

Stewart
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The topic of religious and ritual change, including conversion from one modality of practices to another, has emerged in recent years as a prime focus of scholarly attention in anthropology and related disciplines, such as history, sociology, political science and religious studies. Conversion to Christianity is one focus that has developed within this broad and dynamic field of investigations. This edited volume is a unique set of studies that explores this field further, with a doubly innovative approach. First, the chapters represent a collaboration of leading scholars from Taiwan and from the USA and Europe. Second, the studies involve a comparative dimension, juxtaposing work done among indigenous Austronesian minorities in Taiwan and work done in the Pacific Islands (Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands). Within this collection of essays, common processes of change are evident, while the importance of specific histories is revealed, and analytical and theoretical issues are probed and reviewed in ways that demonstrate their relevance to the overall dimensions of comparison. No other work in this arena of study has brought together scholars with such a comparative framework in mind. This volume is relevant for scholars and students of religious change generally, as well as those readers who are interested in the wider Asia-Pacific region, minority groups, Christianity, indigenous movements, and the socialization of the ritual body in contexts of historical and cosmological change.

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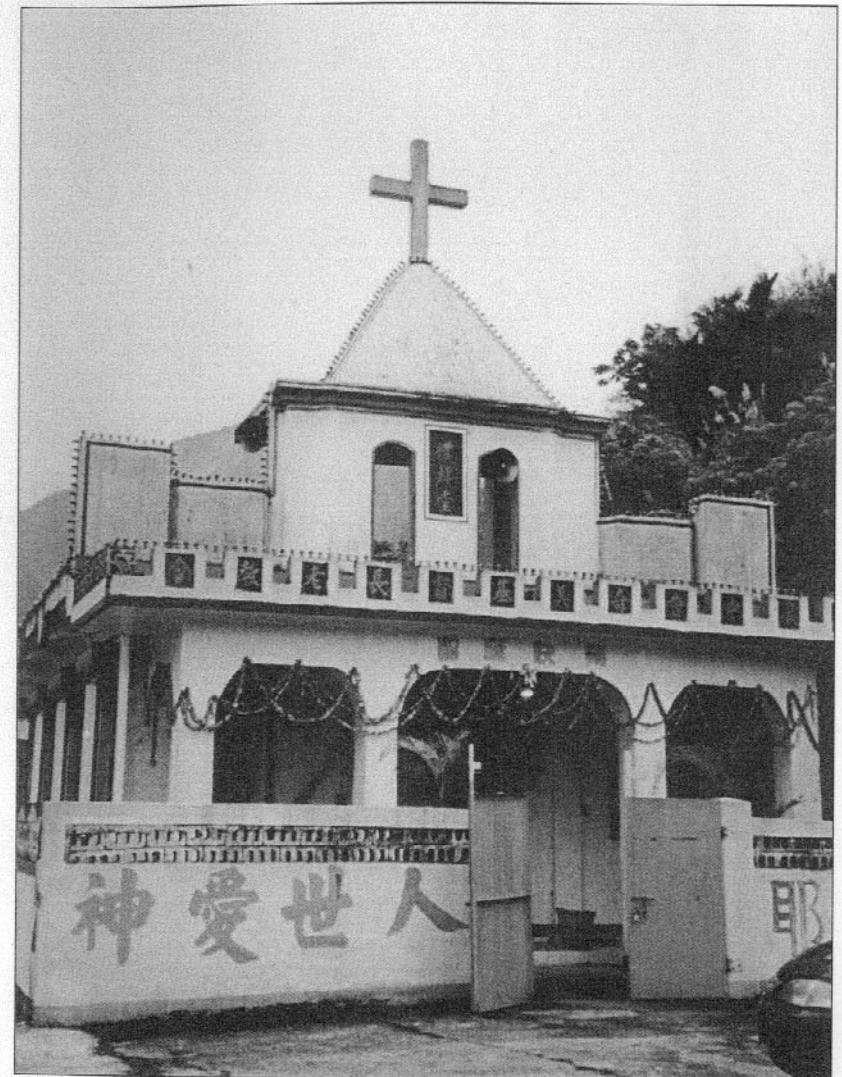
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RELIGIOUS AND RITUAL CHANGE
COSMOLOGIES AND HISTORIES

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Cover photo: the Kivisia church of the Bunun Presbytery, Presbyterian Church of Taiwan, Christmas, 2003. Inscriptions on the church read "God loves everyone" and "Jesus loves you". The church stands in mountainous country between Hualien and Taitung, south-east Taiwan. (Thanks to Shih-hsiang Sung for help in identifying this photograph, which was taken on a field journey with Yi-tze Lee from Taitung to Hualien). (Photo P. J. Stewart / A. Strathern Archive)

To those persons who show kindness to others,
respecting them for themselves.

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6

ANIMAL SKULL COLLECTING AMONG THE KAVALAN OF TAIWAN: GENDER, MASCULINITY, MALE-FEMALE POWER, AND CHRISTIAN CONVERSION

Liu Pi-chen

Introduction

This chapter deals with the gendered religious, economic and political implications surrounding the ritual practices of *Saliman* among the Kavalan of Taiwan, focusing on the interplay between external forces and the internal dynamics of the Kavalan social system. *Saliman* is an animal spirit which symbolically connects human and animal headhunting. The chapter will also explain the transformations in *Saliman* practices which have taken place since the beginning of the 19th century as a result of contact with Han immigrants, the Qing and Japanese states, Christian missionaries, and recent changes in inter-ethnic relations in Taiwan. I will particularly focus on the links between symbolic practices of *Saliman* and the social construction of masculinity: its strategic role in the organization of hierarchical relations between women and men, its use among the men as an expression of social tension, and how it is deployed to establish masculine power and leadership.

The place men occupy in Kavalan society is very different from the position they have in societies characterized as big men and great men societies of Melanesia (A. Strathern 1971, 1993; M. Godelier 1982). Before the arrival of

the Han, the Kavalan were a matrilineal and matrilocal/uxorilocal society in which there was no transfer of women or men against marriage payments. This means there was no relation of equivalence between women or men and material property. This social organization was profoundly transformed by the arrival of large numbers of Han immigrants into the Kavalan homelands of I-Lan at the end of the eighteenth century. The patrilineal practices of the new Han immigrants were institutionalized by the Qing state in the nineteenth century and by the Japanese colonial government in the early twentieth century.

In the 1960s, only one Kavalan village in Hualien county,¹ with a population of about 300 persons, was still practicing “the exchange of men” in marriage. In this village, PatoRogan, the production of rice—the main source of subsistence and wealth in the Kavalan economy—was shared, and rice was symbolically redistributed between members of the local groups during the initiation rites of the shaman women (*Kisaiz*) and the annual shamanic rites (*Pakelabi*), this practice being the central factor in social reproduction. The Kavalan women retained property (i.e. land ownership) and had a position of power in the culture of rice and in rituals.

