'Times' and Images of Others in an Amis Village, Taiwan

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ABSTRACT. Why different 'times' (or different 'categories of objectified time') coexist among the Amis in Iwan? I argue that the Amis' images of others provide an answer to it. For the Amis in that village, four significant others have relations with them. This article explores how the images of others reflect in the time dimension. In sum, attempting to combine their own cultural traditions with certain cultural elements of 'superior' others, and strive for a better future is the important cultural mechanism of the Amis. KEY WORDS • aborigines • Amis • others • Taiwan • times

Introduction

This investigation begins with a question accrued from my fieldwork: Why different 'times' (or different 'categories of objectified time') coexist among the Amis[1] in Iwan? Iwan village, in front of the Coastal Mountains and facing the Pacific Ocean, is located in the Chenggung Township, Taidung County. About 5km to the north of Iwan, there is the Amis village of Ta'man and to the south, about 3km away, there is the Amis village of Tomi'ac. Iwan and Tomi'ac constitute an administrative unit (*li*, literally 'village' in Chinese),[2] which is called Boai Li. The *li* office and the local primary school are located in Tomi'ac. Inside the village of Iwan the households are divided into eight neighborhoods (*lin*). Each neighborhood has a *lin* head that is elected by all adults in the unit.

Traditionally the village (*niyaro'*) was the biggest social unit among the Amis. As Li (1957: 144) points out: The original meaning of *niyaro'* is 'one inside the fence', so the defensive functions and implications of the village are very clear. Every independent Amis village in the past had an age-set organiza-

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tion,[3] and defense was its main function. The age-set organization, together with the village council (with village head as its chairman), formed the basic organizations of an Amis village and the main structure of autonomous government. On this basis, the village became a basic unit for defense, rituals, fishing, farming, hunting and sharing responsibilities.

According to my informants, Iwan was founded around 1865. The founders of the village came from some northern Amis villages, such as Makuta'ay, Kiwit, and Ciwkangan, to avoid the attacks by Atatyal and Bunun aboriginal groups. Since then there has been an age-set organization and a village council in the village.

According to files in the household registration office in the Chenggung Township, there were 112 households in Iwan at the end of December 1988, two years after I started my fieldwork there.[4] A hundred and three household heads were Amis and, of the remaining nine household heads, three were Hakka Han-Chinese[5] and the other six were Chinese war veterans who came from mainland China after 1949. These figures remain roughly the same today.

By the end of 1946 some Amis people in Iwan began to practice Presbyterianism. In 1955 Catholicism was introduced into the village. Today about 80 percent of the Amis villagers are Catholics, 15 percent are Presbyterians and the remaining 5 percent either belong to the Seventh-day Adventist Church or practice Chinese religion.

Traditional Ways of Time Keeping

The Amis traditional language has no vocabulary equivalent to 'time', though the calculation of a day (*ccay a lomi'ad*), month (*ccay a folad*) and year (*samihcaan*) is quite a systematic piece of knowledge. The changes of the tides, due to their habitation by sea, are also well known by all of them. The following section introduces four traditional ways of time keeping, and the meaning it bears in modern social life.

Differentiating night and day

1. Daytime (lomi'ad)

Lomi'ad means the time before the sun rises from the sea level until it disappears behind the mountains in the west. The time around the appearance of sun in the east is called *dafak* (dawn), the time when the sun is in the mid-point of the sky, straight overhead, is called *kalahokan* (noon), and the time around the disappearance of sun behind the mountains is called *kalati'an* (dusk).

A more detailed dissection of the day is as follows:

(a) Dawn (*dafak*) includes daybreak (*cinihar*), sunrise (*cicidal*), and the short rest period after breakfast (*hrek no ranam*). This is the period between 5 and 7:30 am;
(b) morning (*ayaw no lahok*), or the working hours (*katayalanno tamdaw*), is the period from 8 to 11:30 am;
(c) noon (*kalahokan*) is the time for rest from work, including lunch. It spans 11:30 am to 1 pm but is a little shorter in wintertime;
(d) afternoon (*hre no lahok*) is also working time. It generally continues until 5 pm in the summer, and 4 pm in the winter. The villagers have a habit of beginning work early, and resting early;
(e) evening (*kalafian*) is mainly the time for supper. In the summer the sun sets around 6 pm, and it takes approximately an hour to become completely dark.

