenter from the TV studio joined them without invitation. The camera crew were here to make a film to promote tourism for the Tourist Board of Eastern Taiwan. However, several women were unhappy about the presenter using them as background without asking first. She was later asked not to interrupt the performance.

The last programme that day was *pistahu*, the annual séance of spirit mediums. In fact, the spirit medium Cina Avus, and her five pupils, had begun to practice *pistahu* since seven o'clock that morning, and it would last the whole day. Now they moved their ritual objects (*paci-aul*) from Cina Avus' house to the centre of the square. In a bamboo sieve, there were all kinds of necklaces, millet wine, pork, salt, money, couch grass (*pazan*), and small bottles containing *aminamin* (magical pebbles). When they sat down in a circle around the *tukvan*, Cina Avus held the stem of *pazan* and each pupil held the tip of a leaf. Cina Avus started the ritual chanting, composed of short sentences, and the pupils repeated after her. By this time most people were drunk and talking loudly to each other, and did not pay much attention to the *pistahu*. When the spirit medium and novices moved back to Cina Avus' house twenty minutes later, it was about eleven o'clock (more about *pistahu* in the next chapter). The day's performance was

over, and the feast was in full swing.

Recontextualising *Malahtangia*

From the above, it is clear that state interventions play an important role in the revival of 'tradition' in the Vulvul area. Under the policy of multiculturalism, the Bunun are now encouraged to express and celebrate their cultural differences. What was previously belittled as superstitions and backward customs which prevent development and modernity, are now reformulated as not only compatible to modernity, but indispensable to the survival and flourishing of the Bunun in the modern world. As shown in the speech of Bunun officials, 'tradition' is used as an idiom to articulate modern aspirations (cf. James 1999: 189).

On the other hand, Tomuk Tama Mui's speech focuses not on the relationship between tradition and modernity, but on the relationship with ancestors. The Bunun language does not have notions such as 'tradition', 'culture' and 'modernity', and Tama Mui highlights the significance of *Malahtangia* by identifying it repeatedly as 'ancestral work' or 'ancestral way of doing' (*maladaigaz havas tu sinkulakula*). This does not mean that modern aspirations are only the concerns of the Bunun officials and elite. In fact, most of the time the ordinary people of Vulvul are wholeheartedly committed to modernity. Maidal's use of a V8 camcorder to record the ritual for her out-married sister is only one of many examples.

The revival of *Malahtangia* is not a total return to an 'ancestral way of doing', as is evident in the way the ritual is conducted or perceived. Although the ritual structure is basically the same as it was sixty years ago or earlier (see also Chiu 1966: 23-26, Mabuchi 1987b[1974b]: 531-533, Wei 1972: 30-31, Horisuke 1988[1937]), its meaning has been transformed. To allow Maidal and myself to participate in the ritual and to eat the consecrated meat demonstrates not only the loosening of taboos against women, but more fundamentally the lack of efficacy in *Malahtangia*. This is why my adoptive father said it is not a real ritual but only a performance now.

Mapatus, the main part of *Malahtangia* used to be conducted with caution and prudence, but now it is conducted in a much more desultory and casual way. The ritual time is decided by the government, and in 1998 it fell on the thirtieth of the lunar month, the period after full moon. It is said that when the moon wanes, the efficacy of the ritual decreases as well. Also, *mapatus* should be finished before dawn, but now the rhythm of

everyday life is changed and people get up late. The ritual is not started until after dawn.¹⁰ Moreover, no taboos are strictly followed. Compared with other agricultural rituals, *Malahtangia* had fewer taboos. Besides the taboo about women (and dogs),¹¹ there was a taboo against eating spring onions and garlic because their strong scent alerts and scares off the wild animals. To sneeze during prayers was also a taboo.¹² In *mapa sautnul*, it was tabooed to drop the *kus* distributed by the ritual leader, otherwise someone would suffer misfortunes or die from an accident in the coming year. When it happened the help of spirit mediums had to be sought. On the other hand, if the ritual leader miscounted the number of participants and someone did not receive a *kus*, or if someone died violently in the coming year, then the ritual leader had to be removed from the position and a new leader elected to replace him. However, these taboos are no longer followed. Hence the lack of efficacy and power (*mangan*) in *Malahtangia*.

There are two steps of the ritual that were not carried out, and their omission further demonstrates this point. One is *pislai* (empowering the hunting equipment), which is held the night before and/or after *mapatus* (the process is similar to *pistahu* described above). Another is *ma-ip* (curing ear diseases). The period of *Malahtangia* was the most effective time of the year to cure ear diseases for it generated tremendous power. After *mapatus*, those who had ear diseases or who wanted to prevent one, especially women and children, would go to the ritual leader for *ma-ip*. The ritual leader threw some fermented millets at each one of them, blew into the patient's ear, and prayed that s/he would not have any disease (*qatu cis-havis*). The omission of *pislai* and *ma-ip* suggests that *Malahtangia* is not seen as generating tremendous power now. The ritual is performed in a completely transformed historical context wherein the Bunun no longer rely on millet cultivation for their livelihood, hunting is made illegal by the state, and biomedicine widely available. The present purpose and meaning of the ritual is not about enhancing hunting, agricultural productivity and health, but about maintaining sociality and creating a self-image of Vulvul as the centre of Bunun tradition. In this aspect, I suggest that it is none the less active, intentional and productive.

The people of Vulvul plan the ritual and the performance carefully. There is an acute sense of competition with other villages. When I went back to Vulvul after

¹⁰ In Bunun rituals, fire symbolises life and fate (Chiu 1966: 43, 1976: 71). It is more powerful in the night.

¹¹ The power of *Malahtangia* is said to be too strong for dogs, too. I am always struck and amused by earlier ethnographies that say "women and dogs are driven out of the house during *mapatus*" (Chiu 1966: 25, Sayama 1988[1919]:70, Wei 1972:30) as though women and dogs were the same category.

¹² Sneezing was a sign of the presence of evil spirits in any Bunun ritual.

attending Sulai-an's *Malahtangia*, many people asked me how it went. The people of Vulvul were very concerned about how much wild meat Sulai-an provided, how many officials attended their ritual, and how much wine they offered, etc. They were extremely satisfied to know that Sulai-an was unable to provide enough wild meat and used pork and chicken for the ritualistic distribution of meat; they offered rice wine rather than millet wine; they used firecrackers to imitate gun shots because the police station there wouldn't allow them to use guns; and there was less attendance of officials. The people of Vulvul had confirmed that their *Malahtangia* was more authentic and traditional than Sulai-an's. They took great pride in the abundance of wild meat and millet wine that they were able to provide for their guests. This is also an incentive for the officials to visit Vulvul, for they can bring wild meat home.¹³ The reason why Vulvul appears to be a more generous host is because the villagers have a very good relationship with the police and have more freedom in hunting. They are very proud of their ability to negotiate with the police and to make them 'respect' Bunun tradition, so they are less restrained by the law and are able to use guns in *Malahtangia*.

Therefore, *Malahtangia* provides an opportunity for the people of Vulvul to confirm and construct themselves as the centre of the local world and of the Bunun tradition. Occasionally, they are even prompted to say that the place of origin of the Bunun is not in Nantou County but in Vulvul, and that all Bunun culture comes from them. At the same time, *Malahtangia* is conducive to the creation and reproduction of sociality among themselves. In a Durkheimian way, the ritual gathering generates a sense of togetherness and strong social sentiments.

More importantly, I will argue, the significance of such an event in Bunun social life goes well beyond the moment of performance. It contributes to the reproduction of cultural understandings about persons and leadership through which historical transformations are mediated and constituted. I will illustrate this point by examining the remaking of a colonial category: *Tomuk*.

The remaking of *Tomuk*

As mentioned in Chapter 2, *Tomuk* was a Japanese colonial invention. The Bunun were

¹³ However, some people in Vulvul begin to make complaints about the officials, saying that they are getting greedy and demand too much wild meat. For instance, Tama Vanu tells me that some officials go to his house and look in his fridge for wild meat without his invitation and permission. Therefore, he sometimes goes to the mountains deliberately during *Malahtangia* to avoid them.

an egalitarian society and political leaders (*saspinal*) were produced through a unanimous decision making process called *mapintasa*. The election of *saspinal* was linked to the external threat of headhunting warfare. Under Japanese rule, a headman or chief called *Tomuk* was appointed by the colonial government. Several “men of influence” (*silokshia*) or vice-*Tomuk* could also be appointed to help with the implementation of colonial policies. This colonial invention was incorporated by the Bunun through their own idioms of persons and leadership. To be truly respected and followed, *Tomuk* had to behave in such a way that his authority was downplayed. He had to be assertive, courageous and even aggressive in defending the Bunun when dealing with the Japanese, but gentle, kind, modest, loving and caring to his own people. In other words, in spite of the intervention of the Japanese colonial government, a *Tomuk* was expected to act like a *saspinal*. If he was considered as imposing his will on other Bunun, he would be disobeyed and even attacked by witchcraft.¹⁴ In fact, the *saspinal* was an ideal embodiment of Bunun notions of personhood. He was able to balance the conflicting influence of benevolent and malevolent spirits (*masial* and *makuan hanitu*) through his own strong will (*is-ang*) and put them to constructive use.

After the Japanese were driven out of Taiwan, the *Tomuk* lost their official position in a colonial administrative system. They could still be respected and influential due to their ritual knowledge and experience of dealing with the outside, but no more *Tomuk* were appointed by the Nationalist government. This colonial category has come back in new forms due to the recent flourishing and revival of ‘tradition’. During their preparation for performances, the people of Vulvul think they need a ritual leader. The category of *Tomuk* is favoured over the Bunun category of *Liskadan Lus-an* (ritual leader) or *Lavian* (military leader), since *Tomuk* is constructed as an institution intrinsic to all aboriginal groups in the media. Tama Mui is elected because he is a respected elder who has rich ritual knowledge.¹⁵ In 1993, he killed a very big pig for the people of Vulvul and his status as *Tomuk* was established through the distribution of meat.

Tomuk is remade by the Bunun from a colonial category into some kind of the ‘chief of tradition’.¹⁶ In many ways, the *Tomuk* still resembles the exemplary person,

¹⁴ Sayama (1988[1919]: 51-52) has described the persistence of unanimous decision making among the Bunun under Japanese rule. As he noted, even though the *Tomuk* was appointed by the colonial government, his power and authority might not be recognised by other clans.

¹⁵ But some people said he was appointed by the Catholic priest Vilian.

¹⁶ Now every village in Haitun township has a *Tomuk*. In Haitun village to which Sulai-an belongs, a new *Tomuk* is elected every year by a committee of elders. As in Vulvul, the newly elected *Tomuk* will kill a pig to establish his status.

the *saspinal*. In Vulvul, Tama Mui has no authority over others in daily life, and during *Malahtangia* he has to put in more works and money himself, rather than just giving instructions or commands to others. He attended every meeting with the local government and the police, went hunting for *Malahtangia* whenever he could, and made millet wine with the help of his wife and the parents of the village head. He also contributed money, as described above. During *mapatus* at the ritual ground, his leadership is not immediately visible. In fact, to untrained eyes it is really difficult to tell whether there is one ritual leader or who is the leader. Tama Mui is more active only when it comes to *mapa sautnul* and *mapatvis*.¹⁷ In some ways Tama Anci is more articulate and assertive in the ritual, and he is the one who distributes the consecrated meat. He is also the owner of the ritual house. Tama Anci sometimes calls himself vice-*Tomuk*, but this is not yet recognised by others. As mentioned above, the recognition must be established through a pig feast.

Although Tama Mui's status as *Tomuk* is not obvious in *mapatus*, when it comes to official occasions such as speech giving he is articulate and assertive. As the 'chief of tradition', he speaks in Bunun and convincingly demonstrates his ancestral knowledge. He is therefore regarded by the people of Vulvul as a capable *Tomuk*, and there is no need to elect a successor. Tama Mui's ability to combine two aspects of leadership, one gentle and modest, the other assertive and brave, and to act appropriately according to the occasion, is essential to ensure continuous internal support. As the government plays no part in deciding who the *Tomuk* is, such internal support is determinant of his leadership. By remaking *Tomuk* to embody the Bunun ideal of personhood, the people of Vulvul are able to incorporate and transform an external colonial imposition into something generated from within. Through the ongoing processes of constituting and reproducing Bunun schema or cultural models of persons, the people of Vulvul downplay and destabilise hierarchy and power discrepancy among themselves, and between them and the state, and continue to produce a local world in which they are the centre.

As the centre of Bunun tradition, Vulvul begins to attract a large number of tourists during the festive period. Tourists are a welcomed source of cash income. However, in the process of developing ethnic tourism, the people of Vulvul may get more than what they bargain for, as I will discuss shortly.

¹⁷ In Sulai-an, the ritual leader Tama Vava was even more modest in *mapatus*. For most of the time during the ritual process, he sat down and watched quietly.

The development of ethnic tourism

No Han-Chinese tourists were present at the 1998 Shooting-the-Ear Festival discussed above. The guests were government officials or Bunun from other villages. One year later in 1999, around two hundred Han-Chinese tourists flock in from Kaushiong, the second biggest city in Taiwan. This upsurge of interest in 'experiencing Bunun culture on site' is again linked to state intervention. At New Year Holiday in 1999, Vulvul was instructed by the Cultural Centre of Taitung County to hold a Spring Flower Festival to entertain more than two hundred Han-Chinese tourists from Taipei and Taitung. The experience, however, gives rise to mixed feelings.

In October 1998, Vulvul was approached by the Cultural Centre of Taitung County. The government planned to promote ethnic tourism as a new form of leisure activity, and asked whether Vulvul was willing to undertake the job. The people of Vulvul thought it was a very good opportunity to spread their name further and to make some serious money. What they did not know at that time was that the government also called in a contractor, the Folk Culture Association, to instruct them in how to present their culture to tourists. The association is managed by a Han-Chinese who calls himself an anthropologist and claims to have a Ph.D. degree, although this is absolutely not true. After meeting this 'Dr.' Liu in person, the people of Vulvul soon lost their respect for him and called him *hanlas* (bald head) behind his back. The reason is not difficult to understand as the following incident shows.

On New Year's Day, the people of Vulvul were very busy prepare for the next day's job of feeding two hundred tourists. Early in the morning, men went in pairs to the mountains to cut bamboo and to collect a wild plant called *kancihcih*. Its tender sprouts can be used for food, and its old leaves for wrapping rice cake. At noon Mr. Liu and some of his assistants had a meeting with Tama Dahu, the leader of the Bunun Traditional Music Troupe, the village head and those who were responsible for the preparations. The main topic discussed was whether the people of Vulvul had prepared enough food for the following day's lunch. Mr. Liu stressed that the food should give value for money (each lunch ticket cost NT\$ 300), and insisted that there must be some plum flowers in the food, because he had already advertised that plum flower was the theme of this festival. This was no problem, plum flowers could be sprinkled in the millet wine. However, Mr. Liu queried the quantity and variety of the food which the people of Vulvul planned to offer (rice cake, fried rice noodles with pumpkin, roasted

pork, fried flying squirrels, free range chicken, *kancihcih*, cabbages, millet wine and *sanlavhudu* [a wild vegetable] soup), and asked for more kinds of wild vegetables to be added to the menu, because the tourists from cities prefer wild and natural ‘aboriginal food’. Unfortunately, all the vegetables he suggested could not be found locally, and his attitude was too proud and bossy for the Bunun’s liking. Tama Dahu, who had to put up with his ignorance and insensitivity more than the others, could take no more and began to confront him:

Why do you ask for all these things that we don’t have here? Why do you give us such great pressure and talk to us as though you are giving orders? You should respect us first, understand what we’re thinking and what local products we have here, don’t just demand and demand.

Slightly embarrassed, Mr. Liu explained that he had no intention of giving orders to them; what he had said was just a suggestion. If those vegetables could not be found locally, they did not have to buy them from the market. There was another reason why Tama Dahu, usually a polite and gentle man, lost his temper. Besides his bossy attitude, Mr. Liu demanded to be the presenter in the next day’s performance, a job that usually belonged to Tama Dahu, as in *Malahtangia*. He also organised the programme and advertised it in the newspaper before discussing it with Tama Dahu. At the same time, Tama Dahu and some elders soon realised that Mr. Liu didn’t really know much about Bunun culture. Behind his back, they mocked the programme he designed, and even refused to cooperate. However, with the mediation of Ailu, the village head, the people of Vulvul finally gave in to most of Mr. Liu’s demands for the ‘fame (*ngan*, lit. name) of Vulvul’ and the ‘face of the government’.

There were complaints from the other side, too. In the afternoon during the rehearsal of the performance, I heard Mr. Liu’s Han-Chinese assistants and technicians (for setting up the stage, loudspeaker and other machines) complaining among themselves about aboriginal people’s “lack of the notion of time”. The original plan was to rehearse in the morning, but most men were away cutting bamboo and collecting *kancihcih*. Mr. Liu’s workers said such a delay would not happen if the people of Vulvul were Han-Chinese. If they were Han-Chinese, everything would be done efficiently.

Among the people of Vulvul themselves, there were different opinions about how to deal with these Han-Chinese who were not government officials but had come to ‘teach’ them how to present their own culture. Tama Dahu, his brother Tama Kila, and some elders found them irritating and ignorant about Bunun tradition. They complained

about why the government had sent them here, and resented the fact that these Han-Chinese made more money out of this activity. The people of Vulvul were given NT\$ 80,000 by the government to cover the wages (only NT\$ 800 a day, about £ 16) and other costs, but the Han-Chinese were much better paid. However, some thought these Han-Chinese were experts who have connections with the media, and who know how to please the Han-Chinese tourists best, so the villagers should follow their instructions carefully and learn how to organise similar activities in the future by themselves.

The internal disagreements did not surface as conflicts between Tama Dahu and Mr. Liu, but were expressed through gossip and private complaints. For instance, two women who were responsible for designing the menu and preparing the food, both of them Savi, criticised Tama Dahu and his brothers (Tama Kila and Acai). Both women said their ideas were very stubborn and old-fashioned because they insisted on maintaining authenticity. Take the food for example, Tama Kila and Acai insisted that they should preserve the original taste of the food and not add too many artificial flavours because the tourists wanted traditional ethnic food, while both the women thought that they should know how to improve the cooking, otherwise the tourists would not be able to appreciate it. If they did not cook the food by improved methods (that is, in the Han-Chinese way), the Han-Chinese would not understand that aboriginal peoples had made a lot of progress and upward movement in their living conditions. In the end, they cooked the food in the way they wanted.

On the afternoon of New Year's Day, about eighty tourists who participated in the "Experiencing Bunun Life Camp" arrived from Taipei. Half of them would camp in the school or stay in the nearby Holiday Inn owned by the schoolteacher Cina Nivu, and the other half would stay in local peoples' houses. Those who had spare rooms rented them out to tourists at a price they were not informed about beforehand (it turned out to be NT\$ 300 per person), but some refused to let tourists into their homes. For example, Tama Vanu and Cina Malas had two rooms to rent out but they didn't want to. Their daughter Avus said that since their life was the same as that of the Han-Chinese now, there was nothing different or exotic for the tourists to see in their homes.

The next day, the day of the performance, some one hundred and eighty more tourists (in four coaches) from Taitung flocked to Vulvul (see Figure 12). The village was decorated with orange flags and orange posters with a painting of a Bunun woman dressed in a black traditional costume and playing a traditional instrument. The painting

was the work of a Han-Chinese girl from Taipei. At nine thirty the men of Vulvul went up to a small hill near the ritual house, and waited for the instructions of Mr. Liu, the presenter of the day's programme, through a radio. At ten o'clock after the spirit medium Cina Avus said a prayer, men sang *macilumah* (see previous chapter) and walked down the hill, as though they had just come back from hunting. The *Tomuk Tama Mui* climbed up a wooden tower built specifically for that day's performance and announced in Bunun through a microphone that today's *Minpinang* (sowing ritual) was about to begin. Men entered the ritual house to drink millet wine and prepared the ritual objects needed for the performance, while tourists were excluded from entering the house. In the front yard, more than two hundred tourists pushed and jostled each other to try to get a clear view of the raised stage in the centre.

The ritual procedure of *Minpinang* was simplified, it started with eating boiled taro and roasted field mouse (*alual*) on the stage.¹⁸ Tama Dahu was given the microphone by Mr. Liu for a short time to explain the meaning of the ritual to the audience. However, the tourists were more interested in the food (taro and pork) that was distributed to them by the women, although some tourists later threw it away. Amidst the chaos, *Minpinang* proceeded to *malung kaun*, that is, throwing *supak* (fermented millet) at the roof of the house, praying that *dehanin* (sky) bless them with a good crop this year. Then men formed a circle, with everyone facing inward and with their hands on each other's shoulders. They started to sing *pasivutvut*, a wordless song that imitates the humming of honey bees, to pray to *dehanin* for a bumper harvest. After *pasivutvut*, *Minpinang* was finished and followed by *malastapan* (telling heroic deeds) and the performance of singing and dancing (see Figure 13).

Then the performance was transferred to another place. Tourists could wander around the display area before they went to the next performance setting. The display area was set up by the primary school, where students were performing traditional weaving (*cinlun*). Also, there were several stalls selling ethnic handicrafts which were owned by the teacher Cina Nivu and her relatives. This time several government officials, including the Head of the Cultural Centre, the governor of Haitun, the village

¹⁸ Before eating field mouse and taro, the ritual leader of each house has to go to the fields to perform *mapudahu* after receiving a good dream omen. *Dahudahu* is a plant whose fruit can be used to wash clothes for it forms a lot of bubbles. In *mapudahu* the ritual leader sows some millet in the field and covers it with soil, then sticks a *dahudahu* branch with fruits into the ground and prays that the millet grow abundantly like *dahudahu* producing bubbles. Three days later he goes to the field again to say a prayer to drive out any disease that could impede the growth of the millet. Then he returns home and uses water to bless the hoe for working smoothly this year. After that, the whole family share the field mouse and taro together.

head and *Tomuk* of Vulvul, all gave speeches. Then Mr. Liu introduced the performance by the schoolchildren to the audience, saying that what makes Vulvul special is that their traditional culture has been transmitted to the generation of small children.

The lunch started at twelve thirty in the front of the Community Centre. Only tourists who had a lunch ticket could enjoy it. Many tourists wanted to buy a ticket on site, but the people of Vulvul were instructed by Mr. Liu not to sell them any lest the food was not enough.¹⁹ Tourists without a lunch ticket could go to the stalls set up by several families in their own front yard, which sold food, millet, tea, and more handicrafts. There were two tables of food set aside in Tama Mui's front yard for government officials, and the Bunun from Evago and other villages went to their relatives' houses for lunch or sat on the floor of Tama Mui's front yard, waiting to eat what was left over by the officials and the tourists.

In the afternoon, most of the people of Vulvul were drunk, despite the announcement that morning by the village head that they shouldn't get drunk or they would be fined NT\$ 1,000. Because they were drunk, the afternoon's activity of teaching the tourists various kinds of 'folk sports', such as how to shoot with bow and arrow and spin a top, proceeded perfunctorily and finished quickly. Meanwhile the chief of police (a Bunun) of Vulvul was making his anger known in the Community Centre, because Mr. Liu ordered the setting up of a roadblock at the entrance of the village without officially asking for his permission.

The anger of the chief of police highlights an important problem of this activity, that is, the local people's opinions are not respected. This tourist-oriented activity created by government demand is beyond the control of local people in many ways, and the intervention of the Han-Chinese contractor is the direct cause of this problem. The people of Vulvul are instructed to represent themselves according to the Han-Chinese perception of them. In comparison with *Malahtangia* described above, the degree to which Bunun culture is appropriated by the state is much greater.

Despite the resentment and implicit internal conflicts, the people of Vulvul remain undeterred about developing ethnic tourism. They do not see tourism as inherently wrong; what's wrong this time is the intervention of the Han-Chinese contractor. In the *Malahtangia* of 1999, Vulvul again entertained some two hundred tourists from Kaushiong. This time they were approached directly by a journalist who organised the

¹⁹ This was detrimental to the people of Vulvul. Not only did they not make any profit, but the money they got from selling the lunch tickets was NT\$ 4,000 less than the money they spent on buying the food. A loss they blame completely on Mr. Liu.

tour, therefore they did not have to put up with a Han-Chinese expert who did not really know much about Bunun culture telling them how to do things. However, the influence of tourists was still very evident. The people of Vulvul had to wait for nearly two hours to start *mapatus* because the tourists were late, and the ritual was conducted in a somewhat chaotic way due to the crowd.

From the above, it is tempting to conclude that the development of ethnic tourism and the commoditisation of culture results in a loss of agency and autonomy for the people of Vulvul. However, despite the fact that they get more than what they bargain for and the experience is not always pleasant, they still try hard to control this new form of cash income. At the same time, there is more than making money in tourism that interests the people of Vulvul. Their encounters and exchanges with Han-Chinese tourists are tinted with a sense of curiosity, romance, trickery and competition that also makes them appealing.

Intercultural encounters and the romantic ideology of the primitive

All the Han-Chinese tourists came from the cities. Although I did not talk to many of them, it was clear that a longing for the supposed simpler life of nature was the main motivation for them to come to Vulvul. In their conversations with the local people, they said, somewhat patronisingly, that they envied the pristine life the Bunun have. The fresh air, unspoiled beauty of the mountains, unrestrained pace of everyday life, closeness to nature and a sense of community, all the things the Bunun enjoy here are impossible to find in the cities. Obviously the tourists had a nostalgia or romantic ideology about the primitive which is a reaction to the alienation of urban life (Graburn 1995: 167, Nash 1995: 190). They were also looking for an inversion of their daily experiences to rejuvenate themselves (Nash 1995: 187), such as getting drunk, singing and dancing together with aboriginal people, and even proposing to sleep with Bunun women!²⁰

The people of Vulvul did not quite understand what was so enviable about their life, comparing it to the much more exciting lives of these rich tourists in the cities. They were amused that tourists found value in things they did not think much of, such as a wooden top or a bamboo cup. Some Bunun consider tourists gullible and very rightly so,

²⁰ I was deeply disturbed to hear some Han-Chinese men saying to Bunun women that they were going to sleep with them tonight, but the people of Vulvul had the humour to dismiss such proposals as harmless jokes.

and enjoy lying to them when they ask silly questions, as well as making a tidy profit from selling food or handicrafts to them. Watching the Bunun tease the tourists during their performance or try to hold their own ground whilst bargaining over the price of souvenirs, is like watching a competition of wit. When the Bunun do not get the upper hand, they complain about the tourists' stinginess, dishonesty and greediness. Moreover, the way the people of Vulvul talked about tourists and prepared for their arrival was reminiscent of hunting, as though they were preparing to catch them all. As mentioned in the previous chapter, when the hunters hear the sound of wild animals, they feel the animals are calling the hunters to catch them. In a similar way, it is the tourists who call the Bunun to capture them. The connection is particularly clear during the *Malahtangia* hunting ritual.

Perhaps not surprisingly, with the encouragement of alcohol, some bachelors and married men alike attempted to flirt with Han-Chinese women, even though they were usually quite shy. They rarely had the chance to talk to young, well educated Han-Chinese women from the cities, and they were very interested in them.²¹ However, they were often frustrated in this aspect, and it reminded them of their visit to China. They missed the great time they had there. Their experience in China was an inversion of their experience at home, especially in terms of their relationship with the Han-Chinese. They were treated as very important guests. Wherever they went, there were people standing by the side of the road to applaud them, and the officials all shook hands with them. As my adoptive father said, they were treated like *saspinal* (government officials) in China (compare with how the Bunun welcome government officials in Chapter 2). At the same time, the people of Vulvul felt very good about themselves because they were not only powerful but also rich. Seeing the poverty and 'backward' living conditions in the Chinese countryside, they pitied the Chinese and were very proud of their own modern life back home. Acting like *saspinal*, they donated money to the local government in Yunnan. Moreover, they threw money on the ground for the Chinese to pick up. In fact, they were advised by the officials from Haitun township office who accompanied them to China not to do so lest it get them in trouble with the police, but they did not care. As they told me : "What are we afraid of! We have plenty of money. Even the police want our money. All the Chinese praise us because we're so generous". The people of Vulvul also spent a lot of money buying souvenirs,

²¹ I for one was such a young and well-educated Han-Chinese woman. The people of Vulvul ask me to marry a Bunun man all the time even though I already had a boyfriend, and some people would introduce me to outsiders as their daughter-in-law.

such as batik-printed T-shirts. Everyone bought more than ten T-shirts to give to relatives as gifts when they returned home, and some people bought as many as thirty.²² Moreover, men spent several evenings in karaoke; and paid for women to talk and drink with them. They tipped these women heavily and regarded themselves as hugely popular.²³ Although the people of Vulvul also visited Europe and Japan, they did not feel powerful and rich there. As a result, many men say next time they go abroad to perform they prefer to go to a 'backward' country. Africa will be their first choice not only because it is, in their view, the most backward place in the world, but because they can also go elephant hunting!

The romantic ideology of the primitive works in both ways. On the one hand, Han-Chinese tourists come to Vulvul in search of a simpler life of nature and a pristine culture. The Bunun know their intention and try to satisfy their imagining of the primitive through cultural performances. However, they think the Han-Chinese are ignorant or gullible because they are easily fooled by whatever they put on show. On the other hand, the people of Vulvul themselves also have an attitude of primitivism towards the Chinese, as defined by Thomas (1992a: 226, 1994: 30) as a negation of civility or modernity on the part of those who are 'civilized' or 'modern'. Compared with those who endure 'backward' living conditions in the countryside of China, the people of Vulvul feel superior because they are modern. Both sides of the romantic ideology of the primitive are played out in intercultural encounters such as tourism.

The politics of tradition and the production of locality

In the above, I have discussed several aspects of the recent proliferation of cultural performance and the development of ethnic tourism in Vulvul. The state features heavily in the process, but the Catholic Church also plays an important role in the earlier phase. The historical processes of how 'culture' and 'tradition' come to mean certain thing-like elements to the Bunun and the appropriation of Bunun 'culture' by the state and other Han-Chinese groups tell a story of a neocolonial situation, in which the Bunun have to represent *themselves* to be *consumed* (Keesing 1996: 173, original emphasis). As pointed out by Morris (1988: 67-68), cultural pluralism could become another form of control. On the one hand, it is the state which controls, economically and politically, the

²² I saw people wearing these T-shirts everywhere in Haitun township.

²³ These women also provide sexual service if extra fees are paid.

extent and scope of pluralist practices. On the other hand, while the state no longer suppresses cultural and social difference, it domesticates them in controlling the domains in which they can be 'legitimately' expressed. Moreover, as Pemberton (1994: 10) and Wilk (1995: 128) astutely put it, issues of class and of power are displaced or disengaged in the 'safe zone' of expressive culture.

However, there is a different story which takes greater account of the perspective and aspirations of local people. I have shown that the people of Vulvul regain much of their pride and self-esteem through cultural performances. They construct their community as the centre of Bunun culture and gain recognition from the state. Besides prestige and fame, they also learn how to master the official discourse of tradition and reap financial benefits from it. Moreover, they remake the colonial category of *Tomuk* and reproduce their cultural understanding of person and leadership. The story of state appropriation and the commoditisation of 'culture' is also the story of sustaining and remaking local identity and sociality (cf. Appadarui 1996: 186). They are entangled in cultural performance as social action.

While the people of Vulvul enjoy the state recognition of their 'culture', the people of Ququaz feel totally unrecognised and neglected by the state in this respect. When they tell me they no longer have their 'culture', they lay the blame on the local government which is controlled by the Qalavang. In Ren-ai township, all the government grant for cultural performance goes to the Qalavang. Although the Bunun also participate in cultural festivals held in Wushe, where the township office is located, they play a very minor role. As a young woman, Laliah, put it, "we Bunun only get to do the cooking and playing volleyball and basketball". Many people express the desire to hold performances in the village and to revive the rituals, especially an annual ritual called *pasuntamul* (lit. throwing fermented millet). *Pasuntamul* is a ritual they regard as belonging exclusively to their subgroup, Taketudu, and thus the most pertinent one to represent their culture.²⁴ They also single out *pasuntamul* because they think the ritual is fun and spectacular with the wrestling on the river bank.²⁵ However, the revival of

²⁴ It is true that the Bubukun subgroup do not have this ritual. However, Takibahka have a similar ritual called *mukailev* (Chiu 1966: 37-39, 203).