Because men were marginalized in terms of the accumulation of wealth, they were seen as not having vested interests in material conflicts within the village and thus gained a certain degree of counter-power as supposedly neutral arbitrators, maintaining the internal harmony of the village. But not every man could acquire this kind of power. It was obtained through competition among men who had to display their physical prowess and their leadership ability within their age group and in other activities such as hunting (Liu 2004). This competition served as a basis for the reproduction of social relations. “Headman”, “warrior” and “great hunter” were the three prestigious status positions men sought to obtain through competition. This chapter intends to elucidate the symbolic representation of *Saliman* associated with great hunters and its dynamic change in order to understand the logic of the production of men’s power. It will enable us to get a clearer view of the social process guiding the formation of the men’s various powers and the characteristics of these powers.

After Japan started to rule Taiwan in 1895, the practice of human head-hunting was banned. Peace was maintained by the state and, as a consequence, the practice gradually vanished.² But the belief in *tazusa* (spirits/souls)

1. After the Han arrival, most of the Kavalan migrated south from I-Lan county to Hualien on the East coast.

2. On details of headhunting, see Liu 2004: 151–181. A man could not gain merit from headhunting anymore. But he could get prestige through his “accomplishments” as a soldier in the Japanese and, after, the Kuomintang army.

who reside in both human and animal heads persisted under pluralistic imagined forms over time. Today, only a few Kavalan continue to collect the skulls or jaws of deer, wild pigs and muntjacs (small barking deer) killed while hunting. But, following the multiple contacts with Han migrants and missionaries, most of the inhabitants in PatoRogan village³ started to mix different symbolic systems—as with the adaptation of the Han’s Earth God (*Toligong*)—or to switch to another one, notably when they converted to Christianity at the end of the 1950s. The introduction of Christianity to the Kavalan village of PatoRogan also had a deep impact on the belief in the *Saliman* rituals and their links to hierarchy. Since missionaries regarded the *Saliman* as “Spirits” (thus reflecting animistic practices, which are incompatible with the monotheism of Christianity), they forbade Kavalan disciples to collect animal heads and to practice the rituals relating to the *Saliman*. Nevertheless, in interviews conducted in PatoRogan in 1993–2000 and 2004–2006, I noticed that, even nowadays, a great number of persons still tell stories about how they were “bitten” (*genaga*) by a *Saliman*. Most of the village’s inhabitants have had at least one such experience, of which some were very recent. In other words, most of the Kavalan still believe in the existence of *Saliman* and in their power, even after the skulls have disappeared from the village. The ideology is still alive in the society, despite the lack of physical objects to support it and despite the widespread conversion to Christianity.

In fact, from a political viewpoint, since the Japanese colonial period the Kavalan were regarded as Sinicized people or part of the Amis.⁴ Before 2002, they did not have their own administrative status as a unique Aboriginal ethnic group. Various political changes—the lifting of the martial law, the democratization of Taiwan, the rise of Taiwanese nationalism promoting a multiethnic society as a contrast with China—generated a reconfiguration in ethnic relations in which the Kavalan used *Saliman* and traditional hunting life as cultural tools to express their own identity and to seek recognition by Taiwanese society. We will analyse how the belief in *Saliman* accommodated and interacted with these social changes throughout this long period of time.

3. Shin-she in Chinese, on the East coast, Hualien County.

4. The Amis are another group of aborigines, who have been officially recognized since the time of Japanese colonial government.

1. Hunting and the Construction of Masculine Identity and Personhood

In order to better understand the Kavalan's conception of *Saliman*, we must first understand the hunting practices of Kavalan men. Since the Japanese colonial rulers (1895~) controlled the arms and forest lands and expanded rice production as a central part of the colonial economy, hunting was banned. But the Kavalan living in PatoRogan continue to hunt in secret. There are two popular hunting techniques which they use. One is to set up a trap (*temikas*, *tikas*) and catch the wild pig (*babuy*), deer (*mulimun/siRmuq*) and muntjac (*palizbe*) by ensnaring its neck or foot. The Kavalan also hunt in groups of about five or six persons, armed with shotguns and dogs (called *semaraw*). Because hunting in a group is less discreet this practice has almost disappeared since hunting became illegal. Nowadays, only six hunters remain out of the three hundred people living in the village. Each one can catch two or three wild pigs or muntjacs a year.

In the 1980s, the arrival of modern transportation and new agricultural techniques caused many young people to leave PatoRogan to find jobs in Taipei and other urban areas. Even though some of them are now coming back to the village, having lost their construction jobs due to competition with underpaid foreign labor, agriculture remains a secondary economic activity, and hunting is even more marginalized as an economic activity. Hunting is not considered as a priority in the annual repartition of the village's tasks or as part of the subsistence economy. New economic opportunities have introduced new forms of male prestige within the society. Nevertheless, hunting remains a fundamental element in the symbolic construction of masculine identity, functioning as the basis of male power and interpersonal relationships. This is unlike agriculture which, although men actively contribute to the cultivation of rice, is still considered the woman's domain. They sow and control the harvest of the rice.

Indeed, male identity is rooted in several hunting associated practices: the male hunting group which leaves the "women's world" (the house, *lepaw*) for a period of "independent life" in the mountains, the exclusive right to breed dogs, the use of certain tools (i.e. hunting weapons such as spears, knives, shotguns, etc.), and the right to dispose of the animals caught on the hunt. Such game is a marker of Kavalan male identity because it cannot be "produced" (by domestication, or breeding) or be brought back to the village by women. Furthermore, there is an analogy between the game that is brought back and a man's life. For example, in myth a young Kavalan man is described as a

deer which runs freely in the forest. During the headhunting ritual *Qataban*, a deer can substitute for a man's life. In other words, a wild animal and an unmarried man have symbolically an equivalent value. Married man, on the other hand, is represented as a domestic animal—a rooster which is raised and killed by woman as a sacrificial offering to ancestors, during the *Palilin* ritual, through a violent process which is a symbolic representation of the woman's control over her husband. This point is essential to the construction of gendered personhood. Each of the two sexes brings different "products" to the *lepaw* (house). A man comes back to his house bringing what he caught while hunting or fishing, whereas a woman brings back the products of her gathering, collected shells and seaweed, and above all, the harvest of rice and tubers. Before the 1970s the rice produced by the women was the main staple and thus represented wealth. On the other hand, the skulls and jaws hanging in the kitchen, the trees around the house and in the mountains, are a display of a man's capacity, prestige/social status and fertility—in a word, his masculinity. Furthermore, the spirit who lodges inside the animal skull—the *Saliman*—can belong only to men. Women cannot even approach the skull.