These time periods are mainly in accordance with the movements of sun, but can also be deduced from the length of the shadows. On rainy or overcast days, one can approximate the time by how hungry one feels. The villagers of Iwan eat three times a day, and the three main periods of a day accord with meal times: Breakfast in the morning, lunch at noon, and supper in the evening. This regulation can help people judge the time.

2. Night time (dadaya)

In the Amis concept of time, the night is only half of a whole day; the daytime and the night time together form a whole day. Night time refers to the period between dusk until the following dawn, and can be divided into the following periods:

- 'Still able to eat supper' time (*kalafian ho*)
  Generally if a family aren't with the crops or other special events, supper would be finished by this time, and some food would still be preserved for those not home yet. According to the villagers, the reasons for finishing supper before dark include: (1) In the past, the lack of light made eating and tidying difficult; (2) some unwanted night spirits (*taknaway*) might join supper after dark and bring misfortunes and (3) it is impolite to night-time visitors if one finishes eating too late (*matakop no misalamaay*).
- Rest time (*kamaroan* or *kasasalamaan*)
  Even though the sky is dark, it isn't necessary to go straight to bed; during the summer, the porch and front yard are good places for a chat. The youth or those with business on hand can go out for night trips or visits. In other words, this is a time for villagers to socialize and get together.
- Preparing for sleep (*kalifoti'an*)
  Those with nothing to do are already in bed by this time. The fire is more or less burnt out, and family members in the home should go and rest. Visitors

should leave, and those outside the home should return. This is around 9 to 10pm.

- Sleep time (*kafoti'an no tamdaw*)
  This is the time for deep sleep, physical rest, and for the activities of the soul in the world of dream to start. This is also when all *kawas* (gods, ghosts and spirits) come out.
- The first cockerel's crow (*sarakat a skak no 'ayam*)
  The mysterious world of night ends at the first cry of the cockerel, but one can continue to sleep. This is around 2am.
- The second cockerel's crow (*sakatosa no skak*), or early working hours (*kanikaran*)
  During relaxed periods of the agricultural year, only one or two women in charge of breakfast are up for work, but during busy farming seasons, young men may leave early for work. During this time, most members of the family can still lie in or wait for breakfast at daybreak.
- Breakfast time (*karanaman*)
  Generally, families start to eat at the break of dawn, and do their best to finish breakfast before sunrise, for fear of being laughed at.

The night-time periods can be told by the movements of the stars. If there are no stars, the time can be approximated from habit and experience, from things such as the state of the fire in the grate, sounds of barking or insects. The moon can also help with telling the time, even though it changes drastically each night.

According to my informants, the night is not as important as the day, so it doesn't need to be divided so carefully. As long as one gets up early enough, everyone is free to decide when to go to bed. In order to set a standard for the rising time, the whole village keeps the same pace of life, and every family owns at least one or two cockerels. If a cockerel crows irregularly, it can be killed so as not to disrupt the rhythm of time.

The moon

In the past, deciding when to farm (*sakawmah*), hunt (*sa'adop*), fish (*sakistik*) and perform rituals (*sakilisin*) was based on the changes of the moon. Generally speaking, the time that the moon appears in the sky differs daily, as does its shape. A cycle of the moon is more or less 30 days, and is called *ccay a folad* (one month).

On the basis of the shapes of the moon, the Amis separate one moon cycle into two halves. The upper half is called *itipay a folad*, meaning 'the western moon'. This is due to the fact that every month the first sighting of the moon (*kisopaan*) appears in the western sky after dark. The lower half of the cycle is called *iwaliay a folad*, meaning 'the eastern moon', as the last sighting of the moon each month appears in the east just before dawn.

The tides

The Iwan village faces the Pacific Ocean, and during spring and summer, or an idle spell in the agricultural calendar, young men go fishing in the sea, women collect shellfish on the shore, and children swim near the beach. With the addition of the sea god ritual once a year (*misacpo'*) by the age-set organization, the seaside is a much frequented area, and the villagers are all well aware of the movements of the sea. According to Iwan villagers, the rising tide (*ino*) and the ebbing tide (*krah*) are closely related to the phases of the moon. Even if the moon cannot be seen, one can still tell the time of month by the tides.