²⁵ On the day of *Pasuntamul*, before dawn men gather at the house of the ritual leader for *mapatus*. Women must stay outside the house. The ritual leader (or someone with great strength) makes a fire by drilling a hole into *hancuz* wood with an instrument made from *talum* (a kind of bamboo). When the fire is big enough, he consecrates wild meat above the fire before distributing it to everyone (*makusil*). After eating the meat, the ritual leader climbs onto the roof and throws fermented millet (*pasuntamul*) into the sky, and prays (*masumsum*) to *dehanin* (sky) for the abundance of crops and wild animals, as well as for a good and peaceful life in the house. Then men separate into two teams, one goes to the field to fetch taro (this team is *tintai*), the other goes to the river bank to wait for them (this team is *masitada*). After

this ritual has not yet happened, although in the spring of 1999 all Taketudu villages gathered at Qatu for the Bunun Cultural Festival which lasted for three days (30 April to 2 May).²⁶

The festival is an ambitious activity. On the first day the Bunun go on a 'root-searching' journey to an old settlement, Asang Tudu, and spend the night there. The second day starts with a basketball competition between the villages, followed by lunch at the government-owned Puli brewery, and lectures about the importance of controlled drinking. In the evening there is the Bunun Princess Beauty Contest, the first of its kind among the Bunun and the most popular or high profile activity in these three days. The third day starts with *Malagtangia*, followed by folk sport and craft competitions such as wrestling, shooting, catching pigs, pounding millet, as well as the performance of singing and dancing.

Despite the high hopes the people of Ququaz have for this cultural festival, it turns out to be very disorganised and chaotic. In their opinion, it doesn't make the uniqueness of Taketudu culture and history known to the state and Bunun children. Moreover, they feel they are further marginalised because it is totally controlled by a few Bunun officials and elites from Qatu. The people of Qatu want to use this festival to appeal to the state for regular funding of their cultural performance, and to release more land to their village, as it is written in the pamphlet (pp. 58-59). According to the people of Ququaz, this is not what this cultural activity should be about. The transmission of Bunun tradition to the younger generation is a more important task. Also, they suspect that the activity only serves the interests of a small number of Bunun officials and elite. First of all, they are left totally in the dark about the use of the funding (nearly NT\$ 1 million), and they suspect it is mismanaged and put into someone's pocket. Secondly, if the government does release more land, who will benefit from it? Surely it won't be the ordinary people!

As 'tradition' and 'culture' become politicised nowadays, it is not surprising that there are more internal tensions, splits and conflicts. For the Bunun, the revival and recreation of tradition can be a means of empowerment, but it can also draw them into

collecting taro, *tintai* return to the house of the ritual leader, and the ritual leader cuts the taro and prays that cutting an enemy's head will be as easy as cutting the taro. Then the *tintai* sing a wordless song on their way to the river bank. When they arrive, the *masitada* challenge them in a game of wrestling. Wrestling is said to improve the growth of millet and it is also a kind of military training. After the wrestling, men go back to the house of the ritual leader for the feast. Women also join in the feast.

²⁶ It is to celebrate the one hundred years of resettlement of Taketudu (from Qatu's point of view). Due to the limit of space, I am not able to describe and discuss it properly here.

the bureaucratised discourse of tradition and a commodity logic that can further marginalise them. It puzzles me that both the people of Vulvul and Ququaz claim that they cannot hold any ritual or performance without government subsidy. Thus in Ququaz, despite the fact that they declare their longing for the revival of annual rituals such as *pasuntamul* and visiting ancestral settlements, it does not happen and Ququaz remains, in their own words, a village 'without culture'.

Not all Bunun villages think in the same way as the people of Vulvul and Ququaz. In Sulai-an, there were some very interesting developments recently. As I mentioned above in passing, the Takebanual clan of Sulai-an is the only one in Haitun township that never once stopped their *Malahtangia* in all these years, despite the earlier state suppression.²⁷ Unlike Vulvul, they consider *Malahtangia* as a real ritual with efficacy, not 'just a performance'. In 1997, the government subsidised NT\$ 1 million to renovate and 'modernise' the two ritual grounds in Sulai-an for the purpose of developing tourism. At the time of *Malahtangia* in 1998, the ritual ground of the Ispalidav clan was under extensive construction. However, the Takebanual clan turned down the government funding because they didn't want too much state intervention. They wanted to keep their ritual ground the way it was, the way their ancestors built it.

This is a different, and perhaps less compromising, way, in my view, of thinking about cultural autonomy and agency. Compared with Vulvul, the Takebanual clan of Sulai-an does not use their tradition to seek fame and money. Also, in Sulai-an there are also many more children participating in *mapatus*, as their parents want them to learn more about Bunun tradition. This brings home an important issue not yet explored in this chapter: the way tradition is acquired and transmitted in contemporary contexts.

The transmission of tradition

Vulvul's schoolchildren participate in most performances. What they perform is a miniature of adults' singing and dancing, only simpler. They are taught collectively in the primary school by their teacher Cina Nivu. The school also invites some elders to teach them Bunun language and weaving. However, these are only extra-curricular activities and their teaching is intermittent. What the children learn best is singing and dancing, and the worst Bunun language. In Ququaz, the school does not teach

²⁷ In Sulai-an, there used to be seven *Malahtangia* ritual grounds which belonged to different clans. However, most of them were abandoned and only two survive.

traditional singing. Occasionally they invite elders to teach the children how to make baskets and weaving, and there are two Bunun teachers who can teach the language. Again they are not part of formal tuition, and the learning of these things is far from successful.

What most people think is really important for Bunun children to learn is very different from what the school is actually teaching. The patrilineal clan system and marriage taboos (*masamu*) are regarded as extremely important because of the fear of incest.²⁸ If the children do not know their own *sidoq* (clan, lit. kind), when they grow up they are in danger of falling in love with someone they are not supposed to marry, as it has unfortunately happened.²⁹ Ancestral history (*palihavasan*) and ancestral ways of doing (*maladaigaz havas tu sinkulakula*) are also considered very significant, and it is regarded as important to transmit ancestral knowledge to children.

Very occasionally the school does invite Bunun elders to give a talk on ancestral history. However, the children forget it quickly because the lesson is just a one-off and because, as some people put it, “it is not part of the exams so they don’t really want to learn”. The desire and intentionality to learn is regarded as fundamental in the acquisition of knowledge.

During my fieldwork, I was always directed to some people who were considered capable of answering my questions about specific customs or Bunun tradition and history generally. Most of them were elders, but not always the oldest ones in the village. Some middle-aged people in fact knew more than a lot of old people. It was explained to me that the reason why some people were more knowledgeable than others about ancestral history and customs is because they are exposed to the right environment, such as growing up with grandparents or knowledgeable elders in the house, and very significantly, because they were interested in learning these things, asking lots of questions and practising a lot. If there is no conscious effort or intentionality to learn, then even though they grow up in the right environment it doesn’t mean they would know more than the others. Take singing as an example. In Vulvul, all the brothers of

²⁸ The Bunun have the strictest marriage taboos among all Taiwanese indigenous peoples. First of all, it is forbidden to marry a member of one’s phratry (*kavi-an*, lit. friend). Secondly, it is forbidden to marry the member of one’s mother’s patrilineal clan. Thirdly, marriage is prohibited between people whose mothers are from the same patri-clan. To violate any of these taboos is considered incest, and it would lead to misfortunes, bad death, even *malapu* (extinction).

²⁹ The Bunun were forced to use Han-Chinese names under the assimilation policy. However, it is extremely unfortunate that their Han-Chinese family names do not correspond to their patrilineal clan system. It is now legally acceptable to revive their Bunun names, but most people choose not to because of the inconvenience.

Tama Kila are very good at singing. They explain to me that it is because their grandparents and parents sang very often when they were kids. They grew up listening to Bunun music all the time and had many chances to practise singing with the elders. However, Cina Malas grew up in a similar environment but she can hardly sing Bunun songs, even though her brothers and sisters are also very good at singing. It is said that Cina Malas cannot sing because she didn't make a conscious effort to learn.

As traditional knowledge is not inherited but learnt in practice, it is no wonder that it is now very difficult to teach Bunun children ancestral knowledge. Children now are exposed to a very different environment, one in which the mainstream Han-Chinese culture dominates. They spend most days in the school where all the teaching is in the national language (Mandarin). In the evenings they watch lots of TV, and most programmes are again Han-Chinese ones. Even if efforts are made to teach them some Bunun knowledge and skills, they don't really want to learn. As the elders lament, children's hearts (*is-ang*) are not set on ancestral ways of doing. For instance, in the above mentioned Bunun Cultural Festival, what interests youth and children most is not Bunun rituals or history, but the beauty contest. On that night, most adults watched the beauty contest from a distance, under the shelter of the tent due to the rain, but also because many did not approve of such things. In contrast, despite the rain and the muddy ground, teenagers gathered around the platform where nine young women competed for the title of Bunun Princess (see Figure 14).³⁰ Surrounded by excited and screaming teenagers, I could see their faces and hear their comments clearly. Certainly fashion and the chance to appear on TV are much more attractive to them than the Bunun ancestral way of life.

In Vulvul, the transmission of tradition is considered as less of a problem, as they think their children already know better than the children of other villages. But it is still a problem because there is more to tradition than singing and dancing. In Ququaz, it is even more problematic, and people talk often about the plan to journey to ancestral settlements, taking all the schoolchildren with them. It is thought that when the children are in the ancestral places, it will motivate and help them to learn ancestral knowledge.

³⁰ There are two reasons why it is given the name of Bunun Princess. One is that all Taiwanese aboriginal groups are supposed to have 'chiefs', as the Japanese appointed *Tomuk* to every group, and the daughters of chiefs are 'princesses'. The other is that most titles of local beauty contests in Taiwan are called Princess, such as Water Lily Princess, Friendship Princess, or even Rice Noodles Princess (her duty will be to promote the sale of rice noodles). Likewise, Bunun Princess will be a kind of ambassador of Bunun culture. However, in Taiwan those who work as stewardesses in sexual night clubs are also called Public Relations Princess.

Thus in the meetings at Qatu before the Bunun Cultural Festival, several elders proposed bringing all the schoolchildren to the old settlement of Asang Tudu. However, as the officials of Qatu who organised the activity had their own political agenda, they dismissed the proposal as unpractical and claimed that there was not sufficient funding.

The people of Vulvul and Ququaz are aware of the distinction between *tradition as lived experience* or ancestral way of doing, and *tradition as objectified entities* such as rituals, singing, dancing, ethnic dress and handicraft. However, they feel that it is impossible to maintain the former in the historical conditions they find themselves at the present, and it is better to keep the latter than nothing at all. Nevertheless, their pragmatic attitude is dogged by a sense of loss and incompleteness.

The loneliness of the singers: displacement and loss

I began this chapter with the conflict between Tama Kila and Cina Nivu over how to go about the business of inventing new dances. After that night's practice was interrupted by this incident, I went to Tama Kila's house to talk to him. It is the first time I learn about the notion of loneliness (*mahanimunmun*), which is to appear again and again during my stay among the Bunun. Tama Kila felt that to change the Bunun way of singing to suit the newly invented dance is to replace ancestral way of doing with modern things, and that makes him lonely. As he emphasized: "Modern things cannot replace the songs of our ancestors. It is as if we sing Bunun songs in karaoke, it feels terribly lonely".

Tama Kila went on to tell me that he has no wife. His wife died several years ago and left five children to his care. He was lonely and he hoped that coming together with fellow villagers to sing ancestral songs could comfort him and relieve his loneliness. But tonight it made it worse. From our conversation, I learnt that *mahanimunmun* is to do with separation, and more importantly in the context of the following discussion, loss and displacement.

In the previous chapter I pointed out that singing keeps the Bunun happy and gives them the strength to endure physical hardship during hunting. The emotions generated by singing a polyphonic song *macilumah* together evokes the past and ancestral memory. It creates a different reality from everyday experience in the settlement, a simultaneity with the past and a togetherness with ancestors. Although *macilumah* is a standard part of Vulvul's performance and I hear it repeatedly, it is never the same as what I heard on

our way home from Lamatasinsin. The emotions and the experience are very different. As the people of Vulvul themselves are aware, it is very different when singing is evoked by certain contexts, and to sing in performances or for tourists. Several times during the practice for a forthcoming performance, those who pass by or listen on the side comment that the feelings of the songs are different from the way it used to be, or from how their grandparents sang it. Some even say that there is something missing and the feeling is not right.

What is lost in the songs is the ancestral way of doing and a lived experience from which Bunun songs, and the emotions they entail, are generated. Take *macilumah* as an example. If the singers are not exhausted from several days of hard work hunting and carrying heavy loads of wild meat, the feeling is said to be 'thin' and devoid of the plenitude it is supposed to have. Other Bunun songs are also associated with, or interwoven into, specific contexts (an agricultural or life cycle ritual, coming back from a day's hard work, weaving, expecting your man to come home from hunting, etc.), and those contexts are not reproduced when they prepare for a performance or perform for the tourists. This does not mean that the singers do not gain any satisfaction from singing the songs, as the people of Vulvul do enjoy getting together to sing them and to make money from singing them, but they are constantly reminded, or remind themselves, that it is not the same. As they themselves creatively manipulate the context of performance, or are manipulated by the Han-Chinese, loneliness can creep in.

There are some who refuse to participate in any performance. Tama Vanu is one of them. He is a very good singer and he is poor, but he never wants to make money from performing for tourists. When I asked him why he has never participated in any performance, he gave me all sorts of answers. His father was ill, he didn't want to see the tourists' faces, he preferred to go hunting, and most strangely, he could not sing at all or singing made him sad and lonely. He cannot sing on the stage or in front of the tourists, because it is not how the Bunun should sing their songs. In that kind of situation he is not quite himself and doesn't know how to sing or where to put his hands, therefore it is sad. Tama Vanu is odd in insisting on not performing singing and dancing; so is he odd in not knowing how to ride a motorbike or how to drive a car. He also doesn't know how to make money, as his wife Cina Malas states matter-of-factly. Both Tama Vanu's remark that singing for tourists makes him sad, and what Tama Kila says about how lonely it will be to sing Bunun songs in karaoke, highlight a sense of loss and displacement through which the Bunun understand and comment on the changing

historical conditions of their existence.

This is, I suggest, what Raymond Williams (1977: 128-135) calls ‘structures of feeling’, “a particular quality of social experience and relationship, historically distinct from other particular qualities, which gives the sense of a generation or of a period” (ibid: 131). It is “meanings and values as they are actually lived and felt” (ibid:132). When the Bunun sing ancestral songs on the stage or for tourists, there is an interplay between changing historical conditions and the structures of feeling, which articulates a sense of generative immediacy. The sense of loss and displacement is emergent, in flux and difficult to define, however, I argue that it has implications for social action. It moves Tama Kila to argue with Cina Nivu and to reject modifications in the way they sing Bunun songs. It moves Tama Vanu to refuse to perform for tourists. Its implications actually go beyond individual actions and there are more influences it may assert in the future as to how the Bunun rethink and reformulate their relationship with the state and the Han-Chinese tourists. The connection between ‘structures of feeling’ and historical experience will be further investigated in the next chapter, when I delve into the question of why the power of Bunun spirit mediums is weaker now.

Chapter 5

Spirit Mediumship Through Time

Several times a week in Vulvul, I can hear the fluent chant of *lapaspas* (a healing ritual) coming from the house of the spirit medium Cina Avus, who lives next door to my adoptive family (see Figure 15). At first I would rush to her place with excitement and great expectation, but after a few times I was disappointed by the fact that the Bunun healing ritual is in no way mysterious or spectacular as I had hoped for. Contrary to what many researches on healing, spirit mediumship and shamanism had led me to expect,¹ the healing practices of Bunun spirit mediums are not suffused with ecstatic techniques such as trance and spirit possession induced by music, songs, dances or drugs (hence my use of the term spirit mediums). In fact, the ritual is surprisingly casual and informal. Cina Avus and her patient will sit in the front yard, with her grandchildren playing nearby, and other people continue to chat or to busy themselves with whatever activities are at hand. The audience is not an integral part of the healing ritual, nor do they pay much attention to it.² The ritual itself usually lasts only a few minutes, and does not seem to be set apart from, or to interrupt, the flow of everyday life. Almost every day Cina Avus can be seen in her front yard, and she keeps herself busy with child minding, gardening, embroidering, drying maize or red beans, chatting with other women, etc. When the patient pays a visit to her house, usually with one or two bottles of rice wine and occasionally some pork, she will have a chat with the patient first, as though the visit is no different from those of friends who drop in when they pass by her house. Healing seems to be just one of the many daily activities Cina Avus does, and there is nothing remarkable about it.

In the last three or four years the number of Cina Avus' patients has increased considerably, as several spirit mediums have passed away and she is now the only spirit medium practising Bunun traditional healing in Haitun township. This increase has not gone unnoticed by other villagers, as they comment with admiration or envy that healing is a 'good business' and Cina Avus' 'business' is getting better and better.

¹ Such as the classical studies of Levi-Strauss (1963), Eliade (1964) and Lewis (1971, 1986), as well as more recent studies in Southeast Asia (Atkinson 1989; Jennings 1995; Roseman 1991, 1996).

² This is in contrast to societies where the audience serve as arbiters of shamanic reputations and play an essential part in deciding whether the healing performance is successful. See Atkinson (1989) on the Wana of Indonesia and Schieffelin (1996) on the Kaluli of New Guinea.

Indeed she is paid handsomely by those patients who come from other villages, especially those who come a long way from other counties such as Hualien. I am told that there are still some spirit mediums in Hualien, but that they are not 'authentic' because they mingle Bunun practices with Han-Chinese ones. They are more like *tangki* (Toaist mediums) than Bunun *is-amaminang* (spirit medium, lit. those who can use *amin-amin*, a kind of magical substance). I am told that such mingling is no good and that many of these mediums are cheats and money greedy. Patients come a long way from Hualien to see Cina Avus for they want to consult a 'true Bunun medium', that is, 'one who has a good heart', 'one who loves the others'.

I find the statement that Bunun and Han-Chinese spirit mediumship should not be mixed extremely intriguing, as Cina Avus is Catholic, and she has incorporated some Christian practices to enrich her healing techniques. Perhaps it is not surprising at all as I was constantly told that Christianity and Bunun traditional belief are *maszan* (the same), which will be explained in the next chapter. However, the relationship between Christianity and Bunun spirit mediumship is not always as straightforward and unproblematic as the people of Vulvul now present it. There were tensions and conflicts when Christianity was first introduced in the 1950s, and these tensions can sometimes still be felt in Ququaz. As I will explain shortly, the power of Bunun spirit mediums is inherently ambiguous; it can be used both in healing and in witchcraft, therefore it is not always easily tamed or contained within Christianity.³

During a short visit to Ququaz in 1995, I was told by a fifteen-year old boy, Piluch, that there were many spirit mediums (they are called *mamomo* there) in the village, especially in the old settlement, where each household had at least one *mamomo*. Although I now know that he had exaggerated the situation, it is true that Ququaz used to have an unusually large number of *mamomo* compared with other subgroups, a situation closely associated with their warfare with the Qalavang. Nowadays there are still several spirit mediums in the village, although it is difficult to know the exact number due to the more secretive nature of their actions in contrast to the situation in Vulvul. The simple question of "who are *mamomo*" is met with various and ambiguous responses. Some say that there are seven to ten *mamomo*, although exactly who they are is not certain. Some say that there are no 'real' *mamomo* now, and those who claim to be

³ In Evans-Prichard's 1937 classic *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*, the Zande of Southern Sudan make a distinction between witchcraft and sorcery on the basis of whether the power to inflict harm comes from an inherited quality (witchcraft) or requires the conscious use of medicines and acquired knowledge (sorcery). For many years anthropologists have followed this distinction. However, the Bunun do not distinguish between witchcraft and sorcery.

mamomo are liars. Despite the differences, everyone agrees that spirit mediumship is declining and the power of mediums is weaker now.

The difficulty of knowing exactly who is a spirit medium relates to the characteristics of Bunun spirit mediumship, which I attempt to illustrate in this chapter. I will start with the basic concepts of Bunun spirit mediumship, such as why people become ill, and give a vignette of basic healing procedures. Then I move on to explain how one becomes a spirit medium and where the power of spirit mediums comes from through a discussion of dreaming and the annual *séance* (*pistahu* in Vulvul, and *pistako* in Ququaz). I emphasise the centrality of the notions of relational person and relational power, as well as their importance in Bunun moral imagination. The construction of a moral community, I will argue, is a task shared by spirit mediums and the Christian Churches, and it provides the key to understanding their relationships. A continuing concern in this chapter is to evoke the ambiguity and uncertainty of Bunun spirit mediumship, and the emotions it induces in the contemporary historical situation. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of how among the Bunun spirit mediumship is not only a way of dealing with spirits, but also a way of contemplating their own position in the world.

Bunun concept of the person

In Vulvul, a person (*bunun*) is thought to be constituted of three components. First, the body (*lut-bu*). It comes into being when the father's seed (*tani*) is 'planted' or 'accepted' inside the mother's womb (*gaz-uvazan*, lit. where the child is made). It is nourished by the food she eats, and grows gradually inside her body. A fetus is thought to be in a delicate, malleable state and susceptible to outside influences, such as the things parents come into contact with, the food they eat, as well as the mother's emotions. As a result, there used to be many taboos concerning pregnancy.⁴ Although these taboos are not strictly followed now, most people still hold the notion that the fetus is susceptible to

⁴ For example, both parents have to be swift in their daily actions, such as getting up early in the morning and eating quickly to ensure a smooth and easy delivery. They should avoid the sick and the dead, unless they are members of their own household or the mother's natal home. As regards food taboos, the parents shouldn't eat the fetus of animals because it will cause miscarriage. They shouldn't eat bear or leopard meat because the power of their spirits (*hanitu*) is too strong for the vulnerable child and hence causes stillbirth. They should abstain from civets and monkeys because they will make the child prone to illness and fever after s/he is born. Flying squirrels should also be avoided otherwise the child will become a thief in the future (more in Yang 1992: 15-16). These taboos vary slightly in different places (Chiu 1966:46, Wei 1972:22, Wu 1999: 23).

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It must be stressed that most people in Vulvul do not present the composition of the person in a systematic way, and they do not show much interest in it. Spirit mediums, midwives and ritual leaders are more knowledgeable about and interested in these things, but most people hold a pragmatic attitude that *is-ang* and *hanitu* cannot be seen directly and one cannot know for sure what they are really like and how they act.⁶ The Bunun make a distinction between the revealed and the concealed or the hidden, and most people profess to know very little about the latter or spirit world. The activities of *hanitu* and *is-ang* are usually known retrospectively through the experience of dreams, illnesses and misfortunes.

The notion that there is a world of spirits that co-exists with the world of ordinary human beings, but that remains for most of the time unknown to them, is of great importance. It explains why most people from Vulvul say ambiguous and contradictory things about *hanitu*, *is-ang* and their relationships. For example, some people say that the body comes from the mother and *hanitu* comes from the father, and this is why Bunun kinship is patrilineal. Others say that body and *hanitu* come from both the parents and do not make a clear distinction. Yet some others say that the *hanitu* on the right shoulder is from the father and the *hanitu* on the left shoulder is from the mother. Moreover, some people deny that human beings have *hanitu* in their bodies, and say that they are only 'followed' by *hanitu*. If *hanitu* get into their bodies and their *is-ang* fail to drive them out, they will become ill.⁷ Such notions, I suggest, are fairly common

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⁷ In a study on Taketonpu, a settlement which belongs to the same subgroup, Bubukun, as Vulvul, Coe mentions nothing about the inborn *hanitu*. Instead, *hanitu* is described as one of the main causes of

among the Bunun and are not merely a result of the introduction of Christianity and the translation of devil as *hanitu*.⁸

In Ququaz, people do not have the notion that human beings are born with two *kanitu* inside them, or that *kanitu* is one of the constituents of the person. The person is composed only of the body and *is-ang*. *Is-ang* can leave the body temporarily and cause the decline of a person's vitality and health. Dreaming is sometimes attributed to the activity of *is-ang*, but it is mainly regarded as revelations from *dekanin* (sky). After death, *is-ang* leaves the body permanently and becomes *kanitu*. However, there are many other *kanitu* in the world which are not the ghosts of the dead. Animals, plants and even rocks have *kanitu*, too. Contact or communication with *kanitu* is usually undesirable for it is one of the causes of illness. Only spirit mediums can communicate with *kanitu* actively without falling ill.

The uncertainty and elusiveness of notions about the person, *hanitu* and *is-ang* relates not only to the hidden or concealed nature of the spirit world, but also to the egalitarian tendency among the Bunun. As shown in the previous chapters, the Bunun place great emphasis on group consensus and downplay the possibility of hierarchy. Therefore, there is no established authority, whether political or ritualistic, who can impose an opinion on the others. In a sense, everyone is free to believe what they want through their experience. However, these experiences are not random. They are influenced by cultural idioms and social interactions with other people, and have an intersubjective dimension. On occasions like death, illness, misfortune, séance and dream-sharing, the Bunun can still form a consensus about the action, intention and quality of *is-ang* and *hanitu*.⁹

From the above, it would be wrong to over-systemise Bunun notions about the person and to draw out a dualistic symbolic system from it. This was, initially, a temptation I could not resist completely due to the prominence of such models in previous research on the Bunun (Huang 1988: 97-103, 1989: 179-183), and the

disease (Coe 1955: 182-183).

⁸ A closer look at Sayama (1988[1919]: 102-150) supports this point. There are various notions regarding whether *hanitu* are a constituent part of the person and how many *hanitu* and *is-ang* (one or two) a person has. I am amazed by the variety and uncertainty in the statements of Sayama's informants, such as "we never think about the difference between *is-ang* and *hanitu*, we only learnt the difference after you (Sayama) told us" (p.105). Or "human beings have only one *hanitu*. However, after hearing what you (Sayama) have said I feel that there might be two (*hanitu*)" (p.124).

⁹ Cf. Gibson's discussion of the Buid of Mindoro, Philippines, where "the core of belief in invisible powers which is formed in ritual serves as a springboard for individual speculation about metaphysical issues. Such speculation is not thought to be of great practical importance, and fulfills an essentially intellectual function. Everyone is free to believe what they like, so long as they contribute to the collective ritual"(Gibson 1986: 148-149).

convenience these provide.¹⁰ However, such a line of analysis fails to take into account the fuzziness, uncertainty and vagueness which characterise the way the Bunun talk about how the person is constituted and its relationships with other beings. In the light of some recent studies on anthropomorphism and other religious ideas (Boyer 1994: chap. 4, 1996, 2000), I suggest that Bunun notions of the person and other beings are better understood as *constituted intentionalities*, rather than a reified symbolic system. *Is-ang*, *hanitu* and *dehanin* are thought to have their own intentions, desires and will, which can affect human beings and in turn be influenced by their intention and action. To negotiate with spiritual beings and to influence their intentions toward humans is what spirit mediums do, and what Bunun healing rituals aim to achieve.¹¹

Etiology and basic healing rituals

I have mentioned that temporary soul-loss results in the loss of vitality and health. This is usually caused by interaction with a more powerful *hanitu* in one's dreams, or in other contexts. The world is full of *hanitu* and they are behind most cases of illness. *Hanitu* can be very nasty to humans and play all kinds of tricks on them. They bite, touch, shock, hit, shoot and push humans. They also try to take human souls (*is-ang*) away, to intrude into their bodies or to send alien objects into their bodies to cause illnesses. As a prey of *hanitu*, one's *is-ang* becomes weak or detaches from the body. Even when *hanitu* do not have the intention of harming people, any contact or interaction with them can cause diseases if one's *is-ang* is not strong or stable enough. For instance, my adoptive nephew Cian fell ill with a high fever in the afternoon after the annual tomb-sweeping. It was because he was such a cute baby and his deceased relatives 'touched' him, not that they meant any harm to the boy. Babies and small children are more prone to soul-loss because their *is-ang* is still weak, thus their grandparents or parents try to protect them by rubbing calamous roots (*ngan*), a strong-scented plant that can deter *hanitu*, on their foreheads, or by putting a *ngan*

¹⁰ According to Huang (1988: 97-103, 1989:179-183), there exists a symbolic system in the Bunun concept of the person, and the symbols of each item on the same side are mutually interchangeable:

left	:	right
individual	:	collective
disorder	:	order
body	:	spirit
female	:	male
mothers' patri-clan	:	father's patri-clan

His more recent works (1993, 1995, 1999) still rely heavily on the existence of such a symbolic system.

¹¹ This is also true for annual rituals and life-cycle rituals which cannot be discussed here.

necklace on them.

Sometimes soul-loss is caused by witchcraft (cf. Chiu 1968: 59-60), another main source of disease. However, in most cases witchcraft inflicts illness not by capturing the soul of the victim but in one of the following ways. One involves sending an object into the body of the victim. These objects include small stones, burning coal, hair, nails, iron pieces, broken glass, bone, grass, insects, knives, soil, etc. They cause fever, pain, or soreness according to their qualities. For example, burning coals lead to high fever, while the sharpness of knife, nail, and broken glass causes pain. Another way to inflict harm is to curse the exuviae of the victim or the things s/he has contacted, such as hair, nails, blood, skin, excrement, leftover food, clothes, photos, footprints, and the like (cf. Chiu 1964: 80). The intended qualities (fever, pain, heaviness or stiffness, etc.) are inserted in, or transferred to, the victim via his/her 'distributed personhood', as pointed out by Gell (1998: 102-104).

Besides *hanitu* encounter and witchcraft, violating ritual taboos or having contact with bewitched objects can cause a kind of disease called *tis-ia*. In the previous chapter, I have talked about the taboo against women participating in *mapatus* and eating the consecrated meat. If they breach the taboo they will get a cough, asthma or vomit blood. These are *tis-ia*. In some situations *tis-ia* is caused by contact with bewitched objects which are placed in the garden or the hunting ground to keep away thieves or poachers. However, such cases are rare now due to the abandonment of traditional rituals, or the loss of efficacy in these rituals, as well as the fading away of ownership in hunting grounds after the land registration and the nationalisation of most forest.

According to the cause of disease, the spirit medium uses one of the following healing rituals (*lapaspas*) to cure the patient: *lapaspas* (lit. to brush away or pat away), *makusuhis is-ang* or *anchokais is-ang* (to summon back *is-ang*), *mapunpain hanitu* (to drive out *hanitu*), and *mas-ia* (to remove *tis-ia*, unwitch). When a patient comes to a spirit medium in search of a cure for his ailment, the medium will ask the patient and his/her relatives some questions to diagnose the cause of the illness. These questions include: What dreams do they have? Does the patient have any contact with bewitched objects or breach ritual taboos? Does he quarrel with other people or do something wrong? What are the symptoms of the ailment or what has caused the injury, etc. It is said that the most powerful medium can know the cause of the disease or injury directly through his/her *is-ang* without asking any questions (cf. Hsu 1987: 113). However, the spirit mediums I know are not so powerful. They need to build up a picture of the recent

actions of the patient first. Then the medium confirms the diagnosis with the help of her spirit familiars, which usually involves acquiring a vision through leaf-gazing.¹²

Lapaspas is the most common healing ritual. It consists of the use of a few stalks of *pazan* (miscanthus grass, a kind of couch grass) to brush or pat away from the patient's body the *hanitu* or the alien object that causes the suffering. The sharp leaves of *pazan* are considered a deterrent to *hanitu*. Some mediums use *lanlisun* (another kind of couch grass) or *iduk* (the branch of pumelo tree), depending on their dream revelations (see below). At the beginning of *lapaspas*, the medium prays to *dahanin* (sky) or *Tama Dehanin* (Christian God) and summons all her spirit familiars to help her to cure the patient. If she feels coldness and darkness in her heart (*is-ang*) and stutters while reciting spells, it means that her spirit familiars do not come and the patient is incurable. If she feels warmth and strength in her heart and her hair standing up, it means that her spirit familiars have arrived, and with their help she becomes very fluent in chanting her spells. These spells aim to negotiate with, to command or to persuade *hanitu* to leave the patient alone, on the one hand, and to transfer desired qualities to the medium and the patient, on the other.

The following is an example. One morning as I and Tama Dahu were chatting with Cina Avus in her front yard, a middle aged man, Tama Liman from Evago, came to see Cina Avus in his truck. Tama Liman had gout and his feet hurt so much that he had difficulty in walking. After examining Tama Liman's feet and learning that recently he dreamt about being hit by someone he did not know, Cina Avus diagnosed that Tama Liman's ailment was inflicted on him by witchcraft, and *lapaspas* was suitable for treating him. She fetched two stalks of *pazan*, blew a breath into her right hand and clicked the fingers to give strength to, or empower (*mamangan*), them. After praying to *Tama Dehanin* and drawing a cross in the front of her face and chest, an action she was inspired by a dream to add to her repertoire of healing techniques, she began to hold the *pazan* in her right hand and to use them to brush Tama Liman's feet rhythmically. At the same time, Cina Avus chanted the name of all her teachers and spirit familiars who visited her in her dreams, to summon them to help her, to grant her the power to extract any bewitched object from the patient's body and to cure him. After repeatedly reciting these prayers for two or three minutes, Cina Avus started to insert and to transfer the intended qualities or results to the patient repetitively for the same length of time:

¹² Some mediums use water or *patihaul* (the magical stone) to acquire a vision, depending on their dream revelations.