Thus, even though hunting has been marginalized by the arrival of rice cultivation and industrialization, and even though men and women nowadays may bring back the same unmarked product (money) to their house, hunting is still a central element in the reproduction of the Kavalan's system of gender representation and notions of personhood.

2. Objectification of Desire and Intent

Every man can go out hunting but not everyone can return with game each time. Thus, game is coveted by all men. It is not only a question of subsistence (bringing food in to the house), it is also a confirmation of a man's capability, a symbol of his fortune, and a means to get prestige. I have frequently heard hunters complaining in those terms: "unfortunately I couldn't catch any game" or: "my hands are dirty, that's why I cannot catch any game". What is the logic behind such discourse? For the Kavalan, success at hunting cannot be guaranteed by effort and technical prowess alone. To ensure a successful hunt, fortune as expressed by the symbol of "clean hands" is central. They believe that a supernatural force (the *Saliman*) can provide them with the fortune they need. For them, this supernatural force is a concrete one, even though humans cannot see it. Because it is invisible, the Kavalan use symbols in order to establish contact with this force, allowing them to describe and interpret its intentions and actions. In other words, these symbols are a kind of interface,

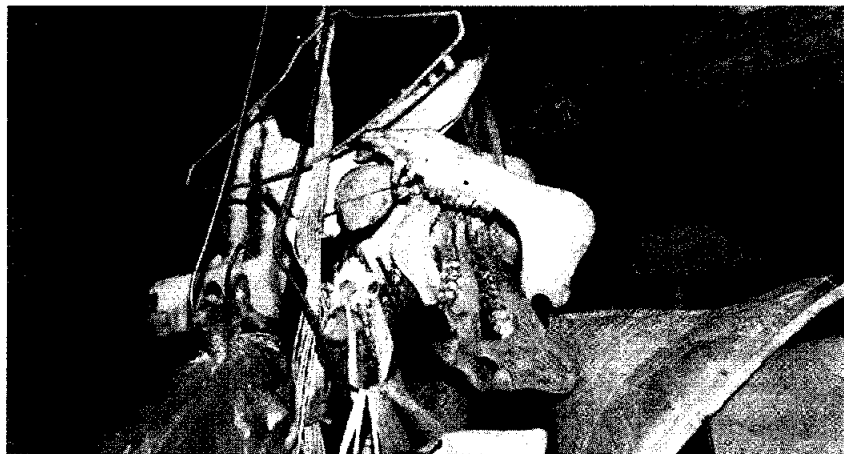


Figure 1. *Saliman* bone shrine in kitchen, Kavalan, Taiwan.

connecting human beings and the supernatural without using spoken language. To use Maurice Godelier's expression, it is a "ventriloquist machine" (Godelier 1982). Although this force does not materialize to communicate directly with the Kavalan using language, they can understand what it means through their shared symbolic representations. This meaning is revealed through the course of daily events and personal experiences. How this meaning is revealed and interpreted will now be explained through an analysis of the social construction of the *Saliman*.

When a young man starts to learn how to hunt, his father and/or grandfather show him how to *paspaw do Saliman*—"make a *Saliman*"—which is to ensure a successful hunt. After he catches his first game with them, they take it back to the village alive. They call a *Mtiu* (shaman woman) who touches the blood of the game with the wooden stick used for *Subli* (divinatory rituals). After that, one of the experienced hunters cuts off the head of the animal and boils it separately, before taking off the flesh and the skin, keeping only a "clean" skull. The next day, the same man puts the skull into a basket placed in the corner of the kitchen, which already contains the skulls of the game hunted by his father or grandfather. Then, his father cuts the heart and liver of the animal into small pieces and pours some rice wine on the ground, murmuring

[Below, 1st line of text, Kavalan language; 2nd line of text, word by word literal presentation; 3rd line of text, translation]:

Yau aisui niyana ku dangi temikas sanui qa ya kabu su
Be you win me now set up a trap talk with your friends

I caught you in my trap, now you are here; you have to go to talk with your friends.

gaizi tazian galisinbu takawasan ku,
live here together in my basket
so they can come to live here together with you, in my basket

yau benanuma ku tatai ka isu alanaba Saliman ku.
Have plantations me to watch over you bite *Saliman* my
My *Saliman*, watch over the plantations (and if a thief comes) bite him.

These spells establish the relations between a hunter, the head of the game/*Saliman* kept in the kitchen of the hunter's house, and the game he hopes to catch during a future hunting. Men feed the head of the animal hunted through *spaw* (rituals), hoping that its spirit (*tazusa*) will then gradually lodge inside the skull. The hunter expects that the "domesticated" spirit will "go back to its home" to call its "friends and kinsfolk". If other spirits respond to this call, their body will follow. A hunter can get a confirmation of the efficiency of his newly domesticated spirit during the next hunt. If he catches game, it will mean that his supernatural force is functioning. A *Saliman* does not exist by itself, like the sun or the moon, but through the action of the hunter. It is created by the hunter who takes it from nature and "domesticates" it. Then it becomes the objectification of his desire and intent.

3. *Saliman* as Agency of Male Personal Power

Kavalan attribute a double character to the *Saliman*. It is both half-savage and half-domesticated. Its savage part comes from the game, whereas its domesticated part comes from the dog. Because the *Saliman*, just like the game and the dog, is imagined as a living being, it has intentions. The hunter answers and behaves according to his interpretation of those intentions. Thus, the relation that links a man to a *Saliman* will have some close similarities with the one existing between a master and his dog. The hunter hopes that the *Saliman* will stay in his service, as a tool of power.

From a Kavalan perspective, the savage character of the *Saliman* is not only related to the symbolic function of attracting game. The *Saliman* is also regarded as aggressive. It "attacks" not only the hunted game but also humans. As Kavalan often say, the more "savage" a *Saliman* is, that is to say the more it *genaga* (bites) people, the more efficient it will be in attracting game into the traps the hunter sets up. The efficiency of a *Saliman* is thus measured through the number of people it bites. We can see here that the *Saliman* is not only

connected to hunting and animist beliefs, but is also has an important role in the network of social relations.

