VOL. 19. NOS. 1-2. SHAMAN SPRING/AUTUMN 2011

Encounters with Deities for Exchange: The Performance of Kavalan and Amis Shamanic Chants

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Why should we analyze shamanic chants and regard them as a social phenomenon, observing them in the totality of society? Today, the rate at which such chants are disappearing or being innovated is quite astonishing. In some places they have gone forever, while in others they have been revived. Are those societies in which shamanic chants still circulate subject to some special law or obligation that imposes on shamans the need to keep on chanting? What special power and metaphors does chanting itself display? In this article I attempt to answer these and other questions in the context of shamanic performance among the indigenous Kavalan and Amis peoples of Taiwan.

Many tribal societies have been gradually integrated in the world-capitalist system; however, in some societies their foundations and the social existence of the individual still do not depend on economic rationality, such as money relations or market logic, and in them rituals must be regularly held in which a shaman exchanges the essential things of life with the deities and the ancestral spirits through chanting. The shamanic chanting itself is more than an individual act, it becomes a collective enterprise. In this process of exchange, the position of the individual and social relationships are reproduced through a politico-religious activity, not just economics, forming a collective identity as a mutually dependent group. This means that the study of shamanic chants is very important, in that it allows us to understand what the

individual's "condition of social existence" and foundations are that have made some societies continue to build exchange relationships with deities until the present time.

In *Essai sur le don* Mauss (1997/1925) examined the theme of people offering gifts to deities in exchange for wealth or safety, presenting the words of shamanic chants to illustrate the exchange of power between people and deities; however, he did not pay attention to the important connection between this kind of exchange and shamanic chants. Malinowski (1922) studied the magic used in Kula exchange, from boat-building preparations to the launching ceremony, setting off, sailing, arriving at the destination, persuading their partners to exchange, and the return journey. He pointed out the importance of magic in researching the subject of exchange. By analyzing spells he pointed out that the words themselves have mysterious power and can directly have a magic effect. The present article applies performativity/performative theory (Austin 1975; Searle 1969; Derrida 1972; Schechner 1988; 2002), with particular focus on the concept of the act of speech, to rethink the power of lyrics and to explore the social and cultural meanings of shamanic chanting itself. In anthropological research the different oral forms such as song, chant, spell, prayer, invocation, request, or blessing are not particularly distinguished. Anthropologists have mostly centered on analyzing the form, structure, and metaphor of these oral texts (Fox 1974; 1988; Sather 2001; Cauquelin 2008).

In the view of Kuipers (1990), "highly structured formal language" is relatively marginal, while background music in a noisy restaurant, conversation, and eating are the main events. Contrary to his view, the present author considers that musical shamanic chants are not just background; rather, that they have a close connection to the event taking place and that, in fact, without song some events cannot even take place. It is thus necessary to research the role that shamanic chants have in exchanges made with deities. Also, in *L'enigme du don* Godelier (1996), following the topic researched by Mauss, examined the essence of *le sacré* in exchange to explore the social basis for determining whether certain objects cannot be given or sold. In this article, by examining the exchange-related myths and shamanic life narratives about chanting and lyric texts that were not touched on by Mauss, the

author will discuss what things cannot be bought with money and which need to be exchanged for shamanic chants and the special forms of expression of this exchange behavior and contract.

The ethnography for this study was collected when the author was a participant observing shamanic rituals in the Kavalan village of Sinshe and the Amis village of Lidau in Hualian, Taiwan, 1993–2008. These two villages, on the fringes of a city, are the last places on Taiwan's east coast where shamanic chanting continues to this day. The Kavalan gradually became sinified after having frequent contact with Han Chinese from the late 17th century, while the Amis were sinified later on. At the end of the 19th century both came under the control of the Japanese colonialists. In the late 1960s, Christianity began to have an influence. The regional industrialization of the 1970s and improvements in transport in the 1980s gradually pushed the villages into the capitalist economic system. In terms of strategy, these two villages where chanting survives were placed together for coordinated comparison because both communities are Austronesian people and they are close geographically, connected by marriage and share the culture of shamanism. Fox (1988), when comparing the special parallelism of the rituals of Austronesian tribes in eastern Indonesia, observed that because of a lack of regional political hegemony, the phenomenon of linguistic diversity appeared for the purpose of self-differentiation, producing the special feature of parallelism. Taiwan's east coast has similar geographic and historic factors, so analyzing the Kavalan and Amis together allows a better understanding and highlights the special features and social context of shamanic chanting in this region.