The ebb of the tide occurs twice a day, once during the day and once at night. The ebbing tide around the full moon is called *canglalan a krah* (or *tataangay a krah*, meaning the 'great ebb'). The ebbing tide at a time when the moon is out of sight is called *pdeng a krah* (or *mamangay a krah*, meaning the 'small ebb'). The ebbing tides during these two times occur respectively at noon and mid-night. In the summer, the period between the rise and the ebb of the tide in the day lengthens. When the sun cannot be seen, the tides can also help with telling the time of day.

The year

One cycle of the moon takes around 30 days, yet the Amis don't use the moon for calculating a year (*samihcaan*). Traditionally an agricultural cycle of millet, from seeding, dividing and weeding to harvesting, was used for a yearly cycle (*karaaor no mihcaan*). Also, activities that involve the participation of the whole village, such as the sea god ritual (*misacpo'*) and the annual ritual after harvest (*ilisin*) were arranged during free time from farming activities. Therefore, a schedule of one year could be allotted in place according to the natural seasons (*rakat no mihcaan*), village activities (*dmak no niyaro'*) and the agricultural cycle (*kaliwmahan*). Social and agricultural rhythms were nicely intertwined.

Some of the aforementioned ways of calculating time are still in use today, and regarded as a part of the Amis tradition. The patterns of a day, from getting up, meal times to turning in, are basically followed by all, and not much has changed from the past. Even though the Presbyterians deliberately act differently from the Catholics by attending church more frequently, or earlier on Sundays, the difference and the meaning it conveys can only be recognized under the same rhythm of life.

Times of the Others

With the impact of outside influences such as colonial government, national administration and capitalistic economics, the original autonomy of the village gradually fades and is absorbed into part of the greater society. Just as Burman (1981) points out: 'If, as Durkheim suggests, time is conceived of a "collective representation" . . . we may logically predict that when a society undergoes fundamental change (such as those associated with the colonial experience and the impact of the market economy) this transformation will be reflected in some way by changes in people's temporal conceptions' (p. 251). Nowadays in Iwan, in addition to traditional ways of time keeping, four other 'times' have been objectified by the Amis.

Time of the Japanese

The Japanese government began its rule in Taiwan in 1895. After the Japanese came, one of the important lessons in education was to 'become acquainted with time', that is, to learn to read the numbers on clocks and watches, and practice the habit of punctuality. Older people remember that the Japanese taught the Amis that one year consists of 12 months, one month has 30 days, one week has 7 days, one day has 24 hours and one hour has 60 minutes.[6] The Amis classified this as *toki no dipong*, meaning 'time of the Japanese'. *Toki* is the Amis pronunciation of the Japanese word *tokei* (clock or watch), thus in the Amis language *toki* has two meanings, the main one for clock or watch, and the other for time. Although knowledge of 'modern' time keeping was learnt, it didn't have much use at that time, since no household owned clocks or calendars anyway. This 'time of the Japanese' was only useful to schoolchildren for punctuality at school.

Gradually, housewives discovered that, every day, the time that children came home from school was also the time they started to prepare supper. Therefore, housewives invented a new word to name this time (around 5 pm), called *pinokayan no mitiliday* ('the time students come home from school'). As soon as they saw homebound students, they would know it was time to cook. Even now this habit is still kept by the housewives. Every Sunday the students got a break, so the Amis invented a new term called *paaliwacan no mitiliday* ('student's rest day'). This invention wasn't of much use to ordinary folk, except that they would know that, apart from the students, the Japanese officials and government establishments all took a day off work.

Apart from school and local government, the 'time of the Japanese' was also experienced by the Amis through their forced labor. No sooner had the Japanese started ruling Taiwan than the Amis were heavily employed with construction work. They were summoned on a compulsory and regular basis, and worked

either without payment on certain public works or with only half the ordinary pay for private enterprises run by the Japanese. After the establishment of the household registration system it was even easier for the police to summon people for this labor service, and this system persisted until the end of the Japanese rule. The calendar and clock were seen by the Amis as a way for the Japanese to control their work period and daily routine during the service. Nevertheless, when they were released from the labor service, these kinds of time measurement didn't have much use in their village life.