The agency of the *Saliman* expressed through its ability to "bite" people is an essential part of the hunter's own agency within his social network. A man's power is built on the imagined aggressiveness and violence of the *Saliman*. Everybody is afraid to be "bitten" (*genaga*) by a *Saliman*, as this results in *tagau* (extreme physical pain). A series of thirty interviews with "bitten" persons has revealed that, most of the time, the "symptoms of the bite" appear on parts of the body which touched the tools or goods of a *Saliman*'s master. For example, someone's hands swell because they touched the hunter's knife, another one's back hurts because it is where a knife was hung, a person's teeth hurt because they ate stolen fruits, etc. To find out whose *Saliman* is at the origin of the bite, the bitten person must appeal to a *Mtiu* who will make a diagnosis. Then, the ill person must buy one bottle of alcohol and ask the master of the *Saliman* to do a ritual called *Pasniu*: the hunter must breathe on the part that hurts and say to his *Saliman* to stop biting the person. After the ritual, the victim will slowly recover. Here, we can clearly see that the power of a man is expressed through imagined violence on the physical body through sickness and fear.

To push the analysis further, we have to answer two questions: what are the characteristics of a *Saliman*'s power and what does this power "say" through these characteristics? A comparative perspective can help us answer these questions. The Kavalan are not the only people to have this kind of politico-religious belief in animal spirits. It is also found among all the other Austronesian peoples in Taiwan. It is noteworthy that some patrilineal ethnic groups like the Tsou put the animal heads or jaws inside the *Monopesia* (ancestral house), which is shared by many members of different houses of the same patrilineal descent category. In contrast, traditionally matrilineal and uxorilocal societies such as the Kavalan or their neighbors the Amis put them in a corner of the kitchen that is a strictly forbidden area, which no one may approach. It is considered as a taboo (*prisin*) to get close to this place. In other words, in Kavalan society, the *Saliman* strictly stays in the private sphere. It does not belong to the public sphere, such as the men's house (*siRodan*). It is the "property" of an individual hunter, and is not shared with other men, even within his own house or village.

In the text of the spell addressed to the *Saliman* (transcribed above in section 2), it appears clear that a *Saliman* belongs to one and only one hunter. A hunter gives his *Saliman* orders and this *Saliman* can't be shared. That is why this imagined animal spirit is part of a man's personal power. However, a man cannot use his *Saliman* as a means to build formal authority to control and dispose of the forest resources. His political power is very limited. The distri-

bution of hunting territories and the hunting itself are organized through consensus, not on the basis of personal power. Nor can every man have his own *Saliman*. When a young man is not yet an adult and still lives in the house of his parents, the skulls of the animals he hunted belong to his father, who is the only one in the house to own a basket and to practice the rituals. When a man marries he goes to live in his wife's parent's house. There the skulls belong to his father-in-law. It is only when he has children and thus is able to build a new house that he can finally have his own *Saliman*. In other words, a man has no social status until he has his first child; only then is he "authorized" to have his own *Saliman*.

Despite the fact that the *Saliman* is unique to an individual, the symbolic representation of the *Saliman* is also the foundation for constructing the relationship between a father and his son, or a father-in-law and his son-in-law. The *Saliman* is imagined in such a way as to help avoid competition within a house, between a young man who benefits from the strength of youth and his older, more experienced, father/father-in-law. The former is denied access to the power and authority a *Saliman* provides to the older men. The hierarchy set up through the "ownership" of a *Saliman* replaces the competition that would otherwise have occurred within a family. Nevertheless, even when there is no competition, the uniqueness of a *Saliman*'s presence in the house creates a tension between the men of the village. They must behave in a way that will allow them to accommodate this situation while maintaining the internal harmony of the house. These behaviors are necessary because the society evaluates the men through them. Their social status and their formation of self depends on their capacity to maintain harmony.

During fieldwork, I often heard women complaining about discord between their husband and father. For example, I asked the father of one of these women to explain the reason why there was tension with his son in law. He answered that it is because of a gap between their life styles. His son-in-law does not want to go hunting in the mountains. When asked the same question, the son-in-law answered that he preferred to go fishing, as it gives him a greater sense of achievement. The tension lies in the asymmetry between the father/father-in-law and the son/son-in-law. The former can acquire prestige thanks to their *Saliman*, whereas the latter cannot and has to find other ways to handle the situation and avoid conflict. For example, as construction workers in urban areas young men can earn money, thus creating new forms of prestige associated with economic success. They often call themselves the "hunters on the scaffolds". Thus, the *Saliman* does not contribute to creating solidarity between the men belonging to the same house, or to the same village.

Furthermore, a *Saliman* cannot be transmitted from a father to his son. Therefore, every man has to do his utmost to have his own *Saliman* in order to achieve social status. Thus, the idea of the *Saliman* puts at stake each hunter's ability to capture game within a network of individual competition. The power of the hunter depends on his personal hunting skills and a concept of "fortune" linked to his *Saliman*. Male power among the Kavalan does not work on the basis of heritage but is acquired through competition and accumulation of prestige between individuals.

This differs, for instance, from the collective relationship maintained with the forest spirit and his daughter, imagined as animal spirits, by hunters in some Siberian patrilineal societies (Hamayon 1990, 1996). All the members of the community and all the hunters share this relationship. In these Siberian societies, a shaman has to be a hunter and therefore, a man. To a large extent, he becomes a shaman specifically to practice the collective rituals that ensure successful hunting. In Kavalan society, on the other hand, there is no collective ritual for hunting and not everybody can become a hunter. The relationship between hunter and game and between hunter and nature (the forest) stays at an individual level because of the logic of competition.

4. Logic of Competition between Men and Its Adaptation to the Han Belief in *Toligong*

Outside of *lepaw* (the house), the Kavalan's conception of the *Saliman* results in a double logic of competition among the men in a village: competition for hunting territory and game is closely linked to competition for social status within the village. Kavalan believe that a *Saliman* helps hunters to compete with other men in search for game within the common territory of the forest. Each hunter hopes that his *Saliman* will "provide" him with more game by "calling" its fellow creatures. The observation of symbolic practices shows that the competition between men is undertaken through rational calculation. For example, when the skull of an animal is hung in the corner of the kitchen, at the intersection of two walls and the ceiling, it symbolizes a simultaneous presence and surveillance of the three planes that represent the hunting territories. The hunter's intention is to extend the area of his hunting territory to the fullest extent possible.

In addition to extending hunting territory, *Saliman* can also be used to increase the quantity of captured game. In preparation for a future hunt, a man will make a basket (*kawas*) with bamboo and hang it on the backside of the house, outside the kitchen, under the eaves. He will then put the jaws of every animal

he has previously captured inside the basket. The more jaws piled up, the better his next hunt will be. Indeed, Kavalan hope that this accumulation will result in an increase of the number of animals caught.