Shamanic Chants: Themes of Myths and Dreams

To understand ancient religions, Granet (1919) analyzed China's earliest ritual songs in *The Book of Songs (Shi Jing)*. He emphasized that, to reveal the basic elements of songs, it was necessary to examine their thematic symbolism rather than observe their literary value. The Kavalan shamanic chants contain the important symbolic themes of myth and legend. For example, a myth about the origin of ancestors

still circulates in the villages today. The myth tells of a goddess called Mutumazu who came to earth to help a poor man, Siagnau, and gave birth to their child. However, because Siagnau was lazy the young child died, Mutumazu went back to heaven in anger, and death and then disease came to the world. The goddess would sometimes return to the human world and teach people song and dance (*kisaiz*) and taboos (*perisin*) that had to be observed in order to treat people's illnesses. This work was carried out by a *mtiu* (group of female shamans) who imitated Mutumazu's song and dance in the *kisaiz* (which literally means 'song and dance'). The female deity would tell those taking part in this organized activity that if people were still sick, a similar song and dance ritual called the *pakelabi* should be carried out and that this ritual should be continually passed down through the generations. The Kavalan believe that the songs and dances that are exclusive to shamans were given by the goddess and were not created by humans. They have the symbolic power to cure sickness and even to save life; thus, they are necessary for life and their practice should never cease. There are also related taboos; ordinarily these can't be sung and they require the practice of *manmet* (no salt, only rice-based foods to be eaten, and abstinence from sexual activity) to purify the shaman's body before chanting takes place. The songs have to follow a certain sequence. In the process of following this sequence and cosmic order, the female deity and the shaman establish their authority and, at the same time, establish a political hierarchy that people must respect and which also determines people's social positions.

When the author interviewed Amis shamans, *sikawasay*, several talked about ritualistic songs becoming the principal theme of dreams (*malmed*) with special symbolic meaning. For example, Valah described how he became a *sikawasay*. He told how one night he had a dream and walked around singing as if he was sleepwalking. His wife went to fetch a senior *sikawasay* to help, and this person's interpretation was that Valah's behavior was a sign that he must become a *sikawasay*. Another fairly senior *sikawasay*, Pah, also sang and danced incessantly in her sleep, and her family brought in the most senior shaman to carry out *mipohpoh* (healing ritual). After the ritual she woke up and the senior shaman told her that she could begin to carry out the

mipohpoh ritual to treat people's illnesses. Singing and dancing when asleep were interpreted as a sign from the deities and the consigning of a further mission to the *sikawasay*. Another shaman, Sla, said "If a ritual was to be carried out the next day I would have bad dreams and would be tense. Sometimes I would dream that the 'old one' would want me to do something and the next day I would conduct the ritual like that. What song to sing and when and how to sing it, the deity and ancestors would teach me in advance in the dream." Like the Kavalan mythical themes, the life histories of the three *sikawasay* show us that, to the Amis, songs are exclusive to the spirit world and are like "ancestral words" (Fox 1974; 1988; Hoskins 1988), containing the intention of a supernatural force. For example the deities or ancestors will choose who is to receive the voice or road (*lalan*). This chanting, walking, or dancing is a metaphor of a journey. Also, as the chanter, the shaman gains knowledge of the language of a ritual in a flash in a dream, rather than by study or memorizing the lyrics of songs.

In 1931 Hayami Iehiko collected another legend about the origins of Kavalan song. In ancient times the ancestors of the Kavalan often went out to fish. One day a wife fell asleep while preparing food and her fisherman husband went out to sea without noticing that she had fallen asleep. When she awoke she thought that her husband had abandoned her and, both furious and sad, committed suicide by hanging herself. When the husband returned it was too late, so he went to dig her grave. Suddenly the sound of singing and dancing emanated from the grave and a voice told him that if he brought wine and venison his wife would return to the human world. The husband mobilized the villagers and held a big feast, with singing and dancing, next to the grave and his wife "really did come back to life." When the present author interviewed a Kavalan *mtiu* (a group of female shamans) in 1995 about ritualistic song and dance, the informer connected this legend with the *kisaiz* ritual in which the initiate treads on white cloth to avoid walking on the ground, simulating death. She interpreted it this way: "The family heard singing and dancing coming from the grave, and when they found she was performing a *kisaiz* using the standard moves." The subject of myth is that by holding singing and dancing the Kavalan man had to exchange wine and games with the deities for the life of his wife.