In the early stages of the Sino-Japanese war, in order to adapt to military education, the Japanese strengthened the concept of clock time for the villagers. They set up a big clock in the men's house (*sfi*), and ordered it to be rung at five o'clock every morning and evening, instead of the *mi'ang'ang* ('vocal announcements') pronounced by the *pakarongay* (the message bearer in the age-set organization). However, it did not bring about the desired effect on the villagers, who instead thought the clock bell sounded like ghosts crying (*soni no kawas*) and it would bring bad luck.

After America went to war against Japan, apart from maintaining the huge hanging clock in the men's house for public use, the Japanese officials sold medium-size clocks to families for home use. It is said that only five or six households ever owned this time-keeping device, but like the illiterate, or other people who didn't know how to read the time, they couldn't use the clock properly either! As a matter of fact, being able to read the clock wasn't really necessary, since people didn't need to go to work according to 'business hours'. Some elders at that time even made fun of this artificial time, saying that even the sun, moon, stars and cockerels were more practical and correct!

Some old people that once owned Japanese hanging clocks recollect:

> Many annoying things came with that clock, for example, Japanese officials visited now and then, asking how the clock went, or if there were any problems. Sometimes even neighbors came to look at it out of curiosity. The most distracting thing was that the tick-tock and the ringing disturbed sleep at night, the clock ringing at midnight sounded like ghosts and disrupted the natural silence of the night, driving everyone crazy!

Although this 'time of the Japanese' has become an essential part of village daily life, these vivid recollections serve as evidence of how the Japanese, with the backing of the state authority, introduced 'modern time concept' by forcing it onto the Amis. Furthermore, it is worth making a comparison with the case of Botswana in South Africa (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1991). In Botswana, the western 'modern time concept' was introduced by Christian missionaries, and paved a path for the capitalist market and colonial government. However, the situation in Iwan was different in the sense that 'modern time' was introduced by the Japanese with the force of modern state authority, which made it more

convenient for the later Chinese KMT (Chinese Nationalist Party) rule, as well as the acceptance of Christianity, and the participation in economic activities in the capitalist market.

Time of the Taiwanese and time of the mainlanders

The 'time of the Japanese' presents an abstract system much unlike the traditional Amis time concepts; it also carries a different meaning from what the villagers call 'time of the Taiwanese', 'time of the mainlanders' and 'time of the whites'.

The Amis classify the Chinese into two main categories, namely the 'mainlanders' (*Kaping* in the Amis language) and the 'Taiwanese' (*Payrang*). For these two categories of Chinese, the Amis not only have two different kinds of images, but also treat them in different ways.[7] The Amis have been in contact with the Chinese since the late Ching Dynasty (cir. 1860s–70s), and it is likely that the coastal Amis' images of the Chinese were shaped by the initial stages of their encounters. At that time, almost all of the Chinese from the mainland were soldiers. Therefore, the Amis called this kind of Chinese *Kaping*, which according to many informants is derived from the word for soldiers in the Chinese Fukien dialect. In their view this category of people ruled Taiwan in the Ching Dynasty and took over Taiwan from the Japanese after 1945. Until March 2000, when the DPP (Democratic Progressive Party) won the election for presidency, the Amis called the ruling KMT government 'a government of mainlanders'. Even now, the idea that 'the mainlander is the political dominator' is still vivid in many Amis' minds.

The Amis call the Taiwanese *Payrang*, which in the Chinese Fukien dialect sounds like a derogatory term denoting 'bad men'. While only a few informants deny it, most of the villagers agree that their ancestors used the word (*Payrang*) to refer to Taiwanese in order to show their dislike. Some of them further explain that this Taiwanese image could be traced back to the early stages of their contacts. At that time, the Taiwanese were landlords or merchants who exploited the Amis rapaciously.

In addition to the Gregorian calendar introduced by the Japanese, after a long history of contact with Taiwanese, the Chinese farmers' almanac[8] is also used frequently when the villagers want to choose date(s) for a ritual, especially the dates for marriages with Taiwanese. However, the Amis in Iwan have no Chinese farmers' almanac at home so they always ask other Taiwanese villagers to find an auspicious day for them. This kind of time measurement is called *nopayrang a toki* ('time of the Taiwanese').