The other form of competition takes place in the selection of hunting territory. Nobody owns a piece of territory, but every year, each man chooses one through a negotiation that ends in a collective consensus among hunters. Most of the time, a man will not go hunting on the same territory from one year to another. Furthermore, there is no clear delineation of the different territories (no hedge or natural marks). Once every hunter has chosen his territory, each will place an animal skull on a stone or hang it to a tree to indicate that it is the area where he hunts and that it is a restricted area, under the surveillance of a *Saliman*. In a sense, a *Saliman* is a kind of weapon that enables a man to "show off" his might. Nevertheless, this practice does not exclude the possibility of overlapping territories. In that case, the hunters involved hope their respective *Saliman* will "solve the problem". They will compete to attract the game on the overlapping area. But, while tracking down an animal, if a man comes too close to someone else's *Saliman*, he may be "bitten".

This system of representation is not fixed, or immobile. It is dynamic. Indeed, the arrival of the Han triggered a conflict for land that put Kavalan men in front of a new situation: areas where they used to go hunting were occupied by Han farmers and they had to find solutions to catch game on smaller and smaller areas of territory. It meant that the competition between them gradually intensified. These new hunting conditions are directly connected to the way Kavalan accepted the Han's *Toligong*⁵ (Earth God) and adapted them to their own needs in the competition for game. For Kavalan, a *Toligong* is a mountain spirit in charge of the game. They also think that Han are more powerful than Kavalan because their *Toligong* are stronger than their own spirits. That is why some of the hunters started to use *Toligong* to help them compete with other hunters' *Saliman*.

Kavalan told me that only ambitious hunters who want to have more game use a *Toligong*. Furthermore, these hunters only use traps. They have to pay a Han shaman (*Tangi*) to "create" a *Toligong*. To do so, when the hunter has chosen his hunting territory for the year, he has to find a big living tree at what they call the "entrance of the mountain". Then he hangs creepers on its branches before the *Tangi* does the ritual using rice wine, incense and betel nuts. Then the shaman does *buabue* (divination) to ask the spirit to live in the tree.

Whereas a hunter has to kill the first animal he catches every year if he wants a new *Saliman* to lodge in its skull, a man using a *Toligong* does not. He just

5. *Toligong* is the Hoklo language term and *Tudigong* is the Mandarin Chinese term.

cuts an ear of the first trapped game of the year before letting it go. When the animal is caught a second time, it indicates that the "contract" with the *Toligong* is over. This is a message sent by the spirit to the hunter, saying there is no more game in the mountains. The *Toligong* will not "give" game anymore to the hunter who has to call a *Tangi* to release it from the tree. Nevertheless, some of my informers told me they did not abide by this obligation. They did not let the *Toligong* go and continued to set traps.

Kavalan think a *Toligong* that was not freed after breaking the contract will "come back" for revenge. He will "ask" the hunter to "give a life back". The death of a man who spat blood before dying was explained in these terms. According to Kavalan, he was stricken by a "*Toligong* illness". Here we see again that in the Kavalan symbolic system, animal and human lives can substitute for each other. If a hunter does not catch game in his traps, he will take action against his *Toligong* to "threaten" it. He will beat the creepers with a piece of wood or tighten them to hurt the *Toligong*.

The concept of the Kavalan *Toligong* appears to work as a kind of regulatory mechanism between nature and human beings. First, it sends information to the hunter about the level of available resources in the mountains; second it has the power to take a hunter's life to punish him for not respecting its warning about the depletion of game. The utilization of *Toligong* for its perceived "higher power" also reveals the strategy by which the Kavalan adapted to the arrival of the Han population; specifically, the reduction of the hunting territory and the rarefaction of game. The use of a *Toligong* involves a rational calculation based on the compatibility between this new spirit and the *Saliman*. They co-exist in the logic of competition for game.

In a comparative perspective, the symbolic practice of *Toligong* differs from the relation between a Kavalan man and his *Saliman*. If a man does not catch any game he will not make his *Saliman* responsible and will not torture it. Thus, for Kavalan, whereas a *Toligong* can be controlled through coercion, a *Saliman* cannot. Human beings and *Saliman* maintain a relation on an equal footing; they are inter-dependent and therefore they have to preserve harmony.

In addition to competition for game, the other form of competition is about the acquisition of a social status in the village. The Kavalan think that there is one very strong *Saliman* with extraordinary capacities by far surpassing those of any other *Saliman* in the village. There exists a competition between the *Saliman*. The most powerful is the one who "bites" the most people, which is associated with its capacity to "bring back" more game. The "owner" of this *Saliman* will therefore be the best hunter, the strength of whose *Saliman* will be feared and respected by the other inhabitants. In the past the strongest hunter among the men in the village would be in direct competition with the

best headhunter and the *Tomu* (headman, chief of the village) for prestige. This competition is a means to establish a hierarchy among all the men.

A parallel appears with the fear inspired by the great headhunter warriors of the past. In both cases, the power of death is the source of fear and respect, and causing death (killing/using violence) is a means through which a man can reach social promotion. Again we find that male power and hierarchy among the Kavalan work on the basis of competition and accumulation of prestige between individuals.

5. Reproduction of the Symbolic Representation System and the Impact of Christian Conversion

Two other important characteristics can be found in the Kavalan social imagination of the *Saliman*. First, it is a living creature that searches for food (it is active) and thus needs to be fed by the hunter (to keep it passive). Second, with time, it will become old and its capacity to bring back game will weaken. These conceptions are linked with a relation of exchange that must be repeated frequently between a man and his *Saliman*. We will first look at the reasons behind this indispensability of repetition and then address the question of the exchange that constrains the hunter to feed the *Saliman* as he would do with a domesticated animal.

The main reason why the exchange has to be repeated lies in the imagined ephemeral nature of a *Saliman*. A hunter cannot keep a *Saliman* eternally and he cannot pass it to another person. When a *Saliman* gets "older" its "power" decreases, so it has to be replaced. Therefore, to hang the skull of the first hunted game is not sufficient to ensure an eternally abundant hunt. Without continuing efforts, its "master" cannot keep a *Saliman*. Thus, the idea of *Saliman* involves the capability and the perseverance of each individual hunter. He has to continue to accumulate the skulls and the jaws of the game he kills each year in order to change the head of the animal which is hung in the kitchen and where the *Saliman* lodges.

When necessary, a hunter hangs the head of the game caught during the first hunt of the year and brings the former one outside to hang on a tree planted around the *lepaw* (house) or in the mountain. From the moment a skull is brought out of the kitchen, it cannot be reintroduced. One can find an important symbolic function to this practice: it is the renewal of the vitality and the force which will ensure the perpetuity of game presence. In fact, unless the head hung in the kitchen "brings/attracts" a lot of game, it is replaced regularly, almost every year, and more often if the new head is not "efficient." I think it is possible to under-

stand better the logic that is hidden behind this practice of renewal by comparing it with the Kavalan use of hunting dogs. The idea of *Saliman* is partially constructed through the experience of hunting with dogs. Like a hunting dog, the *Saliman* must bring back game, watch his master's goods, and bite the thief.