Chapter 5

Spirit Mediumship Through Time

Several times a week in Vulvul, I can hear the fluent chant of *lapaspas* (a healing ritual) coming from the house of the spirit medium Cina Avus, who lives next door to my adoptive family (see Figure 15). At first I would rush to her place with excitement and great expectation, but after a few times I was disappointed by the fact that the Bunun healing ritual is in no way mysterious or spectacular as I had hoped for. Contrary to what many researches on healing, spirit mediumship and shamanism had led me to expect,¹ the healing practices of Bunun spirit mediums are not suffused with ecstatic techniques such as trance and spirit possession induced by music, songs, dances or drugs (hence my use of the term spirit mediums). In fact, the ritual is surprisingly casual and informal. Cina Avus and her patient will sit in the front yard, with her grandchildren playing nearby, and other people continue to chat or to busy themselves with whatever activities are at hand. The audience is not an integral part of the healing ritual, nor do they pay much attention to it.² The ritual itself usually lasts only a few minutes, and does not seem to be set apart from, or to interrupt, the flow of everyday life. Almost every day Cina Avus can be seen in her front yard, and she keeps herself busy with child minding, gardening, embroidering, drying maize or red beans, chatting with other women, etc. When the patient pays a visit to her house, usually with one or two bottles of rice wine and occasionally some pork, she will have a chat with the patient first, as though the visit is no different from those of friends who drop in when they pass by her house. Healing seems to be just one of the many daily activities Cina Avus does, and there is nothing remarkable about it.

In the last three or four years the number of Cina Avus' patients has increased considerably, as several spirit mediums have passed away and she is now the only spirit medium practising Bunun traditional healing in Haitun township. This increase has not gone unnoticed by other villagers, as they comment with admiration or envy that healing is a 'good business' and Cina Avus' 'business' is getting better and better.

¹ Such as the classical studies of Levi-Strauss (1963), Eliade (1964) and Lewis (1971, 1986), as well as more recent studies in Southeast Asia (Atkinson 1989; Jennings 1995; Roseman 1991, 1996).

² This is in contrast to societies where the audience serve as arbiters of shamanic reputations and play an essential part in deciding whether the healing performance is successful. See Atkinson (1989) on the Wana of Indonesia and Schieffelin (1996) on the Kaluli of New Guinea.

Indeed she is paid handsomely by those patients who come from other villages, especially those who come a long way from other counties such as Hualien. I am told that there are still some spirit mediums in Hualien, but that they are not ‘authentic’ because they mingle Bunun practices with Han-Chinese ones. They are more like *tangki* (Toaist mediums) than Bunun *is-amaminang* (spirit medium, lit. those who can use *amin-amin*, a kind of magical substance). I am told that such mingling is no good and that many of these mediums are cheats and money greedy. Patients come a long way from Hualien to see Cina Avus for they want to consult a ‘true Bunun medium’, that is, ‘one who has a good heart’, ‘one who loves the others’.

I find the statement that Bunun and Han-Chinese spirit mediumship should not be mixed extremely intriguing, as Cina Avus is Catholic, and she has incorporated some Christian practices to enrich her healing techniques. Perhaps it is not surprising at all as I was constantly told that Christianity and Bunun traditional belief are *maszan* (the same), which will be explained in the next chapter. However, the relationship between Christianity and Bunun spirit mediumship is not always as straightforward and unproblematic as the people of Vulvul now present it. There were tensions and conflicts when Christianity was first introduced in the 1950s, and these tensions can sometimes still be felt in Ququaz. As I will explain shortly, the power of Bunun spirit mediums is inherently ambiguous; it can be used both in healing and in witchcraft, therefore it is not always easily tamed or contained within Christianity.³

During a short visit to Ququaz in 1995, I was told by a fifteen-year old boy, Piluch, that there were many spirit mediums (they are called *mamomo* there) in the village, especially in the old settlement, where each household had at least one *mamomo*. Although I now know that he had exaggerated the situation, it is true that Ququaz used to have an unusually large number of *mamomo* compared with other subgroups, a situation closely associated with their warfare with the Qalavang. Nowadays there are still several spirit mediums in the village, although it is difficult to know the exact number due to the more secretive nature of their actions in contrast to the situation in Vulvul. The simple question of “who are *mamomo*” is met with various and ambiguous responses. Some say that there are seven to ten *mamomo*, although exactly who they are is not certain. Some say that there are no ‘real’ *mamomo* now, and those who claim to be

³ In Evans-Prichard’s 1937 classic *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*, the Zande of Southern Sudan make a distinction between witchcraft and sorcery on the basis of whether the power to inflict harm comes from an inherited quality (witchcraft) or requires the conscious use of medicines and acquired knowledge (sorcery). For many years anthropologists have followed this distinction. However, the Bunun do not distinguish between witchcraft and sorcery.

mamomo are liars. Despite the differences, everyone agrees that spirit mediumship is declining and the power of mediums is weaker now.

The difficulty of knowing exactly who is a spirit medium relates to the characteristics of Bunun spirit mediumship, which I attempt to illustrate in this chapter. I will start with the basic concepts of Bunun spirit mediumship, such as why people become ill, and give a vignette of basic healing procedures. Then I move on to explain how one becomes a spirit medium and where the power of spirit mediums comes from through a discussion of dreaming and the annual *séance* (*pistahu* in Vulvul, and *pistako* in Ququaz). I emphasise the centrality of the notions of relational person and relational power, as well as their importance in Bunun moral imagination. The construction of a moral community, I will argue, is a task shared by spirit mediums and the Christian Churches, and it provides the key to understanding their relationships. A continuing concern in this chapter is to evoke the ambiguity and uncertainty of Bunun spirit mediumship, and the emotions it induces in the contemporary historical situation. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of how among the Bunun spirit mediumship is not only a way of dealing with spirits, but also a way of contemplating their own position in the world.

Bunun concept of the person

In Vulvul, a person (*bunun*) is thought to be constituted of three components. First, the body (*lut-bu*). It comes into being when the father's seed (*tani*) is 'planted' or 'accepted' inside the mother's womb (*gaz-uvazan*, lit. where the child is made). It is nourished by the food she eats, and grows gradually inside her body. A fetus is thought to be in a delicate, malleable state and susceptible to outside influences, such as the things parents come into contact with, the food they eat, as well as the mother's emotions. As a result, there used to be many taboos concerning pregnancy.⁴ Although these taboos are not strictly followed now, most people still hold the notion that the fetus is susceptible to

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The notion that there is a world of spirits that co-exists with the world of ordinary human beings, but that remains for most of the time unknown to them, is of great importance. It explains why most people from Vulvul say ambiguous and contradictory things about *hanitu*, *is-ang* and their relationships. For example, some people say that the body comes from the mother and *hanitu* comes from the father, and this is why Bunun kinship is patrilineal. Others say that body and *hanitu* come from both the parents and do not make a clear distinction. Yet some others say that the *hanitu* on the right shoulder is from the father and the *hanitu* on the left shoulder is from the mother. Moreover, some people deny that human beings have *hanitu* in their bodies, and say that they are only 'followed' by *hanitu*. If *hanitu* get into their bodies and their *is-ang* fail to drive them out, they will become ill.⁷ Such notions, I suggest, are fairly common

⁶ Cf. Mabuchi's description of the Bunun that "...in daily life, they do not pay much attention to their magical beliefs. At least, they do not express it externally...Except for spirit mediums, very few people care much about the existence and the function of the *hanitu* on both shoulders, or pay heed to things that belong to the domain of magic in their everyday life" (Mabuchi 1987a [1974a]: 260).

⁷ In a study on Taketonpu, a settlement which belongs to the same subgroup, Bubukun, as Vulvul, Coe mentions nothing about the inborn *hanitu*. Instead, *hanitu* is described as one of the main causes of

among the Bunun and are not merely a result of the introduction of Christianity and the translation of devil as *hanitu*.⁸

In Ququaz, people do not have the notion that human beings are born with two *kanitu* inside them, or that *kanitu* is one of the constituents of the person. The person is composed only of the body and *is-ang*. *Is-ang* can leave the body temporarily and cause the decline of a person's vitality and health. Dreaming is sometimes attributed to the activity of *is-ang*, but it is mainly regarded as revelations from *dekanin* (sky). After death, *is-ang* leaves the body permanently and becomes *kanitu*. However, there are many other *kanitu* in the world which are not the ghosts of the dead. Animals, plants and even rocks have *kanitu*, too. Contact or communication with *kanitu* is usually undesirable for it is one of the causes of illness. Only spirit mediums can communicate with *kanitu* actively without falling ill.

The uncertainty and elusiveness of notions about the person, *hanitu* and *is-ang* relates not only to the hidden or concealed nature of the spirit world, but also to the egalitarian tendency among the Bunun. As shown in the previous chapters, the Bunun place great emphasis on group consensus and downplay the possibility of hierarchy. Therefore, there is no established authority, whether political or ritualistic, who can impose an opinion on the others. In a sense, everyone is free to believe what they want through their experience. However, these experiences are not random. They are influenced by cultural idioms and social interactions with other people, and have an intersubjective dimension. On occasions like death, illness, misfortune, séance and dream-sharing, the Bunun can still form a consensus about the action, intention and quality of *is-ang* and *hanitu*.⁹

From the above, it would be wrong to over-systemise Bunun notions about the person and to draw out a dualistic symbolic system from it. This was, initially, a temptation I could not resist completely due to the prominence of such models in previous research on the Bunun (Huang 1988: 97-103, 1989: 179-183), and the

disease (Coe 1955: 182-183).

⁸ A closer look at Sayama (1988[1919]: 102-150) supports this point. There are various notions regarding whether *hanitu* are a constituent part of the person and how many *hanitu* and *is-ang* (one or two) a person has. I am amazed by the variety and uncertainty in the statements of Sayama's informants, such as "we never think about the difference between *is-ang* and *hanitu*, we only learnt the difference after you (Sayama) told us "(p.105). Or " human beings have only one *hanitu*. However, after hearing what you (Sayama) have said I feel that there might be two (*hanitu*)" (p.124).

⁹ Cf. Gibson's discussion of the Buid of Mindoro, Philippines, where "the core of belief in invisible powers which is formed in ritual serves as a springboard for individual speculation about metaphysical issues. Such speculation is not thought to be of great practical importance, and fulfills an essentially intellectual function. Everyone is free to believe what they like, so long as they contribute to the collective ritual"(Gibson 1986: 148-149).

convenience these provide.¹⁰ However, such a line of analysis fails to take into account the fuzziness, uncertainty and vagueness which characterise the way the Bunun talk about how the person is constituted and its relationships with other beings. In the light of some recent studies on anthropomorphism and other religious ideas (Boyer 1994: chap. 4, 1996, 2000), I suggest that Bunun notions of the person and other beings are better understood as *constituted intentionalities*, rather than a reified symbolic system. *Is-ang*, *hanitu* and *dehanin* are thought to have their own intentions, desires and will, which can affect human beings and in turn be influenced by their intention and action. To negotiate with spiritual beings and to influence their intentions toward humans is what spirit mediums do, and what Bunun healing rituals aim to achieve.¹¹

Etiology and basic healing rituals

I have mentioned that temporary soul-loss results in the loss of vitality and health. This is usually caused by interaction with a more powerful *hanitu* in one's dreams, or in other contexts. The world is full of *hanitu* and they are behind most cases of illness. *Hanitu* can be very nasty to humans and play all kinds of tricks on them. They bite, touch, shock, hit, shoot and push humans. They also try to take human souls (*is-ang*) away, to intrude into their bodies or to send alien objects into their bodies to cause illnesses. As a prey of *hanitu*, one's *is-ang* becomes weak or detaches from the body. Even when *hanitu* do not have the intention of harming people, any contact or interaction with them can cause diseases if one's *is-ang* is not strong or stable enough. For instance, my adoptive nephew Cian fell ill with a high fever in the afternoon after the annual tomb-sweeping. It was because he was such a cute baby and his deceased relatives 'touched' him, not that they meant any harm to the boy. Babies and small children are more prone to soul-loss because their *is-ang* is still weak, thus their grandparents or parents try to protect them by rubbing calamous roots (*ngan*), a strong-scented plant that can deter *hanitu*, on their foreheads, or by putting a *ngan*

¹⁰ According to Huang (1988: 97-103, 1989:179-183), there exists a symbolic system in the Bunun concept of the person, and the symbols of each item on the same side are mutually interchangeable:

left	:	right
individual	:	collective
disorder	:	order
body	:	spirit
female	:	male
mothers' patri-clan	:	father's patri-clan

His more recent works (1993, 1995, 1999) still rely heavily on the existence of such a symbolic system.

¹¹ This is also true for annual rituals and life-cycle rituals which cannot be discussed here.

necklace on them.

Sometimes soul-loss is caused by witchcraft (cf. Chiu 1968: 59-60), another main source of disease. However, in most cases witchcraft inflicts illness not by capturing the soul of the victim but in one of the following ways. One involves sending an object into the body of the victim. These objects include small stones, burning coal, hair, nails, iron pieces, broken glass, bone, grass, insects, knives, soil, etc. They cause fever, pain, or soreness according to their qualities. For example, burning coals lead to high fever, while the sharpness of knife, nail, and broken glass causes pain. Another way to inflict harm is to curse the exuviae of the victim or the things s/he has contacted, such as hair, nails, blood, skin, excrement, leftover food, clothes, photos, footprints, and the like (cf. Chiu 1964: 80). The intended qualities (fever, pain, heaviness or stiffness, etc.) are inserted in, or transferred to, the victim via his/her 'distributed personhood', as pointed out by Gell (1998: 102-104).

Besides *hanitu* encounter and witchcraft, violating ritual taboos or having contact with bewitched objects can cause a kind of disease called *tis-ia*. In the previous chapter, I have talked about the taboo against women participating in *mapatus* and eating the consecrated meat. If they breach the taboo they will get a cough, asthma or vomit blood. These are *tis-ia*. In some situations *tis-ia* is caused by contact with bewitched objects which are placed in the garden or the hunting ground to keep away thieves or poachers. However, such cases are rare now due to the abandonment of traditional rituals, or the loss of efficacy in these rituals, as well as the fading away of ownership in hunting grounds after the land registration and the nationalisation of most forest.

According to the cause of disease, the spirit medium uses one of the following healing rituals (*lapaspas*) to cure the patient: *lapaspas* (lit. to brush away or pat away), *makusuhis is-ang* or *anchokais is-ang* (to summon back *is-ang*), *mapunpain hanitu* (to drive out *hanitu*), and *mas-ia* (to remove *tis-ia*, unwitch). When a patient comes to a spirit medium in search of a cure for his ailment, the medium will ask the patient and his/her relatives some questions to diagnose the cause of the illness. These questions include: What dreams do they have? Does the patient have any contact with bewitched objects or breach ritual taboos? Does he quarrel with other people or do something wrong? What are the symptoms of the ailment or what has caused the injury, etc. It is said that the most powerful medium can know the cause of the disease or injury directly through his/her *is-ang* without asking any questions (cf. Hsu 1987: 113). However, the spirit mediums I know are not so powerful. They need to build up a picture of the recent

actions of the patient first. Then the medium confirms the diagnosis with the help of her spirit familiars, which usually involves acquiring a vision through leaf-gazing.¹²

Lapasas is the most common healing ritual. It consists of the use of a few stalks of *pazan* (miscanthus grass, a kind of couch grass) to brush or pat away from the patient's body the *hanitu* or the alien object that causes the suffering. The sharp leaves of *pazan* are considered a deterrent to *hanitu*. Some mediums use *lanlisun* (another kind of couch grass) or *iduk* (the branch of pumelo tree), depending on their dream revelations (see below). At the beginning of *lapasas*, the medium prays to *dahanin* (sky) or *Tama Dehanin* (Christian God) and summons all her spirit familiars to help her to cure the patient. If she feels coldness and darkness in her heart (*is-ang*) and stutters while reciting spells, it means that her spirit familiars do not come and the patient is incurable. If she feels warmth and strength in her heart and her hair standing up, it means that her spirit familiars have arrived, and with their help she becomes very fluent in chanting her spells. These spells aim to negotiate with, to command or to persuade *hanitu* to leave the patient alone, on the one hand, and to transfer desired qualities to the medium and the patient, on the other.

The following is an example. One morning as I and Tama Dahu were chatting with Cina Avus in her front yard, a middle aged man, Tama Liman from Evago, came to see Cina Avus in his truck. Tama Liman had gout and his feet hurt so much that he had difficulty in walking. After examining Tama Liman's feet and learning that recently he dreamt about being hit by someone he did not know, Cina Avus diagnosed that Tama Liman's ailment was inflicted on him by witchcraft, and *lapasas* was suitable for treating him. She fetched two stalks of *pazan*, blew a breath into her right hand and clicked the fingers to give strength to, or empower (*mamangan*), them. After praying to *Tama Dehanin* and drawing a cross in the front of her face and chest, an action she was inspired by a dream to add to her repertoire of healing techniques, she began to hold the *pazan* in her right hand and to use them to brush Tama Liman's feet rhythmically. At the same time, Cina Avus chanted the name of all her teachers and spirit familiars who visited her in her dreams, to summon them to help her, to grant her the power to extract any bewitched object from the patient's body and to cure him. After repeatedly reciting these prayers for two or three minutes, Cina Avus started to insert and to transfer the intended qualities or results to the patient repetitively for the same length of time:

¹² Some mediums use water or *patihaul* (the magical stone) to acquire a vision, depending on their dream revelations.

May you be bright and pure like the moon, and let there be no pain any longer.
Be as lively as the morning birds.
Let your feet jump like a goat, run like a boar, and be as swift as the deer.
No matter how painful or full of purulence your feet are, you will be cured by my hand.
You will be green like the grass and flourish as the trees.
Be cured! May you be as comfortable as in the summer breeze.

After Cina Avus finished reciting spells, she leaned on the back of Tama Liman's waist to suck out (*masupsup*) the bewitched object with her mouth, and showed the pebble to Tama Liman. Then she threw the pebble and *pazan* away in the nearby rubbish bin provided by the local government.¹³ When she returned Tama Liman offered her NT\$ 500 (about £10) as remuneration. Upon receiving the money, Cina Avus held the money in her right hand and circled her hand above and around Tama Liman's head, chanting her blessings (*pis-dauk*) to him. It lasted about two minutes, and the whole healing ritual was ended. Tama Liman stayed for a chat for about twenty minutes, before he drove home with a bag of beans given to him as a gift by Cina Avus.

For most diseases, *lapaspas* can extract the bewitched object or drive out the *hanitu* inside the patient's body. However, in some serious cases the spirit medium has to perform *mapunpain hanitu* (drive out *hanitu*) and a pig must be killed.¹⁴ Because of the great cost, it is seldom performed and I have never seen this ritual. The basic procedure is the same as *lapaspas*, but it is more complicated. After summoning the help of *dehanin* and the spirit familiars, the spirit medium rubs some pig blood on the forehead of the patient and requests the *hanitu* to leave the patient alone. Then she goes around every room in the house, flinging ashes into the air to frighten off the *hanitu* that is troubling the patient, with one hand, and holding *cinusal* (a skewer of small pieces of pork and inner organs) to entice the *hanitu* to follow her, with the other. Meanwhile the medium keeps on talking to the *hanitu* and persuades it to leave and never return. Because *hanitu* is greedy and wants to eat the meat, it will follow the medium away from the patient's house and away from the settlement. When it is far enough, the medium places *cinusal* on a tree or a rock for the *hanitu*, then returns to the settlement.

¹³ Theoretically, the bewitched object should be thrown away to a place people hardly pass by, lest someone else come into contact with it and become ill. In Ququaz, spirit mediums usually perform the healing ritual inside the house, rather than in the front yard, so that *kanitu* or the bewitched object won't affect other people.

¹⁴ Coe (1955: 188) mentions that the invading *hanitu* occupies the heart (*is-ang*) of the patient.

On her way back, she spreads more ashes and places a *pazan* knot on the path to deter *hanitu*. Before entering the house of the patient, the relatives of the patient spread ashes on the medium in case the *hanitu* is too stubborn or too powerful and follows the medium back. The medium also places some more *pazan* knots on the door for the same purpose.

In the situation that illness is not caused by an intruding *hanitu* or a bewitched object inside the patient's body but by temporary soul loss, the ritual of *makusuhis is-ang* or *anchokais is-ang* (summon back *is-ang*) is performed for the patient. Unlike the other healing rituals, *anchokais is-ang* must be performed during the night, otherwise the soul will be too shy to come back. I have only seen this ritual once in Ququaz, when Nasin invited the spirit medium Tama Avis to heal his daughter Maiyaz. In the morning he made an appointment with Tama Avis. After ten thirty that night, when most villagers had already gone to bed, Tama Avis, his wife Tina Niun and I went to Nasin's house, which was located about half a mile away from the settlement. When we arrived, Nasin's family were in bed, but they left the door open and the light on for us. Immediately after entering Nasin's house, Tama Avis prayed before the Cross and the pictures of Jesus and Mary. Nasin's whole family, including his grandparents and parents, got up to greet us. The sleepy twelve-year-old girl Maiyaz was fine, and she did not feel uncomfortable or unwell at all, but her mother Ivaz was very anxious and worried because of the bad dream she had last night. She dreamt about Maiyaz falling into the river and was unable to save her. She ran along the river for a long distance but she could only watch Maiyaz being swept away. Such a dream indicates that the child's *is-ang* has already been taken away by *kanitu*, and if the spirit medium cannot summon it back the child will become ill and eventually die. Tama Avis asked Nasin to fetch some *pazan* and a big rooster, and Ivaz was instructed to fetch a bowl of clean water from the kitchen. Meanwhile Tama Avis, who was also the catechist of the Catholic Church, led us to pray together for the success of the healing ritual he was going to perform shortly before the pictures of Jesus and Mary. When Nasin came back, Tama Avis peeled off the outer leaves of *pazan*, and kept the tender inner stem. Then he pulled off a big feather from the rooster's wing. The water was placed outside the door, under the eaves. After the preparation, the light was turned off. In the darkness, Tama Avis could see a specific star clearly in the Southeast direction of the sky. Holding *pazan* and the rooster feather in his right hand, he invoked *Tama Dekanin* and all his teachers and spirit familiars to help him fight against the *kanitu* and bring back the child's *is-ang*.

After the chant, he sang a wordless song. Then he raised his right hand, pointing *pazan* and the rooster feather in the direction of the specific star, and called for Maiyaz's *is-ang* to return.

The light was turned on so that Tama Avis could check the water to see whether Mayaiz's *is-ang* had come back. When he gazed into the water, a small hair was floating on the surface. This was Maiyaz's *is-ang*.¹⁵ Tama Avis took the hair out with the tips of *pazan* and the rooster feather, and 'planted' it back on Maiyaz's fontanel. As he did so, he chanted:

Enter your body! Let your *is-ang* enter you body.

Be strong! For I have already summon back your *is-ang*.

You can fight against the *kanitu* who wants to harm you or anyone who wants to bewitch you.

Forever strong! Full of strength!

Like wild animals running and jumping, so agile that no hunting dogs can catch you.

Be strong and healthy! For your *is-ang* has come back.

After Maiyaz's *is-ang* had been planted back into her body, Tama Avis put the *pazan* and rooster feather above the door to deter *kanitu*, and the healing ritual was finished. We again gathered in front of Jesus and Mary to pray for the health of the child and to sing a hymn. Afterwards the sleepy Maiyaz went back to bed, while the adults stayed up for a chat for about half an hour. Before we left, Tama Avis wanted to see the girl again. He went into the bedroom, rubbing some holy water on the child's forehead, and prayed for Maiyaz again while holding a small statue of the Virgin Mary in his hands. Finally he was satisfied with his work and we headed back to the settlement. Nasin did not offer any money as remuneration, but he insisted on giving Tama Avis the rooster. Tama Avis kept on refusing to accept it, so in the end Nasin gave it to Tina Niun.

On our way back Tama Avis was very pleased that he had been able to retrieve Maiyaz's *is-ang* at the first attempt. The longer *is-ang* leaves the body the more difficult it is to retrieve it. If after three attempts the spirit medium is still unable to summon it back, the patient will die. When we went back to Tama Avis' house, he insisted on giving me the rooster. As he said, healing is a gift from God (*Tama Dekanin*), not a

¹⁵ Hsu (1987: 124-125) also records that the hair is the soul of the patient. Because the hair will not rot away, so it symbolises the *is-ang* of human beings which will not decay.

business. It is for helping people, not for making money. Therefore he never wants payment or reward from his patients. However, if they insist on paying him he will accept it and donate the money to the church.

In the above, I have suggested that Bunun notions about the person and other spiritual beings can be understood as constituted intentionalities. *Hanitu* is the most common cause of affliction, and witchcraft also works through the help of spirit familiars. The Bunun attribute to *hanitu*, *is-ang* and *dehanin* desires, emotions, will and mind, and interact with them according to their 'theory of mind'. Healing is achieved through the ability of spirit mediums to extract the bewitched objects from the body of the patient, and to negotiate, communicate and persuade *hanitu* to leave the patient alone or to release his soul. Occasionally a chicken, a goat or a pig is sacrificed to feed *hanitu* and to entice it to go away. However, the relative power between the *hanitu* that causes the affliction and the spirit familiars of mediums is a deciding factor in the outcome of a healing ritual. Sometimes the *hanitu* is too strong and the healing fails. In these cases the patient may consult another medium, or invite several mediums to treat him jointly.

The unavoidable question arises as to how healing works or how ritual has efficacy. The analysis of the symbolic structure of the ritual itself seems unable to provide answers. The healing ritual itself is not complex, dramatic or elaborately structured. There are many variations due to the different revelations the mediums receive in their dreams. Most healing rituals last only a few minutes, the action is simple, and the prayers and spells are straightforward. There is no occult language known and used only by the mediums. Moreover, despite their repetitiveness, I do not think the prayers and spells work because of their 'illocutionary force' (Bloch 1989[1974]: 31-33, Tambiah 1985: 78-82). Certainly the Bunun themselves do not make much of it. Also, from what I can see and what I am told, the medium and the patient experience no 'altered state of consciousness' which features heavily in many studies on healing rituals.

The efficacy of healing rituals, I was told clearly, lies not in their action and language, but in the power the spirit medium has acquired or received in dreams and in the annual *séance*. Healing works because the spirit medium is given the ability and power by *dehanin* and ancestors to communicate and negotiate with *hanitu*. The actions and the spells of *lapaspas* are easy to imitate, but they will not work if the performer has no dream revelations, which serve to establish relationship directly with his own spirit familiars. Moreover, the healing rituals and the annual *séance* are thought to be

'dreamed-up' by the ancestors.¹⁶ It is taught to the Bunun by *dehanin* and the spirits. Therefore, in order to understand Bunun spirit mediumship, it is necessary to look more closely at dreaming.

“The power comes from dreams. No dreams, no power”

Very early in my fieldwork, I was struck by the vital importance of dreams in the everyday life of the Bunun. Although there are many listings of Bunun dream omens in earlier ethnographies (Sayama 1988[1919]: 134-136, Chiu 1966: *passim*, Tien 1999 [1944]: 122-124), very little information is provided about the context of dream sharing and its importance in everyday life. It feels very different to see my adoptive family discuss dreams early in the morning, then postpone some plans or decide to start planting maize immediately or to go hunting. Children are encouraged to remember and to share their dreams with others from as early as three or four years of age, when they can speak clearly. Moreover, my adoptive mother was very concerned that I talked in my dreams, after my sister-in-law Apas, whose room was opposite mine, heard me several times. Dream talking indicates communication with other *hanitu*, which is not a good thing for ordinary people, and illness may follow. I was instructed to reverse my pillow before sleep. It was also suggested to me that perhaps I should go to consult Cina Avus. Since I was fine and I knew that I talked in my dreams since childhood, I didn't go to see Cina Avus specifically.

My adoptive mother must have mentioned it to Cina Avus. Some days later when I, Cina Su-ing and Cina Avus were chatting in her front yard, to my surprise Cina Avus proposed to teach me spirit mediumship for the price of one pig and NT\$20,000 (about £ 400). As it was expensive and I doubted that I could become a spirit medium myself, I didn't embark on such an apprenticeship. Only later did I realise that my dream talking could also be interpreted as an early sign of mediumship.

The line between dreams that cause illness and dreams that give one the power to negotiate with *hanitu* is very fine indeed. When one dreams a lot, sleeps badly, talks in dreams, loses appetite, looks absent-minded all the time, talks to oneself or becomes unusually quiet during the day for a long period, these are 'illnesses' indicative of being 'chosen' or 'followed' by *hanitu*. These 'illnesses' will gradually disappear when the chosen person starts the learning process to become a medium, when s/he establishes a

¹⁶ Cf. Herdt (1987: 62) for a similar notion among the Sambia of New Guinea.

relationship with her/his spirit familiars.

Spirit mediums' dreams are treated differently from other dream omens concerning hunting, agriculture, building a house, marriage, death, or the annual rituals. The Bunun share dream omens openly with their family members, and frequently with other people as well. It is thought that those who live together or participate jointly in the same activity would be affected by other members' dreams. For example, a group of men who plan to go hunting together must share their dreams with the others. They may postpone the hunting trip due the bad dreams some of them have, or the person who had a bad dream the previous night has to withdraw from the trip. A bad dream will influence the hunting luck of the whole group, not only the dreamer's. Dreams are a topic that comes up frequently in daily conversations between neighbours and friends. If anyone mentions they have some dreams then there will be plenty of people to listen to their dreams. At the time of death, illness and misfortunes, dream sharing and interpretation always feature significantly. However, a dream that will lead to mediumship cannot be shared with others unless one has already tested it and the dream has come true. Otherwise the good effect of the dream will diminish and the spirit familiar will 'run away'. For instance, when Kulas Ladiah was a child she participated in *pistako* (the annual séance).¹⁷ Once she had a dream about an old man who taught her how to cure headache. When she woke up she mentioned that she had a dream. Before she told the content of the dream, her uncle smacked her on the head angrily for she had acted foolishly and let her spirit familiar run away.

Spirit mediums should be discreet about their dreams. Only after they have tested what they have been taught and the dream has come true, can they share it with others. Even so these dreams are never shared as openly as other dream omens, but only in a specific context such as the annual séance. At the same time, spirit mediums do not like to tell their dreams lest they are thought to be boasting, which might have a negative influence on them. Thus it is difficult to collect these dreams systematically. In Ququaz, the attitude towards spirit mediums is ambiguous and ambivalent. Spirit mediums are quite hesitant to share their dreams or even to admit that they have dreams, but they may tell some of the dreams that deceased mediums had. In Vulvul, Cina Avus is more open about her dreams. The most typical dream of this kind is about being visited by someone, such as a deceased relative, an acquaintance or a stranger, who teaches her healing methods, witchcraft, how to retrieve stolen goods, love magic, etc. As a result of

¹⁷ Kulas/Hulas means grandparents in Bunun.

dream revelations, the techniques and methods of different spirit mediums may vary, but they are also strikingly similar and can be described as elaborations on a common theme. The spirit familiars usually visit their chosen people many times to renew the lessons or to teach them different things. If a medium does not receive dream revelations for many years, his/her power will gradually diminish (cf. Chiu 1968: 46). Thus I am always told by mediums and non-mediums alike: “The power comes from dreams. No dreams, no power”.

Besides these typical dreams, there are dreams which are less straightforward and their distinction from other kinds of dream omens is less clear. I was told some of these dreams by Tama Tiang in the annual seance. They were not his dreams, but dreams of his deceased brother Tama Saulan, who was a prominent spirit medium in Ququaz. One of Tama Saulan’s dreams was about a man dressed in robes, with long hair to his shoulders and holding a stick in his hand. He looked like Jesus.¹⁸ This man appeared in Tama Saulan’s dream and challenged him in a competition to climb a huge stone wall. Although it was difficult, Tama Saulan won the competition. The other dream was that Tama Saulan was challenged to race with someone and won. Winning a fight or a competition is always a good omen in Bunun dream interpretations. After receiving these two dreams during the period of the annual séance, Tama Saulan became a *mamomo*.

It is common that some people receive one or two dream revelations and are able to cure certain diseases or drive out *hanitu*. However, this is not enough to make them established spirit mediums. Participating in the annual séance and learning how to manage, enhance and control their ability to summon and to communicate with *hanitu* is very important.¹⁹ It is through learning that a spirit medium acquires a full range of skills and techniques. At the same time, the annual séance provides those who do not have any dream revelations with an opportunity to attract spirit familiars and to acquire the magical substance.

¹⁸ Some Christian homes are decorated with a tapestry of Jesus the Shepherd, in which Jesus has long hair, wears a robe and holds a stick in his hand.