What exchanges are women involved in? Mugi, an Amis, decided to become a *sikawasay* in 2005 and described how at the time her chest felt tight and she was rushed to hospital by her children; she then fell unconscious and was put in intensive care, where she lay unconscious for almost a month. After examining her, the senior *sikawasay* interpreted her condition in this way:

> She hasn't yet completed the Kawas (deity) road so she hasn't woken up, judging that she had actually *mapaak* (fainted), a kind of expression of *mapatai* (death). After waking up, Mugi recalled clearly how in her unconscious state she had seen three ancestors who said that if she followed them she would regain consciousness.

This narrative and the shaman's discourse are replete with cultural metaphors. Unconsciousness/fainting symbolize death, waking up represents life, the road means ancestors, and becoming a *sikawasay* symbolizes the exchange of a life. In terms of meaning, a modern woman becoming a *sikawasay* is the exchange her life between her family and the deities and ancestors.[1]

What kind of exchange is this? What relationship is built between the two parties during the process? Permission to become a *sikawasay* does not just involve offering the deities and ancestors material things such as a pig. The *sikawasay* must also hold a *mirecuk* song and dance ritual in their home once a year and hold a feast for relatives and villagers to establish virtual consanguine (parent–child) relations with the deities. Then *mtiu* and *sikawasay* become inheritors of the deities. During all their life the food, behavior, and sexual relations of the *sikawasay* must "fit into a special order," this being the only way the deity will reward the initiated shaman and allow them to live; otherwise the unconscious person will be thought to have no chance of waking up and will be deemed to have died. This exchange relationship has to be renewed every year and requires the following of a life-long "contract" and discipline. If the "contract" is breached unilaterally by a shaman,

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[1] In the 1980s the number of men becoming *sikawasay* fell sharply.

it is believed that they will be punished and that this will take the form of their family falling victim to an unfortunate event.

Chanting, Hierarchies, and Control

The Kavalan and Amis believe that they can conduct exchanges with a supernatural spiritual power; however, for them this power is real but it is invisible. As this power is beyond most people's visual scope, how is such an important exchange carried out? How do people give gifts to deities? How can it be ensured that the deities will accept gifts, and give gifts in return? The Kavalan and Amis created a series of symbols—in particular, a special vocabulary and songs—to contact deities. At the same time, these symbols are a kind of tool used by the Kavalan in order to depict and enable themselves to understand these deities' will and actions. So, it is important to explore the polyvalent symbols of chanting in this exchange process.

In the two societies, the birth and death rites, healing rites or worshipping of Saliman (animal spirits) do not include songs (Liu 2009). Only the head-spirit worship ritual (*qataban*) that has evolved into today's harvest ritual (*malalikit*), the male initiation ritual (*malenlen*), and the annual ritual conducted by the shaman (*kisaiz/pekelabi*, *mirecuk*, *milasong*, *midiway*) feature songs. The songs of *qataban*, *malalikit*, and *malenlen*, which are male-centered rituals, are intended to show men in a heroic and competitive light. They are in the form of polyphony and call-and-response, with a person of relatively high social position leading the lyrics according to the situation and others following with fixed function words. In the past, this kind of song was regarded as having the symbolic function of calling the spirits of the enemy to ensure that headhunting expeditions would be a success. There is a wide difference between the songs of this type, whereas songs used in shamanic rituals have a fixed order of words and sentences, representing textual authority, that cannot be changed, otherwise punishment will be meted out by the deities. Although shamans are at different levels in the hierarchy depending on when they were initiated, the form of their chants is homophony. In contrast to polyphony, call-and-response, and freestyle creating of

words, shamanic chants show the authoritative style described by Kuipers (1990). So, how do we understand the significance of this pattern in its social context and its connection to exchange?

Kavalan and Amis only use this special song form to carry out exchange negotiation with deities that are relatively high up in the hierarchy, like the goddess (Mutumazu, Dugi) who created humans, the rice god (Kasiwasiyu), the fire god (Lalevuhan), ancestral spirits (Tuas), and gods of other tribes. Chanting constructs the reality of spiritual hierarchy. In comparison with extensive prayers, the special nature of chants allows us to imagine the grandeur of the exchanged object and the difficulties involved. The special character of chants also lets us ponder on the essence of power and control implicated in the whole process of exchange that Weiner (1976: 219–220) criticized Malinowski for ignoring. When people and deities carry out life exchange they are actually trying to overcome their fear of death and the exchange event can be seen as an act of control. People exchange with deities in an attempt to control death. This control is achieved through the form of social interaction.