Kavalan attribute a double character to the *Saliman*: as an object (game) and a tool (imagined as a dog) of the hunt. Like the game and the dog, the *Saliman* is imagined as a living creature, which thus gets old. This representation forces each hunter to keep hunting in order to acquire a new *Saliman*. When men go hunting, it is not only an activity that will provide them with food through predation; it is also related to the reproduction of an entire system of representation.

A description of the hunting ritual will provide us with a better understanding of the concept of exchange in its similitude with the domestication of the *Saliman*. Each year, before leaving the village to go hunting in the mountains, the hunter must do a ritual (*pas paw*) in the kitchen, using rice wine. It is directed to the *Saliman* and does not need to be repeated before each hunt. A hunter who comes back from the first hunting of the year must, before he can enjoy the product of his hunt, cut the liver and the heart of the game into small pieces and add some rice wine before offering them to the *Saliman* that resides in the kitchen. If a hunter does not accomplish these obligations, Kavalan think the starving and thirsty *Saliman* will "bite" him, causing a *tagau* (physical pain). The *Saliman* may also cause accidents during the next hunt or make it unsuccessful.

By the same logic, if a man does not hunt for a long period of time, the *Saliman* will "retaliate" and the hunter will be struck by *tagau*. In other words, there is a reciprocal engagement, a kind of "imaginary contract" between the hunter and the *Saliman* imagined as solely carnivorous. It implies that the hunter must be able to provide the *Saliman* with the liver, heart and rice wine necessary to its feeding. In return, the *Saliman* will provide the hunter with game. Thus, this symbolic representation of *Saliman* establishes a relationship between humans and animals. Therefore, we are in presence of a cycle that cannot be broken by the man. Once he enters into a contract with the *Saliman*, he is constrained by it for life. He is forced to maintain a regular hunting activity to avoid being "punished". The necessity to repeat the exchange by itself reproduces the Kavalan system of symbolic representation.

This "imaginary contract" was broken by the arrival of Christian missionaries, though some of the men continued to hunt. As a consequence, the interdependency between a hunter and his *Saliman* was severed. I now take a look at the history of Christian conversion and the challenges it posed for the reproduction of *Saliman* practices and the production of male power and so-

cial hierarchy associated with it. To settle in Taiwan, the Christian missionaries associated with local political forces. Following the Chinese civil war, many Christian organizations were expelled from China. It was for this reason that they came to Taiwan to evangelize the island's population. Chiang Kai-shek, under whose leadership the KMT (Kuomintang) came to Taiwan from China, had himself converted to Christianity in 1929 in order to marry his Protestant wife, Soong Mei-ling. Because of this, and because the KMT was heavily supported by Christian groups in America, he was very open minded towards evangelization. But the Christian Church was not well received by the Hoklo and Hakka communities (80%–85% of the local population) whose members considered it to be the church of "the invaders and the savages" (Zheng 2006: 113). In other words, Christianity was considered by most of the people as the religion of the minority groups: mainlanders and aborigines. As a result Christianity has not had many converts and remains marginal to mainstream Taiwanese society. Nonetheless, the missionaries themselves said "it is almost a miracle" that they managed to convert half to two thirds of the Aborigines in such a short time. PatoRogan village was no exception. What motivated the Kavalan to convert to Christianity?

When I interviewed the Christian fathers from the M.E.P.⁶ who had been living there for more than 30 years, they recalled that in fact it is thanks to the Catholic center which gave food and clothes to people impoverished from the war time during the last years of Japanese rule that this miracle could take place. This was the same explanation given to me by Kavalan informants.⁷ I also discovered four additional reasons from my Kavalan informants: first, the Catholic missionaries learned the Kavalan language to facilitate communication and thus evangelization; second, before 1965, during the church services, the priest would speak only Latin⁸ and the Kavalan did not understand a word, but this was not unusual for them, as the *Mtiu* (Kavalan shaman) speaks and sings only in special language which cannot be understood by ordinary people. Third, the first impression of the Kavalan regarding the missionaries was very positive because it was associated with the distribution of food, a behavior that recalls the way their goddess Mutumazu is said to have saved the first Kavalan from starvation. Furthermore, Kavalan assimilated Mutumazu to the Virgin Mary. Fourth, the Catholic ceremonies

6. Mission étranger de Paris.

7. This explication can also be read in the church review *Fidès*, 11/04/1964 and in Chantal Zheng's research (2006).

8. The Second Ecumenical Council of Vatican (1962–1965) decided not to use Latin anymore in church services.

focused on key life-cycle events, such as birth, marriage and death which are also very important to the Kavalan. As a consequence of this local integration and the similarity to existing Kavalan rituals, they were not afraid to go to church.

But in the meantime the Catholic church in Europe expressed doubts about these quick conversions, as the Kavalan did not seem to have understood the catechism and did not obey monotheistic rules in their day to day life. So towards the end of the 1960s to 1970s Catholic missionaries became much stricter in their attitude towards traditional animist practices, such as shamanism and the *Saliman*. This new policy led some people to leave the church. Those who remained became part of the church establishment and in doing so anchored their position in the village.

Missionaries forbade Kavalan disciples to collect animal heads and practice the ritual to the *Saliman*. As a result the Kavalan began to conceive of “killing” the *Saliman*. They started to throw animal heads into the sea to “drown the spirits to death”. This act informs us how the Kavalan conceive of the *Saliman*: they live on the land and cannot be “killed” there. That is why they have to bring them out of their territory, to the sea, where they are “destroyable”. Furthermore, the “killing” of the *Saliman* indicates a contradiction between their daily behavior as Christians, and the persistence of a belief in *Saliman*. In fact, they still believe in the existence of *Saliman*. At the same time, although the “external form” of *Saliman* disappeared, some Kavalan still think it continues to “bite” people, including the hunter himself. Some will complain to the former master about these injuries and ask to be treated. We can see, in spite of different religious conversions, that their earlier beliefs are still being practiced and continue to be an important component in the construction of their social relations and cosmology.

Apart from the material benefits brought by the conversion to Catholicism, being Christian contributed to creating connections with the Kuomintang, which retained a monopolistic hold on political power. Indeed, most of the Catholics supported the Kuomintang, and the Kuomintang was favorable to Catholics. Thus, some of the Kavalan Catholics were picked by the KMT to run for local office. Those designated were almost automatically elected and thus acquired a new form of social prestige through their political status. Meanwhile, the Kuomintang political structure replaced the Kavalan traditional political hierarchy. Therefore, while the centrality of the *Saliman* decreased within the Kavalan society, the combination of the arrival of the Kuomintang State and Christianity gave Kavalan men new ways to access political power and social prestige in their village.