¹⁹ Coe (1955: 184) said that the Bunun divide shamans into two categories: ‘instructed shamans’ and ‘inspired shamans’. The former are the real professionals, having been instructed their art by older shamans. They are adepts in both sorcery and curing. The latter are called into their profession by dream visitations of supernatural helpers, always *hanitu*, and are restricted in their power to simple cures. However, this distinction is blurred in both Vulvul and Ququaz. Those who have dream revelations only but do not participate in the annual séance are not called spirit mediums because their ability is restricted. The spirit mediums I know have both dream revelations and the experience of participating in séances.

***Pistahu*: the annual séance of spirit mediums**

As I have mentioned in passing in the last chapter, the annual séance of spirit mediums follows immediately after *Malahtangia* because it is considered the most powerful time of the year. Like *Malahtangia*, *pistahu* (*pistako*) used to be held separately by different patrilineal clans or sub-clans. Spirit mediumship was passed on from one generation to another within the family and the patri-clan. Those who were from different clans had to offer some payment (a chicken, pig, clothes, tools, guns, money, or labour) in order to learn from renowned spirit mediums or to buy magical substance from them.

Children start to participate in *pistahu* from an early age. It depends on the individual case, but as soon as they could speak fluently and remember their dreams clearly they could join in *pistahu*. In principle, the annual séance and the knowledge of spirit mediumship are accessible to everyone regardless of gender, generation or status. However, those who have a physical disability such as deafness, dumbness, a stammer, or deformed hands are excluded. Another important criteria is the character, the *is-ang*, of a person. Spirit mediums usually refuse to accept envious, proud, and dishonest people as pupils because they tend to use their power in 'bad things', i.e. witchcraft. As a precaution, the knowledge should be passed on to those who are calm, gentle, kind, and modest, in other words, 'those who have a good heart (*masial tu is-ang*)'.

Pistahu used to last for one week. Immediately after *Malahtangia*, the magical stone (*paci-aul*, *patihaul*) and other ritual objects were brought out from their secret storage places. People gathered at the house of renowned spirit mediums to participate in *pistahu* for seven days and seven nights. During *pistahu* the participants have to commit themselves completely to the activity and cannot drop out halfway. They have to follow many taboos, such as abstaining from smoking, getting drunk, eating vegetables and the meat of domestic animals, washing their face or taking a bath. More importantly, they have to endure severe lack of sleep. They can only nap during the break between chanting sessions. The practice of these austerities helps the participants to direct and focus their attention on communicating with ancestors and spirits, which is the main purpose of *pistahu*.

The spiritual experience of participating in *pistahu* is similar to hunting in significant ways. The self-imposed lack of sleep, drinking, and singing ritual chants repetitively help to achieve a mental state that is highly sensitive to the presence of ancestors and spirits. Also, *pistahu* is not unlike hunting in its attempt to attract and to

‘capture’ spirit familiars. The endurance men acquired through hunting is conducive to participating in *pistahu* and obtaining magical power. Therefore men are more likely to become prominent spirit mediums, despite the fact that *pistahu* and the knowledge of mediumship are accessible to both men and women.

Pistahu literally means reciting chants. The most important action of the annual séance is singing chants, which aims to please *dehanin*, to invoke ancestors and other spirits, to establish relationships with them, and to acquire magical substance and power. The spirit mediums take turns to be the *tusnatha-an* or *tokangus* (leader, leading singer) to lead the formalised chant. Each sentence is short and consists predominantly of four syllables. At the last syllable the rest of the participants join in chorus (*pislavi* or *pislancan*, lit. to follow), and repeat the sentence together with the leader to a slightly different tune. The overlap at the end of the medium’s initial phrase and the beginning of the chorus phrase interweave the two sessions. When there are many experienced participants, their singing forms a polyphonic chorus which is said to be so beautiful that it attracts ancestors and spirits from far away, so pleasing that *pacihaul* (the magical stone or pebble) falls from the sky, given to them by *dehanin*.

I have participated in three *pistahu*, two in Ququaz (1998 and 1999) and one in Vulvul (1998). Each *pistahu* is different in terms of context, atmosphere and participants, but the basic structure is very similar (see Figure 16 & 17). In Vulvul, it is no longer held every year because of the shortage of participants, and it only lasts for one day, from early morning to late afternoon on the day of *Malahtangia*. Most of Cina Avus’ pupils came from other villages, one even came from Hualien county. In Ququaz, it is still held by several patri-clans for a week every year, but no longer during daytime due to its potential danger for other villagers and opposition from the two Christian churches. In the following, I will use the first *pistako* that I participated in — the *pistako* held in Ququaz in April 1998 — as the main example to explain in more detail how it is done, and describe the odds the spirit mediums have to fight against and struggle with to keep this tradition going in the present.

“These things are all alive. They have *is-ang*, they are *is-ang*”

Ever since I came to know that *pistako* is still held by several patri-clans in Ququaz, I eagerly awaited its arrival. For six months Tama Avis and other spirit mediums had refused to tell me more about spirit mediumship and the annual séance because they

considered it a taboo, although Tama Avis had let me accompany him to some healing sessions. As they said, it is forbidden to talk about it because their spirit familiars (*is-ang*) will come when they are mentioned, and this is potentially dangerous. Their *is-ang* may cause illness to others. After all, they are spirits and they have their own will. Even though they have no intention to harm people, their contact with persons with weak *is-ang* is enough to make them ill. At the same time, the mediums have to watch out for their own safety, too. I remember clearly the unease on Tama Malai's face when our conversation moved from discussing the role of the ritual leader (Tama Malai's grandfather was the last *Tomuk* and *Liskadan Lus-an* of Ququaz) to whether *Liskadan Lus-an* was also a powerful *mamomo*. Tama Malai explained to me that he would have to wait until the period of *pistako* to tell me more about spirit mediumship, because the hair on his neck had already stood up and he felt the arrival of his ancestors while we were talking about these things. He invited me to participate in his *pistako* when the time came.

Unfortunately when the time of *pistako* finally came, I could only participate in one *pistako* at a time and inevitably missed many others for they were held at about the same time. One week before the *pistako* in 1998, Tama Avis had an operation on a bony growth on his spine and stayed in the hospital. He couldn't make it this year but asked me to join his sons for the *pistako* at his cousin Tama Tiang's house. It was difficult to know the date in advance because the cloudy weather was preventing Tama Tiang from seeing the moon clearly. Tama Tiang didn't look at the Han-Chinese lunar calendar on the wall of his living room to set the date, and I suspected that he was also waiting for a good dream omen to start. Therefore I had to check with him every day and worried about missing it.

On the evening of 5 April 1998, after the annual tomb sweeping in the morning, *pistako* at Tama Tiang's house finally began. Tama Taing's house was located in the old settlement, which is about two miles away. Because most villagers are afraid of its danger, *pistako* is now held in the old settlement or in the field hut away from the village. Unlike in Vulvul where *Malahtangia* has turned into cultural performance, the *Malahtangia* in Ququaz is very simplified, as though it is just a prelude of *pistako*. After seven thirty in the evening, a fire was lit in the back of Tama Tiang's house, where some animal jaws and a small bamboo cup for holding libation hanging under the roof. Because of the scarcity of wild animals in the nearby mountain areas, there were no deer or roe ears for the men to shoot at with bow and arrow, only a dried flying squirrel

that was placed on a stick above the fire. I was allowed to watch *Malahtangia* but not to eat the meat.

The front door of the house was wide open so that *dekanin* could see clearly what we were doing and *is-ang* could know they were very welcome. *Patihaul*, food offerings (home made rice wine and pork), and other ritual objects were taken out and placed in a bamboo sieve (*kapon*) in the centre of the living room. The participants sat in a circle around the *kapon*, with Tama Tiang facing the door. The participants included Tama Tiang and his wife Tina Puni, Tama Avis' eight-year-old grandson Avis, and two of his sons, Lagos and Ulang. All of them are members of Madovai-an clan. There were also four 'guests' from other clans, but apart from Tama Sabun of Balincinang clan they left for their own *pistako* after two chanting sessions.

As soon as we settled down in position, Tama Tiang started to pray (*masumsum*) to *Tama Dekanin* and to invoke the ancestors to give us power, knowledge, help and blessings. Then *pistako*, the reciting of chants, began. Tama Tiang was the leader, and the rest of us followed at the last syllable of his sentence. Then all of us, the leader and the chorus, joined together to repeat the whole sentence:

Iamopanka	
Tama Dekanin	
mapisvadvad	<i>Tama Dekanin</i> , look at our chanting
nituh mahtu	
takunavun	
lilus-anan	
cia dekanin	Don't throw away the ritual of <i>dekanin</i>
pais mamamu	
kapisin-an	
lilus-anan	The ritual is full of terrifying power
...	Once a year, we bring out [<i>pahi-haul</i>] to chant
	The ritual that is passed on from the deceased
	leader Balan
	The ritual of the leader brother Saulan
	The ritual uncle Tiang had captured
	The ritual of the leader brother Avis
	The ritual passed on from uncle Tiang
	Chant the ritual of the leader brother-in-law Tiang
	Chant the ritual imparted by brother Tiang
	Start the ritual
	Don't throw away the ritual of <i>dakanin</i>
	The ritual is truly terrifying
	Ancestors, listen to the various kinds of chanting
	Don't forget to pass on the words from <i>dakanin</i>

The words that are taught and spoken in the
most powerful month
Bring out [*patihaul*] to listen to the most powerful
ritual chant
Take [*patihaul*] out once a year in this month
This ritual is taught by the ancestors
Don't forget to rely on their power
[the power] make [*patihaul*] stand up
What does it matter that everyone has to endure
Hold hands to fight the enemies
Don't forget the ancestral way of life
Our ancestral work
...

For about forty minutes, we concentrated on repeating and learning these chants loudly. The content and the rhythm of these chants were highly repetitive, and Tama Tiang began to sway his body slightly half way into the chanting. He was so immersed in the flow of the chanting that his mind seemed to be very far away. I almost felt that he was self-hypnotised, although in fact he was totally aware of what was going on around him.

We spent most of the night singing chants until four o'clock in the morning. Each chanting session lasted from twenty-five to forty-five minutes, between which we had twenty to thirty minutes break. This was much easier compared with ten years ago. At that time several powerful mediums were still around and one chanting session could be two hours long. During the breaks, rice wine was passed around in the same bowl, and Tama Tiang instructed us to pick up *patihaul* carefully one by one and to sprinkle home-made rice wine and rub fatty pork on them. This was to offer them drinks and to feed them. Tama Sabun explained to me during the break between chanting sessions that *patihaul* are not normal stones but the embodiment of spirit familiars (*is-ang*). Pointing to the bamboo sieve, Tama Sabun declared that all these things we see are alive. They have *is-ang*, they are *is-ang*.

Most spirit familiars are deceased ancestors, especially ancestors of one's own clan, as *is-ang* is considered to be passed on from parents to children. It is also the reason why the people of Ququaz dislike to call spirit familiars *kanitu*, and make a distinction between *kanitu* that cause illness and *is-ang* that promote healing. However, spirit familiars can come from far away places, from other ethnic groups or even from over the sea. The more spirit familiars *pistako* attracts, the more power it generates. In this sense, *pistako* is very much a 'technology of enchantment' (Gell 1998a), a centering

process which aims to entice spirits by food offering and the collective intentionality achieved through ritual chanting.

There were about fifteen *patihaul* in the bamboo sieve; each was a different size, colour and shape. Some were smaller than half an inch in diameter and some were as big as five inches. Most of them were round, but some were oblong. Brown and grey were the common colour, but several *patihaul* were white. The most unusual ones were bright orange and purple. *Patihaul* are acquired in several ways. Some are inherited from the ancestors, some are given by *dakanin* during *pistako*, when the polyphonic chorus is so beautiful and moving. Still others come to the spirit mediums or their pupils by themselves within a short period before *pistako*. For instance, a few years ago when Tama Tiang was working in a plum garden near the Kahavu (a group of plain aborigines) village of Paike, one week before *pistako*, a white and round stone rolled down the slope toward him and stopped in front of his feet. This *patihual* belonged to a Kahavu medium but it was neglected and dissatisfied so it came to Tama Tiang by itself. As Tama Tiang said: “we don’t go to find *patihaul*, but *patihaul* come to find us”. Among all *patihaul*, those given by *dakanin* directly are thought to be the most powerful ones.²⁰

Patihaul are treated with respect and care. Rubbed with fatty pork for many years, several of them are very smooth and shining. When they are moved about, people talk to them intimately in kinship terms, usually addressing them as grandparents. During the ritual chanting and the break, we try to stand *patihaul* on the surface of rice wine bottles one after another, which is an uneasy task. When *patihaul* stand up and stay still on the bottle, it is a sign that the ancestors are very pleased. They like us and grant our action. This is the first step of achieving mutual understanding and establishing an amicable relationship with them. In the good old days, I was told, renowned *mamomo* could stand *patihaul* in a row on the sharp edge of a machete — that was a sign of how powerful they were. They could command *patihaul* with ease and no enemies or *kanitu* were their match.

Patihaul give spirit mediums power, but they are in turn empowered during *pistako* by human attendance. Besides *patihaul*, medicines and talismans are also empowered and strengthened in the ritual. Among the Bunun, two kinds of herb medicine are commonly used in healing. One is *pa-ich*, which can be used in curing diseases such as stomach ache, food poisoning, headache, and diarrhoea. The other is *cumai*, which is

²⁰ However, all *patihaul* can be said to be given by *dakanin* as *dakanin* is implicated in every aspect of spirit mediumship.

used for external injuries and bleeding, as well as diabetes and flu. Depending on their dream revelations, the mediums also use other herbs and insects as medicine or in witchcraft. A talisman usually comes in the form of a necklace made from *ngan* (calamus roots), which is a big deterrent to *kanitu*. It can also protect those who wear it from witchcraft attack.

There are several themes in the ritual chanting, and different nights of *pistako* focus on different themes. The first night focuses on summoning ancestors (*manunastu kulas daigaz pismadvad pistako*, lit. to bring down great grandparents for ritual chanting). The second night focuses on empowering the medicine (*kavahe paka-un yio*) and several kinds of plants that are used in healing or in witchcraft. The third night is for promoting hunting luck (*pislahe malahe*) and agricultural productivity. The fourth night concentrates on conjuring spirits and powers from different places (*luklach vaivi vaivi lilus-anan*, lit. calling various kinds of ritual). The fifth night is for retrieving lost souls (*minusvai kaklivun*) and stolen possessions. Things become more sinister towards the end of *pistako*, as the sixth night focuses on curses (*matuskon*) and witchcraft (*matimva*). The last night of *pistako* reviews the above themes and then *patihaul* are stored in a safe place (*thanvucun*, lit. to pack up, to store) after a chicken or a pig is sacrificed. However, except for the first and the last two nights, the order is not rigidly fixed. The important thing is that *pistako* must cover all these topics.

The fact that the power to curse and to bewitch is sought after or renewed in *pistako* makes it uneasy for the participants and terrifying for non-participants. Although the use of witchcraft is considered justified in certain contexts, such as in retaliation and in warfare, the possibility that spirit familiars may activate themselves at their own will and inflict harm on anyone is deeply disturbing. Thus the participants approach this part of the seance with extra caution and prudence, and for most of the time refuse to let me record it.²¹ Stories of how those who disrespect the power of *patihaul* contract strange diseases or lose their mind are circulated in *pistako* as well as on other occasions. At the same time, the first reaction non-participants have upon knowing that I take part in *pistako* is always to ask me: “Aren’t you afraid?” Then they tell me how they used to be terrified by witchcraft, and how it still commands fear in their hearts.

It is clear that the fear and the thrill evoked by *pistako* and particularly witchcraft

²¹ Although I was allowed to record two short chanting sessions for research purposes, it turned out that both recordings were incomplete either because the batteries ran out, or because the tape was placed on the wrong side. Spooky indeed!

among the people of Ququaz do not simply disappear following the conversion to Christianity. In fact, the Church reinforced such fear by identifying all activities of spirit mediums as witchcraft and evil at the early stage of its introduction. By attacking spirit mediums, the Church was able to present itself as the source of protection and superior power. The strategy works well in some aspects, as most people now avoid *pistako*, and seek the churches' protection against witchcraft and *kanitu*. Still, with very few exceptions, Christianity and Bunun spirit mediumship are not perceived as incompatible or exclusive. Many people still pursue the help of spirit mediums in situations of sudden illness, chronic suffering, missing persons, as well as bad dreams which are indicative of soul-loss.

Facing the challenge from the Church in the 1950s and early 1960s, many patri-clans abandoned the *séance* and buried their *patihaul*, gave them to other mediums, or asked the priest to take them away. However, some of them revived *pistako* secretly after a few years because they were troubled by bad dreams, their families suffered a series of misfortunes, or *patihaul* insisting on coming back to them.²² At the same time, the opposition from the Church had softened after it had established a stronghold locally or simply because of the changing of priests or pastors. This not only enabled the mediums to negotiate their position within the Church, but also to play an active role by becoming catechists or elders. Without exception, all participants of *pistako* are followers of Christianity. Most of them are members of the Catholic Church, but some join the Presbyterian Church.

For the mediums and their pupils, Christianity is an *additional* source of power which they want to incorporate. Not only are the Christian God (*Tama Dekanin*) and Jesus Christ (*Ilsu Kilisto*) invoked like ancestors and other spirits to give them power in *pistako*, but there is also a repeated emphasis on the similarities between *pistako* and Easter. Both rituals take place in April, and their dates often overlap. In the Catholic Church, the consecration of new fire is an important part of Easter Mass, which is reminiscent of *mapatus* in *Malahtangia*. Above all, *pistako* and Easter are about *mihdi* (affliction, hardship or suffering). The participants of *pistako* have to commit themselves to endure hardship and austerity to please *dekanin* and the ancestors in order to establish a good relationship with them and to access power. So does Jesus, whose suffering and sacrifice on the Cross opens up the channel for human beings to reconcile and communicate with God. Like the Bicol in the lowland Philippines studied by

²² The most amazing way for *patihaul* to come back is to appear suddenly in the soup during meal time.

Cannell (1995), Jesus is seen as a shamanic exemplar by Bunun spirit mediums. By identifying their own suffering in *pistako* with Jesus' at Lent, Bunun spirit mediums perceive and construct themselves as the guardians of the community who fight against *kanitu*.

Despite the spirit mediums' efforts to negotiate their position within the Church and to enrich their practice with Christian elements, the problem of witchcraft simply won't go away. It still generates unease, anxiety and tensions in Ququaz. In Vulvul, Cina Avus solves this problem by abandoning this part of the séance completely after she joined the Catholic Church. As she said, the priest only objects to witchcraft, not healing practices. Moreover, healing is an ability given by *dehanin* to help people. It is only given to those who have a good heart. To practise healing is to apply the Christian teaching about love in daily life. However, the mediums in Ququaz do not think it is right to perform *pistako* in such a half-baked way, and stress the significance of completing the full cycle of ritual. For them, to abandon this part of the séance is to lose the ability to manage and control the use of witchcraft, and to risk the danger of *patihaul* becoming upset and causing illness and misfortunes in the village. Thus they put themselves in an uneasy position as the suspicion about witchcraft inevitably dogs their practice, although there is no public accusation. This is an important reason why it is so difficult to be certain about the number of *mamomo*, and about who are *mamomo*, and why the mediums often deny that they have the power to cure and to bewitch. They often claim that despite their involvement in *pistako* they have no dream revelations and hence no power. The moral ambiguity of spirit mediumship deserves a closer look, and it is to this I now turn.

Relational person, relational power and moral imaginations

The reluctance and hesitation to admit being a spirit medium are not only associated with avoiding witchcraft suspicion, but also linked to what defines a 'good heart' for the Bunun, and the consequences it entails. It is repeatedly stressed by mediums and non-mediums alike that a 'true' Bunun medium is "one who has a good heart", and "one who puts himself below the others". A medium should be kind, gentle, modest, loving and honest. His good heart will influence his spirit familiars to do good. When he is proud, envious, greedy, angry, boastful or dishonest, his spirit familiars will do 'bad things', i.e. witchcraft, and harm other people. A medium's heart does not only affect

his/her familiars, it also has moral repercussions for him/herself. The Bunun believe that the abuse of power will lead to infertility, misfortunes, untimely death, and even the extinction of the mediums, their families and, if they have any, their descendants. Such notions are closely related to the relational construction of the person and the concept of *dehanin* as the omnipresent supervisor of morality.

As the Bunun do not see the person as a fixed and bounded entity but constructed relationally, a person and the social group he belongs to, especially the house, is fused to a certain extent. This fusion is achieved and expressed in the converging process of *is-ang*. A person has his own inborn *is-ang*, which is influenced by the *is-ang* of those he interacts with, and he in turn is able to influence their *is-ang*. *Is-ang* is passed on through kinship ties, but the *is-ang* of those who live under the same roof, working together and sharing the same food will become similar, even though there is no biological relationship between them. Due to this mutual influence and fusion of *is-ang*, what the medium does will have repercussions for his/her family and offspring. At the same time, the spirit mediums cannot use their craft on their own family members, on those with whom they “live, cook and eat”. As a result, witchcraft suspicion is usually directed not at one’s own kin but at outsiders. The mediums’ healing power can be seen as inherently altruistic, which underlies the idiom of help in spite of the acceptance of payment for their service.

‘A good heart’ is pleasing to *dehanin*. *Dehanin* literally means sky. It is also a general term which denotes celestial phenomena such as the action of wind, rain, thunder, lightning, sun, moon, and stars. Mabuchi (1987a[1974a]: 255) describes *dehanin* in the following terms:

...the concept of sky (*dehanin*) is commonly recognised and regarded as the supervisor of morality by the Bunun. To a degree, it can be regarded as God. However, their unique concept of the spirit (*hanitu*) and magic are more dominant. Therefore, in their beliefs and religious rituals, this concept of ‘sky’ has never held a particularly significant role.

Huang accepts Mabuchi’s description and suggests that for the pre-Christian Bunun “*dahanin* is not very active, most people did not pay attention to it in their ordinary lives except during the time of disasters” (Huang 1988: 178, 1992: 289). However, I find that *dehanin* is much more important to the Bunun than Mabuchi and Huang have suggested, and its importance in their daily life is not merely an influence of Christianity as implied in Huang’s work. Although *dehanin* is not ‘worshipped’ as an

object in Bunun rituals, its blessings and power are always sought after, as shown in ritual prayers and chants.²³ Moreover, in the Bunun myth of shooting the sun, annual rituals, life-cycle rituals and marriage taboos are all taught to the Bunun by *dehanin*. It is through the performance of these rituals and the observance of marriage taboos that the Bunun distinguish themselves from animals and plants and construct themselves as persons (Yang 1992: 38-41).

Dehanin plays a significant role in the daily life of the Bunun for it is regarded as the supervisor of morality.²⁴ Morality is an important defining feature of personhood, and it also has implications in terms of power and fortunes. Children are taught from young age to respect *dehanin*, and not to point at the moon directly with their hands. They are disciplined by stories of how their behaviours are watched over by the ubiquitous *dehanin*, and how *dehanin* gives reward or inflicts harm according to the rights or wrongs of their actions. A Bunun saying “*saduang dehanin*” (*dehanin* is watching) is often cited as the ultimate explanation of misfortunes, illness and untimely death. For example, it is thought that witchcraft can cause illness and other misfortunes, but it only works if the intended victim is morally culpable. If the victim has done nothing wrong then he won't be harmed. Moreover, in such case the witchcraft will 'return to' or 'rebound on' the witch himself (*cis nak*, lit. to oneself) or his family, and cause them misfortunes and afflictions. This is because “*dehanin* is watching”. The relative or relational power between the witch and the victim is arbitrated by *dehanin* according to their morality.

Therefore, illness, misfortunes and bad death always have a moral dimension that can be rather disquieting and ambiguous. In a particular incident, different people may attribute moral culpability to different parties involved according to their own position and perspective. Take Nasin's case mentioned in Chapter 2 as an example. Nasin developed a sudden and severe condition of gout a few years ago when he was the village head of Ququaz. He was certain that he was bewitched by those who bore a grudge against him in the village and sought help from several spirit mediums in other villages. However, Tama Tiang told me that Nasin's ancestors were the most ferocious headhunters and killed many people, and this was why Nasin had this troublesome disease. “*Saduang dehanin*”, Tama Tiang said. This reminded me that Nasin's

²³ This point comes from my own observations of Bunun rituals, and it is supported by the ritual chants recorded in Chiu (1966) and Hsu (1987).

²⁴ Mabuchi noticed that *dehanin* is regarded as the supervisor of morality, but he failed to see that it is as important as *hanitu* to the Bunun.

grandfather Kulas Nasin still keeps in his room an ancestral piece of beeswax to which many beheaded enemies' hairs have been attached. When Nasin's wife Ivaz first married into the family, she developed a sudden and aggressive allergy on her skin, a *tis-ia* caused by contact with a bewitched or tabooed object, just because she entered Kulas Nasin's bedroom.

The moral ambiguity of misfortunes, illness and witchcraft is highlighted and complicated by the abolition of headhunting and the introduction of Christianity. As I have mentioned above, the use of witchcraft is considered justified in certain contexts: retaliation and warfare. In these situations the use of witchcraft does not contradict or violate the idiom of 'good heart'. The Bunun's assertions of what is right or wrong, good or bad, are not intended to apply to all men. They are stated from the position of a particular collectivity outside of which the moral norm ceases to have any meaning.²⁵ To defend oneself and one's property from witchcraft attack with counter-witchcraft and to kill enemies with witchcraft in warfare are not wrong or bad. On the contrary, relentlessness and bravery in warfare are highly valued. They improve men's status and earn them the title of *mamangan* (hero, powerful man). Due to their warfare with the Qalavang, the people of Ququaz sought spiritual power with zest and there were an unusually large number of spirit mediums in this area. This phenomena continued after the abolition of headhunting. When Tama Taugan, an ex-policeman who was originally from Isin-an and lived in several Bunun villages, was transferred to Ququaz in 1949, he was astonished to know that Ququaz had about forty *mamomo* at that time, compared to less than ten in Isin-an and some fifteen in Lathuan.

In the time of headhunting, the military leader was for certain a powerful medium as well. Thus, like the *saspinal* discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 4, a 'true' Bunun medium is very much an exemplary person who combines gentleness, kindness and modesty when dealing with his own group members, on the one hand, and aggressiveness and bravery toward outsiders/enemies, on the other. When witchcraft is channelled and used for constructive aims to defend the social group and the community, it is perceived as having a positive value.

Although headhunting was outlawed by the Japanese colonial government, the significance of rivalry and warfare persists until today in another form. In Ququaz, the rivalry and hostility between the Bunun and the Qalavang is shown occasionally in the

²⁵ In this aspect, the Bunun are very similar to the Gahuku-Gama of New Guinea discussed in Read's classical essay (Read 1955: 256).

gang fighting among the youths and institutionalised in local sporting events. The annual sporting event held by the township office is taken very seriously by the people of Ququaz and other Bunun villages, and they always outdo the Qalavang to win the prize. Taking into account the fact that the Bunun are so outnumbered by the Qalavang in Ren-ai township, this is quite an achievement. The individualistic and disuniting tendency of the Qalavang is cited as one factor why they lose, but the use of witchcraft is considered by the Bunun as the most important reason. Early in the morning of a sporting event, Bunun spirit mediums will secretly bewitch the track and the field where the competition is held, so the Qalavang will fall down or get injured when they are competing. In this context, to use witchcraft against the Qalavang, who are said to have no powerful mediums, is not regarded as wrong or bad by the people of Ququaz.

However, in contrast to the time of headhunting, the spirit mediums do not acquire prestige and status by attacking the Qalavang with witchcraft. Even though such action is accepted by the people of Ququaz, and they are actually quite excited about outdoing the Qalavang in this way, it is not regarded as justified to praise it publicly because of the teachings of the Church. As pointed out by Read (1955: 247-251) and Johnson (1993: 19-22), Christian teachings bring forward the concept of a natural moral order which is essentially universal or metacultural. The notion of the 'brotherhood of men' opens up the possibility for some Bunun customs, such as headhunting or killing twins, to be considered morally wrong. Therefore Tama Tiang attributes Nasin's illness to his ancestors' *muliva* (fault, mistake, wrongdoing, or 'sin') of killing many people in headhunting. The people of Ququaz know perfectly well that according the Christian teachings it is wrong to use witchcraft to attack the Qalavang. Consequently, they are discreet about celebrating the victory they obtain in this way.

The moral ambiguity and uncertainty of spirit mediumship is augmented by the changing historical conditions and the conversion to Christianity. I suggest that it is because of its ambiguity and uncertainty, that spirit mediumship becomes so pertinent for the Bunun to reflect and contemplate their precarious position in this changing world.²⁶

²⁶ Cf. Geschiere's point (1997: 219) that the ambiguity of witchcraft is essential to its pertinence in modern contexts.

Why is the power of spirit mediums weaker now? The ambiguity of decline

In both Ququaz and Vulvul, it is often commented that spirit mediumship is in decline and the power of spirit mediums is weaker now. It is true that the number of mediums is shrinking and there are far fewer young people willing to endure the hardship of *pistako* to acquire spirit familiars and power. The mediums always talk about how powerful their ancestors and teachers were, and how they cannot compare with them. Listening to those marvellous stories told by mediums and non-mediums alike of how powerful the mediums of the previous generations were, I cannot help but agree that this is indeed the case. The mediums now cannot cure a high fever within ten minutes, curse down a big tree, break a rock with words, or make cars fall into the river. In Ququaz, this sense of decline, loss and powerlessness is particularly strong, as they proudly think that their subgroup Taketudu was the strongest in this tradition. But look at what's happening now!

I had already heard such comments and laments many times before participating in *pistako*. However, during *pistako* the sense of decline, loss and powerlessness was so strong that it still hit me head on. It becomes an integral part of the hardship and suffering that those who have seen the big time have to endure. I began to know how such emotions are deeply felt the very first night at Tama Tiang's house. Halfway into our second chanting session, tears started to roll down Tama Tiang's face, but he still maintained his composure to lead the ritual. During the break I asked him why he cried, and he said that he was overwhelmed by sadness because his teachers were all gone. Calling their names brought back the memory of how powerful they were and how people used to cherish and respect *pistako*. When his elder brother Tama Saulan was still alive, their living room was full of people during *pistako*. As many as thirty people crowded into the small room; some had to sit in the bedroom or under the eaves. And how loud and beautiful was their voice! How powerful was their ritual! Now the remaining mediums are not powerful at all, and only a few young people are willing to participate in *pistako*. To whom can they pass on this ancestral tradition? Its total disappearance seems inevitable! Young people have not learnt how to do it by themselves yet. When the few remaining mediums are gone, what are their descendants going to do with their *patihaul*?

The painful anticipation of *pistako*'s inevitable disappearance makes the mediums

take an innovative measure. Among the *patihaul* and other ritual objects, there is a tape recorded a few years earlier during *pistako* when Tama Saulan and several powerful mediums were still alive. They were hoping that their power, like their voice, could be captured and preserved on this tape, and that future generations could play it during *pistako*, learn from it and be inspired when no mediums were around. However, the tape is now broken. During our *pistako*, I make new recordings and give to Tama Tiang and Tama Avis respectively a copy of them. Sadly, we all know that they are not the same as the real *pistako*, just as *pistako* is not as powerful as it used to be.

There are several reasons why the power of spirit mediums is weaker now. Non-mediums tend to attribute the decline of spirit mediumship to the influence and opposition from the Church. However, the mediums do not see the opposition from the Church as the direct reason why their power is weaker now, since they regard Christianity as an additional source of power and try to enrich their healing skills with Christian elements. They are far more concerned with the way *pistako* is done in the present. First of all, the annual séance is not performed according to strict standards. The ritual no longer lasts seven days and seven nights, and the taboos are not followed rigidly. People get drunk, eat tabooed food, and even drop out halfway. Secondly, the present participants' séance skills are, as they say, poor. It is very difficult for them to sing a polyphonic chorus in the chanting sessions, rather they can only manage the same tune. Therefore their chorus is not beautiful and moving enough to attract many spirits, and nowadays *patihaul* seldom falls down from the sky. Thirdly, spirit familiars and *patihaul* give the mediums power, but their power is also augmented, if not brought into being, by the attendance of people in the ritual. Less human attendance diminishes their power and efficacy. As Tama Avis said, the lack of zeal and devotion for ancestors and *pistako* from the young people "saddens the *is-ang* of the ancestors and weakens their power".

The reason why the young people are not interested in and do not care about their ancestors, according to the mediums, is to do with oppression and money. Tama Sabun once expressed this opinion bitterly during the *pistako* of 1998 in the following terms:

The Bunun are an oppressed people, and this is why the young people lose interest in their own ancestors. The government and the Christian Churches have said that our tradition is superstition, so we go for the things of the powerful people. But we are stupid to do so. How can we not cherish our ancestral things? We must find our own power, and our power is in these things.