Time and Taboo (*Manmet*)

Ordinarily, these shamanic songs cannot be sung because the song itself has a symbolic temporal and spatial identification/separation function as a special label. It also represents the entering of a special temporal order by the village. The two groups hold the *kisaiz/pakelabi* and *mirecuk* at around the same time in September[2] after the first rice crop has been harvested, dried, and husked in July so that there is new rice to offer as a sacrifice to the deities. The Kavalan choose a date at the end of July when the moon cannot be seen to hold the *kisaiz/pakelabi*. They chant until the new moon comes up, giving the songs a symbolic meaning of flow and transition.

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[2] In headhunting days the head spirit of the other tribe had to be worshipped first before it was held. The reason for this order was to avoid seedlings and rice not growing well in the new year (thought to be a return gift from the deities).

To enter the time and order marked by the song, the shaman, families, relatives, and participants from the different villages must all observe *manmet*. In other words, not only the person who carries out the exchange has to follow all the taboos associated with their body, feeding, and behavior. Analyzing the Wana of Indonesia, Atkinson (1989: 179) observed that when a shaman was engaging in exchange with a deity there was an audience, unlike the exchange without an audience observed by Mauss. In Kavalan and Amis society, exchange takes place with an audience, and their bodies, food, and behavior enter the same state as the shaman, rather than the audience just observing. If someone fails to observe *manmet*, they are regarded as breaking the taboo and it is believed that they will become ill. This kind of purification is actually a kind of order and temporal-spatial state of the deity. If the separation between people and deity is hazy and the order broken, the body will also lose its order. Entering the exchange ritual state does not only involve preparation of goods (gifts), the body and behavior cannot be separated from the ritual. The body dimension was not noticed by Austin (1975: 6–8) and Searle (1969: 16–17) when they regarded words

Fig. 1. This group of Amis *sikawasay* shamans started their journey guided by the deity *saray* using an invisible thread held by the senior *sikawasay* (left). Photo: Liu Pi-chen, 2010.

and sentences as speech acts of organized systems. Ritualistic language includes concepts of body which distinguish it from daily language. In what follows, the texts of song lyrics will be analyzed to see how songs create a special temporal and spatial performance effect and allow people and deities to engage in "real" exchange.

Encounter of Two Parties to an Exchange (*tapung*/*palitemeh*)[3]

Normally, exchange requires that two parties meet physically,[4] but how does a person meet a deity? In interviews, the shamans often said that the songs in the ritual were intended to make person and deity *tapung*/*palitemeh*, literally to meet. The song and dance of the *kisaiz* perform a journey in which such a meeting takes place. Its structure is fixed and is divided into *matijuto binanun* (dancing on a roof), *qa-saray* (taking "silk thread," fig. 1) from the place of the deities, *pahte* (fainting), and *paqan do patai* (worshipping the shaman's ancestors). First the *mtiu* go on to the roof and call the deity, then they obtain the *saray,* representing a road, from the deity, and then they set off on a journey on the road. As the rhythm of the song quickens, synchronous movement of hands and feet[5] shows that the place of the deity is close, then *pahte* (fainting) shows that it has been reached. Offerings of *isi* (wine) and *nuzun* (rice cakes) are then made, then finally the name of the new shaman is called out and the sound of her footsteps simulated to call her back. If the initiate wakes up,

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[3] *Tapung* is the Kavalan term, *palitemeh* is the Amis.

[4] "Market place" exchange does not require an actual place where people meet to exchange goods; however, most market exchange requires that people meet face to face (Dalton 1968). On the east coast of Taiwan "silent trade" was once popular. Because the different tribes were headhunters, members of those tribes avoided meeting. When an exchange of goods was desired, the party wanting to exchange goods would leave them in a fixed place and return the next day; if another party wished to make an exchange, they would leave whatever they were offering in exchange at that location for collection.