Presbyterians arrived a bit later and entered in competition with Catholic missionaries. Around the 1970s they opened free schools for their congrega-

tion, and provided those who needed to find a job with professional training. These strategies worked well to attract new members. Indeed, Kavalan who were worried about their careers and their children's future converted in order to benefit from the Presbyterians' help. As a consequence, they started to be politically influenced by the Presbyterians who supported the opposition political movement's fight for democratization and localization. These behaviors show that religious conversion is part of a rational strategy to benefit from the opportunities (education, social promotion, material gains) created by a new social context.

In spite of the marginalization of *Saliman* by Christianity, the belief in animal spirits has not completely disappeared. People are still “bitten” and continue to think that they can be treated only through the “traditional process” involving a *Mtiu* (shaman) and the *Saliman*'s master. Therefore, Christianity has not totally replaced the former ideology and social organization. Nowadays, two systems of representation coexist within PatoRogan village, but they do not interact or mix, just as is the case with the incorporation of Taoism in the worship of *Toligong*. Here, Christianity and the belief in *Saliman* exist in parallel, with Christianity holding a predominant position.

6. *Saliman* as a Form of Masculine “Self-Defense”

As we have seen in the spells of one of the invocations to a *Saliman* translated in section 2, a hunter orders his *Saliman* to lure more game into his traps and at the same time to bite the persons who would try to steal his fruits. But do *Saliman* only “bite” thieves in practice? What are the social relations between bitten persons and the master of the *Saliman* responsible for the injuries?

It is noteworthy that *Saliman* only “bite” following the stealing of certain types of objects like fruits, plants grown by men, or tools—that is to say only goods belonging to men. Thus, all thieves are not systematically bitten. For example, according to my informers, thieves who stole rice (controlled by women) were never bitten, even though it was the most frequent form of theft in the village. Furthermore, according to information gathered through twenty interviews with bitten persons, the “victims” are usually close to the hunter—neighbors or relatives, including their wife—and never inhabitants from other villages. Moreover, after I established the genealogy of both the *Saliman*'s masters and the “victims”, I found out that the latter were very often relatives of the hunters' wife. But Kavalan themselves are not conscious of this kinship relation between the bitten persons and the masters of the *Saliman*.

We still have to elucidate why a *Saliman* often bites its master's wife relatives and never the enemies of the village. The first part of this question finds an answer in the imagined "wildness" of the *Saliman*. Even though a man can be considered master of his *Saliman*, he cannot fully control it. This is the reason why, like an ill-trained dog, it does not make any distinction between relatives and other Kavalan. It bites only those who pass by its close neighborhood. This threat imagined as a random one can be assimilated to a form of indirect masculine defense. A *Saliman* is not purely passive in the surveillance of a man's goods. It is also active, "biting" and inspiring fear in his master's wife relatives. It therefore prevents them from wronging the hunter, gaining him a certain amount of respect within the *lepaw* (house). The representation of the *Saliman* partially reflects the tension between a married man and his wife's kin. A *Saliman* is a kind of "self-defense tool" protecting men from this tension.

The *Saliman* can also be a source of conflict. When a *Saliman* "attacks" a man's wife's relatives, it creates tension. But it is noteworthy that the bites are never fatal as they can be among the Baruya (Descola & Lory 1982). These "bites" generate intense but ephemeral pain, never death. The irreversible consequences of death would likely trigger a desire for revenge among the members of the victim's *lepaw*. Following a similar logic, the fact that a *Saliman* is considered uncontrollable—that it does not bite under its master's order—frees the latter from being responsible for the injury. There are no lingering resentments as a result of a "bite." Consequently, *Saliman* are not a source of social conflicts, or even "*Saliman* wars." To the contrary, they help preserve the social order since they protect men's goods against the greed of others.

While a man has the means to defend himself from the underlying tensions in the *lepaw*, at the same time, he is required to strive to preserve an apparent harmony with his wife and her kin. Here is another example of how a man must have the capacity to deal with existing tensions and avoid creating conflicts. Such model behavior will garner the approbation of the village and may be decisive for a man's acceptance as a village leader. Nevertheless, we still have to explain the social logic behind the fact that a man has to defend himself from his wife's relatives.

7. Imagination of *Saliman* and Expression of Asymmetry in Male-Female Power

Four different asymmetries can be highlighted by comparing male and female power acquired through *Saliman* and the social position of *Mtiu* (shaman women). These asymmetries will then enable us to deconstruct the politics of

gender in the Kavalan society. First, the range of power a *Saliman* confers on a man is very limited since, contrary to a *Mtiu*, in symbolic practices he cannot communicate with the spirits. A man cannot use his *Saliman* as a means to build formal authority to become a shaman. The participation of women in hunting activities is tabooed, but only women can become *Mtiu*. Contrary to what is commonly observable in shamanic societies, here the activity of male hunting is not connected with being a shaman. The *Mtiu* are not involved directly in any specific hunting rituals. Their rituals are not for attracting more wild animals in the forest, but only for helping to find lost domestic animals such as the water buffalo used in the fields. There is no direct link between men, shamans and the imagined spirits of animals (*Saliman*) in public affairs in Kavalan society. The imagined supernatural force of the *Saliman* is associated with a male-female asymmetry of power. In this very particular society where men are excluded from the position of shaman, the main hierarchical divide is between men and women. The construction and reproduction of this relationship are strongly related to their imagination of *Saliman*.

A second asymmetry results from the dependence of male hunters on shaman women, who retain a monopoly on communication with spirits. As a result of this monopoly, shaman women are the only ones able to understand the *Saliman*'s intentions. Therefore, male power is greatly reduced. Not only can a man not control his *Saliman*—for example, he cannot order it to bite one person or another—but he is also unable to find out if his own *Saliman* or someone else's is responsible for a bite. Only a *Mtiu* can determine this through the practice of the divinatory ritual *Subli*. As a consequence, when a man comes back from hunting wild pig or cervidae, he has to send in his name to a *Mtiu*. Then, when the hunter starts to cut up the hunted animal, the shaman touches the game's blood that flows out from the first cut made by the knife. She does this with the rattan cane or bamboo stick ornamented with a stone cylinder (*smakai*) that is normally used as a divinatory tool. Kavalan often say it is because this tool touches blood that its magic power increases. Game blood symbolizes vitality and fortune, which will be transmitted to the village population through the tool of the *Mtiu* that serves also during divinatory and healing rituals. Here, we can see that in the Kavalan society the power of redistribution of fortune is attributed to the *Mtiu* even though this fortune comes from the blood of the game hunted by men. Because everyone in the village desires fortune, which brings success and good health, the *Mtiu* assumes a central role in the society. In comparison, men do not get as many social benefits from the hunting activity. Moreover, in order to show their respect and acknowledge their superior social status, hunters used to give the thigh of the game to the *Mtiu*. These asymmetries reveal the superior power of the *Mtiu*.