Despite his strong words, Tama Sabun dropped out of that year's *pistako* after two nights and returned to his work in the city. One night, only Tama Tiang and I turned up for *pistako*. And Tama Tiang said to me:

Money! The young people now only care about money. Their work is more important than *pistako* because they make money from it. The time has changed. In the past the Bunun didn't care much about money. We worked the land and went hunting, everybody's living conditions were similar and there were no competitions of wealth. Now we compete about who's richer and who has more money. Because the young people want to make money, we no longer hold *pistako* in the day time. Now they don't even turn up in the evenings! No wonder the ancestors dislike us and do not come to us as they used to.

The foregoing comments of why the power of mediums is weaker now have wider significance. They are not only reasons for the decline of spirit mediumship but also reflections of the Bunun's position in the world they find themselves in. As an oppressed people who have been drawn into wage labour and a capitalist economy, whose traditions are dismissed as superstition by the government and the Church, their ancestors dislike them and they probably dislike themselves, too. The importance of holding onto this ancestral tradition is a way of finding their own power by persevering in hardships, and in order to "make a world for themselves in a world they did not make" (Ortner 1995b: 385).

The decline of spirit mediumship is met with ambivalent responses. Some people actually think it is a good thing, as incidents of witchcraft decrease and they feel less anxious about witchcraft attack. Also, it is in accord with the Church policy. However, these very same people also regret it when their family members are sick and the hospital treatment fails. At times of consecutive misfortunes, the power of spirit mediums to fight against *kanitu* is particularly missed. Most people will agree that it is good to keep this tradition going, but they are too busy or too sleepy to practise *pistako*, and they are apprehensive about the potential danger for themselves and their family.

In Vulvul, the interest in learning to be a medium, like other traditional rituals, has undergone some revival recently. When I first went there in 1991, *pistahu* had stopped for several years. Cina Avus had to go to another village to participate in *pistahu* held by her teacher. However, in 1997 and 1998, she was able to attract six pupils at her house to practise *pistahu* for one day. Most of her pupils are middle aged or elderly women who aspired to become mediums but were impeded by child care responsibilities when

they were young. The only male participant, Umas, is in his mid-thirties and also the youngest. Umas migrated to Taipei as factory worker or builder for many years. Since three or four years ago, he started to receive dream revelations from six elderly men and women, all of them strangers. He came to realise that *dehanin* wanted to give him the gift of healing to help people. Tired of the life in the city, he returned home and began to learn from Cina Avus and her teacher Cina Ivu before the latter passed away. Umas is making very good progress, and Cina Avus says that it won't be long before he becomes a full-fledged medium.

In Ququaz, this revival has not happened yet. Although there are several young men who begin to re-evaluate the tradition of spirit mediumship and to partake in the annual séance, they are unable to control their desire and lapse into heavy alcohol consumption, a situation which gives very little optimism. Also, so far none of them has dream revelations. Nevertheless, there is no harm in hoping.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have described how Bunun spirit mediums respond to Christianity not by rejecting or opposing it but by incorporating it into their practices. Christianity is seen as a source of additional power. Despite their attempt to negotiate their own position within the Church, mediums and non-mediums alike agree that spirit mediumship is in decline and the power of Bunun mediums much weaker now. I suggest that Bunun spirit mediumship is not only a way of dealing with spirits, but also a way of contemplating their own position in the contemporary world due to its ambiguity and uncertainty.

The sense of decline and powerlessness resonate not only in the annual séance and the practices of spirit mediums, but also in many other contexts. There is a strong connection between these feelings and the way the Bunun experience the changing historical conditions of their existence, a connection that will continue to be explored and highlighted in Chapter 7. However, in the following chapter, I will first discuss how the Bunun contrive to change and transform the world in which they live through conversion to Christianity.

Chapter 6

Christianity, Identity and the Construction of Moral Community

On a Friday evening in February 1998, we gathered at Batu's house after dinner for the family worship. There are five family groups in the Presbyterian Church of Ququaz, each of which is composed of six to eight households. The weekly family worship is a relatively informal service hosted by households on a rotating basis. The worship starts with the singing of two hymns, followed by a Bible reading, and a short talk given by the leader that day and some discussion. Often the discussion is not focused on the exegesis of the Bible, but on matters in the village that concern the participants on a more day-to-day basis. Then it moves to praying for common themes, followed by singing another hymn. The worship ends with praying for individual needs and the collection of a money offering. Afterwards, the host will provide drinks and snacks for the group, and most people stay for a chat and enjoy the food and each other's company. The commensal eating of food designates the participants as living in harmony and wishing each other well (*pinaskal*), which in turn is a blessing to the host family. The atmosphere of the gathering is relaxed and intimate, although there is also an undercurrent of competition in terms of the quality and quantity of food provided.¹

That particular night only three households of the group turned up for the family worship, which prompted Balan to give a warning against abandoning one's own religious practice:

We should stand firm against temptations. It saddens me when I see some people in our village start to imitate the Han-Chinese by worshipping idols. Most of them are Catholics, but some Protestants do that, too. Some families haven't stepped into the church for years. This is not right. Aboriginal people should behave like aboriginal people, like Christians. Since we already have our own church, we shouldn't turn away from it and pick up Buddhist or Taoist practices. Those people who imitate the Han-Chinese in their worship don't really know what they are worshipping and why they should worship in certain ways. This is sad and laughable. Let's pray that these people will recognise their mistakes and return to God.

Balan pointed out the close connection between Christianity and aboriginal identity.

¹ The Catholic Church in Ququaz also organised its congregation into similar family worship groups.

For him and many others alike, aboriginal people are Christians and should behave so. To abandon the church is to turn away from what they truly are, and it will not work. The threat of Han-Chinese religion can be clearly felt in Ququaz since the building of a huge Buddhist temple on the outskirts of the village in 1994. Most villagers detest the temple and criticise it as extremely ugly. In the village rumours circulate that the monks try to entice Bunun boys to quit school and become their pupils.

It is against the law for the Buddhist temple to be built inside the aboriginal reservation area. The land was sold unlawfully to the temple by a Han-Chinese man who married into a local Bunun family. The villagers were so outraged by the result of this action that his family found it difficult to live in the main settlement and moved to their field near the temple. Nevertheless, the illegal building remains in Ququaz and keeps on expanding, a testimony of the temple's wealth and political influence. A small number of people in the village, most of them Han-Chinese and their Bunun relatives, begin to show an interest in the temple. For most of the people of Ququaz, however, the connection between Christianity and their aboriginal identity is stronger than ever.

When I first moved to Ququaz, I was often advised to focus my research on the church. As an articulate young man, Ulang, said, "If you want to understand us, you have to understand the church first. The church is the centre of our social life, it helps the community to unite together". He went on to disagree with the view that Christianity has brought destruction to aboriginal cultures and traditions, which he was afraid that I assumed. Ulang's opinion is not an exception. Most people of Ququaz value the Christian churches positively, and take pride in the fact that there is no explicit opposition or hostility between the Catholic and the Presbyterian Churches in their village. Several things are repeatedly cited as examples of the cooperation between these two churches, and as symbols of community solidarity. The first is the fact that although Ququaz is the smallest among all three Bunun villages in Ren-ai township, their candidate always managed to get elected as a representative in the township council. The joint Christmas Gala and the Credit Union are also cases in point.² The Credit Union was started by the Catholic Church in 1969 but became a community-wide organisation, which helped the people of Ququaz to adjust to the capitalist market economy and still works very well today.

² On the evening of Christmas, the whole village gathers together to celebrate Jesus' birthday. Villagers sing popular songs and perform 'modern' dancing to entertain themselves, and exchange gifts. Every household contributes a gift. The gifts are numbered and displayed in public, then every household receives a gift by drawing lots.

In Vulvul, Christianity is not attributed with the central importance it is in Ququaz. There are no regular meetings or activities other than the Sunday Service, and church attendance is very low.³ However, the people of Vulvul are also predominantly Christians. At first, I was puzzled about why some people identify themselves as Christians despite that fact that they have stopped going to church for more than twenty years. Later I came to understand that this is a way of saying that they are part of the community, and different from the Han-Chinese. As in many Southeast Asian tribal societies which seek to maintain an identity apart from the dominant culture by converting to Christianity (Tapp 1989, Kammerer 1990, Tooker 1992, Keyes 1993; see also Hefner 1998: 95), Christianity helps the Bunun to strengthen their identity and to maintain the boundary between themselves and the Han-Chinese majority who follow predominantly Han-Chinese popular religion and Buddhism.⁴

Although Christianity functions as a significant identity marker in the present, identity construction and boundary maintenance are not given by the Bunun as the immediate reasons for conversion. Instead, the continuity between Bunun 'traditional beliefs' and Christianity is commonly regarded as the most important reason why the latter took strong hold among the Bunun. As the people of Vulvul and Ququaz told me all the time, they converted to Christianity because "it is the same (*maszan*) as Bunun traditional beliefs". They emphasise that there is no schism between the two, on the one hand, and that they were not passive recipients but played an active role in the process of conversion, on the other.⁵

This chapter will be dealing with the question of how the Bunun make Christianity their own, or how Christianity has become a Bunun religion. I begin by describing how Christianity was introduced to the Bunun, and examine the Bunun's reaction and the reasons for their mass conversion. Then I examine why they think that Christianity and Bunun traditional religion are the same, and look at which aspects of Christianity remind them of their ancestral beliefs. I will also explore the questions of what the Bunun seek in Christianity, and what they are asked by the missionaries to leave behind

³ The attendance is so low that even the priest thinks the Catholic Church is dissolving. The Presbyterian Church faces similar crisis due to the pastor's misconduct.

⁴ According to statistics (Barrett 1982: 235), in the mid-1970s 51.4% of the population of Taiwan were Chinese folk-religionists and 41.0% were Buddhists.

⁵ In his comments on conversion, Asad (1996: 271-272) has questioned the notion of agency by asking: "Why does it seem so important to us to insist that the converted are 'agents'? Why do we discount the convert's claim that he or she has been 'made into' a Christian?(ibid: 271)" His caution, although justified, does not apply to the Bunun. Christianity and colonialism did not go hand in hand when it was introduced to the Bunun and other 'mountain tribes', and they were not 'made into' Christians.

when they become Christians.

Missionary activities among the Bunun

The missionaries of the Presbyterian Church reached the Bunun earlier than the Catholics. In 1947, a Han-Chinese minister, Wen-Tsu Hu, arrived at Kuanshan to evangelise the Bunun. He was assisted by a Han-Chinese doctor, Ying-Tien Huang, who provided a room in his clinic as a meeting place. To attract the Bunun to participate in the Sunday Service, Dr. Huang gave them 50% discount in medical fees, and provided them with free lunch and snacks. From 1948, minister Hu began to travel with a Bunun interpreter around the Bunun villages in the foothills to preach the Gospel. In his autobiography, he describes the Bunun's initial reaction to Christianity in the following terms: "Although they loved to listen to the Gospel, singing the hymns and looking at the colourful paintings of Bible stories...they kept a distance from the faith and held a wait-and-see attitude" (Hu 1984: 113).

In 1949, the missionary first arrived at Vulvul (Hu 1965: 407). In the same year, eight Bunun men were recruited as missionaries after a five-day Bible training in Kuanshan, and were sent to various Bunun townships and villages. In 1951, the missionaries reached Ququaz. They taught the villagers hymns and provided free medical service, but nobody was converted. The number of Bunun converts started to grow more rapidly in the mid 1950s. The people of Vulvul and Ququaz were converted to the Presbyterian Church in this period. They soon built their own churches which were made with bamboo walls and thatched roofs, and had their own pastors.

The Catholic missionaries came into contact with the Bunun in the mid 1950s. In 1954, Rev. Franz Senn, a priest from the Swiss Bethlehem Mission Society, arrived at Kuanshan (Taitung Catholic Doctrine Centre 1995: 16). He had spent ten years in China before and spoke fluent Mandarin. In 1956, with the help of the distribution of relief goods, the converts increased significantly. In the same year, the Kuanshan Catholic Church was built, and the congregation included the Bunun, the Amis and a limited number of Han-Chinese (Kuanshan Catholic Church 1979: 4). Some people from Vulvul began to walk for several hours to Kuanshan to attend the Sunday Mass and to acquire relief goods, such as wheat powder, clothes, shoes, medicine, milk powder and cooking oil. However, until today the people of Vulvul have still not built their own church, despite the fact that most villagers are Catholics (26 households out of 35). The

Mass is held at the catechist's house, and the priest only comes once a month or less frequently.

The people of Ququaz first heard about Catholicism in 1956 from the Puli Catholic Church. In 1957, an American priest from the Marino Mission Society arrived at Ququaz to preach the Gospel. At this time the people of Ququaz were already familiar with the Presbyterian Church, although only about one third had converted. The Catholic missionary attracted more people in a short period with the distribution of relief goods, and some households switched from the Presbyterian Church to the Catholic Church. In 1958, a bamboo church was built in the village. As part of a parish composed of three Bunun villages, the priest only comes once a week to hold the Mass, and for most of the time the running of the church is left to the catechist and lay apostles.

The evangelising strategies of the Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Church are characterised by the Bunun as “the Catholics use relief goods and the Presbyterians use healing”. Since the very beginning, the Presbyterian Church was associated with modern medical care. It was the church's policy to use medical work as an evangelical means, for “salvation in its fullest sense includes the body as well as the soul” (Wu 1978: 114). In Kuanshan, besides Dr. Huang's hospital, the Maria Nursing Home was established by the Mustard Seed Mission in 1959, which provided free childbirth care for aboriginal women (Hu 1984: 154). In Puli, the largest clinic centre for aboriginal people was set up by World Vision in the 1950s, which later became the Puli Christian Hospital.

The difference in evangelical strategies between the Catholic and the Presbyterian Churches is more one of degree than kind. The Catholic Church also provided medical services, but not as comprehensively as the Presbyterian Church. In 1953, the St. Cross Hospital was built in Kuanshan to increase the availability of biomedicine to the local residents. At the same time, although the Catholic Church provided more relief goods and for a longer period, the Presbyterian Church also distributed relief goods to its congregation.

As minister Hu said, the Bunun initially kept a distance from the Christian faith. As several elders said to me, their initial reservation was mainly due to the fact that Christianity was alien, that “it was the religion of the Amelika (Americans), which did not concern the Bunun”.⁶ The missionaries' attack on their ancestral religion did not

⁶ Although many missionaries were Han-Chinese, the Bunun strongly associated Christianity with

help the situation either. However, their reservation or resistance did not last long, and the missionaries' effort began to pay dividends after several visits to the village. There are various reasons why the people of Vulvul and Ququaz converted to Christianity. The aspiration to the missionaries' modern lifestyle had featured significantly. Relief goods and free medical care were part of the symbols or instruments of modernity, so were the educational opportunities made possible by free entry to some missionary schools. The consideration of social relationship was also important. Some people joined the church because they were fond of the missionary who visited their homes and showed a lot of concern for them, or because their relatives had joined earlier. Several spirit mediums admired Jesus' healing power and wanted to incorporate it into their own repertoire of healing techniques. Also, for many people the church meetings provided entertainment in their repetitive daily life, as they enjoyed the delights of listening to Bible stories and singing songs.

The situation among the Bunun bears out Hefner's point (1993: 27) that the account of conversion must be multicausal rather than mono-causal. However, in addition to their various personal reasons, the elders of Vulvul and Ququaz repeatedly emphasise that the most important or fundamental reason for their conversion is their coming to the understanding that Christianity and Bunun traditional beliefs are *maszan* (the same). Why this is so will be explained shortly.

“Maszan halinga, maszan kamisama” (same teaching, same God)

When asked to explain to me why Christianity and Bunun traditional religion are the same, a statement that sounds defiant to the church's official position, the elders focus on their shared moral dimension. As they said, the teachings (*halinga*, lit. words) of the Christian God are the same as those of their ancestors: do not do bad things, do not harm other people, do not murder, do not steal, do not commit adultery. Respect your parents and elders. Be kind and modest, not proud and boastful. Have a loving heart (*madaidad tu is-ang*) and help those in need. When they heard about these messages from the missionaries, they found them familiar and close to heart.

At the same time, they discovered that the Christian God is the same as their own notion of *dehanin*. As I have mentioned in the previous chapter, *dehanin* (sky) is

Americans or Westerners, which relates to their attempt to maintain the boundary between themselves and the Han-Chinese.

commonly regarded by the Bunun as the supervisor of morality, a characteristic shared by the Christian God. Due to its omnipresence, *dehanin* was vaguely considered by the Bunun as the arbitrator of rights and wrongs, and it gave rewards or punishments to human beings. Apart from *dehanin*, the Bunun have no other notion of higher beings. This 'monotheism' paved the way for the missionaries to translate the Christian God into Bunun as *Tama Dehanin* (lit. heavenly father). However; God is also referred to by the Japanese term *kamisama* (god), or the Bunun term *Saspinal Dehanin* (lit. heavenly Lord).

The evangelical strategy of translating key Christian notions into Bunun, rather than introducing them as foreign concepts, has a bearing on the way the Bunun perceive Christianity. For them, Christianity is the same as their traditional religion in essence, because they have "*maszan halinga, maszan kamisama*" (same teaching, same God). The differences between the two, found in rituals (*lus-an*) and organisation, for example, are constantly downplayed. I found it extremely difficult to ask the Bunun, except for missionaries or pastors, to compare and to point out the difference between the Bunun notion of *dehanin* and the Christian God.⁷ For most Bunun, the Christian notion of God is more specific and elaborate ("He has a name called Ihuva, which our ancestors didn't know". "He has a wife called Malia and a child called Ilsu"), but it is not intrinsically different from their own notion of *dehanin*. Both supervise morality, who watch over human beings and give them rewards or punishments according to the rights and wrongs of their behaviours. The fortunes and misfortunes of human beings rely largely on the intention and will of *dehanin*.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Bunun notions about the spiritual or supernatural world are very vague, speculative and uncertain. Spiritual beings like *dehanin*, *hanitu* and *is-ang* are attributed with intentionality, desire and will, but the Bunun are not sure about their characteristics. It is deemed unimportant, even futile, to try to specify rigidly or to regulate formally about what the spiritual world is like, because it is known only through experiences such as dreams, illnesses, misfortunes or the annual séance. To paraphrase Geertz (1973: 172) on animism, the Bunun address the 'problem of meaning' piecemeal.⁸ The character of their religious knowledge is

⁷ The main difference, as an old pastor, Tama Qancuaz, told me, is that "the Christian God is the Creator of the world, He creates, protects and rules the world. But *dehanin* in Bunun was not the creator of all creatures, it was not a personalised god. Most congregations do not really understand the difference and the true meaning of *Tama Dehanin*, that's why their faith is confused and unsolid".

⁸ Geertz's point, of course, comes from Weber's distinction between traditional religions and world religions and the superior rationalisation of the latter (Hefner 1993: 7-10).

particular and activity-oriented, rather than systematic.

This tendency to downplay intellectual speculations and to prioritise practical activities set a limit for the way Christianity was introduced. Due to the 'extreme lack of abstract vocabularies' in aboriginal languages, the missionaries had to translate key Christian concepts in 'animistic terms'; which could not express exactly the original meaning (Wu 1978: 79-81). Consequently, systematic doctrine or theology were de-emphasised in the conversion process in favour of 'piety', which was cultivated and expressed through praying, singing hymns and participating in rituals and church activities.⁹ Conversion among the Bunun is not about systematic rationalisation of belief or doctrine, but about a reconfirmation of their status as moral persons and their relationships with *dehanin*, as shown in the history of the establishment of Ququaz Presbyterian Church written by Tama Taugan:

Bunun traditional religious notion believed that there is a God in the sky, called *Dehanin* (it means sky). *Dehanin* looked after and took care of the Bunun day and night. Therefore, our annual rituals and life-cycle rituals were closely linked to the invisible *Dehanin*. Our people believed that good will be rewarded with good, and evil with evil. Although the Bunun had taboos and superstitions, we believed that *Dehanin* took care of kind and hard working people. In the Japanese period, the Japanese forced us to worship Shintoism, but they could not change our belief in *Dehanin*. The Japanese were defeated and left Taiwan, but our traditional way of life had been changed under the resettlement policy. At this time the Gospel was introduced by the missionaries together with medical care, which activated the Holy Spirit among us. Our primitive religious notion of *Dehanin* encountered the loving God who created the world and all creatures, and we realised that the *Dehanin* respected by our ancestors was the God preached by these foreign missionaries who provided medical service. Since then, we have been freed from the bondage of taboos and superstitions and have gained the true freedom of belonging to the Heavenly God. Consequently, we followed God collectively, and built the church to spread the Gospel and to witness the love of God (Ququaz Presbyterian Church n.d.:5).

There are several aspects in this conversion history that are worth noting. Firstly, it demonstrates clearly that the notion of *dehanin* provided the Bunun with the foundation to understand a more abstract and elaborate notion of Christian God. In their own perception, not only are these two notions not regarded as contradictory or incompatible, *dehanin* actually is the Christian God. Secondly, healing or the medical services provided by the missionaries played a very significant role in the conversion process.

⁹ Cf. Schrauwers (2000: chap.6) on how the systematic doctrines were underemphasised in the conversion process of the To Pamona, Central Sulawesi.

Thirdly, the Bunun have learnt to deploy the missionaries' rhetoric that conversion to Christianity freed them from the "bondage of taboos and superstitions" enforced by their traditional religion. Both the issues of healing and ancestral taboos merit further attention, because they illustrate what the Bunun seek in Christianity and the price they are asked to pay when they become Christians.

Taboos as sins and sins as taboos

Early missionaries considered attacking Bunun traditional religion as a means of consolidating the local churches. In sermons, the people of Vulvul and Ququaz were told that their ancestral taboos, rituals, dream omens, and spirit mediumship were ignorant superstitions at best, and the work of the devil (*hanitu*) at worst. They were asked to abandon these practices as a sign of their Christian faith. On the other hand, the missionaries had imposed new taboo-like prohibitions. Christians, the Bunun were told, must abstain from alcohol, cigarettes, and betel nuts. Also, they were forbidden to work on Sundays. To violate these prohibitions was to sin, and they could not go to heaven (*Asang Dehanin*) after death (cf. Wu 1990: 54).

In fact, the Bible does not forbid men to drink wine, and drinking is not a sin. However, the pioneering missionaries associated drinking with traditional rituals, idleness, economic irrationality, illness, and violence. Also, aboriginal people were considered as lacking in self control in alcohol consumption (Wu 1978: 75-78, Hu 1984: 94-99). Therefore, drinking is regarded as a practical sin, and not drinking, a criterion of righteousness (Wu 1978: 77).

The Presbyterian Church was very strict in demanding its congregation to follow these prohibitions of 'evil customs'. Its opposition to traditional religious practices was also very strong. In comparison, the Catholic Church was more tolerant of Bunun traditions, and its objection to drinking and smoking, more negotiable. Consequently, in both Vulvul and Ququaz the latter gained a much wider support than the former. In Vulvul, the ratio of Catholic to the Presbyterian households is about 3 to 1. In Ququaz it is about 2 to 1. However, the difference is not so obvious in terms of regular service attendance.

The fact that the Catholic Church was able to attract more converts shows that the Bunun were not so ready and willing to give up their ancestral taboos, dream omens and rituals. At the same time, it is doubtful that they ascribe to the notion that to follow

ancestral taboos is to sin. In Bunun traditional understanding, taboos are either taught to them by *dehanin*, or come from the experiences of their ancestors. In the most important and most widely known Bunun myth, i.e. the myth of shooting the sun, it is explained that *dehanin* had taught the Bunun how to perform annual rituals and life-cycle rituals to express thanks for his protection in their daily life. As a result they would not turn into animals any more. Several other myths related to *dehanin* also illustrate that *dehanin* is believed to have instituted the social order and norms, such as incest and marriage taboos. The status of the Bunun as persons rather than other kinds of living beings is established through their relationship with *dehanin* and the observance of these taboos and social norms (Yang 1992: 37-41). Therefore, adhering to taboos carries positive moral implications, and grants value to the person who maintains them.

Taboos instituted by *dehanin* are universal to all Bunun, but there are also taboos inherited through patrilineal descent which are thus specific to different clans. These kinds of taboos are icons of the past which come from the practical experiences of the ancestors. For example, some patri-clans were forbidden to make bamboo artefacts (such as sieves, baskets and wine colanders), because their ancestors had injured their hands or eyes during the manufacturing process, and relied on exchange to acquire them. It was believed that if their descendants violated the taboo and tried to make bamboo artefacts, they would be injured or even die from accidents in the process. This kind of taboo is about dangers, rather than about prohibitions or wrongdoings.

Under pressure from the Church to give up their superstitious taboos, the Bunun were relatively willing to relinquish those taboos which came from the practical experiences of their clan ancestors. This kind of taboo could be tested or challenged by present experiences. If a person who breached the taboo did not suffer any misfortune, then the taboo could be lifted. However, where taboos directly taught by *dehanin* are concerned, such as the marriage taboo, the Bunun are much more reluctant to abandon them. There are indeed some marriages that violate marriage taboos, but most of them are eventful and plagued by misfortunes such as child death or deformity, car accidents, poverty, or the untimely death of a partner. When such cases occur, most people blame the Church in private for telling them to abandon ancestral taboos in the first place, and, as a result, reconfirm the efficacy of these taboos. As will be shown in the next chapter, now even the local Catholic Church advises its members not to take ancestral taboos lightly.

From the above, it can be seen that the Bunun do not view the violation of taboos

in terms of individual morality, according to a Judaeo-Christian logic of temptation and sin, but in terms of infelicities (cf. Lambek 1992: 259-260). They also understand sins in taboo-like ways. For example, the prohibition of work on Sunday is interpreted in magical terms: work done on Sunday will cause crop failure, or the harvest will suffer a bad market price. However, these prohibitions are also tested by practical experience, and some people have discovered that working on Sunday does not necessarily entail divine retribution. The degree to which prohibitions are observed varies widely from person to person. Most people are not too concerned about the warning that the violation of these prohibitions would prevent them from going to heaven after death.

Having said that, I do not mean to indicate that the missionaries' instructions did not have any influence and effect on the Bunun. Although their attack on traditional religious practices did not have immediate effects, by the late 1970s, traditional agricultural rituals and their related taboos had disappeared, and spirit mediumship had undergone serious decline. Also, the Church had played an increasingly significant role in life-cycle rituals, and became more important than the partilineal clan in organising these events. More importantly, the people of Vulvul and Ququaz felt that they were obliged to follow the advice and instructions of the Church. When they failed to do so, as they often did, they felt embarrassed because they were criticised by the missionaries as improper Christians whose faith was not 'authentic'. As some elders said, they felt they were uncomfortably 'divided into two' (*padusa*) between their ancestral religion and Christianity. However, they did not quite understand why these two could not be reconciled in the eyes of the missionaries.

The continuous exhortation and strictures of the missionaries met with some backlash. Some people dropped out of the Church altogether because they were tired of being told off, and many chose to go to the Church only during the festive season, life-cycle rituals, and when they or their families suffered from illness or misfortune. As will be shown in the following, in their daily life, the local Christians give much less attention to individual salvation than to harnessing divine favour in support of their health, fortune and community identity (cf. Schneider & Linderbaum 1987: 2).

Healing, protection and power encounter

In the conversion process, healing has been a focal point of attention for both the Bunun and the missionaries. For the Bunun, modern health care is effective and desirable. Also,

the types of diseases it is able to treat are more wide-ranging than those treated by traditional spirit mediumship. Even those who resisted to accept Christianity were impressed by the free health care the missionaries provided, and, as a result, eventually converted. The case of Tama Taugan is illustrative. Tama Taugan was a policeman when the missionaries first arrived at Ququaz. He was hostile to the missionaries because the police station had received a government order demanding them to keep watch over the activity of the missionaries, who were regarded by the government as potential trouble makers and might cause destruction to social and political order. Tama Taugan took the order seriously and used to impugn the missionaries and the villagers during their meetings. In 1954, he quit the police job because he married a local girl and did not want to be transferred to villages elsewhere. In 1956, his wife joined the Catholic Church for her best friend invited her persistently to the Mass, but Tama Taugan was still not interested in Christianity. From 1957 to 1961, Tama Taugan was an elected representative on the local council, and drank heavily when he went to Wushe for meetings and when government officials came to inspect local development in the village. He also frequently drank with other villagers in order to maintain their support. As a result, his health deteriorated. In 1962, Tama Taugan had gastrorrhagia and was admitted for free to Puli Christian Hospital for a month. At first he was so ill that he thought he was going to die. After two weeks he recovered his strength and wanted to go home, but the doctor would not discharge him. Since he had nothing to do in the hospital, Tama Taugan attended the Church service in the hospital twice a day, and was given a Japanese Bible. Also, the pastor visited him in his room and prayed for him, and he experienced an uncanny feeling of being filled by the Holy Spirit. Tama Taugan was moved by his religious experience and converted.

Not long after his conversion, an old injury on Tama Taugan's left shoulder, which was caused by a fallen rock on a mountain path several years earlier, recurred when he was clearing stones in his field. It hurt so much that Tama Taugan was prevented from sleeping at night for several days. He earnestly prayed for God to cure him, and his prayer was answered in the following way:

One day a pastor from Hualien came to preach in our church, and I asked him to pray for my shoulder. The pastor laid his hand on my shoulder, and I felt a current of warmth entering my body and was filled by the Holy Spirit (*Is-ang Dekanin*). That very night I had a dream. I dreamed about carrying two very heavy loads of stones, that went from my shoulders to my knees, on my back. They were so heavy that my shoulders hurt severely. Every step was so agonising. After a while I was at

a crossroad. There were two paths in front of me, one to my left and one to my right. I didn't know which way to go. Then an American missionary, who visited Ququaz before, appeared on the path to the right. He waved his hand at me and called me. He told me to put down the heavy load and to follow his path. I did what he told. The next morning I was cured, and my shoulder no longer hurt. Moreover, the injury never recurred for these forty years. The prayer healed me, *Tama Dehanin* healed me completely.

From the above case, we can see that although the free modern health service provided by the missionaries was a great help to the Bunun, most of whom could not afford it, it alone was not enough to make them convert and to keep them in the Church. The experience of dreams, of being filled by the Holy Spirit during prayers, were extremely important. As Tama Taugan told me, he would not have converted if he had not experienced God and the Holy Spirit in his heart (*is-ang*), for "belief is an issue of the heart". Also, the efficacy of prayer healing relies completely on the sincere belief of the heart. Tama Taugan's experience of being healed by *Tama Dehanin* was not exceptional, I heard many similar stories from Catholics and Presbyterians alike. For example, my adoptive mother, a member of the Catholic Church, told me:

Once I was very ill. I had a high fever for a long time. I went to Kuanshan to see doctors and took many medicines, but it didn't cure me. I thought I was going to die. One night I dreamed about going to the cemetery alone, I was very afraid. When I had almost arrived at the cemetery, *Tama Dehanin* came from the sky. He had long hair and wore a white robe, but he didn't wear a cross. *Tama Dehanin* held my hand and pulled me back from the cemetery, and I felt safe and comfortable by his side. The next morning I woke up and the fever had receded. *Tama Dehanin* had pulled me back from death. I regained my strength and was completely recovered soon after having this dream.

Healing was also a focus of attention for the missionaries because it was an effective evangelical strategy. Modern health care was considered as superior to the practice of Bunun mediums, and was conducive to dispelling 'superstitions' and the obstacles of their evangelical work. Bunun mediums were regarded as 'witches' or 'false prophets', and the missionaries viewed the exposing of the inferiority and inadequacy of spirit mediums as a means of spreading the gospel. One such case happened in Vulvul:

In the village of Vulvul, Haitun township, Taitung County, there was a witch called Haido. She heard of Jesus' gospel before, but she was not really saved, she just wanted to imitate the healing ability of our Savior. She called herself a friend of the

moon and claimed to be able to communicate with the moon directly. She often pretended to talk to the moon when she was curing a patient, and then spoke nonsense and said it was the instruction of the moon. Also, she often laid her hand on patients when she prayed for them.....Once a child of the village administrator was ill, she prayed for the child and prevented the child from seeing a doctor, and the child died. She said to the bereaved family: "It's fine, do not bury the child, I can pray and resurrect the child". She prayed for the child earnestly for six days, but there was no effect at all.....Since then, even the simple mountain people no longer believe in her words. Therefore, the gospel spread quickly in nearby villages (Hu 1984: 142).

At the same time, the missionaries placed great emphasis on the healing ability of Jesus, who was mightier than these 'witches' and 'false prophets', to attract the Bunun. Hu, the pastor of the Presbyterian Church, has recorded several cases of the 'repentance of witches', who wanted to imitate Jesus' ability to heal the sick and to drive out demons (*hanitu*) (1984: 138-142). As I have discussed in the previous chapter, Bunun spirit mediums still see Jesus as the exemplary healer, and they regard Christianity as an additional source of power which they attempt to incorporate.