[5] In contrast to ordinary walking, when the hands and feet are not synchronized.

it means that she is able to communicate with the deity and the exchange has been a success. Some new shamans wake up and receive return gifts from the deity—for example, a piece of *nuzun* or Formosan barking deer hair may be in their hand, symbolizing that the harvest and hunting will be good in the new year. The symbolic return gifts are the Kavalan's way of concretely depicting the reality of the journey to the spiritual world and a means by which to express the authority of the shaman.

How is the exchange realized in the journey? The whole journey comprises nine songs, the word pattern of which is the same, with functional words accompanied by the name of the deity. No matter which stage is reached, the words are all entextualized (Kuipers 1990: 4), the rhetoric is highly modulized and poetic, and the shaman cannot make up the words but must sing the set words. The order also cannot be altered and separated from the actual situation. The order goes from the deity's name to male and female ancestors, the names of deceased shamans, and ritual implements. Apart from the functional words, another main characteristic of the songs is their parallelism, with corresponding men and women, or plants and implements, forming a "dyadic language" (Fox 1988: 2). The songs are nonnarrative, in dialog form, and are distinguished from daily language by the use of a special vocabulary. For example, *barenden*, reed, is sung as *bohatilo vavanal* to show that the *mtiu* are in a nonhuman world and are engaged in talking with the deity. The two song examples below are sung on the roof and when preparing *qa-saray*.

1. *a-o a-o ao-wa a-iya Salamai e Ziyanan a Salamai e Ziyanan a-o e ju a-o wa*
(Goddess name) Deity (Goddess name) Deity
Deity Salamai ! Deity Salamai ! Please come to help us.
2. *a-o a-o a-o-wa a-iya Siagnauwi e Ziyalan a Siagnauwi e Ziyanan a-o e ju a-o wa*
(Male deity name) Deity (Male deity name) Deity
Diety Siagnau! Diety Siagnau! Please come to help us.
3. *a-o a-o a-o-wa ama-imi moloman a ama-imi moloman a-o e ju a-o wa*
What shall we do? What shall we do?
We don't know how to conduct the ritual, please show us!
4. *a-o a-o a-o-wa ama-imi moloman a ama-imi moloman a-o e ju a-o wa*
What shall we do? What shall we do?
We don't know how to conduct the ritual, please show us!

5. *a-o a-o a-o-wa a-iya kimi vai*[6] *yaniya* *a-kimi vai yaniyag a-o e ju a-o wa*
Yes grandma ancestors yes grandma female ancestors
This ritual has been passed down from generation to generation and we must continue it today.
6. *a-o a-o a-o-wa a-iya kini vaqi yaniyaq* *kini vaqi yaniyaq a-o-e ju a-o-wa*
Yes granddad ancestors yes granddad male ancestors
This ritual has been passed down from generation to generation and we must continue it today.

These song lyrics must be understood in the context of the performance. They are themselves performative, "like a performance" (Schechner 1988: 30; 2002: 123), and their significance is in the process of performance. "Meaning—and all and every meaning is contingent, temporary—is created in the process of complex interaction of all speakers—players—and their specific personal-cultural circumstance" (Derrida 1972). The first and second parallel lines have an independent mythical meaning and are named after the female deity who founded the tribe and taught the Kavalan how to grow rice, Mutumazu, and her husband. The singing of these names has meaning, the *mtiu* using their names to call directly on the deities, with the objective of bringing them to earth. Senior shamans explained that this is a kind of direct address, so the name of Muzumazu is not called, but is replaced by Salamai as a way of showing respect. This dialogic form of communicating constructs the hierarchical relationship formed between people and the deity. In this situation, when a *mtiu* sings the name of the deity it is like the stage speech of a theater actor, itself a kind of special theatrical performance form, as Austin (1975: 12–13) notes: "To say something is to do something." He used the word "performative" to describe utterances in Shakespeare's plays such as, "I take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife" or "I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth." As the song goes on it depicts the presence of the deity and its existence for the singer and audience and expresses the act of encounter between *mtiu* and deities.

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[6] *Vai* is the terminology of the kinship for female ancestors (consanguinities), and *vaqi* is the term for male ones.

When the deity's name is called the north must be faced. This direction has the effect of creating different imagination spaces to reveal what Foucault (1984) called the real space. In this special space people begin to exchange with the deity and, simultaneously, symbols of their belief are accurately reproduced. Also, these imagination spaces have an in-built opening feature which, normally, ordinary people cannot enter. Only after the ritual starts, after purification has been carried out using alcohol by the shaman, the shamans have begun to sing and sacrificial offerings have been brought, can a different real space—the deity's world—be gradually entered.