After the Chinese takeover, the influences from the governing system increased, especially when it came to promoting local self-government. In the early years under the KMT rule, more and more political gatherings, such as

family-head meetings, community leader meetings, farmer gatherings and village gatherings began to take place. All these big and small meetings during the year were meant to be good opportunities to learn about modern time, yet almost all those attending these activities felt that 'it wasn't really worth attending and being punished just for being late or leaving early'. Elders call this *nomingkok a toki* ('time of the mainlanders'), which refers mainly to the political activities of the government.

Time of the whites

Shortly after the KMT came to Taiwan, Christianity began to be introduced, including Presbyterianism, True Jesus Church, Seventh-day Adventist Church and Catholic Church. As mentioned earlier, today in Iwan, the majority of the Amis villagers are Catholics, while the Presbyterians form the second biggest religious group.

Despite the variety, each religious group still practices similar time patterns that are originally from the west but were introduced to the Amis by the Japanese. For example, going to church regularly every Sunday (or Saturday) which is called *pilihayan* ('the Sabbath day or Sunday') or *pimisaan* (mass day for Catholics).

In addition to Sunday worship, the Presbyterians have more regular weekly church activities than the Catholics. Every Wednesday evening, all the Presbyterians gather in one of their fellow believers' houses for household worship. Every Friday evening, there is an evening prayer in the church. Believers go to church to pray freely. No formal ritual is carried out but participants sit on the chairs or kneel down and pray individually. Thus the Presbyterians have more frequent church activities than the Catholics, who have no weekly worship besides the Sunday service. However, in terms of annual activities, apart from the two common festivals, Easter and Christmas, there are many other festivals such as Pentecost, Ascension, and Holy Week, and so on in the Catholic Church.

If a follower doesn't keep this time regulation, they would feel that they have disobeyed the Lord's (or God '*Kawas*', Holy Father '*Wama*') orders! Thus *nopadaka a toki* ('time of the whites') is used mainly for religious activities.

Social Life and Coexistence of 'Times'

After 1966, industrial production began to exceed agricultural production in Taiwan. Since then, the capitalist market economy has become dominant. In 1969, 62.53 percent of the sampled aborigine households living in ordinary areas[9] made their living by farming, fishing and hunting, while 37.47 percent of

them had shifted to non-agricultural sectors. In 1986, the percentage of farmers among them was further reduced to 42.32 percent (Taiwan Provincial Government, Department of Civil Affairs, 1986: 21).

Paddy rice cultivation was the main production in Iwan from the early 1930s until it was abandoned in 1985. Before 1977, both the Japanese and Chinese governments encouraged rice cultivation. For example, the irrigation system, fertilizers and pesticides were all introduced or controlled by the government. In that year, a new policy to encourage the transfer of wet-rice land to other crops was implemented by the government to reduce the oversupply of rice. All such kind of government policies influenced Iwan deeply.

Today, for their daily consumption, most villagers grow vegetables, fruits, and areca nuts in the gardens around their houses or in the plots in their farm fields. Poultry and livestock raising are not popular but can occasionally be found. It is still customary for the villagers to collect wild vegetables in the hills or seafood by the shore for their daily diet, but they also have to buy foodstuff regularly to meet their needs. Rice is still their main staple food but no single household grows it. In other words, they have to buy rice grown outside the village.

Before the mid-1960s only a few people found jobs outside the village. However, the increasing industrialization of Taiwan since then has provided the villagers with varied working possibilities outside the village. In 1968, an oceanic fishing company, which was based in Gausyung harbor, sought fishermen among the coastal Amis villages. It was the first time that a large number of the villagers went to western Taiwan for wage earning.

At the present time, almost all the household income comes from the wages of the able-bodied young people working outside the village, especially in northern or western Taiwan. Except at the time during rituals, only the elderly and minors could be seen in the village. This is an indication of the extent to which the Amis in Iwan have been absorbed into the mainstream economic system of Taiwan.

Nowadays, every household owns calendars and clocks, and the villagers are well aware of their functions and usage, for even if we don't consider the time for going to and from school, everyday contacts with government establishments still make it essential to be conscious of the working hours. On a larger scale, when the villagers want to choose dates for the annual ritual *ilisin*, the national holidays set by the central government are also taken into consideration in order to allow the people who work away from home to attend. As for when to invite guests to a feast, the national calendar can certainly not be overlooked. Apart from these, the clock also plays an important role in daily events, from public transportation and church activities to age-set gatherings. In Munn's (1992) words: 'In the context of daily activity, clock time is quite alive, embodied in purposeful activity and experience'(p.111). From these instances we

can see more or less how deeply outside influences have penetrated the village life, and that the 'times of others' have been widely accepted.