It is recognised by the missionaries that the concept of 'power encounter' with Jesus Christ is particularly important among animists or 'traditional religionists'. As Stott puts it, "The turning of a people to serve the true and living God is normally a response to some evident and convincing demonstration of the power of Christ over the spirit powers (experiential), rather than what they called a mental assent to truths about Jesus Christ (cognitive)" (Stott 1986: 236, ff.23). This is applicable to the Bunun case. For both the missionaries and the Bunun alike, healing was an arena for encountering the power of Jesus Christ. With the assistance of biomedicine, the missionaries, many of whom were also doctors, seemed to be more successful in curing diseases. Their ability, with Jesus Christ behind them, was perceived as more powerful than that of spirit mediums by many Bunun. In Bunun etiology, diseases are mainly caused by *hanitu* (spirits) and witchcraft. The healing ability of the missionaries is a demonstration of Jesus Christ's superior power over *hanitu*, which the missionaries call devil.

Healing, protection and blessings are central to what the Bunun seek in Christianity, and they understand and appropriate Christian practices for this purpose. Baptism seems to be regarded as a kind of *paspas* (healing ritual), and the Holy Water and the Eucharist as medicines. When I went to the Kuanshan Catholic Church to write down the baptism records relating to the people of Vulvul, I was perplexed by why several people were baptised twice. Although the reason was not absolutely clear, it seems that ailment was

the main reason for it.¹⁰ Also, a few years ago a young Vulvul man, Havudal, was injured in a car crash, and he was baptised in the hospital although his family did not join the Catholic Church. Many people drink Holy Water when they are ill, and they suggested I do the same. As Tina Mua said, “when I am not feeling very well, I drink Holy Water, then I usually get better”. At Easter, the once-a-year opportunity to fetch Holy Water from the Catholic Church, Tina Sokut made sure that I did not forget to bring an empty bottle with me. Also, when someone is bed-ridden due to illness, the catechist, who is usually accompanied by some of the congregation, will send the Eucharist to the patient and pray for him or her.

Although the Presbyterians do not drink Holy Water or send the Eucharist to the sick, prayers are eagerly applied in the case of a bad dream, illness or misfortune. As Cina Piliah said, prayer is also a kind of *paspas* (healing ritual). One morning when we were chatting, Tina Piliah mentioned to Tina Puni and I that she had a bad dream last night. She dreamt about carrying one of her granddaughters on her back, and a *kanitu* suddenly appeared and tried to grab the child. She tried to scare off the *kanitu* by spitting in its face, but she was very afraid and soon woke up in a fright. When she woke up, she immediately prayed to God for protection against the *kanitu*, otherwise the child would become ill soon. Tina Piliah did not bring her granddaughter to consult a spirit medium, because “praying is also a kind of *paspas*”.

Most homes have religious images of some kind, which are seen as a source of protection. Catholics are given a Cross by the Church, as well as the pictures of Jesus and Mary, which are hung in the centre of the living room wall, usually facing the door. The Presbyterians have the Cross, and some also bought the pictures of Jesus. Both the Catholics and the Presbyterians are fond of tapestries, such as the Last Supper or Jesus the Shepherd, and hang them in an obvious spot in the living room. The Bunun pray to these images to ask for the protection and preservation of *Tama Dehanin*, when they feel they need to be strengthened and protected, as on the occasion of illness or taking a journey. When a family suffers from misfortune, the Catholic Church may send them more religious images to uplift them. When my adoptive brother Nihu died on a hunting trip, the priest sent the family two big posters of Jesus and Mary, which were regarded as additional protection and blessing.

The Bunun’s concern and attempt to harness divine favour in support of their

¹⁰ Some people who were baptised twice had passed away. I asked some young people, now in their thirties or twenties, about the reason for their double baptism, which they are not very sure about but think it is probably due to the fact that they were prone to illness when they were kids.

health entail that they do not see Christianity and traditional healing practices of spirit mediums as exclusive, although it is recognised that Christianity is more encompassing. Also, different Christian denominations are not regarded as being in opposition to each other. It is fairly easy and unproblematic to switch between Catholicism and Presbyterianism, as usually happens in marriage, when the bride switches to the groom's denomination. Also, my regular attendance in both churches was not seen as a problem, as I was often told that I would have 'double blessings' because I attended both churches. In times of grave illness, this double blessing and protection is sought after, and the patient's family will ask both churches to pray for them. The following is a case in point.

In June 1998, Tama Tiang suddenly fell ill when he was working in the field with his wife Tina Sokut. At first he just felt very cold and had a fever. Tina Sokut thought he had a cold and asked him to rest in the field hut. However, when he was in the hut he got worse, and vomited. Tina Sokut realised that it was more serious than a common cold, and drove him back home on an agricultural tractor from the old settlement. When they got home, he was delirious and then passed out. Tina Sokut panicked and asked her mother Kulas Lagos to come. When Kulas Lagos saw the state Tama Tiang was in, she urged Tina Sokut to send for the spirit medium Tama Avis, immediately. As Tina Sokut said, "My father was a *mamumu*, so my mother is very experienced in these things". When Tama Avis came and performed a divination with his *patihaul* (magical pebble), he diagnosed that Tama Tiang's illness was caused by the late medium Tama Avis, who died seven months earlier and was buried in a field next to Tina Sokut's land. One afternoon when Tama Tiang was napping under a tree, Tama Avis' *kanitu* passed by and advised Tama Tiang not to nap outside lest he caught a cold. Tama Avis' *kanitu* had no intention to harm Tama Tiang, on the contrary, he was concerned about Tama Tiang's health. However, the dead and the living are of different worlds and shouldn't mix together. Direct contact or communication between the two will cause the living to become ill. This is exactly what happened to Tama Tiang. The words of the deceased Tama Avis were 'attached' (*macup*) to Tama Tiang, and produced an effect similar to curse, which caused him to be ill. After the spirit medium performed a healing ritual, the patient was hastily sent to the Puli Christian Hospital.

After two days in intensive care and the testing of spinal cord, Tama Tiang's disease was finally diagnosed as meningitis. However, at this point the hospital refused to keep him and he was referred to a specialist in another hospital. The specialist told

Tina Sokut honestly that Tama Tiang's life was in serious danger. Another agonising three days had passed, and Tama Tiang remained unconscious. Meanwhile, Tina Sokut phoned several priests and catechists, as well as the pastor and elders of the Presbyterian Church, to pray for her husband. Then one night Tina Sokut had a dream:

My husband and I are preparing to go to work together from our home, and he suddenly disappeared. I look for him in and around the house, but he is nowhere to be found. Suddenly I am on the road to our field, I climb up the mountain and see him sitting in a place and chatting to a group of strangers. Each of them carries a bag, some are very big, almost the height of a person. After they had their rest, they carry the bags on their back and start to leave one by one. I see the last one, whose bag is smaller, seems to be my husband. When he is about to leave, I call him and ask him where is he going and why is he with those strangers. I tell him that we still have work to do and ask him to come back. He turns back, looks at me, and returns to my side.

After Tina Sokut woke up, she thought about this dream for a long time, and realised that it was a good omen. But she didn't tell anyone lest the good effect would be diminished. The next day Tama Tiang regained his consciousness and gradually recovered. Only after Tama Tiang was out of danger did Tina Sokut tell her children and relatives about this dream. As she commented to me, "if my husband didn't return to me but went with those strangers in my dream, he would certainly be dead by now".

Tama Tiang was in hospital for several weeks. During that time, he was continuously remembered in the prayers of both the Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Church. Moreover, both churches sent their followers to visit him and to pray for him in the hospital, and sent him some money to help with the fees as well. After Tama Tiang returned home, Tina Sokut killed a pig for the congregation of the Catholic Church, and made thanksgiving offerings to both churches. She said:

I was very grateful to both the Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Church. Although my family are Catholics, the followers of the Presbyterian Church also have love and compassion for us. They visited us, sent us money, and prayed for us constantly. Our village really showed sympathy and care for us when we were in difficulties. Whether we are Catholics or Presbyterians does not really matter, there is no division and opposition between these two churches in Ququaz. After all, we believe in the same God and we are one community.

The theme of love, compassion and community is as prominent as that of healing, protection and blessings where Christianity is concerned. The Bunun place great

emphasis on the theme of how they should live with one another in harmony. It is also central to what they think human beings are or ought to be.

Christian love, Christian person and a good heart

The Bunun would agree with Mauss (1985: 19-20) on the point that a Christian is a 'moral person', but not in the sense of a rational and individual substance. Nor is this Christian person an independent, autonomous and thus essentially non-social moral being, as described by Dumont in modern, Western society (1985: 94). Rather, Christians are persons-in-a-moral-community, whose relations to God are expressed in and through their relations to other persons. The notion of community is stressed by the missionaries and the Bunun alike. The missionaries think Christianity has given the aboriginal people new life and new community (Wu 1978: 75). In the above conversion history written by Tama Taugan, he stressed the fact that conversion among the Bunun was not an individual but a group phenomena, that "we followed God collectively".

I have talked about how the elders perceive Christianity and their ancestral religion to be the same because of their shared moral dimension, which is most clearly demonstrated in their notion of a good heart (*masial tu is-ang*) or a loving heart (*madaidaz tu is-ang*). A person with a good heart should be kind, gentle, modest, compassionate, forgiving and willing to help others. The highest praise the Bunun have for a person is to say he or she has a very good heart. Similarly, they often summarise their criticism of a person by attributing to him or her a bad heart (*makuan tu is-ang*), or a heated heart (*vavakai cia is-ang*).

In sermons and in daily conversations, the significance of a good heart is brought up repeatedly. For most Bunun, a good sermon is not one that refers to a lot of doctrines and theological phrases, but one that is relevant to their daily life, such as how husbands and wives should love each other, how parents should take care of their children, and how neighbours should live in harmony, etc. At first, I was always amazed at how the priest's sermon had almost nothing to do with the Bible paragraphs we read that day. Also, the congregation of the Ququaz Presbyterian Church reacted to the knowledgeable sermons of a new pastor, who had a Masters degree in Theology, in a way he thought of as indifferent. This frustrated him deeply. He complained to me about those whom he called 'bench believers', who were merely sitting in the Church without listening, or listening without understanding. On the other hand, most of the congregation

complained that his sermons were too difficult and too abstract, and implied that they were not very good. What they wanted was a more straightforward and ‘down-to-earth’ approach. The pastor must be good at pastoral care and an exemplary person in practising whatever he preaches in sermons. Otherwise, they think that the pastor is trying to put himself above them, and that the “pastor’s heart is not here, not really in our church”.¹¹

The great value the Bunun placed on a good heart, and their concern for how they should live in harmony with one another in a moral community, are expressed concretely in the actions of compassion and mutual help. The following is a good example. The spirit medium Tama Tiang broke his leg when he was transporting his cabbages to a truck for the market and fell down into a ditch. The injury was made more serious by his diabetes, as the wound would not heal quickly and properly. He had three operations and the doctor declared him unfit to work anymore. When Tama Tiang’s maize was ready for harvest, although he had savings and could afford to hire some workers, he asked the Catholic Church to help him with the harvesting. The request was announced after the Mass two days before the job was to be done. His request was answered with compassion. On the day, around fifteen people, including me, gathered in Tama Tiang’s field, which he borrowed from Tama Taugan for free. Some who were unable to come, but wanted to help, sent some chickens and drinks for the workers to Tama Tiang’s house. After praying together for the safety and smoothness of the work, we started. Men were responsible for cutting down the maize and carrying it down the slope, while women collected the cobs and peeled off the outer leaves. The atmosphere was cheerful, as several people commented that it was less tiresome and more efficient to work in a group. Drinking and sharing food at intervals added to the intimacy and conviviality. After the completion of the work, we prayed together again to give thanksgivings to *Tama Dekanin* and to pray for Tama Tiang’s health. Everyone expressed their satisfaction with the occasion, which fulfilled the ideal of ‘mutual help’, of the ‘brotherhood of love in and through Christ’.

Although there is a continuity in this emphasis on a good heart from the pre-Christian past to the present, the missionaries and the younger generation often consider it an effect of Christian teachings. Certain aspects of their ancestral practices, such as warfare, witchcraft and headhunting are highlighted as the pagan past. The violence and conflicts of this pagan past were the result of ill tempers and ‘bad hearts’.

¹¹ Not surprisingly, this pastor left Ququaz in 1999, after only two years in the parish.

However, conversion to Christianity had tamed their fierceness and violence, and transformed them into peace and love. Tama Qancuaz, the first Bunun from Ququaz to become a pastor, had told stories of such a transformation at both the personal and the collective level.

Tama Qancuaz was over seventy years old. When Christianity was introduced into Ququaz, he was in his twenties. A couple of years after his conversion, he decided to become an evangelist. In 1955, he was admitted into the Yu-Shan Theological College, which was established specifically for training aboriginal clergymen by the Taiwan Presbyterian Church. The reason why Tama Qancuaz wanted to be a pastor was because he had many experiences of being filled by the Holy Spirit during prayers. He describes his experience as seeing inner light in his heart, and tangibly feeling the presence of God. Sometimes his hairs stood up.¹² During these moments, his faith was strengthened. He viewed them as callings, “God wanted to discipline my heart, because I used to be ill-tempered and fierce”.

When Tama Qancuaz was studying at the Theological College, he was sent to Haitun township to spread the gospel. Before he went to Rito, a neighbouring settlement of Vulvul, he was warned that the people there were still quite ‘backward’ and fierce, and it was dangerous for him to go all by himself. Tama Qancuaz was not worried, and replied that God would protect and preserve him. When he entered the village, he was soon surrounded and threatened by a group of hostile men who carried machetes and hoes as weapons. Tama Qancuaz retained his composure until their leader asked him who he was. He replied that he was a Takitudu, and their faces changed colour. They whispered in each other’s ears, saying “*Takitudu sai-ia*” (he was a Takitudu)! After some time, the men of Rito put down their weapons, and the elderly leader invited Tama Qancuaz to stay at his place. Tama Qancuaz was told that Bubukun were very afraid of Takitudu. Once they had sent a group of twenty-five men to the Takitudu area, and one was beheaded by the Qalavang, but they thought the Takitudu were the guilty party, and wanted revenge. However, they did not succeed in taking heads, and were attacked by the Takitudu’s witchcraft. On their way home, they died one by one. Only two people returned to Rito, but they were soon dead, too. Since then, the people of Rito were very afraid of Takitudu and their witchcraft. Tama Qancuaz seized the chance to preach the love of Christ. He told them human beings were all *Tama Dehanin*’s creation, and it was

¹² This can be compared to the experiences of Bunun spirit mediums. As described in the previous chapter, their hairs often stand up when they sense the presence of their spirit familiars during healing rituals or the annual séance.

wrong to kill each other. It was a mistake their ancestors had made. There was no benefit of living in hostility and fear. Now they should repent their sins, love one another and live together peacefully. And God's overflowing grace would be bestowed upon them. Tama Qancuaz said the people of Rito were very moved by this message of love and peace, and the heat in their hearts was tamed as many were added to the converts.

From the above, I suggest that Bunun conceptions of Christianity can be seen in the classic Durkheimian sense of being the sacralised social. It is less about the possibility of individual salvation; rather, it is associated with the here-and-now, with how they can live in harmony with one another and live well. As pointed out by Stirrat (1984: 204), this sense of sacred is what people turn to in their daily lives:

“In the great religions, it is possible to distinguish between two ‘sacred models’. The first...is in a sense socially irrelevant. It is unbounded by space and time and is considered to be an absolute. This is the sacred of Eliade, and it has a relevance for human life not as a model *of* social life but as a model *for* individual emulation and striving. It is concerned with universals; with the possibilities of individual salvation...On the other hand, there is another sort of sacred, a sacred which is associated with here-and-now, and which is concerned with the existence of time and space...This is the sacred in the classical Durkheimian sense of the sacralised social, forming a sacred model for society as well as a model for social life. This is the sacred which people turn to in their daily lives and which is most amenable to sociological analysis” (Stirrat 1984: 204, original emphasis).

Having said that, I am aware that Christianity remains to this day a plural experience. This chapter discusses only the public and social aspect of Christianity, and contains very little about how the individual experiences the divine. It does not mean that there is nothing more in the Bunun's relationship to Christianity, as those who view Christianity in terms of identity construction and boundary maintenance often suggest. Although the Bunun in general are not very keen on studying the Bible and the doctrines, this does not mean that their relationship to Christian faith is a completely 'external' one (Tooker 1992). Their notion of the good heart is both about the internalisation of the faith, as well as its external expressions. It is close to the embodied personhood and identity, the somatic centre of social being, as discussed in Orta's (2000) study of Aymara catechists. Among the Bunun, there are certainly some people who consider their Christian faith the anchor and the centre of their life, and are also seen by the others in this way. Batu is one such person.

Batu, in his forties, was born a Christian. His family belonged to Toqolang clan, a

small clan which was not renowned for ritual knowledge, spiritual mediumship or a glorious headhunting past. When Christianity was introduced, his parents were among the earliest converts, because they regarded that the Christian God and their traditional *dehanin* were the same, capable of protecting them from the witchcraft of other more powerful clans. Batu was baptised a few months after birth, and was taught the Word of God as he grew up. At the age of sixteen, he attended Confirmation. When he was called by the pastor to walk to the altar, he felt his steps were very light as though he was walking on the clouds rather than on the ground. When the pastor laid a hand on his head, he was very moved, and cried. On the same day, he was elected as a deacon. Batu devoted his service to the Presbyterian Church. Even when he was away in the army, he sent offerings back every month. After returning home from the army, he was elected as a deacon again, and later, as an elder, until today. The Christian faith is extremely important for Batu. It is the anchor of his life which gives him stability and strength, especially when he worked as a construction worker in the city. Every morning, he read the Bible and prayed before going to work. He is very gifted in praying, with great spontaneity and plenty of visions. When he prays, he is transformed from a usually quiet person to an eloquent and charismatic character. The sharp contrast never fails to impress me. For most of the time, he prays for the Church, the community and other villagers who are suffering. During his moment with Christ, the power of religious experience and emotions are sometimes so strong that it keeps him up a whole night praying.

Batu came across as a very tender, kind, clam, humble, compassionate and loving person. I was extremely impressed by his air and integrity, and the way he suffers when other people are afflicted. It is hard to describe him; his spiritual insight and inner light shine through. I have never heard anyone speaking ill of him, and his family is regarded as a model for others. For me, and for the members of the Presbyterian Church, he is the exemplary Christian, for he embodies Christian love.

Conclusion

I began this chapter by pointing out the connection between Christianity, the strengthening of aboriginal identity and the maintenance of the boundary between the Bunun and the Han-Chinese. The analysis of how Christianity and Bunun traditional beliefs are the same suggests that the Bunun have actively attempted to transform

Christianity from a foreign religion into something familiar, indigenous and of their own. As a result, they have a strong tendency to downplay systematic doctrine or theology in favour of piety, which is cultivated through practical activities. In their daily life, the local Christians give much less attention to individual salvation than to harnessing God's benevolence in support of their health, fortune and community identity. Healing, in particular, demonstrates the power of the Christian God and constitutes in significant ways how the Bunun experience Christianity.

Although many Bunun try to incorporate Christianity as an additional source of power, it is inevitable that the missionaries consider many aspects and practices of their traditional beliefs as pagan, and have to be abandoned if they are to become 'authentic' Christians. At the same time, they tend to deny the continuities between Christianity and Bunun ancestral beliefs. Consequently, many Bunun feel they are uncomfortably 'divided into two'. In the next chapter, I will discuss how competing religious options aggravate the Bunun's feelings of vulnerability and loss when they face the transience of human life.

Chapter 7

Death, Emotions and Social Transformation

In February 1993, Havudal, a twenty-two year old young man from Vulvul, died in a road accident on the Eve of Chinese New Year, two days before his parents were going to propose marriage on his behalf to the family of a suitable girl they had in mind. This was an irretrievable loss to his parents, because he was their only child. The situation in which Havudal died is a fairly typical one among the Bunun. The migrant workers come home from the cities for holidays, they drink with relatives and friends, and an accident occurs due to drunk-driving. In a desperate attempt to save Havudal, the catechist invited the priest to the hospital to baptise him. In spite of the baptism, his funeral was a 'traditional' rather than a Christian one, since his parents did not join the Catholic Church. However, they disregarded many traditional *masamu* (taboos) concerning bad death. Havudal's body was not buried roughly at the place he died without any ritual, but was brought back to the settlement and, to the horror of the villagers, placed inside the house instead of in the front yard. This was a clear sign that his parents were so devastated that they no longer cared about their own lives and would rather die. Instead of relinquishing a relationship that was no longer possible, they longed after him and lingered over the sense of grief. To other villagers, such inappropriate treatment of the corpse entailed particular dangers for the whole community, because the dead would linger around and seek to bring some company to another world. They were torn between their fear of the dead and the contamination of the corpse, and Christian notions of love and compassion. However, some managed to overcome their fear to help Tama Huson and Cina Su-ing to bury their beloved son, and to deal with the bureaucratic procedures of reporting death and applying for government subsidy to cover some of the funeral expenses.

Different past experiences and historical forces came together in the ways Havudal's death was perceived and dealt with. To the people of Vulvul, his tragic and untimely death reconfirms the efficacy of traditional taboos. Tama Huson and Cina Su-ing once had another child, a girl, who was born when both of them were still married to other people, and was abandoned in the mountains to die. *Dehanin* saw what they did and was displeased, and Havudal's death was a punishment from *dehanin*. This

also articulates the traditional distinction between good death and bad death, and the particular dangers involved in bad death. Therefore, they want to completely avoid having any contact with the dead and the bereaved. On the other hand, with the exception of suicide, all deaths are the same according to the official position of the Christian Churches, and everyone should show love and compassion for the bereaved by helping and comforting them. Such support is particularly needed since nowadays funerals are very costly and the bureaucratic procedures confusing.

The people of Vulvul find themselves situated uncomfortably in these various historical forces which pulled them in different directions. If, as Humphreys (1981: 5) has written, death confronts human beings with an awareness of their own transience, it is more so at times of social change, when a variety of religious and ritualistic options call each other into question. However, for Havudal's mother Cina Su-ing, who made the defiant decision to bring the corpse into the house because her love and grief for her son outweighed any fear of bad death, social transformations provide her the opportunity to disregard any cultural constraint on how emotions should be expressed and channelled.

The emotions aroused at the time of death is an important topic which has drawn attention from anthropologists since the seminal work of Hertz (1960). Following Hertz, the emphases have been largely on how rituals organise and orchestrate private emotions, and on the socially constructed nature of the emotional and ritual reaction to death.¹ This model has successfully challenged the psychological assumptions that emotions are peculiarly private and individual. However, as pointed out by Lyon (1995) and Reddy (1997, 1999), a strong constructionist approach views the individual as fully plastic and passive, and fails to take into account the dynamic and temporal character of emotions. Such cautions are particularly relevant here. As shown in Havudal's death, Bunun traditional taboos against bringing those who died from bad death into the house and showing excessive grief over the dead had failed to restrain his mother. Her emotions are not wholly constructed by cultural scenarios and idioms; rather, she purposefully subverts them to come to terms with her grief experience.

In this chapter I will look at how the Bunun conceptualise and deal with death in particular historical contexts, and how emotions aroused at the time of death are not static and timeless social constructions but processes which might undergo changes through time. I begin with a depiction of contemporary death ritual, and heed especially

¹ See, for example, Geertz (1960: chap.6, 1973); Metcalf & Huntington (1991); Maschio (1993)

to the relationship between the dead and the living. Then I examine how colonial policies and the introduction of Christianity have transformed the ways in which death is dealt with, and, to some extent, the emotional responses to death. As in some of the previous chapters, I will continue to highlight the connection of the experience of loss and the way the Bunun think about themselves in the changing world.

Making death peaceful

I attended seven funerals in Vulvul and Ququaz during my fieldwork. Although funerals are not performed for everyone in the same manner, but vary according to the category of death and the wealth and social status of the bereaved family, from what I have seen and from discussions with the villagers, there is nevertheless a fairly set pattern.

Most people die at home. Even though nowadays most Bunun can afford to stay in hospital for medical treatments, the patient is asked to go home if the doctors think there is no more they can do. Also, the Bunun want to die at home, surrounded by their kinsmen. When a crisis is foreseen, close relatives will be informed, usually by telephone, and they have to drop whatever they are doing and go off to the house where death is imminent or has occurred. At the time a person dies, some relatives will shed tears over the dead. Although it is expected that those close to the dead, especially the spouse, will despair over their loss, it is not an obligation to cry, and there is no “emotional division of labour” between men and women (Palgi & Abramovitch 1984: 400).

Meanwhile, preparations for the funeral begin. Men build a temporary roof with bamboo or steel poles and tarpaulins to form an extension of the house in the front yard, where the wake can take place. Some people will be sent to the Han-Chinese commercial funeral specialists in town to get the things needed for a funeral, such as the coffin, white candles, flowers, coffin shroud, refrigerator for the corpse, etc. A photo of the deceased is also brought to town to be enlarged and framed.

When these things are brought back, in all but the poorest families the corpse is washed and changed with the help of the Han-Chinese funeral specialists, then moved into the refrigerator in the living room to face the door. They also instruct the bereaved family to cover the entrance of the house or the display cabinet in the living room with a piece of white cloth. Although some families also consult them to decide the date of the burial, the specialist’s help is usually not needed after the corpse is washed and changed

since the people of Vulvul and Ququaz are predominantly Christians. Rather, a Church leader is invited to help with the subsequent preparations.

After the corpse is ready, a table is set in the front of the refrigerator. The photo of the deceased is put in the middle of the table, with two candles in front and flowers on both sides. Food, drinks and in some cases incense are also provided for the dead in Catholic families. As the news spreads, relatives, neighbours and friends begin to visit the bereaved and to keep them company. When they arrive, each of them will approach the fridge to view the deceased from a small window on its top, and say a prayer for the dead. They often console the bereaved by commenting that the dead looks 'peaceful'. The bereaved are softly encouraged not to be overwhelmed by their loss, because the time of death is not up to human beings but God (*Tama Dehanin*), who decides when to "call us back".

Nowadays, the dead are usually buried within two to four days, or at most within a week. It could take longer if a date is chosen by a Han-Chinese geomancer, but such cases are very rare. There is still a strong imperative that the dead should be buried as soon as possible, otherwise the bereaved family will be criticised in private. At the same time, it is a burden for the bereaved family to hold such a long period of wake, both physically and financially. In theory, a wake demands an all-night vigil. Although in practice the bereaved family will snatch some sleep each night, they will be grey and exhausted by the day of the funeral. I have never seen the last guests leave a wake before three or four in the morning, and they must be sustained with drinks, cigarettes, betel nuts and snacks.

A wake usually starts with a prayer for the dead led by a Church leader. Meanwhile, some people already begin to chat and drink, and, in Ququaz, to make a big fire for the barbecue after the prayer. In sharp contrast to the pre-Christian funerals, the house of the bereaved is now filled with people, light, noise and activity. In Vulvul, people also play games of poker to kill the time, but no gambling is involved. In Ququaz, some youths who work in the cities begin to gamble whilst playing *ma-jian* in one funeral. However, gambling is still regarded as inappropriate and extremely insensitive to the loss of the bereaved.

The obligations to help each other not only include attending the wake but also digging the grave, cooking the food, and donating money or food and drinks. The dead person is buried within a short time, and to dig the grave, the help of patri-clan relatives affines, and anyone else who might be willing, is needed. Again, the bereaved family

must in turn provide food and drinks for them.

The deceased is only placed in the coffin early in the morning on the day of the burial, with a Christian service (see Figure 18). Following this, the Requiem Mass or a Burial Service is held in the church or at home, depending on the attitude of the bereaved and the category of death. The purpose of funerals, according to the Bunun, is to bid the dead a good farewell and to make them leave peacefully. However, bad deaths still pose a problem today, especially for the Catholic Church. People who died bad deaths cannot be brought into the church. Although sometimes the priest is willing to lead the Requiem Mass, it is usually the catechist who leads a prayer for the dead before the burial. Moreover, the priest will definitely not come for those who have committed suicide. In Vulvul, the Catholic Church flatly refuses to have anything to do with suicide; not even the catechist will come to pray for the deceased.

In Ququaz, the coffin is carried by men during the funeral procession. Only the richest families will hire a funeral car which has a tape recorder in it with hymns playing loudly. In Vulvul, where the graveyard is a bit far, a truck is used to carry the coffin to the end of the paved road; then men take over the task to the grave (see Figure 19). After arriving at the graveyard or the private land where the deceased is going to be buried, the photo of the dead person is put in front of the grave together with candles and flowers. Then a simple prayer or another Christian ceremony is performed as the coffin is put into the grave.

When the deceased has been buried, most of the guests return to the house of the bereaved for a big meal, a practice taken from the Han-Chinese. In Ququaz, before entering the front yard of the house, everyone washes their hands in a bucket of water which contains the leaves of *ngan* (calamus), a plant used to protect people from the attack of *kanitu* in many traditional rituals. When the last guests leave the house after lunch, a suitable place in the living room is chosen to hang up the photo of the deceased. The white cloth covering the door or the television display cabinet is removed, and the tarpaulin extension of the house is pulled down. Then the house is cleaned and resumes its normal look.

After the burial, the relationship between the dead and the living continues, and some other rituals will be performed for the dead. However, what form these take varies considerably according to the attitude of the bereaved and the wish of the dead. Dream omens also play a part. It could be a Memorial Mass or Service held one month later in the church, a Han-Chinese-style forty-nine days' ritual, a visit to the grave one month

later or at Anniversaries (see Figure 20), or the annual tomb-sweeping in early April. More rituals, such as chicken or pig sacrifice, will be held if the living are troubled by the dead.

This simple sketch of the procedures of death ritual inevitably glosses over the uncertainty and the ad hoc feel which are an important characteristic of the occasion. Therefore, in the following I will give more detailed examples to evoke the sense of the situation when death occurs.

There is nothing we can do: the inevitability of death

Joh's death

One mid-November evening in Ququaz, I went to spirit medium Tama Avis's house to tell him I had just come back from Taipei. When I approached the house, I saw it was unusually bright and some women were chatting in front of the house under a tarpaulin extension. Then at the entrance of the house, I saw the living room was full of people, the television and the display cabinet were removed, and one person was lying under a heavy duvet cover on the ground, facing the door. Immediately I knew someone had died but I was not able to see the face of the body from the door. I asked a woman in a low voice, and was surprised to know the deceased was Tama Avis's son Joh, who was only thirty-eight. Although I knew Joh had been ill for some time, due to his heavy drinking in earlier days, the last time I saw him he seemed alright and in good spirits. However, I felt I was the only one troubled by Joh's death, for no one in the room seemed to be sad. Avus, Joh's widow, looked more exhausted than sad. I knew she had left Joh for several years and had a lover in the city, and that she refused to look after her husband several times when he was in hospital so that their two children, one aged ten and one eight, had to miss school to look after their father. The boy was lying beside his father, eating snacks and laughing at the jokes he overheard. I could also hear Joh's daughter laughing and screaming as she played with other children in the bedroom. Joh's four younger brothers were back home, and some were already drunk, so too were Joh's father-in-law and brother-in-law. From the shop fifteen yards away, the sound of karaoke singing was loud so everybody in the house could hear it clearly, although a formal announcement of Joh's death had been made earlier through the loudspeaker.

More people arrived at the wake. They were offered rice wine, cigarettes, soft drinks, cookies, and other snacks. The treat was not considered satisfactory for no pork

was provided for a barbecue. But men still made a fire on the ground outside the house to ward off the autumn chill. It was recognised that some young men attended the wake only for the wine offered by the bereaved, and you could expect to see them at every wake.

There were no group prayers tonight, since Tama Avis had joined an overnight tour to Kaoshiong that morning, and he happened to be the catechist of the village. This tour was organised and partly paid for by the local branch of the Nationalist Party, as the local election approached in one month's time. Without his presence, how and when the funeral was going to be held could not be decided. It was difficult to contact him before the group went back to the hotel. People waited anxiously for him to call. Balan, a classificatory affine of Joh, told me Tama Avis shouldn't have gone away because he already knew Joh was going to die. He had a dream about one month ago.

Around midnight Tama Avis called and asked his son to fetch him from Puli for there was no transportation. This was a problem. Neither did any of his sons, or Joh's brother-in-law, have a car. There was a discussion about who they could borrow one from. A lot of families of that patrilineal clan had a car, but they were regarded as unwilling to help. In the end a truck was borrowed from a classmate of one of Tama Avis's sons. It was nearly four in the morning when Tama Avis finally returned. He went straight to the corpse, kneeled down and burst into tears. He didn't say a word but cried loudly for about twenty minutes in a special tune. People around him tried to comfort him but some women ended up shedding tears with him. I wanted to cry, too. Finally, he was persuaded to sit on the bench, but his tears wouldn't stop. For three successive years, his family members had died, one by one. His wife died two years ago, and one of Joh's younger brothers died at thirty-four last year.

