Introduction

• Two observations:
  – Aboriginal villages in the east of Taiwan are often of recent origin and transient
    ↓
    Village as a static geographical entity with a long history
  
  – Villages are often mono-ethnic
Bunun

- One of the 14 officially recognised indigenous tribes
- Austronesian
- 52,427 ethnic members
- Five clans:
  - Isbukun
  - Takbanuaz and Takivatan
  - Takituduh and Takibakha
Bunun

- Traditionally:
  - 高山族 'High mountain tribe'
  - Hunters and slash-and-burn agriculturalists
  - Pre-colonial periods: headhunting
  - Mobile and minimal social stratification
  - Strong cultural importance of individualism (Huang 1995)
Bunun

- **Takivatan:**
  - 1700 + members
  - Nantou and Hualien

- 馬遠村 Mayuan / Bahuan
Population movement

• Before the Japanese (pre-1895)
  – Oral history / myth of the original village (Asang Daingaz)
  – Semi-sedentary settlements, often family groups
  – Widely dispersed across the Central Mountain Range
Population movement

• Before the Japanese (pre-1895)
  - Unstable, because of strong stress on individualism
  - Typical settlement pattern:
    • Village gets established
    • Social pressure or population density builds up
    • One group splits off and founds a new settlement
Population movement

• **Japanese Occupation (1895-1945)**
  – The Japanese saw geographical dispersal of indigenous populations as a security risk and an administrative problem
  – Hostility of Atayal, Bunun and Paiwan towards Japanese entering the mountains to harvest timber
Population movement

- **Japanese Occupation (1895-1945)**
  - Pacification campaigns + gradual resettlement into lowland villages (Wang 1980)
  - Japanese schools and police stations
  - Bunun were disproportionately affected by resettlements: between 1920 and 1929, 62% of the Bunun population had been resettled
1931
Population movement

- **Kuomintang Rule (1945-1980s)**
  - Stress on Chinese cultural unity
  - Aborigines were considered 'defective citizens'
  - Containment in reservations
  - Social and political inequality
  - Modernisation slower than that of the original population
Population movement

• Modern Taiwan (1980s-now)
  – 1984: National Taiwan University + Yushan Theological Seminary (玉山神學院) = Alliance of Taiwan Aborigines
  – 1993: Official recognition of indigenous groups
  – 1996: Council of Indigenous Peoples (原族民委員會)
Population movement

- Modern Taiwan (1980s-now)
  - Young people move towards the cities in search of better life
  - Aging villages
  - Reappreciation of traditional culture
  - Trend to retire in the village
The mono-ethnic village

- Despite all these movements and changes, at present, there are fairly strict geographical divisions along ethnic lines
- Ma-yuan is as good as exclusively Bunun
The mono-ethnic village

• Historical reasons:
  – Traditionally, tribal divisions were absolute
  – Inter-ethnic marriages were (and to some extent still are) discouraged
  – Japanese resettlement policies resettled tribes, not individuals
  – Freedom of movement is relatively recent
The mono-ethnic village

• Contemporary reasons:
  – Reawakening of cultural pride
  – Attachment to the home village (a Chinese influence?)
  – Government policies and financial incentives meant to deal with social inequality make it opportune to live in indigenous villages
Conclusion

• Geographically and historically, the Bunun village is a transient entity
• Ethnically, Bunun villages appear to be a much more clearly delineated entities
• More research is needed


Unināŋ
miquumisanāŋ!