Therefore, when it comes to events that involve the outside world, the 'times' introduced by the Japanese (and the Taiwanese) must take effect. As for the 'time of the mainlanders' and 'time of the whites', they separately refer to other different social events. However, this observation doesn't imply that the traditional time concepts are entirely out of use. In fact at the present time, many different 'times' share a mixed usage in village life and the traditional time still bears its meanings in everyday social events, and regulates the progress of many activities.

Henry J. Rutz (1992) observes that most works on the anthropology of time focus either on time concepts in disparate cultures or on the measurement of time. In contrast to that, the multiplicity of times within a single social formation and consequently the contests of power that shape time as both concept and resource are emphasized. Thus the essays in that book 'adopt the view, first, that there are different times according to particular cultural constructions placed upon a substratum of duration and sequence and, second, that the shape of time is forged in contests of social power' (p. 1) Based on this point, Rutz suggests that 'time is an object of power relations'(p. 1).

Along the same lines as Rutz's book, this article treats time as a social and cultural construct, and assumes that different cultures construct different times. In the case of Iwan, we find that disparate 'times' coexist in the same village. I try to interpret why it happened in this way and the cultural logic under it. I argue later in this article that this phenomenon bears a close relation to the way the Amis perceive alien cultures and their images of others.

The Images of Others and Cultural Change

Just as Kommers (1991) observes: 'In social contact, people tend to reduce the complexity of reality. This also holds for the perceptions of the other'(p. 111). Prior to contact with the Chinese and the Japanese, the Amis' use of the term *tao* mainly referred to other aboriginal groups. Among those with whom the Amis people have had a historical experience of contact, the Bunun and the Atayal, their headhunting enemies, are the most significant. There are many Amis folk stories reflecting these unpleasant memories. However, the Amis' images of others changed radically after the arrival of the Chinese and the Japanese.

Like Iwan, many other Amis villages along the eastern coast of Taiwan were founded between 1860 and 1890 and the threats from other headhunting people were the principal reason for the Amis' southward movement (Suenari, 1983). Obviously, the influence of the Ching court did not reach this area effectively and the fear of headhunting attacks from other aboriginal groups still existed.

Indeed, this uncertain situation continued in Iwan and its nearby area until the Japanese government established control over the region. Since then, radical socio-cultural changes have been initiated by politico-economic forces outside the village.

As mentioned before, the Japanese government began its rule in Taiwan in 1895. Their army arrived at Taidung on 25 May 1896, and defeated the remaining Chinese soldiers within a week. They then set up police stations in eastern Taiwan, one of which was established in 1900 in Syawgang, about 6–7km south of Iwan. One of the major achievements of this police station was that the local Amis began to move from the hilltop to the nearby plains adjacent to the sea in 1908. This implies that not only had the Amis surrendered to the Japanese but also that peace was established under Japanese rule. This peace was finally consolidated when the government successfully confiscated guns from the Amis of the Taidung sub-prefecture in 1911, although with some cash compensation.

The military conquest was followed by policies of integration. A household registration system was introduced in 1916 through the local police stations. Later in 1920, complete household registration data on Iwan was compiled. In addition, a land registration system was implemented from 1923 to 1927 on the eastern coast of Taiwan. Furthermore, a primary school and a health clinic were set up by the government in 1917 (in Iwan) and 1926 (in Chenggung) respectively. The government also persuaded the Amis to plant paddy rice, and the most important irrigation system was constructed by the Amis with the help of Japanese technicians between 1926 and 1931. A road along the eastern coast was built and further widened in 1917, 1925, and 1932. This means that by 1940 Iwan could be reached by bus from Chenggung or Taidung.

Most importantly, through the management of the Japanese police, a large number of Amis were recruited as construction workers from the initial stages of the Japanese occupation of Taiwan. After the establishment of the household registration system it was easier for the police to summon people for this labor service, and this system persisted until the end of Japanese rule in 1945. Due to the significant impact of the Japanese government on the Amis society, among the older generation in Iwan the Amis word *Dipong* not only refers to the Japanese as a people but also refers to 'government' and 'official'.