If we come back to a more global analytical vision of power in the Kavalan society, two other asymmetries can be discovered. First, women's power is based on wealth and shamanism, both of which are directly linked to production and redistribution. Hunting is not central to the production of wealth, but agriculture is. Second, through their respective production activities, the women and the men each enter into different relations with the other world (the supernatural). The first group (*Mtiu*) is connected to the goddess Mutumazu, who brings life on earth (human beings and rice) and is the mother of all Kavalan, who are subject to her.

Each male individual is, for his part, in relation with the *Saliman/tazusa* (spirit) of the game he hunted. However, although *Saliman* do have desires and will, they are not humanized. Kavalan do not have anthropomorphic representations of animal spirits. Moreover, *Saliman* are not superior to human beings and are even treated as inferior creatures in their association with the image of dogs. In the hierarchy of the other world, Mutumazu occupies a much superior place than *Saliman*, which has repercussions in the world of living beings, the *Mtiu* legitimizing their social status and their power as agents of the goddess. They are repositories of her power, whereas men are merely helped by their *Saliman*, which in the end stay out of their control. In other words, the relations between each gender and the other world serve to reinforce the construction of internal relations in Kavalan society in which women have a higher social status than men.

The tension existing within the traditional Kavalan society's hierarchy of the sexes, which was already a force "driving" for changes in the power relation between men and women combined with external gendered forces—the patriarchal system of Han and Japanese societies, their States, the capitalist market and Christianity—in which the men occupied the dominant position. These different pressures on the Kavalan social structure resulted in women losing their dominant position. The new social context establishes a new structure which legitimizes masculine power. For example, following the slide from matrilineal to patrilineal organization, women lost part of their power within the house. Furthermore, about half of the *Mtiu* converted to Christianity, thus losing a part of their social power without gaining some from their position as Christians. On the other hand, men who "killed" their *Saliman* had an opportunity to occupy an important position in the Christian—and especially the Catholic "men only"—organization (as assistants of the missionaries).

These changes combined with transformations in the political sphere (see section 6) to undermine the sources of women power in the religious sphere (shamanism, ritual power), the economic sphere (production of rice) and political sphere (influence on public opinion). As a consequence, women were pro-

gressively marginalized in all these domains. Nevertheless, the launch of the "Campaign for name rectification" (*zhengming yundong*) gave an opportunity for women to recover part of their social status. Indeed, the shamanic rituals accomplished by the *Mtiu* (shaman) were considered as the most significant cultural label in the reconstruction of Kavalan identity in the 1990s. This search for original identity contributed to the revival of shamanic rituals, considered as a cultural heritage, in PatoRogan village. Thus, women shamans became the repositories of the Kavalan past, acquiring a form of cultural power.

Conclusion

This study of the symbolic representation of the *Saliman* prevailing until the 1950s–1960s, enables us to highlight the relations between religion, social hierarchy, masculine power and masculinity. Kavalan men accumulate the skulls of animals obtained during their economic activity to "create" a *Saliman* with which a personal relation is maintained. But this spirit is a very limited source of power for men because a hunter is not able to control it and cannot use it to build formal authority to dispose of the forest resources. By contrast, about half of the women in the village become *Mtiu* and maintain a collaborative relation with *Mutumazu*, the goddess who taught the Kavalan how to grow rice. This close relation serves as the basis of women's power. It gives them a monopoly on the main economic activity—the cultivation of rice and its redistribution—and an exclusive access to communication with the other world. Therefore, the difference between the relations maintained by men and women with spirits (*Saliman* and *Mutumazu*) is the source of the asymmetry in male-female power. In other words, the first social hierarchy discernible within the Kavalan society is produced by a gender arrangement.

A second social hierarchy operates among the men. Men use competition and the imagined aggressiveness of *Saliman* to resolve conflicts and tensions encountered within their natural and social environment. Meanwhile, *Saliman* are an important means to defend their property and legitimate their limited authority and their social status within the house and the village. But men have to compete with each other to gain prestige and access to a higher social position. Thus, competition is the source of the second hierarchy which produces a differentiation of value between men according to their personal ability as hunters.

Nowadays, the Kavalan are a marginalized group within the wider Taiwanese society. Contacts with the "external world" have produced different forms of pressure on the Kavalan social organization. The accumulation of pressure pushed Kavalan to restructure their system of symbolic representation. It also

recomposed the existing social hierarchies following a multi-dimensional process. First, an external social hierarchy replaced one previously existing inside Kavalan society. In that case, the hierarchy between men has been destroyed by the ban on hunting and headhunting imposed by the State. As a consequence, Kavalan men lost the opportunities to compete with each other to acquire higher social position (chief of the village). They were also deprived of the limited power provided by their *Saliman*. New means that opened up for men to obtain social prestige and positions were to join the army, to go to school, to compete in local elections or to convert to Christianity.

In a second transformation, a new system of representation combined with the traditional one to reinforce the latter. After the arrival of Han people, Kavalan started to use the *Toligong* (mountain spirit) as a means to compete with other men within the existing social hierarchy. But the use of *Toligong* had a deep impact on the relation between Kavalan and their natural environment. In the third transformation, an external hierarchy brought by Christian missionaries was superimposed on the traditional Kavalan one (shamanism and animism) but it did not totally replace it. The two hierarchies coexist and are voluntarily distinguished one from the other even if some form of syncretism is observable in their system of symbolic representation and their religious practices.

Faced with different forms of external pressure, Kavalan people have encountered profound acculturation and almost totally lost their identity—their consciousness of being different—following their assimilation to Han or Amis people. In the 1980s a few Kavalan elite started to feel the identity crisis faced by Kavalan. They put an emphasis on traditional culture, values and social organization as a heritage to recreate a sense of cultural difference among their fellow Kavalan and thus rebuild their ethnic frontier. This move paved the way to cultural revival and finally gave the Kavalan a new identity, enabling them to face globalization with new resources: the official recognition of their existence as a Taiwan Aboriginal people gave them access to State financial resources distributed within the new framework of the construction of a Taiwanese multicultural society (see Stewart and Strathern 2005).

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