In the third and fourth lines the deity is asked what to do—that is, how the song and dance should be performed so that the deity's instruction and assistance can be received. In the imagination of the people the deity gives knowledge and brings power. Lines five and six are also parallel, calling on female and male ancestors. The self-interpretation of this song and dance as passed down through the generations is a kind of self-contained narrative. In the process of performing, the deity is imagined and is concretely displayed. The Kavalan use a fixed, unchanging chanting form to express it. The shaman is the main performer, with some even performing solos, and in her role she conducts a dialog with the deities. The deities do not possess the shaman and change their singing voice or movements; their part in the dialog is invisible and silent, unlike the Kululi of Papua New Guinea described by Schieffelin (1996), where spirits showed their presence by changing the voice of the medium. It is seen as an example of a relatively successful performance.

The Kavalan's nonsituational expressive sentence pattern is fixed. Below is an example of a song sung when the shamans are preparing *qa-saray* (pick up the thread and go on the journey).

1. *he ya ho he e io a i yo o a i o a na lisu o zaisi Ziyalan a e*
   Deity!
2. *he ya ho he e io a i yo o a i o a na Salamai si Ziyalan a*
   Deity Salamai!
3. *he ya ho he e io a i yo o a i o a na Siagnau Ziyalan a e*
   Diety Siagnau!

4. *he ya ho he e io a i yo o a i o a na mai e mo mtiu to vinanong a e*
Shamans on a roof
It's our customs that during the ritual shamans sing and dance on a roof.
5. *he ya ho he e io a i yo o a i o a na kini he vaqi yaniya a e*
Granddad! What shall we do?
We don't know how to conduct the ritual, Granddad please show us!
6. *he ya ho he e io a i yo o a i o a na vaqi ni kini yaniya a e*
Granddad! What shall we do?
We don't know how to conduct the ritual, Granddad please show us!
7. *he ya ho he e io a i yo o a i o a na vai ni kini yaniya a e*
Grandma! What shall we do?
We don't know how to conduct the ritual, Grandma please show us!
8. *he ya ho he e io a i yo o a i o a na vaqi e yai ziyusai a e*
Grandma! What shall we do?
We don't know how to conduct the ritual, Grandma please show us!
9. *he ya ho he e io a i yo o a i o a na amilo he tosalingousi a e*
Bells ringing
The shamans' bells star to ring, the ritual will begin!
10. *he ya ho he e io a i yo o a i o a na Zaonayo Nokayo a e*
(Name of a deceased shaman)
Zaonayo Nokayo! Please come to help us!
11. *he ya ho he e io a i yo o a i o a na Lomo o Sobina Elis a e*
(Name of a deceased shaman)
Lomo Sobina! Please come to help us!
12. *he ya ho he e io a i yo o a i o a na Salamai si Ziyalan a e*
(Goddess name) Deity!
Deity Salamai ! Please come to help us!
13. *he ya ho he e io a i yo o a i o a na Siagnau Ziyalan a e*
(Male deity name) Deity!
Deity Siagnau! Please come to help us!
14. *he ya ho he e io a i yo o a i o a na kani hitivi Ziyalan a e*
Deity!
15. *he ya ho he e io a i yo o a i o a na mtiuto vinanong a e*
Shamans on a roof
It's our customs that during the ritual shamans sing and dance on a roof.

The pattern of this song is the same as the previous one, but the meaning of its genealogy is clearer. In the words the shamans call on female deities, male deities, male and female ancestors, and deceased shamans. In addition to casting aside time, through the order of the words time is restructured and linearized, creating a cycle running from mythical time to a more contemporary time represented by dead shamans, which is close to the living shamans, and then back to ancient times,[7] deliberately creating a line between distant past and present. This form is analogized in the linear form of the genealogy, allowing a new shaman and these deities to metaphorically establish a kind of linear parent–child relationship. Through the deliberate analogization and dialog-type meeting, a "participation mystique" (Lévy-Bruhl 1960/1925: 42) effect is created between the new shaman and the deities whose names are called. To the Kavalan, this is how a supporting tie is constructed between an initiate and the called deities, making them into a union. The initiate has given their life to these supernatural powers, and when they or other villagers need help it is imagined that the members of the group will help voluntarily.