According to my understanding, the village Iwan has been integrated into a wider system since the mid-1920s (Huang, 1999). The Japanese assigned a village head to replace the traditional one in 1925, a clear indicator of the increasing influence from the outside government. Furthermore, after long contact with the Japanese and the Chinese, the Amis' lifestyle had shifted from a subsistence economy to a complex economy (Burridge, 1969).

Military failure, political subjugation, and the differences in terms of living standards, all these factors led the Amis to feel a sense of subordination toward the Japanese and the Chinese. This experience of subordination is expressed

vividly in a folk story, which I have called 'The Story of the Lost Amis' Writing'. In general, this kind of story is narrated in the following pattern:

> The Amis and the Taiwanese have a common ancestor. A long time ago, the ancestors of these two peoples lived on a southern island and each group had their own writing system. One day, they planned to move to Taiwan together. In order to preserve their own traditional way of writing, the ancestors of the Taiwanese carved their script onto a wooden board. The ancestors of the Amis carved their script on a stone tablet to avoid the decay of a wooden one. Unfortunately, a typhoon destroyed their ship. After the storm, the ancestors of the Taiwanese sought their wooden board on the surface of the ocean and succeeded in finding it. The ancestors of the Amis did the same thing, but they failed, because their stone tablet had sunk to the bottom of the ocean. After this, the Taiwanese still possessed their way of writing, but the Amis had lost their own way of writing forever.

In another version of this story, the Japanese were included. In this case, the Japanese are also descendants of the same ancestor. When the ancestors of the Japanese prepared to leave, they carved their writing onto a bamboo board. As a result of this, the Japanese preserved their writing after the storm, since the bamboo board floated on the ocean just as the wooden board did.

Another story shows the same theme in a slightly different way:

> A long time ago, the Amis, the Japanese and the Taiwanese had a single ancestor. When the immediate ancestor of the Amis was born, he was naked without anything on his body. When the ancestor of the Taiwanese was born, he was wearing a pair of straw sandals on his feet. When the ancestor of the Japanese was born, he was wearing a pair of cloth shoes on his feet. This is why the culture of the Japanese was more advanced than the Taiwanese and the Taiwanese more advanced than the Amis.

This kind of story reveals how self-conscious the Amis people were and still are. On the one hand, it emphasizes the equality between the Amis, the Taiwanese, and the Japanese, that is, all of them originate from the same ancestor and the orator does not emphasize the birth order. On the other hand, it expresses the Amis' sense of subordination in a metaphorical way.

To some extent, the Amis have this sense of subordination toward the whites too. In one of my earlier articles (Huang, 1996), I argued that the Amis' mass conversion to Christianity in the 1950s took place amid marked economic inequality between the Amis and the dominant outsiders, which resulted in the Amis' general dissatisfaction with their material life and negative images of the Japanese and the Taiwanese. The fact that the Japanese, the Amis' political overlord between 1896 and 1945, were defeated by the Americans, gave them the belief that Christianity was more powerful than the religions of the Japanese. As a matter of fact, in the initial stage, Christianity was translated as 'the reli-

gion of the American (or the white)'. So conversion to Christianity not only helped the Amis pursue a brighter future but also showed their resistance to the dominant others (i.e. Chinese and Japanese). Nowadays, the practice of Christianity is important for the Amis to ensure their success in the secular life. However, for most of them, the Christian God is still not seen as their own but originally 'belonging to the whites' (*no Padaka*).[10]

R. Wilk (1990) says that 'modernization theory may be out of favor in academia, but in Belize, as in most of the third world, it is alive and well as popular ideology' (p. 80). This opinion fits the case of Amis. It has been observed by Heishiki (1968) that the Amis are more eager to learn new things from the Japanese and Chinese than any other Taiwanese aboriginal group. He points out that the adoption of agricultural skills from these two peoples and the high ratio of those attending schools set up by government are two such expressions of this attitude.