After Tama Avis finally resumed his normal calm, Joh's father-in-law Tama Ivi, who sat by the corpse, started to say how the divisions of the patrilineal clan and the *masamu* concerning marriage were still important today and should not be forgotten. He thought the reason why Joh died so young was because Joh and Avus violated the *masamu* of marriage. Avus's mother was a out-married woman (*pitilain*) of Joh's patrilineal clan. These *masamu*, once regarded as no longer that important after the introduction of Christianity, truly made sense.

Tama Avis began to tell us his dream (*vahe*) in a calm voice:

I was carrying a slate like those used in making a grave. It was very heavy and my feelings were heavy. I felt very bad in my heart...I knew then Joh was not going to

make it. It was only a matter of time.....

The dream omen evoked a strong sense of the inevitability of Joh's death. Everyone agreed there was nothing we could do to help and Tama Avis should not mourn too much. After all, it was Joh's fate (*vahe*).

It was five in the morning and everyone was completely exhausted. I decided to go home.

The death of Cina Kim

My adoptive mother, Cina Kim, was badly injured in one of Vulvul's numerous pig feasts. It was a sunny morning in June. My youngest brother Talum's boss Cina Uli decided to kill a pig for her workers after a busy period of harvesting cabbages. The meat was distributed to the workers, but everyone in the village was welcomed to have a drink and to share the internal organs and some meat cooked in a big saucepan. Cina Uli bought some expensive and 'high class' red wine specifically for elderly women to show her respect for them, so my adoptive mother drank quite a lot and became very drunk, like everyone else. When noon approached and my adoptive father was expected to return home soon for lunch from the maize field, Talum was worried that he would become very angry to see my adoptive mother so drunk and beat her, so he tried to drag her home to sleep. She resisted and struggled, so Talum became angry and released her hand. She lost her balance and fell into the big saucepan of boiling soup, and was badly injured below the waist. It was a disaster no one knew how to deal with correctly. They poured water on her, and pulled her pants off, so her fragile skin was torn off. Then after some discussion of whether soy sauce or toothpaste was better for scalds, they put toothpaste on her wound.

Cina Uli's sister-in-law Avus drove my adoptive mother to hospital. Drunk and in such a rush, she hit a tourist's car before leaving the settlement. She was fortunately unhurt, but my adoptive mother broke her right arm. When she was finally delivered to a hospital in the nearest town, the hospital refused to take her in because the injury was too bad. By the time they arrived at the biggest hospital in Taitung County, my adoptive mother had already lost her consciousness due to the unbearable pain. The hospital gave her some minimal treatment and pain-killing injections, but refused to admit her. So it was a three-and-half hour drive to the biggest hospital in Hualian County, which had a special centre for burns and scalds.

I was not in Vulvul when all these things happened. When I got the news and went

to the hospital, it was half month later. My adoptive mother was in the intensive care unit, unconscious after her second operation. She had diabetes so the wounds would not heal. The doctor dropped hints that she was not going to make it. My adoptive father refused to stay in hospital, so their sons and daughters-in-law had to take turns to look after her. They were not really willing to do so and quarrelled over money. When I went home from the hospital, my adoptive father wanted to know what the doctor had said. I tried to tell him as implicitly as possible that her situation was pessimistic. Then to my surprise he replied, with a gesture indicating death, that if she wouldn't recover it was better that she 'leave' soon. After all, it was her own fault. She shouldn't have drunk alcohol.

Everyday I tried in vain to persuade him to visit my adoptive mother in the hospital, and he always found an excuse not to go. The monkeys were eating the maize so he had to scare them off. The maize was ripe and needed to be harvested. Then after all the work of harvesting was done, it was "tomorrow, I will go tomorrow". Several tomorrows had passed, and he finally went to the hospital on the day she died to bring her body back home.

It was one month after my adoptive mother was injured. Early on that Monday morning my brother phoned to tell my adoptive father that the doctor had asked us to bring her home. It was the opportunity to see her for the last time while she was still breathing. When my adoptive father, Talum, and Cian went to the hospital, Cian's wife Avus and I started to inform all close relatives by telephone. We waited anxiously and began to discuss how the funeral should be done. We were not sure whether this was a good death or a bad death and where my adoptive mother should be placed. If it was a bad death then the body could not enter the house and could only be put in the front yard. Avus tended to think it was a bad death because my adoptive mother died from an accident. I went to ask the opinion of Tama Vanu and Cina Malas, who also saw themselves as my adoptive parents. They said it was an *ikula* (bad death).

The anxious wait was finally over when the ambulance arrived at two o'clock in the afternoon. At the instruction of the Han-Chinese driver, my adoptive father and brothers called my adoptive mother again, as they had been doing on the road, and asked her to follow them home. Then she was brought out of the ambulance and placed on the ground of the living room, facing the back of the house. Tears fell quietly from Talum's face, and he was the only one crying. My adoptive mother's breath was maintained by a pump and a tube stretching into her mouth and throat. The driver told

us to cut the tube off with scissors and burn it later, and turned her body around to face the door when she stopped breathing. He wrote down the time, then left. To me my adoptive mother was already dead. There was no sign of breathing, her body was cold and hardened in the hot summer afternoon. But my adoptive father rejected the possibility that she did not die at home. He insisted that although she was not breathing, he could still feel a very weak heart-beat when he put his ear onto her chest.

We decided to not to move her until the Han-Chinese funeral specialists came. Everyone except Talum and my adoptive father went to the funeral service in the town. Talum went to a quiet place at the back of the house to cry quietly, and my adoptive father and I sat on the bench in the front of the house to talk. The first thing he told me was the dream (*daisah*) he had when he was still looking after my adoptive mother in the hospital:

I had a bad dream. I dreamed of your mother falling down from a cliff. I watched from a long distance and was extremely worried. I ran fast to the cliff to find her. But she'd gone, disappeared. I couldn't find her. When I woke up I felt very bad inside me. I knew she would not make it this time. So I didn't want to stay in the hospital to watch her dying.

This dream was told again and again during the funeral wake to a lot of people. And the listeners would try to console my father by saying that there was nothing he could do and it was Cina Kim's fate (*daisah*).

The wake: pity, taking care of the dead and keeping the dead company

Unlike in the pre-Christian past, nowadays the dead will not be buried on the same day or the next morning inside the house and be kept close to their relatives. Rather, the deceased will stay in the house for several days, and then be separated from their families and be buried in the graveyard or on private land. When the Bunun talk about the wake, they refer to their pity and compassion for the dead, as well as the need to take care of them.

One cold January afternoon, I came back from Taipei to Ququaz for the funeral of Tama Batu. I met an old woman, Tina Kaut, from the village at the bus station of Puli. She told me that she had come to town to see a doctor because she had a flu. "I took care of my child Batu for two nights and didn't sleep much. It was very cold so I got the

flu.” At first I did not realise she was talking about the funeral wake of Tama Batu because Batu was a very common name and Tina Kaut was only a distant relative to him, I thought she was talking about her grandson who was ill.

It gradually became clear to me that the Bunun talked about wakes in such terms. When my adoptive mother was brought home by the ambulance, we waited for the Han-Chinese funeral specialists to help us wash and dress her. They arrived at about three-thirty in the afternoon, and brought with them the fridge and the clothes for the deceased. The rectangular fridge, with four wheels and a shining aluminium surface, was pushed into the living room. Then the funeral specialists, two young men in their thirties, removed the blanket that covered my adoptive mother. She was undressed and covered only by her bra and heavy bandages. Her body was very swollen and some fluid flowed out of her mouth. I could smell it was decaying. Because of her condition, the washing was simplified. The funeral specialist wiped her face and upper body with a wet towel, and then dressed her in a white satin robe and covered her head with a white hat, both of which had a red cross embroidery on the top. Then they instructed my adoptive father and brother to lift the body by grasping the ends of the sheet underneath, and put her into the fridge from the side door to face the entrance of the house. Before they left, they also gave us a piece of white cloth to cover the entrance of the house.

The first guest came after five. It was Tama Vanu, who got the news that morning from me. He went into the house, approached the fridge, and saw my adoptive mother from the window on its top. Already drunk, he murmured some words to her, something like “Cina Kim, you are dead now so please go peacefully” which I could not hear clearly. But he stayed calm and did not cry. After he paid his respects, we sat down on the bench in the front of the house to talk. My father told him the dream he had, and Tama Vanu tried to comfort him by saying he shouldn’t mourn too much because it wouldn’t help. What is dead is dead, and this was Cina Kim’s fate. He asked my adoptive father when the burial would be, who answered in a week’s time. Tama Vanu suggested that it was too long, the weather was so hot and her wounds would decay soon even in a fridge. But my father said:

I pity her, if we bury her soon she will be very lonely. I want to look after her and keep her company longer. One week is short, sometimes the plainer (Han-Chinese) keep the dead in the house for more than one month.

While we were talking, my brother Kavas and sister-in-law Apas came home from

the funeral parlour and joined the discussion. Kavas and Apas said they had consulted the funeral director, who said that this Friday and particularly next Tuesday were good days. If we buried our mother on these good days it would be very beneficial for her offspring. We would have her blessings and live a good life. So my adoptive father decided the burial was going to be on the following Tuesday, eight days later.

Kavas and Apas brought home candles, incense, rice wine, soft drinks, cookies, flowers, three kinds of fruit, fish, chicken and pork. Apas set up a table in front of the fridge, and laid out the food offerings for my adoptive mother. She arranged the flowers on each side of the table, and lit two candles next to the flowers. Then she put the fruits and cookies on the left side of the table, and placed the cooked fish, pork and chicken together on a big plate in the more central part of the table, with a glass of wine for each meat item in the front. This practice was similar to the Han-Chinese way of offering *sheng-li* to the gods, but not to the dead (Thompson 1988: 77-78). Later, when the rice was cooked, she added a big bowl of rice to the table, and stuck a pair of chopsticks into the rice. She wanted to burn some incense when she prayed to my adoptive mother, but there was no incense stove in the house. She wanted to buy one, but my adoptive father said we didn't need incense since my adoptive mother was Catholic.

Food was offered to my adoptive mother twice a day, every day before the burial. Then the food was consumed by the family. Although the way in which food was offered to the dead showed Han-Chinese influence, the Bunun insisted that feeding the dead was a custom passed on from their ancestors. This was a practice valued by all Catholics. But the Presbyterian Church forbade offering food to the dead, and regarded it as idolatry.² However, the ordinary believers usually explained to me why they did not offer food to the dead in more pragmatic terms. "What is dead is dead, so how can they eat? What's the use?" was their common response to my question. To the Catholics, this was a cruel neglect of the needs of the dead. Tama Masan once expressed his disapproval to me, shaking his head:

Once I went to visit a bereaved family, they were Protestants. When I entered their living room to see the dead, I was very surprised to see that there was nothing for her. Except candles and flowers, nothing. They (her family) didn't take proper care of her. Ay! I pitied her. She was the most miserable, there was nothing for her to eat. Nothing at all. All they did was sing the hymns and pray for her.

² The Catholic Church also regarded offering food, especially meat, to the dead as idolatry. But this objection was not strongly implemented by the parish priests.

Praying was another form of looking after the dead. For the Bunun, it was not only a way of communication between *Tama Dehanin* and human beings, but also between the dead and the living, despite the fact that praying to (not for) the dead is considered as idolatry by the Church officially. During the wake for my adoptive mother, the catechist and other Catholic Church followers came to pray for her four times. They were supposed to come every night, but other things came up. One night they went to the hotel nearby to perform 'traditional singing and dancing' for tourists, two nights the catechist was too drunk, and one night a Bunun pop singer came to the village to film for MTV so everyone except my adoptive father went to see her and to join the pig feast. As was explained to me by several people, the dead were dead but the living wanted to live and to enjoy their lives.

Praying for the dead assumes a similar form for both the Catholic and the Presbyterian Church: it starts with the singing of hymns, followed by readings from the Bible and a short sermon given by a church leader. Praying for the dead follows, and the ritual ends with another hymn. However, in Vulvul it is simpler than in Ququaz. When the Catholic Church prays for the dead there is no reading or sermon because they do not use the Bible. The first night after my adoptive mother's death, the catechist and other Catholics came to pray for her at about seven-thirty. The catechist instructed us to set up another table by the side of the fridge, to move the flowers and candles to this table, and bring him a bowl for the holy water. He asked us to take down the cross on the wall and put it at the centre of the table.³ Then he went outside to take a small tree branch, put it in the bowl of holy water and used it to sprinkle the holy water on the fridge, and began to pray. He prayed that the deceased might go to *Tama Dehanin*, and that one day we might all meet again in heaven (*Asang Dehanin*). We finished the prayer by singing two hymns.

Death, money and social status

I have mentioned that death rituals are not performed in the same manner for everyone. Besides the distinction between good and bad death, the main factors affecting the way these are performed are wealth and social status. As will be shown in the following, death rituals have become a showcase of social differentiation, and the gap between the

³ The next day, when the picture of my adoptive mother was brought back from the photo shop in town, it was placed at the centre of this table with the cross on its side.

funeral of the rich and powerful and the funeral of the poor and ‘nobody’ is very wide.

When Kavudal died quietly and almost unnoticed on a late December night, he was buried two days later. Although only in his early forties, Kavudal had been ill for a long time due to his heavy drinking. An in-marrying man from the village of Bukai, and kicked out by his wife for many years, he owned nothing and had almost no support from his own family. Ill and unable to work, he lived with his classificatory brother-in-law and relied on them to feed himself. One month before he died, he was shown the door by this family and moved to live with a mentally handicapped man who was also from Bukai, in a shabby wooden house. He had no medical insurance and did not receive treatment for his illness. When he died, he was all skin and bones. His wife and children organised his funeral swiftly with help from the Catholic Church. They borrowed NT\$ 20,000 (about £400) from the Credit Union of Ququaz to pay for his funeral. Other than close relatives and church leaders, very few people came to the wake at the shabby house and donated money or food. Also, the priest did not come to Kavudal’s funeral because his family was unwilling to pay the fee. It seemed that he was buried almost unnoticed.

It was a very different story when Tama Batu died. He was a government official and a Catholic Church leader, and his brother is an elected representative in the local council. His family was the richest and the most powerful family in Ququaz. When he died unexpectedly at forty-four, from hepatitis, one week after Kavudal’s death, the family planned to bury him in four days. However, the head of local government stepped in and took charge of the funeral proceedings. It was the first funeral to issue an obituary to inform the guests, and to do that it took more time. Therefore, the burial took place one week later. The wake drew the biggest crowd of people, who were sustained with the most abundant and elaborate food. As one woman commented, “everything was more and better”. More sumptuous flowers, more prayers, more rosaries, more rituals, more of everything. Even more priests, six in total, came to his Requiem Mass, each of them was in charge of a different part of the Mass. It was possible not only because the bereaved family had the money to pay for their services, but also because they had good connections with people in the higher positions of the Catholic Church. At the same time, several government officials attended the funeral and gave eulogies in public. A funeral car was hired from Puli to bring the coffin to the graveyard only three hundred yards away, and at one point the bereaved family considered hiring musicians, too. After the burial, the tomb was built within three days,

which was unusual in Ququaz. Most people have to wait for several months, or even a year, to save enough money to build the tomb.

The notion that the funeral should give the dead renown was evident here. Tama Batu's family wanted his funeral to be spectacular, to match his achievement and the family's status. To do so they spent about NT\$ 400,000 (about £ 8,000). However, they received more than NT\$ 750,000 (about £ 15,000) from the guests. Almost every family in Ququaz donated money, from which they would definitely get a return in the future. But most money came from outside the village, from the family's wider political connections. It is a relatively new phenomena among the Bunun for death rituals to reflect the social differentiation between the rich and the poor. So too are the current ways through which death is dealt with. It is to this point that I now turn.

Historical transformations of death ritual

The present form of Bunun death ritual only came into being gradually about two decades ago. The people of Vulvul and Ququaz are very aware of its relative novelty. During the wake, they often comment on how death rituals were subjected to external influences and have changed over the years.

Under Japanese colonial rule, the understanding of death was one key arena in which battles were fought out between the Bunun and their colonisers. Among all life-cycle rituals, the death ritual was the one in which the colonial government strongly intervened. Bunun traditional indoor burials were seen by the Japanese as extremely unhygienic and were banned. The colonial government also instructed the Bunun in how to use coffins rather than tie the dead into a sitting position with a linen rope. Despite the control, some people still secretly managed to bury their dead inside the house or in the field hut. The Bunun had tried hard to keep their own way of dealing with death in new circumstances. Those who died from bad death were most likely to be buried in the graveyard. Also, they maintained a clear distinction between good death and bad death concerning where the dead should be buried in the newly built graveyard. Therefore, during the Japanese colonial period, except for the place of burial and occasionally the use of coffins, which the Bunun referred to as the house of the dead, Bunun death rituals remained largely intact.

The dead were buried as soon as possible according to the category of death. The Bunun distinguished between good death and bad death. Bad death (*ikula/misdiklav*

matal) was to die from accidents, such as being killed, being bitten to death by a snake or an animal, drowning, difficult labour, falling from a cliff, suicide, or other violent situations.⁴ Those who died from bad death could not be brought back into the settlement but had to be buried hastily on the spot during daytime. Such burial was so rough that it was called *minkulali* (throwing away a torn piece of cloth). It was believed that the *is-ang* ('breath-soul') of the person would transform into *makuan tu hanitu* (bad spirit) in the situation of bad death, and had to be avoided. No mourning was held for those who died from bad death, except that the bereaved had to rest at home for one day.

If the deceased died from old age or illness at home, it was a good death (*itmaminu matal* or *malahpa matal/mihazan matal*). The *is-ang* of such person left the body from the fontanel (*tonkul*) and transformed into *masial tu hanitu* (good spirit). The dead body was preferably buried inside the house, under the bedroom or the living room, on the day of death or the next morning.⁵ After the burial, the bereaved family went through seven days of mourning (*ai-sang*). They had to rest at home and followed a lot of *masamu* (taboos). They could not sing, clean the house, weave, drink wine, pound the millet, sleep in the daytime, wash their face or take a bath. In Vulvul, they also could not eat spicy food. It was said that eating spicy food in the mourning period made one *ma-ahvon* (aggressive and quick to anger). In Ququaz, the bereaved had to put out the fire and could not cook for themselves, but relied on the relatives of their patrilineal clan to bring them food.

The length of mourning depended on the status of the deceased. In Vulvul, it was one or two days if the deceased was a baby for whom *masuhaulus* ritual had not yet been performed;⁶ and seven days for adults and children after *masuhaulus*. In Ququaz, the mourning period was three days for children and seven days for adults. In the situation of good death, not only did the bereaved family have to rest at home, so did other members of the same patrilineal clan. They had to stay home for at least three days. In Ququaz, neighbours from different clans also had to rest at home for one day. However, apart from the bereaved family, no one had to follow other taboos and observances.

⁴ According to Chiu (1966: 74), if one died from a sudden illness away from home, it was also regarded as a bad death.

⁵ It was a taboo to bury the dead during the night. Therefore, those who died at night would be buried the next morning.

⁶ *Masahaulus* ritual is an annual ritual performed after harvest on the day of full moon for babies born within the last year. The purpose of this ritual is to make the baby "truly a person", not just a piece of cloth (*kulali*). If a child died before *masuhaulus*, no funeral would be performed.

At the end of the mourning, the deceased was sent away in a cleansing ritual *malanav* (lit. face-washing). In Vulvul, on the day of *malanav*, the bereaved family got up before dawn. They cooked some millet and killed a chicken to offer to the dead, and asked the deceased to leave peacefully. After the offering had been made to the dead, the bereaved family accompanied the dead to leave the house. They stopped at a quiet place near the river. An elder put two stems of couch grass (*pazan*) in the water and used it to pat and 'wash' his face and body, and prayed for the removal of impurity. One by one, every family member followed what he did. Afterwards, the elder tied the couch grass into a knot and put it in the middle of the path to prevent the *hanitu* of the deceased following them home. Then they went home quietly. This ritual had to be done before dawn and could not be seen by anyone, otherwise more people would die.

In Ququaz, on the last day of mourning, the bereaved family brought a piece of used cloth (*kulali*), usually the clothes of the deceased, to the river. They washed their hands and feet, and put some couch grass in the water and 'washed' their face and body with it. Then they washed *kulali* and let it be swept away by the river. This marked the end of their mourning. Afterwards they went home and made a new fire (*mapatus*) to resume normal life.

As described above, Bunun traditional death ritual was not symbolically elaborate. The focus was not on the ritual transformation of the dead or the transcendence of human mortality, as emphasised by Hertz (1960) and Bloch & Parry (1982), but on the forceful but problematic separation of the dead from the living. It is as though there was nothing to be salvaged out of the disturbance of death; the best the living could do was to prevent further deaths by avoiding the deceased and the bereaved. During the mourning period, the bereaved were identified with the dead and were isolated. It was emphasised by the Bunun that during the mourning the bereaved had to sit quietly all day with their head bowed down as though they were dead.⁷ In both good death and bad death, other members of the community tried to avoid the dead and the bereaved as much as possible.⁸ Because of the permeable barriers between the dead and the living, fear was said to be a dominant emotional response to death. Even the bereaved family would abandon their house and flee if they dreamed about the deceased frequently.

The introduction of Christianity in the 1950s was much more influential and

⁷ There was indeed a remarkable similarity between the bereaved who sat down quietly, and the corpse which was tied into a sitting position.

⁸ Although Bunun traditional death ritual can be said to demonstrate a typical structure of rite-of-passage (separation, transition and reintegration) (van Gennep 1960), the symbolic and ritualistic transition was not its central theme.

significant in shaping the form of death ritual, although it did not sweep Bunun funeral customs right away as the catechist and the pastor tend to claim. In the eyes of ordinary Bunun, what has been changed most is the status of the bereaved. Under the influence of Christian teachings of love and compassion, the bereaved are no longer identified with the dead and isolated. The missionaries condemn such behaviour as selfish and superstitious. Death is now dealt with in a collective way as a problem for the whole community, not just a problem for the bereaved family and their relatives. This transformation was a slow process, which took the Churches about twenty years to achieve. Only in the late 1970s did attending the funeral wake become more widespread and not just an obligation for relatives and Church leaders.

However, changes in ritualistic forms does not necessarily correspond to changes in notions concerning afterlife and the relationship between the dead and the living. In traditional notions, there was very little speculation about afterlife and the spirit world. It was said that the *hanitu* of the deceased “went to a good place” (*ku sia masial*) or *asang hanitu* (where the spirits live) if it was a good death. In the circumstance of bad death, the *hanitu* “went to a bad place” (*ku sia makuan*) or went nowhere, and was blown by the wind and wandered miserably in the world. These places were not specified. Some thought the good place was in the sky or behind the rainbow, but no one was certain.⁹ Until today, the Bunun are still very uncertain about afterlife and the spirit world. Heaven (*Asang Dehanin*) and hell (*Vinsahtuang*, lit. the place of suffering) are not talked about much, and I never heard people mention Purgatory. It always strikes me that death is routinised or ‘made peaceful’, as the Bunun call it, in Christian funerals, and the dead are presumed to go to heaven, yet the Bunun are not very interested in speculating about the afterlife. They are not sure whether the *hanitu* of the dead stay in their tomb or the place they die for an unknown period, and then go to heaven or hell, or whether they travel to all the places they have been in their lifetime and after this journey, go to another world. Or whether they just wander in the world, or move between two different worlds. At the same time, the reluctance and even refusal of the Church to be fully involved in dealing with bad death and suicide imply that people who die from *ikula* cannot go to heaven but become bad spirits. Thus one’s destiny after

⁹ Among the Bunun, the speculation about afterlife is not as minimal as in hunter-gatherer societies based on an immediate-return system (Woodburn 1982). Nevertheless, there is a lack of elaboration. This is related to the egalitarian tendency of Bunun society. Thus the Bunun case bears out indirectly Bloch & Parry’s (1982) insight on the connection of ideological representations of death and the legitimation of political authority (see also Bloch 1982).

death is not determined by one's actions or sins (*muliva*), but by the cause of death.¹⁰

The spirits of the dead retain many desires and intentions. They can be mild and gentle ancestors who look after their descendants. They are also said to be lonely and to want the company of the living, which can cause the latter to become ill. The excessive or prolonged longing and nostalgia of the dead for the living is a source of ailment and misfortune even for close family members. Thus, their attendance to the living can only be safely offered in controlled conditions like those of the annual tomb-sweeping, when the dead are visited in their tombs and offered food and prayers. The spirits of those who died from bad deaths are said to be angry, aggressive, vengeful and jealous of the living because they cannot accept their own untimely death. They are harmful to every human being.

Although the Bunun do their best to 'make death peaceful', their attempts are not always successful. The thing about death, they often remark, is that you can never be sure. A sense of uncertainty and vulnerability is always associated with death, especially when in circumstances of bad death the attempt to routinise or to tame them often fails.

Bad death, suicide and the ambiguity of death

The winter of my first year in Ququaz was a unique period. More than ten people died within four months. Three were violent deaths and several more died untimely or unexpected deaths. Such a situation of successive deaths was quite unusual in recent years and caused much worry and concern. One Saturday night when I walked down the slope with Tama Avis after the Mass, without my asking, he started to tell me how suicide used to be dealt with in the past. Looking down at the lights of the village, he told me that if someone committed suicide then the village would be in darkness. The body could not be brought back into the village. All the fires of every house had to be put out, water was thrown away and millet was carried outside. *Lisgadan Lus-an* (the ritual leader) would visit the bereaved and pray (*masumsum*) to the dead not to bring the living with her/him so that no more death would follow, and made a new fire for the bereaved family. Afterwards, every household made their new fire, fetched new water and brought the millet back into the house. Listening to Tama Avis, I had a feeling that he had in mind the recent successive deaths in the village. Shortly before my arrival, a

¹⁰ This is reminiscent of the popular Christian belief under the influence of the counter Reformation that it was not necessary to take such pains to live virtuously, since a good death redeemed everything, as discussed by Aries (1974: 38).

woman committed suicide by drinking pesticide. Her death was dealt with in Catholic ways, and Tama Avis led the prayers in her house. However, the successive deaths in the village somehow indicated that her death was not successfully mediated or resolved. The last *Lisgadan Lus-an* died in the 1960s when Christianity had gained a great deal of support and established itself well. No one was elected as the new *Lisgadan Lus-an*, since it was a time when old taboos and rituals were regarded as having less efficacy and importance under the influence of Christianity.

When Ulang, aged thirty-eight and a father of four, was drowned in the river at the end of February, there was a strong sense of uncertainty and anxiety in the village. The reservoir upstream released excessive water the day before and a lot of big fish were swept down the river and trapped in shallow water near the shore. Like many men in the village, Ulang took the opportunity to go fishing, an activity Bunun seldom engaged in themselves. He had already caught a lot and sent his teenage boy to carry them home, and said he would return soon. When night fell and Ulang did not go home, the family began to worry and villagers started the search. His body was found two kilometres downstream.

Ulang's funeral wake drew a large crowd. This is quite unusual for a bad death, but the experience of successive deaths made the villagers worry about whether avoidance would aggravate the deceased and cause more death. Ulang was a man who had not stepped into the Catholic Church for many years. At the beginning, the Church hesitated to act on his behalf, but in the end the Church helped in every way. The reason given was that his parents, who lived in another village, were good followers of the church. However, an old woman, Tina Isul, had died one month earlier, and the Catholic Church refused to help on the basis that she had not attended the church for twenty years. This prompted many people to exclaim that one should go to church more frequently when still young, otherwise the church wouldn't help you after death. However, the catechist, Tina Kaut, denied that the church made an exception for Ulang because everyone was afraid of *ikula*. She told me adamantly that the Bunun's attitude toward death was transformed soon after the introduction of Christianity, and that everyone was no longer afraid of death after receiving the teaching of the priest.

Although the Catholic Church tries to downplay the fear of the dead and to turn it into "loving memories" for the deceased, many people expressed their fear explicitly, and didn't stay for the meal after Ulang's burial. The bereaved family provided six tables of food but two were completely untouched. Only about thirty people stayed for

the meal, and most of them were relatives from another village. Much food was left and no one wanted to bring it home, in contrast to other celebratory occasions when the behaviour of packing the food to take home could sometimes be described as excessive.

The people of Ququaz look for explanations and solutions for the problem of successive deaths. Besides the unresolved suicide of the young woman, two other explanations were put forward in different contexts. Once in a meeting after the Mass, Tama Tiang, an elected representative on the township council and a leader in the church, lectured us on how we should *matusamu* (follow the taboos). He thought the reason why our village had suffered so many deaths and misfortunes (*likla vahe*) recently was linked to the violation of taboos, for example, the taboos between brothers-in-law (*soluk*). He asked the congregation to respect traditional taboos, and to behave ourselves well. The next morning, Tama Tiang spoke again to the whole village through the loudspeaker.

Another explanation was related to the disturbance of *kanitu* in the village. The land of Ququaz was obtained by the Bunun after they defeated their Qalavang enemies, and many Qalavang had been beheaded in this area. The spirit of these beheaded Qalavang were suppressed under a big stone by the spirit mediums. However, the stone was removed in early winter when the landowner, a Protestant government official who lived in the city, hired a bulldozer to dig his land. No longer suppressed, the *kanitu* of beheaded Qalavang ran rampant and sought revenge from the villagers. Unfortunately, the remaining spirit mediums were much weaker than their predecessors and were unable to control these *kanitu*.

After Ulang's death, there was talk about how we could turn the situation around. Some suggested inviting the Bishop to bless us and to spread holy water around the village, because the village was "not clean". Some thought we should try to perform the traditional ritual of *Anlulus*, which was described above. However, these ideas were discussed only in private, and no communal consensus was reached. Fortunately, although no communal action was taken, Ulang was the last casualty in this wave of successive deaths.

But this was not the end of the story. When Puni, a twenty-six-year-old woman, was killed in a motorbike accident next winter, a modified *Anlulus* was held the night after her burial. The decision was taken during her wake by the attendants. That evening, after dark, Puni's father-in-law announced through the loudspeaker that *Anlulus* was going to be performed. He asked every house to turn off the lights, bring out the rice

and throw away some water, then pray by themselves. After the prayer, they could bring rice back into the house and turn on the lights. Tina Sokut told me what she prayed:

I spoke to Puni first. I told her that since she had already left this world she should go peacefully and should not bother the villagers. Her death wasn't our fault or what we intended. She was taken away (by *kanitu*) so she should blame the one who took her away, not anyone else. Then I prayed to *Tama Dehanin*, asked for His help and protection.

Some Presbyterian families were critical about the revival of *Anlulus*, and thought the Catholics should be blamed for not renouncing the superstition. Even so, they still prayed specifically at the time when *Anlulus* was held, despite not taking part in the ritual. To the villagers' relief, this was a peaceful and normal winter. No more untimely death or *ikula* this time.¹¹

In Vulvul, there was no *Anlulus* ritual, and the problems caused by *ikula* were at the same time similar and different. My adoptive brother Talum committed suicide fifty days after my adoptive mother Cina Kim's death. Since the Catholic Church in Vulvul refused to have anything to do with suicide, the way the family dealt with his death was in many senses unprecedented.

The day Talum died was when the family reunited together again seven weeks after Cina Kim's death to hold a forty-nine days' ritual.¹² This was proposed by a daughter Uli who was married to a Han-Chinese. That September morning all the siblings came home and went to Cina Kim's tomb, which was not in the graveyard but in the plum garden in the back of the house, about 150 metres away. They brought with them three kinds of meat (pork, chicken and fish), fruit, flowers, incense, spirit money and rice wine as offerings to the dead. After Cina Kim had the food and received the spirit money burnt for her, they went home to share the food and drank for the rest of the day.

Around midnight, everyone was very drunk and began to quarrel. Talum was unhappy about his sister-in-law Apas's attitude at the tomb. He thought Apas was

¹¹ I was told by a pastor of the Presbyterian Church about the revival of *Anlulus* in the village of Qato. A woman from there was married to a Han-Chinese in the city and the marriage was a misery. In 1998 she was killed by her husband, who set fire to her. Her death horrified the people of Qato and her family requested *Anlulus* to be performed, even though her father was also a pastor. In this case, the pastor of Qato Presbyterian Church led the *Anlulus*.