The Obligation to Give a Deity Gifts, and the Return of Gifts

Relatives and people from nearby villages are obliged to participate in the *kisaiz* and *mirecuk* held in the shaman's home. Red envelopes (containing money) are handed out or wine and drinks are given to the *mtiu/sikawasay* as gifts in the early morning before the singing and dancing start. Then participants stay and watch the ritualistic dancing and singing and join in the feast. After dinner they take the *nuzun* rice cakes offered by the *mtiu/sikawasay* to the deities as a return gift (fig. 2). These *nuzun* have special meaning and have to be taken home and shared with the whole family because they symbolize that, in the

[7] Their terminology of kinship also has this cyclical characteristic.

Fig. 2. During the annual *pakelabi* ritual the Kavalan *mtiu* shamans are giving *nuzun* (rice cakes) as gifts to deities by throwing them and chanting. Photo: Liu Pi-chen, 1995.

new year, there will be vitality, that crops and other materials will be abundant, and there will be good luck (*lemet*). The situation in which a shaman chants creates a group that has imagined blood relations with the deities, and this group, through ritual eating together, shares rice and also shares abstract good luck (*lemet*). So they become a tightly knit community. Members of the group depend on the *mtiu*/*sikawasay* to conduct the life rites, cure illness, or give gifts to different Kawas (deities) or Tuas (ancestral spirits). Therefore they are obliged to visit their shaman's relatives on the mother and father's side (*kakakafit* lineage) and give gifts. It is not only the shaman's family that is involved in the ritualistic exchange but the entire community, and it is in public. Through this kind of gift-giving, every member of the family and important things like food and money are all included in the scope of the agreement with the deity (called "total prestation" by Mauss), and it decides a person's social position.

Not all people can directly engage in exchange with deities. The *mtiu* has the main role in ritualistic exchange, while the singing and dancing is the main event in the exchange. How, then, are the gifts given to the deities during chanting? Taking the *mirecuk* of the Amis, they have almost 50 songs because they have 40-odd deities. They sing in accordance with the type and number of the *sikawasay*'s personal deities, allowing them to journey to the dominions of different deities. After being guided by the deity *saray*, the shaman reaches the destination and meets the deities, holding the offerings in their hand or placing them on the floor, giving them by repeated chanting.[8] Below is an example of the words that are chanted:

i haw wei ha hai haw hai	For beginning
palitemehai ya ca haw hai	Encounter with deities
haidang lalevuhan haw hai	Deity! Fire deity
haidang tilamalaw haw hai	Deity! Fire-lighting god
ama'ay kakacawan haw hai	Father! Monkey deity
ama'ay ansoray haw hai	Father! Eagle deity

[8] When a sacrificial offering is made the text of the song is usually the same and is repeated five times. This is the basic song content.

ama'ay sasululan haw hai	Father! Fishing deity
haidang vavaliwan haw hai	Formosan barking deer deity
icuwa watasayan haw hai	Everything is here that should be
o seren ini haw hai	We have glutinous rice cake
ulingalawan aca haw hai	We have wine
i tayo ini aca haw hai	We have betel nuts
o piko ini aca haw hai	We have deer feet
lumet ini aca haw hai	We have pottery
tatuzon no haidang haw hai	Dedication
matila to haw ilang	Partners, we have finished drinking
e wei ha hai haw hai	For ending
ta ta dum	We have finished.

The word pattern in the Amis *mirecuk* is similar to the Kavalan *pakelabi*, using a dialogic method to directly call the names of the deities, such as the fire deity, the fire-lighting deity, and the monkey deity. Calling them "father" is done as a mark of respect (hierarchy), while also showing the self the presence of the deity. Then the names of the gifts offered are sung out one by one, meaning that they are being handed over to the deity face to face. Singing itself is an act of giving. Equivalent to the Han Chinese rituals, burning is often used to give gifts to the dead or deities, and burning is thus also a giving action. The shamanic chants are a special Kavalan and Amis way of giving gifts. Chanting is like a stage speech when a theater actor says his/her lines, having a theatrical effect. Through the action of singing, gifts are given—and this, for the shamans and the audience, depicts the fact that the other partner has received them.

What gifts do people have to give the deities when an exchange takes place? In the past gifts were grand, and it is said that large animals obtained by hunting were offered, especially deer. However, in the Japanese era (1895–1945) their guns were confiscated and hunting was banned, so this practice gradually died out and the foods offered became mainly rice-based, including *nuzun* rice cake, and also *isi* wine and money. The gifts given by the Kavalan to their deities have undergone big changes, the gifts are fewer and fewer in number (showing

that their dependence on the deities is decreasing), the time spent by the shaman chanting is gradually being reduced, and the community consciousness and connection are weakening as a result.