Obviously there is a link between the Amis' images of others and their willingness to accept new things. Due to their historical experience, the Amis dislike, and to some extent, look down upon other aboriginal peoples, especially the Bunun and the Atayal. Although after 1970 there have been several cases of intermarriage between the Amis and other aboriginal groups, there is no sign that the Amis will accept anything that is classified as 'belonging to the Bunun or the Atayal'. On the other hand, if something is labeled as 'belonging to the Chinese, Japanese, or the whites' then it has a higher probability of being accepted. This is mainly because they think that these peoples are 'more advanced' than themselves and that borrowing cultural elements from these peoples can improve their lives. The adoption of four different 'times of others' could be understood in this way.

Conclusion

This paper could be seen as a response to a challenging question: 'To what extent do indigenous people accept, reformulate, or reject hegemonic cultures of ethnic domination?' (Alonso, 1994) I also take the viewpoint that 'we cannot achieve a full interpretive understanding of cultural forms without reference to the effects of cultural contact and difference (Urban and Sherzer, 1991: 3).

This study begins with a simple question: Why do different 'times' coexist among the Ami in Iwan? I argue that the Amis' images of others provide an answer to it. For the Amis in that village, four significant others have different relations with them. The Japanese were the Amis' political rulers in the past, and many significant socio-cultural changes among the Amis were initiated by them. The mainlanders, who replaced the Japanese after 1945, are considered to be the main rulers while the Taiwanese represent economic domination in the

Amis' eyes. As for the white people, through the adoption of Christianity, they came to have important influences on the Amis' religious life.

Through the different aspects of social life in the present village, it seems that the villagers are attempting to combine their own cultural traditions with certain cultural elements of 'superior' others, and striving for a better future. This is why, in addition to their traditional ways of time keeping, four different 'times' are recognized and adopted by the Amis.

Notes

1. The aboriginal peoples of Taiwan belong to the Malay-Polynesian family in terms of physical features, language and socio-cultural characteristics (Mabuchi, 1960). A latest official document records 404,000 aborigines living in Taiwan, which is less than 1.7 percent of the total population. The Amis is the biggest one among the ten groups in terms of population.
2. Two alphabetical systems other than English are employed in this study. There are different systems of Romanization for Mandarin Chinese pronunciation and in this study the Yale system is used. For reasons of brevity, however, the different tones in Chinese pronunciation will be ignored. With regard to the spellings of Amis native words please refer to Fey (1986). However, 'ng' will replace 'g' to keep in line with the recent change.
3. There are two main types of age-system in anthropological literature: Age-grading and age-setting (Gulliver, 1968; Baxter and Almagor, 1978: 2). The Amis' age-set organization is a good example of this type of system (Chen, 1989).
4. My fieldwork in Iwan began in July 1986, and has continued to this day. The longest periods were from January to July 1990, and from October 1992 to August 1993. Besides the fieldwork in Iwan, three other Amis' villages are also included in my research.
5. Hakka is a dialect of the Chinese language. Its speakers are the second biggest group in Taiwan, next to the speakers of the Fukien dialect. Although the Amis distinguish between the Fukien and the Hakka, and sometimes classify them into two subgroups, the Amis' images of these two subgroups are quite similar. There are three grocery stores in the village owned by the three Hakka Han-Chinese households.
6. According to Shimada (1995) 'the Meiji government introduced the Western form of time regulation in 1872 with the intention of leading Japanese society into "civilization"' (p. 254). This Western form of time regulation includes two systems: 'The international meridian (the 24-hour system with twelve o'clock midnight as the beginning of the day) and the Gregorian calendar' (Nishimoto, 1997: 244)
7. Nevertheless, they knew that the Taiwanese were originally from mainland China and shared common cultural traditions with the mainlanders.
8. There are many different versions of Chinese farmers' almanac in Taiwan, but their contents have some similarities. The most important features are their astrological predictions of upcoming events and their advice about human activities, such as farming, fishing, marital compatibility, and important ceremonies.
9. Including Iwan and other Amis villages.

10. This only applies to the majority of Catholics. For the Presbyterians, their degree of devotion to church matters is much higher than their Catholic fellow villagers. Consequently, the Presbyterians, as a whole, know the content of the Bible much better than the Catholics. They believe that all human beings are descendants of Adam and Eve, which is something that most Catholics do not take seriously. Furthermore, compared with Catholics, they tend to see God as the Lord of all human beings. For details, please see another article of mine (Huang, 2003).

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