¹² This is a part of a series of seven days (*tzuoh chi*) rituals performed for the dead in Han-Chinese popular religion. The people of Vulvul do not know very clearly what it is about and always said it was forty days. However, as in the case of other Han-Chinese rituals they perform occasionally, when I asked them why they did it, they always said to me Bunun 'feed the ghosts' (*mapakaun hanitu*, feeding *hanitu*), too. To them, there was something essentially similar between their *mapakaun hanitu* and those Han-Chinese rituals.

disrespectful because she didn't burn the spirit money well but rushed to finish the ritual. My adoptive father Tama Inqis was angry that Talum was rude to Apas, and somehow also blamed Cina Kim's accident in the pig feast on Talum. He took a knife to threaten Talum. Talum was frightened so he picked up a stick and tried to hit the knife away, but he missed the target and hit at Tama Inqis's head. When he saw the blood on Tama Inqis's wound, he panicked and ran away. Tama Inqis ran after him with the knife and threatened to call the police. The police came and patrolled the village, but Talum hid at his classmate Alul's house. He didn't tell a word about what had just happened. After drinking with Alul until two in the morning, Talum went home from the back of the house to the shed in the backyard. He took pesticide to his mother's tomb and drank it there.

He did not die instantly, but was in extreme pain and agony. Talum struggled to his boss Cina Uli's house at Sky Dragon Bridge, which was about one kilometre away from the path through the woods. He woke them up and asked for help. Cina Uli phoned Talum's sister Uli to send Talum to the hospital with her. He died that evening.

Talum was buried one week later. It took such a long time not because the family consulted the geomancer to choose an auspicious date, but because they had to wait for a coroner to examine the corpse to clear any suspicion of murder. My adoptive father was so very mad at Talum that he did not take pity on him, nor did he want to look after him. So the funeral was arranged mainly according to the opinions of his elder brothers. They wanted to invite the priest but he refused to come, so did the catechist. Therefore, they consulted a Taoist priest who was introduced to them by their Han-Chinese brother-in-law.

Very few people came to help with the wake, and on the day of funeral only close relatives came. Apas complained to me how hard this was on the family:

Nobody came to help us...in the night we had to take turns to stay awake. Sometimes me and Uli, sometimes Cian and Kavas. We were very tired, we kept Talum company all by ourselves. Other people were afraid of suicide, they didn't dare to come! On the day of the funeral only relatives came...very few people came to help. All that food, so much was untouched. Two out of six tables were completely empty. No one ate the food.

Because my adoptive father was so angry at Talum, he refused to spend money on building a tomb for him. Talum's body was sent to be cremated in town. His ashes were put in a small box, wrapped in white cloth, and kept in a shabby and tiny shed by the

side of Cina Kim's grave, for he was only nineteen and was her favourite child.

Cremation was unprecedented in Vulvul and had unexpected consequences. After Talum's funeral, Uli, Kavas and another brother Lian kept on dreaming about their mother, their brother Nihu, who had died violently seven years ago whilst hunting, and their sister Ali, who was killed in a road accident. They all said the same thing: they could not find Talum. They looked for him everywhere but couldn't find him. People in the village knew their dreams, and wondered whether Talum's soul was burnt to nothing by the fire. How could a father be so cruel as to cremate his child?

Some people made a connection between cremation and the Christian notion of the fires of hell, and felt very compassionate about poor Talum's soul. Cremation is seen as a horrifying torture after death. This is very different from how cremation is understood in the West and in India. Since the late nineteenth century, cremation has been seen as a modern, scientific, hygienic and space-saving option.¹³ Its current popularity is to do with its non-denominational character, and it fits nicely with the atheist belief in the finality of death (Aries 1974: 91, Bradbury 1999: 16). In India, cremation is a sacrificial offering of the self to the gods. Through the ritual of sacrifice, life can be wrenched out of death, and cremation is consequently an act of creation (Parry 1982, 1994: chap. 5). For the Bunun, things could not be more different.

The question of what happened to Talum after cremation, and of what would happen to them, had bothered Talum's siblings deeply. Both their own dreams and the dream of the spirit medium Cina Avus were very disturbing. During Talum's wake, Cina Avus dreamed about their deceased elder brother Nihu. He rode a motorbike, stopped in front of the house, and watched the wake with coldness and anger. He said the death of Talum was caused by the 'violent heart' (*ma-ahvon tu is-ang*) of their father, and he was going to take his brothers, one by one, away from him, and leave their father all alone.

Terrified by Nihu's threat, my adoptive brothers sought solutions for their problem not from traditional spirit mediums but from Taoist and Buddhist ritual experts. They wanted to invite them home but knew too well their father would refuse. Some villagers suggested they to invite Cina Avus to perform a traditional ritual known as *ma-avus* or *mapunpain hanitu* (driving out *hanitu*), described in Chapter 5, but they thought she was less powerful and the ritual, in which a pig must be sacrificed, was more expensive. In the end they went to a Buddhist temple to have Talum 'found' and themselves protected. They also bought an Eight Diagrams mirror from a Taoist priest and placed it on the top

¹³ The government in Taiwan try hard to encourage cremation for the same reason.

of the front door to prevent the spirits of the dead entering the house. After that, none of them dreamt about their mother or siblings.

Emotional responses to death

After attending several obsequies, I was still struck by the “flatness” of the emotional expressions evident at these funerals and burials. This is not to say that emotions are not expressed or released, but they are displayed in a restrained and reserved way.¹⁴ There are some moments in the ritual when outbursts of grief and wailing are likely to take place: the moment of death, and the moment when the coffin is about to be sealed and moved out of the house. However, in many deaths these outbursts do not happen, and excessive grief is strongly discouraged. Such emotional responses to death are general among the Bunun.¹⁵ Moreover, when someone who is not close enough to the dead or whose relationship with the deceased is known to have been bad shows excessive sadness and bereavement, s/he is likely to be criticised in private or even mocked in public as acting or pretending, and the tears are likely to come from drinking too much alcohol.

Such reaction to death is partly to do with the pragmatic and matter-of-fact attitude to death shown in the funerals I attended, namely, what is dead is dead, so what’s the use of grief and crying. It is also related to the need to protect oneself from the longing and nostalgia of the dead which is a source of illness and misfortune.¹⁶ Yet it is assumed by the Bunun that death rituals are sad occasions. The word for funeral is *mahavin* (to hide, to make [the dead] hidden) or *makaltun* (to bury). *Mahavin* is used much more often for it is a polite expression which is said to be less hurtful to the listener’s heart. Also, I was told that the ritualistic washing which marked the end of mourning in traditional funerals was to wash away the sorrow and sadness of losing a family member.

¹⁴ However, unlike the Javanese funerals studied by Geertz (1960:68-76), the Bunun do not attempt to achieve a “willed affectlessness”. It is also different from the “indifference” to death so compellingly described by Scheper-Hughes (1992).

¹⁵ Huang noted that a Bunun funeral in Taketonpu “...is more a busy day than a sad day. From my experience, most people do not express their grief”(1988:199). In a recent article, he described the first funeral he saw there: “In 1979, I first attended a funeral of an old man. The body was laid out in the living room so the villagers could see him for the last time. Many people sat around, watching television, speaking and eating. Since it was prohibited to work that day, many youth played basketball. There was no atmosphere of sadness. It is not much different nowadays”(1999: 435).

¹⁶ The need to protect oneself from illness caused by grief does not make the Bunun go as far as the Balinese who respond to death with laughter (Wikan 1990, chap.8).

It would be wrong to look only at emotions shown in death rituals. As pointed out by Rosaldo (1989:13-14), human beings mourn both in ritual settings *and* in the informal settings of everyday life. The Bunun talk about a kind of day-to-day grief evoked by the memory of the deceased that ‘closes’ the hearts of the bereaved and drives them to voluntary social isolation after the funeral. It is not unusual to see the bereaved stay at home for weeks, even months, after the funeral, unwilling or unable to work and to participate in social activities. Tina Ivaz told me how she felt after her husband’s death:

It’s a month now. I stayed at home for a month now. I didn’t go to the Church or visit anyone, and I didn’t go to work. It is not *masamu*, but I feel very messy inside to go anywhere or to do anything. I always cry. The only place I go is the grave of your Tama Joh. I go to see him every morning and afternoon, to pray for him and to check whether the candles are still burning. I take care of him, I offer food to him in front of his photo everyday. I want to take care of him as though he’s still alive. You see (the photo), he looks as though he is still alive and smiling at me.

If for the Bunun grief follows death, so does fear. As should be clear by now, the Christian teaching that the fear of the dead is a sign of weak faith, of not trusting in God’s power and mercy, has done little to dispel such fear. I was always struck by how afraid of the dead the Bunun are. The night after Puni’s burial and *Anlulus*, I went to Tina Sokut’s house, and as usual, called her from outside her window. There was no response but the light of the house indicated someone was at home. I called her again, and after a while her son answered the door. When I entered the living room, she was relieved and happy to see me. She explained to me why she didn’t answer me immediately herself. She was very afraid after her niece Puni’s death. When I called her, she wondered whether it was Puni, and didn’t dare answer. She told me how terrified of death she was:

I was very afraid of dead people since I was little. I was so terrified that I hid at home and wouldn’t dare to go out, let alone go to a dead person’s house. I only started to visit the bereaved family since I became a leader in the Catholic Church and had responsibility to comfort and console the bereaved. But I am still afraid. When there is a dead person in the village I cannot sleep at night and I easily become ill.

There is always a possibility that the dead could come back, and it is terrifying. The second night after my adoptive mother’s death, her sister Cina Niqa, who slept on

her bed, dreamt about her coming back and asking Cina Niqa to budge to make room for her. Cina Niqa was so frightened that she since refused to sleep in my adoptive mother's room, and needed someone to accompany her constantly at night otherwise she couldn't sleep. The connection between death, dreams and the dead coming back is so strong that children of five learn all about it. One afternoon in Vulvul, while I was writing my fieldnotes, I heard five-year-old Uli and her brother Dahu, seven, children of my adoptive brother, quarrelling. Uli grasped Dahu's toy and ran upstairs to seek my protection, and Dahu, unable to hit her, shouted at her: "Smelly Uli, I'm going to beat you to death!" Uli, not to be outdone by his threat, shouted back: "If I die I'll make you dream (about me)!".

Grief and fear are not the only reactions to death, but they are regarded as 'natural'. For the Bunun, to be able to have these appropriate emotions is very important to being human. When my adoptive father displayed rage rather than grief after Talum's suicide, he was criticised as being "like *hanitu*", or "he was *hanitu*" ('devil'). And his heart (*is-ang*) was said to be "still in the time of the Japanese (the time of headhunting, that is), so angry and aggressive (*ma-ahvon*) that he could kill someone". Talking in these terms, the people of Vulvul were not only making their moral judgements but also contemplating how their emotional responses to death were, or should be, changed by the process of colonisation.

The Bunun used to be fierce headhunters. There were various reasons for headhunting,¹⁷ among them to revenge the death of a family member, to clear one's name against accusations of wrong doing (especially adultery and theft) and to react to a wife's adultery, all involved rage and 'justified anger'. These are of particular interest here. The people of Vulvul and Ququaz often talk about headhunting in the past in celebratory terms, but they had to make a break with such practice since the historical conditions have changed. My adoptive father, whose heart is still in the time of headhunting, and who allows his anger and rage to run uncontrolled, is unable to justify himself in the present. His tendency to grab a knife, or even a gun, when he is outraged is heavily criticised. "Rage was very good for headhunting and tribal warfare, but not in the present. The time is different, you know, we can report him to the police", I was told. Thus, the suppression of headhunting by the colonial government and the introduction

¹⁷ According to previous studies (Chiu 1965:195, Wei 1972:19, Mabuchi 1974), these reasons were: to prove one's bravery and acquire fame; for revenge during a blood feud; to prove one's innocence against an accusation of crime; to exorcise bad fortune derived from the wife's adultery; in response to a dream revelation; to increase agricultural productivity, especially millet; to compete for a lover.

of a different juridical system pose a question for how to deal with one's rage and justified anger. In Vulvul, the reason for all cases of suicide, apart from Talum's, in the past two decades was the shame and rage brought on by the adultery of one's spouse. There is little sympathy for those who committed suicide under such circumstances. Those husbands are said to be stupid because they should have killed those who stole their wives rather than themselves. However, I suspected that it was precisely the painful realisation that one couldn't go to kill the man who stole your wife, and get away with it, that pushed these men to commit suicide.

In his study on Illongot headhunting, Rosaldo has described how an Illongot man converted to Christianity because with the advent of Martial Law in the Philippines headhunting was out of the question as a means of venting his rage and thereby lessening the grief of losing his son (1980: 288, 1989: 4-5). It is true that cathartic violence is susceptible to changing political conditions, however, I wonder how it could be so straightforward and unproblematic for the Illongot. For the Bunun, who faced a similar predicament and are still trying to come to terms with it, it has been a struggle.

My adoptive father turned to Catholicism when his eldest son Nihu died tragically on a hunting trip in 1992. He was very angry at Nihu for going hunting, despite the fact that he had a bad dream and advised him to stay at home. Nihu still went hunting by himself, because he was the village head and local government officials were going to come up to the village to have a meeting the next day. He wanted to be able to provide wild meat for the lunch after the meeting to show his hospitality. His body was found two days later in an area predicted by the spirit medium Cina Avus. My adoptive father was in such a rage that he threw Nihu's photo out of the house after the funeral. He was angry for a long time. Gradually, my adoptive mother persuaded him to go to church with her, which he had not done for many years. However, two years later when his eldest daughter Ali died in a road accident, he was angry at *Tama Dehanin* and declared that he no longer believed in Catholicism.

The displacement of my adoptive father's heart to the time of headhunting, and his failure to tame his rage and to discipline his own heart through Catholicism made him inhuman in the eyes of other Bunun. This is different from how they see Havudal's mother Cina Su-ing, who purposefully subverted cultural scenarios on how emotional responses to death should be expressed. Although they criticise Cina Su-ing's improper treatment of the corpse, they understand and sympathise with her grief. However, my adoptive father's case is seen as one lacking 'natural emotions', and hence inhuman. For

the Bunun, the emotions aroused at the time of death, are at the same time social and historical constructions, as well as part of the nature of human beings.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed how among the Bunun the purpose of Christian funerals is to 'make death peaceful', to bid a good farewell to the deceased and to disengage with the soul of the dead. The Bunun are taught by the missionaries that they should not be afraid of death and the deceased, because the time of death is determined by God and should be calmly accepted. The missionaries regard the isolation of the bereaved in traditional death rituals as an act of selfishness, and request the Bunun to show love and compassion for the bereaved by comforting and helping them.

However, there remains a strong fear of the dead because the barriers between the dead and the living are permeable, and the dead can come back to bring illness, misfortune and death to the living. The emotions aroused by death are contradictory. There is the simultaneous love of the dead person and fear of the corpse and the spirit of the dead. At the time of death, the Bunun feel most vulnerable, ambiguous and powerless. It is all the more so when in circumstances of bad death the attempt to 'make death peaceful' can easily fail, and the emotional contradictions are particularly strong.

The Bunun relate such contradictions and ambiguities to crosscutting ways of conceptualising and dealing with death brought about by social transformations, which pull them in different directions. They are very aware that the appropriate expression and orchestration of emotions is situated in particular social and historical contexts. This does not mean that emotions aroused at the time of death are not based on human nature. However, as a marginal people, they have to do their best to adjust to the changing historical conditions, whether to discipline their own heart through Christianity or, when the Church fails them completely, to experiment and to seek help from the Han-Chinese ritual experts. In doing so, they have a better chance to reproduce themselves as human beings.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have explored how the Bunun engage with their historical conditions, as well as the complicated relationship between these changing social conditions and the Bunun's experience and understanding of their world. I have moved between different contexts in which the Bunun experience, reflect, negotiate and attempt to work through the predicaments of their contemporary situation, highlighting the importance of their relationship with the state and powerful others. I began with the issue of how the Bunun conceptualise the state through the examination of their responses to government policies, their interaction with government officials, local elections and the symbolism of money. I have suggested that the Bunun have learnt the 'folly of resistance' from the historical experience of being pacified and massacred by the Japanese colonial regime, and consider compliance an effective political action. Compliance and cooperation open up space for negotiation. Through these actions, the Bunun try to incorporate the state and government officials into their own idioms of kinship and political leadership, to morally oblige them to look after and provide for the Bunun, and thus transform the power of the state from an external and potentially dangerous force into something positive and benevolent for themselves.

The Bunun's attempt to incorporate the state through kinship idioms has created a dialectical integration between the two, but it also makes it easier for the state to appropriate their history and objectify their cultural tradition. I have shown how Bunun resistance to the Japanese has been commemorated by the government in ways that fit well with the Nationalist ideology. The turning of Lamatasinsin into a 'national hero' through monument building and the construction of an official narrative, however, does not erase or silence different local versions. The narratives the Bunun tell about Lamatasinsin remain multiple, and the question of whether he resisted the Japanese militarily, contested. Moreover, the Bunun also evoke and remember the past in very different ways. When the Bunun go hunting, they experience a simultaneity with the past through their bodily movement in the landscape imbued with ancestral agency. Singing, drinking and severe lack of sleep all help to achieve an emotional and mental state which is susceptible to the presence of spirits, and which brings to the surface ancestral memory. Although hunting works as a central moving force in the shaping of local memory and historical thought, it is becoming more and more difficult for the

Bunun to experience the past in this way due to the increasingly strict implementation of laws against hunting.

While the government bans hunting, other aspects of the ancestral ways of life are redefined by the state as 'tradition' and 'culture' and regain legitimacy following the change of government policy from assimilation to multiculturalism. Under the influence of the government, the Bunun have also come to see 'tradition' or 'culture' as composed of certain objectified or 'thing-like' elements, such as music, ritual, dance, art, handicraft and ethnic custom, etc. I have demonstrated that the Bunun are quick to respond to the change of government policies and the development of tourism, that they recreate their own image to meet Han-Chinese imagination and expectation. Cultural performances do not only help the Bunun to regain pride and self-esteem, but also contribute to the sustaining and remaking of local identity and sociality. However, the Bunun also make a distinction between 'tradition' and ancestral ways of doing, between objectification and lived experience, and they are acutely aware of the loss of the latter. The experience of representing themselves to be consumed and appropriated by the Han-Chinese tourists and government officials, could be the experience of loss and displacement under certain circumstances.

I have argued that there is a connection between this sense of loneliness, loss and displacement, and the way the Bunun contemplate their own position in the contemporary world. This is shown most explicitly in the annual séance of spirit mediums, when the weakening or loss of power become part of the hardship the participants have to endure. I have pointed out that Bunun spirit mediumship is intrinsically ambiguous not only because of the unpredictability of spirits, but also because it can be applied to both healing and witchcraft. Moreover, the spirit mediums' attempt to incorporate Christianity as a source of additional power and enrichment does not render their current position completely unproblematic. After all, the missionaries regard many aspects of their practice as paganism and idolatry, if not devil worship. I have suggested that it is because of its ambiguity and uncertainty that spirit mediumship is so pertinent in reflecting on the Bunun's position in contemporary contexts.

The spirit mediums' multi-stranded relationship with Christianity is an evocation in miniature of the Bunun's relationship with Christianity more generally. I have shown that non-mediums also try to incorporate Christianity as an additional source of power. The Bunun are quick to point out the similarity and even sameness between their ancestral notion of *dehanin* (sky) and the Christian God (*Tama Dehanin*), and attempt to

transform Christianity from a foreign religion into something familiar, indigenous and of their own. In their daily life, the local Christians focus their attention on harnessing God's benevolence in support of their health, fortune and community identity. Healing, in particular, demonstrates the power of the Christian God and constitutes in significant ways how the Bunun experience Christianity. Although Christianity provides the Bunun with divine blessings and protection, and helps the Bunun to strengthen their aboriginal identity and maintain the boundary between themselves and the Han-Chinese, it also plays a key role in shaping the ambivalence of the Bunun's relationship to their ancestral religious practices. The missionaries' tendency to see Christianity and Bunun ancestral religion as exclusive inevitably creates some problems for the Bunun, especially when the Church fails to deal with issues such as bad death and suicide successfully.

I have demonstrated that most Bunun now deal with death in Christian ways. The purpose of Christian funerals is to 'make death peaceful', to bid a good farewell to the deceased and to disengage with the soul of the dead. However, the transformation from pre-Christian death rituals to Christian ones did not entail changes in the notions concerning afterlife and the relationship between the dead and the living. I have shown that the Bunun still consider the barriers between the dead and the living to be permeable, and that the deceased can come back to bring illness, misfortune and death to the living. As a result, the spirit of the dead commands fear in the heart of the living, especially in the circumstances of bad death and suicide, when the attempt to 'make death peaceful' can easily fail or when the Church refuses to be fully involved. The Bunun attempt to find a solution to their predicament by experimenting with different ways of dealing with death, and mediating the relationship between the dead and the living, whether by reviving traditional Bunun rituals or seeking the help of the Han-Chinese ritual specialists. Still, at the time of death, the Bunun feel most vulnerable, uncertain and powerless. They relate such emotional ambiguities to the different ways of dealing with and conceptualising death brought about by social transformations, therefore, there is a connection between these feelings and the way the Bunun think about themselves in a changing world.

I have situated the Bunun case in the studies of marginality. I have not described the situation faced by the Bunun as postcolonial because, as explained by Alva (1995: 243) and Loomba (1998: 8-9), one's experience of colonialism was depended on one's position within its hierarchy, and the term 'postcolonial' does not really apply to those at

the bottom end of the hierarchy. For those who are still at the far margins of the nation state, there is probably nothing 'post' about their colonisation. Therefore, it is more appropriate to describe the situation of the Bunun as one of 'internal colonialism' rather than 'post-colonialism'. The term of 'internal colonialism' has been used by Hechter (1975) to underline the similarities between the Celtic fringe of the United Kingdom and Britain's overseas colonies.¹ Recently, the notion of 'internal colonialism' has been evoked to describe power relations within a postcolony (Comaroffs 1997: 17). This is reminiscent of the Bunun's situation, as they have an acute sense of themselves as a marginal minority in an unequal relationship with the Han-Chinese and the state. However, the recent flourish of colonialism studies is closely associated with the historical turn in anthropology, which, while equally important, cannot be conducted at the same time with the project I set my heart on here, that is, developing an ethnography of the present.

Throughout this thesis, my intention has been to take into serious account the marginal status of the Bunun in the wider Taiwanese society, without overstating the power of the state and creating an impression of their permanent victimisation. Therefore, I have emphasised how the Bunun can sustain an active role in their relationship with powerful others. I have examined how the Bunun read and make sense of their situation, and the ways in which the Bunun create 'agentive moments' for themselves. While this is a common concern shared with other marginality studies, the Bunun case is specific in several aspects. It is to the specificity of the Bunun case, and its theoretical implications, that I now turn.

Reconsidering marginality

As I have pointed out in the Introduction, the concepts of marginalisation and marginality have been employed by various writers to explore the interplay of multiple forms of asymmetrical power relations in the production of human conditions. Marginality is understood as a theoretical concept which offers a comprehensive understanding of the multiple dimensions of power relations, rather than their reduction to any single dimension along the lines of race, class or gender. This emphasis on power is accompanied by a tendency to destabilise it by bestowing on the marginalised agency

¹ The notion of 'internal colonialism', as pointed out by Hechter (1975: 8-9) was firstly used by V. I. Lenin in an empirical investigation of national development. Later, it was discussed by A. Gramsci.

and autonomy. Marginality is seen less as a disadvantageous structural position, and more as a source of resistance, critique and empowerment. Autonomy and empowerment is often considered to be achieved through opposition to the centre, or by inversion of mainstream practices.

I have shown that the present-day Bunun respond to the state, and its appropriation of their history and tradition, in a characteristically non-confrontational or non-oppositional way. They regard protest and resistance as the worst way of making their needs and demands known to the government, and strongly prefer negotiation and 'talking things over nicely'. In the preceding chapters, I have also demonstrated that the Bunun are very able at rendering foreign things, such as Christianity and certain Han-Chinese customs, familiar and even indigenous. This is probably linked to their relative 'lack of political closedness', as described by Mabuchi (1974: 195), or the 'eclectic' character of their culture, as described by Shepherd (1993: 30). The Bunun's response to encapsulation by more powerful ethnic groups is not one of resistance through the inversion of mainstream practices. Rather, they attempt to negotiate a better position for themselves by constructing an image of an encompassing state through idioms of kinship and leadership, and by placing themselves within the protective aura of the mainstream. Such responses, I have suggested, are in no way less active.

If the Bunun's current response to their situation is not resistance, can we describe it as accommodation, bearing in mind that Nugent (1999) has criticised the literature on marginality for assuming that the response of the subaltern has only two trajectories: accommodation or resistance? I think accommodation is not the most pertinent description because it seems too one-sided. I suggest that the relationship between the Bunun and the powerful others is one of *dynamic engagement*, in which there is always a potential for transformation. It is in this way that the Bunun are involved in, and come to comprehend, the changes taking place in their world.

The Bunun escape the usual characterisations of marginal peoples, as described in Day et al. (1999a) and some other literature. They do not live resolutely in opposition to the mainstream and in the short term, nor are they preoccupied with resistance. Nor is their response to encapsulation merely accommodation or adaptation. Instead, the Bunun are resourceful and creative in finding different suitable ways of interacting and engaging with the state, the dominant ethnic group and the mainstream culture in different historical contexts. They have avoided the lowland Ch'ing China state and sustained their political autonomy by constant movement and retreating into the

mountainous areas. They have resisted the Japanese through headhunting. They have also used compliance and cooperation as means to open up space for negotiation with the state, to better their own position and to transform the world in which they live. Therefore, the previous theorizations of the socially and politically marginalized groups do not really illuminate much about the Bunun's situation. I suggest that this is because of the lack of a historical perspective and an understanding of the relationship between the past and the present, which can help us to avoid simplified essentialisation, in most marginality studies.

Day et al. (1999) highlight the ethnographic phenomena of 'living in the present', which they regard to be widespread in the socially marginal groups in the world. 'Living in the present' or 'living for the moment' is a specific set of attitudes towards time, in which the present or the short term is transformed into a transcendental escape from time itself. The achievement of a permanent, timeless present involves an exceptional inversion of mainstream practices, and it constitutes an effective cultural and political critique. Moreover, the marginal groups they study imagine the present as other people imagine the future or the past: It is a source of joy and satisfaction. Through their fundamental commitment to living each day as it comes, these people invert their marginal status and translate it into freedom and autonomy. As a result of their refusal to be caught in any framework or institutions that organise long-term social reproduction and, simultaneously, produce hierarchical relationships, people who live in the present find it difficult, or even impossible, to reproduce themselves. Nor is it easy for them to pass their values and achievements to a new generation. At the same time, living in the present makes people, as emblems abstracted from all historical context and relations, peculiarly vulnerable to appropriation by others.

I think this romanticised depiction of marginal people, though vivid and attractive, is problematic in claiming that those who 'live for the present' are determined to disengage themselves from any long-term relationships, and are least concerned with the past and the future. It makes the difficulties they face in reproducing themselves seem to be the consequence of their choice and action. I have pointed out that the Bunun also face the problem of social reproduction, however, it is more a result of their structural position than their own choice. Many of the difficulties they face in reproducing themselves are created by the state and the wider politico-economic circumstances. I also want to suggest that the past and the future have a more significant role to play. As Day et al. themselves recognise, the 'living-for-the-present' moments

are in fact fleeting and are coloured through and through by a sense of loss. If these marginal peoples are not concerned with the past and the long-term at all, why would they experience a strong sense of loss and why would reproduction be important?

As I have argued, the Bunun differ from the characterisation by Day et al. of marginal peoples in most aspects. However, it is also clear from the preceding chapters that the Bunun share with them a sense of loss. In the concluding section, I want to draw more attention to affective qualities such as loss, displacement and powerlessness, and suggest that they are an integral part of how the Bunun experience history.

‘Structures of feeling’ as historical consciousness

Throughout this thesis, I have tried to convey the affective qualities of the Bunun’s experience. In the discussion about the trip to Lamatasinsin, I have shown how hunting, drinking and singing create certain emotional states which help to bring to the surface ancestral memories. Feelings are important to remembering because they inform the ways in which people relate to their world at large, including the social environment, the landscape and the presence of spirits. They also play a central part in how the past is experienced by the individual through collective action. In the chapter on cultural performances and the recreation of tradition, I have demonstrated that the loneliness experienced by the Bunun under certain circumstances, such as performing for tourists or being told by the Han-Chinese how to adjust their singing to newly invented dances, is closely associated with loss and displacement. I have argued that this sense of loneliness, loss and displacement are what Raymond Williams calls ‘structures of feeling’, and that they are significant to how the Bunun come to comprehend the changes taking place and their historical situations. As pointed out by Williams (1973: 35), structures of feeling are a particular kind of reaction to the fact of change. They should be taken as *social* experience, rather than ‘personal’ experience or as the merely superficial or incidental ‘small change’ of society (Williams 1977: 131, original emphasis). I have taken these affective elements of experience seriously, and, in the chapters on spirit mediumship and death, continued to highlight the connection between them and the way the Bunun think about themselves in a changing world.

My purpose has been to convey, as Williams defines it, a particular quality of social experience, historically distinct from other particular qualities, which gives the sense of a generation or of a period. This is not an easy task, since such feeling and

thinking are not fully articulated and defined by the Bunun themselves. However, I do not want to ignore or erase them from the story, because they provide an important way to understand what history means to the Bunun. I am not talking about the question of 'how history happens' or how new events are culturally mediated, understood, and absorbed; but about how the relation of past to present is locally formulated and understood in the present, and how the past articulates with the present to give a particular shape and form to time — a characteristic historicity or historical consciousness (Lambek 1998: 106). As Clark (2001: xxviii) has said, it is not change itself but a particular attitude to the past that affects local historical consciousness. I argue that the feelings of loneliness, loss, displacement, powerlessness and ambivalence are powerful expressions and evocations of how the Bunun experience the history of their colonisation, and of how they are marginalised by powerful others, although they themselves do not articulate it in these words.

Having said that, I do not mean that these structures of feeling are an existential state in which the Bunun constantly reside. They are a particular reaction to historical changes, but they surface or are evoked under certain circumstances. I suggest the recent change of government policy from assimilation to multiculturalism, the development of local cultural consciousness, and the renewed interest in, and contestation about, the ancestral past all contribute to highlight the feelings of ambivalence, uncertainty and ambiguity. However, one of the most remarkable things about the Bunun is that they are energetic, resilient, brave and humorous people. I do not want to reproduce a Han-Chinese stereotype about aboriginal peoples, that they are happy, fun-loving, live each day as it comes and do not worry about or plan for tomorrow.² What I am talking about is an incredible ability not to be weighed down by their suffering and predicaments, not to dwell on the gloomy situations of life, but react to them with strength and even witticism and lightness. I am extremely impressed by the way in which the Bunun can joke about their problems, as the following recollection about a typhoon that brought serious damages shows.

When the Hebe Typhoon approached Taiwan a couple of years ago, we were not sure whether it would hit Taiwan directly or not. We hoped that it would, because typhoons caused vegetable prices to rise sharply, and we would make a tidy profit. Also the month before the typhoon came, the weather was very dry and our water

² According to a government statistic on the living conditions of aboriginal peoples published in 1998, nearly 80 % of aboriginal peoples describe themselves as happy (United News, 21 Aug 1998). It is a sharp contrast to the high rate of depression among American Indian populations (O'Neil 1996: 5).

reserve was running low. A day before the typhoon arrived, my relative Tina Sokut looked at the sky and saw that it was bright and the clouds seemed to be moving away. She thought the typhoon was not coming, therefore, she went up to her roof terrace, and shouted loudly to ask *Dekanin* to make the typhoon come here. This was like what our ancestors did when they prayed for the rain. They just went up to the roof and shouted loudly to *Dekanin*. If the person who prayed had dream omens, it would work and the rain would come within an hour. It was the same when we wanted the rain to stop. Tina Sokut's prayer was very effective, the typhoon hit Taiwan that night. The next morning she woke up, opened her front door, and the entrance was blocked by mud and huge stones. The typhoon had caused landslides and her house was half-buried. The road was completely destroyed. We could not transport our vegetables to the market in the lowland, but left them to rot in the fields. But what could we do? Our hard work was completely wasted. Tina Sokut was very upset by the disaster, and shouted at *Dekanin*: "I asked for the typhoon and the rain, but not this much!" It is so funny when we think of how foolish it was to pray for the typhoon to come. But you see, we still work hard, look after the vegetables and hope to fetch a good price in the market this year.

For most of the time, the Bunun refuse to see themselves as victims or to indulge in self-pity. I suggest that it is an important way of achieving transcendence. In the chapters on Christianity and death, I have mentioned that the Bunun are not much concerned about individual salvation or afterlife. Also, they make little or no attempt to salvage life out of death, or to construct a permanent, transcendental world of ancestors. Transcendence is not sought in another world, but in this world. It is achieved through everyday things such as the laughter one shares with fellow workers in the field, the joy of making beautiful music together, the satisfaction of taking care of one's family. And, above all, the incredible ability to keep hope for the future.

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