In comparison, the Amis still give animal sacrifices, with the domesticated pig the largest. Other essential gifts include betel nuts, betel leaf, wine, ginger, salt, and three kinds of rice food: *dulun*, *hahah*, and *lavek*. What is interesting is that the gifts for deities are all foods—in particular main staple foods. Why do the Kavalan and Amis always give food as gifts to the deities? The people imagine that the deities are alive and will be hungry, so they continually give them food and believe that they have an obligation to feed them. Otherwise, the deities will come down to the human world to look for food and when they encounter people they will become ill (*tagau*/*adada*). Thus, people are very cautious and feel they have an obligation to hold regular rituals, or otherwise they will be harassed by deities and will become ill. Through the giving of food by the shaman's chanting, the "full" deities will make return gifts to people, like a good harvest (sending rain, getting rid of pests, and giving sunlight), making animals flourish, and ensuring that work goes well. It forms a mutually feeding, reciprocal people–deity relationship. The concepts of the imagined community and sharing obligation are actually put into practice, such as when an individual *paspaw*/*mifdi* gives daily sacrificial offerings: the deity is first given food or drink, then the same glass of wine or rice cake will invariably be finished off by the person who is giving. What remains of the wine in the glass is seen as a return gift from the deity, and it is therefore something that people must drink dry.

Conclusion

The Kavalan and Amis do not have a written script, so a highly structured formal language as seen in *mtiu*/*sikawasay* chanting plays an important role in the construction of individual and collective identity and social relationship networks. The chantings of the *mtiu*/*sikawasay* relate the themes of their myths and dreams; thus, the chants have been made mysterious and sacred; furthermore, they have become taboo and,

at the same time, they have been personified (having will/intention) and have special symbolic functions of curing illness, passing on knowledge, etc. In the ritual singing, movements are coordinated with walking, giving them the meaning of being a journey to the deities' dominions or meeting with deities. They become a means through which a person can engage in exchange with the more powerful deity—in particular, in the most difficult and grandest exchange, that of life. The mysterious power of the words chanted comes from their performativity. The words chanted by the *mtiu/sikawasay* are regarded much as an actor's theatrical stage speech. When a chanting performance takes place, different imagination spaces are created to reveal real time and space and complete the person–deity exchange agreement. The single-handed performance of the dialog between the two parties by the *mtiu/sikawasay* describes for people the arrival and real existence of the party to the dialog that has not answered. In contrast to Austin and Searle's "collapse" of "fiction" and "reality," the performance by the shaman reveals reverse authenticity. Also, in the process of exchange and gift-giving the *mtiu/sikawasay* receives gifts from relatives, villagers, or outsiders. The interwoven gift-giving obligations decide the position of the individual in the village and also, at the same time, the individuals' social relationship network develops beyond relationships with relatives.

Further analysis of the lyrics in this article shows that the words chanted most in the *kisaiz/pakelabi* (Kavalan) and *mirecuk* rituals do not only have the common characteristics of parallelism and dyadicism of East Indonesian Austronesian languages pointed out by Fox, they also have the features of deliberately fixing, structurizing, and desituationizing the words, forming the special textual authority analyzed by Kuipers (1990: 71). This special authoritative pattern constructs the real imagination of the Kavalan and Amis about the hierarchy between people and Ziyalan/Kawas (deities). Facing this kind of deity, people must unconditionally follow the order, and give gifts to show obedience and reliance. The Kavalan and Amis also arrange the order of the song lyrics by deity or person's name to create a special linear structure, analogizing it in the genealogical organization pattern, symbolically forming virtual parent–child blood relations with the deity. In this kind of life exchange, the shaman becomes the descendant and inheritor of the deities and must obey special orders all their lives for

food, behavior, and sexual relationships. This shows the form and essence of this kind of social power organization: while having a bodily orientation, it also pays attention to the process of life. The highest function of its power is not to directly take away the life of a person as an equal exchange, for example by offering a person as a sacrifice. It surrounds and controls life in every aspect of its daily conduct. Consequently, only a deity has the power to announce the end of a person's life, not a person such as a doctor, or economic logic that would force someone to commit suicide.

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