

The Rise and Fall of the Bunun Village

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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

TAIWAN

台灣

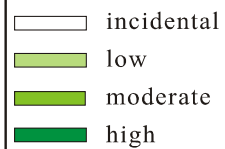
0 25 50 km

Taipei
台北市

Nantou County
南投縣

Hualien
花蓮市

Concentration of
Bunun inhabitants

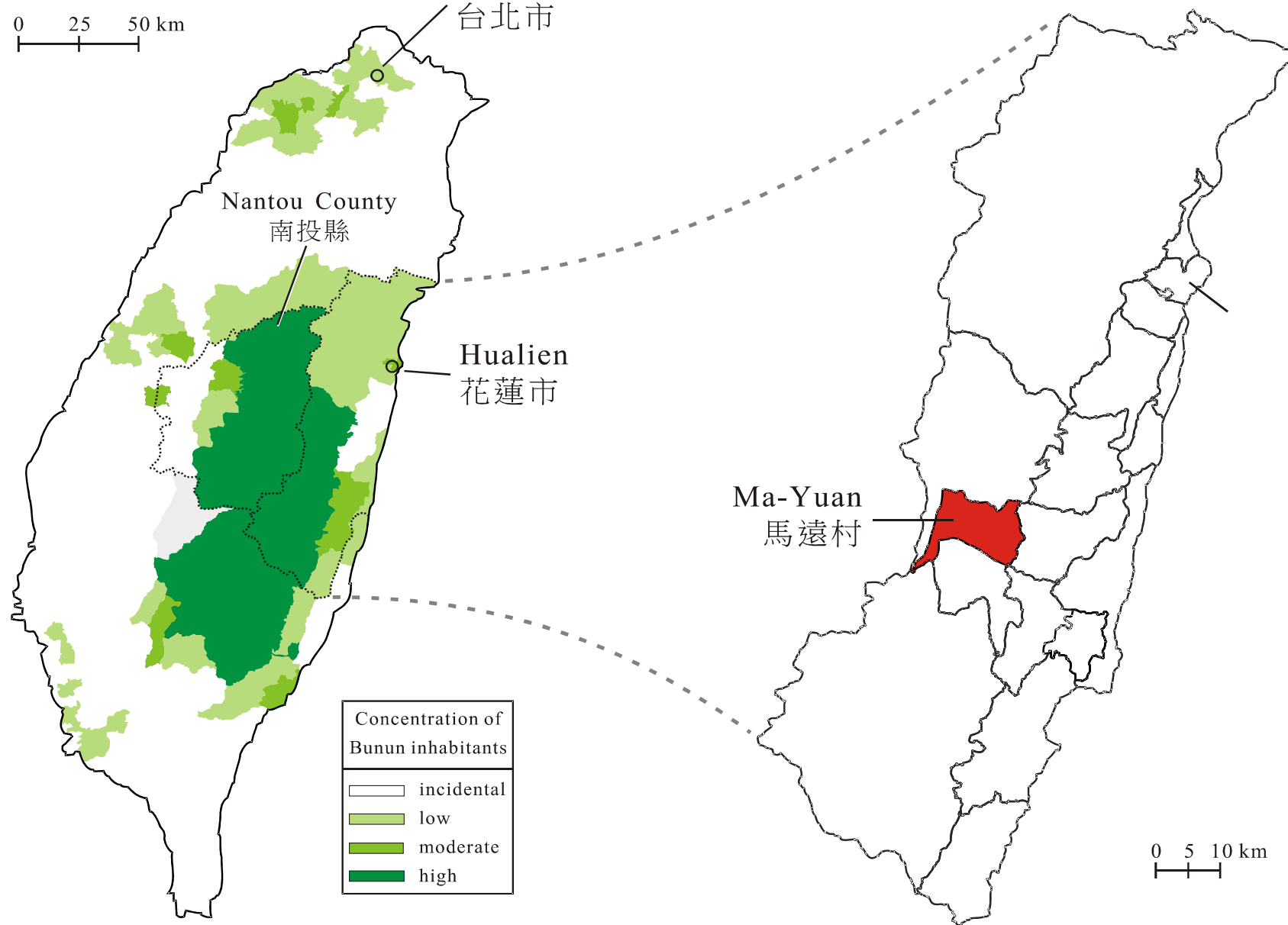


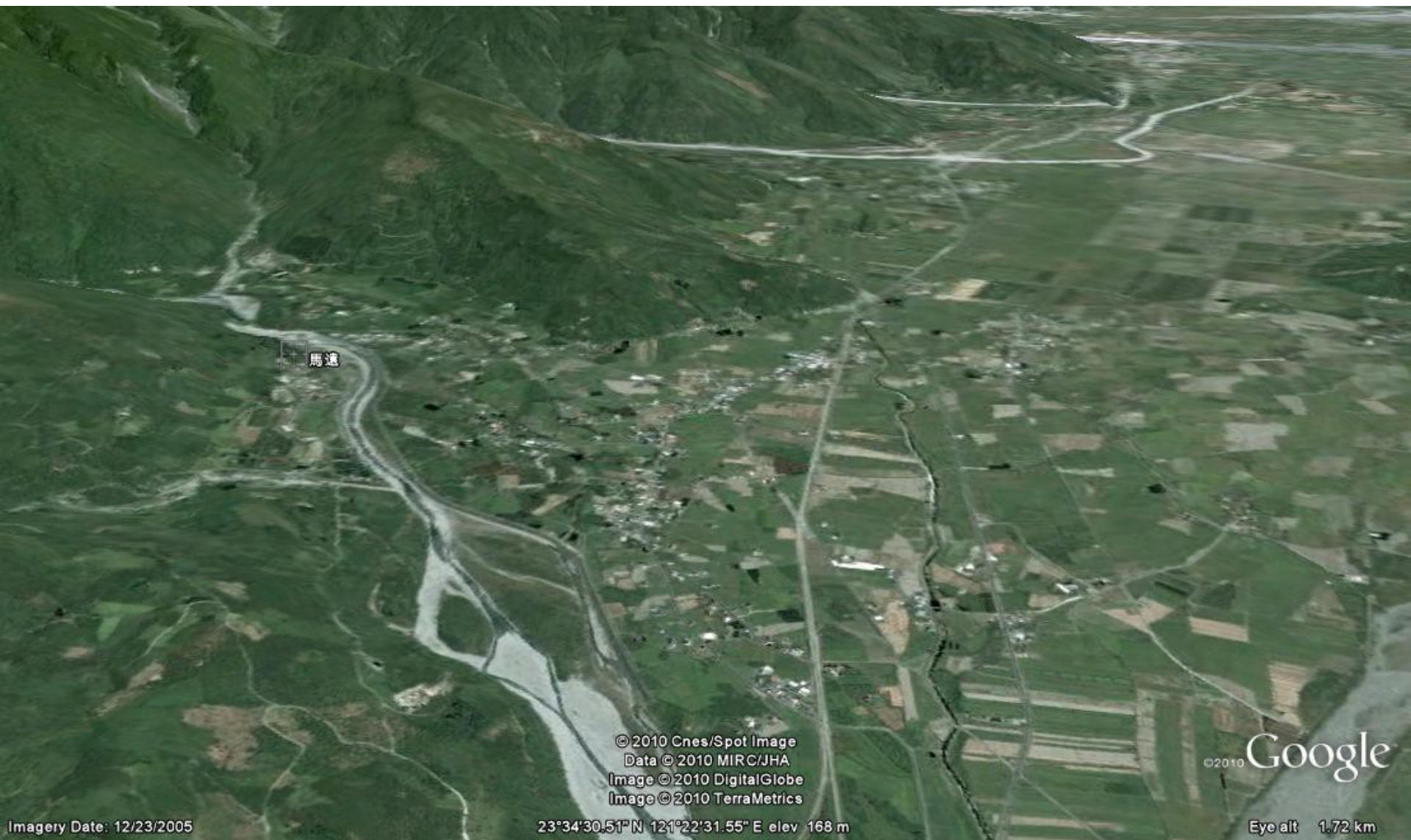
HUALIEN COUNTY

花蓮縣

Ma-Yuan
馬遠村

0 5 10 km





馬遠

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Data © 2010 MIRC/JHA
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Imagery Date: 12/23/2005

23°34'30.51" N 121°22'31.55" E elev 168 m

Eye alt 1.72 km



Image © 2010 DigitalGlobe

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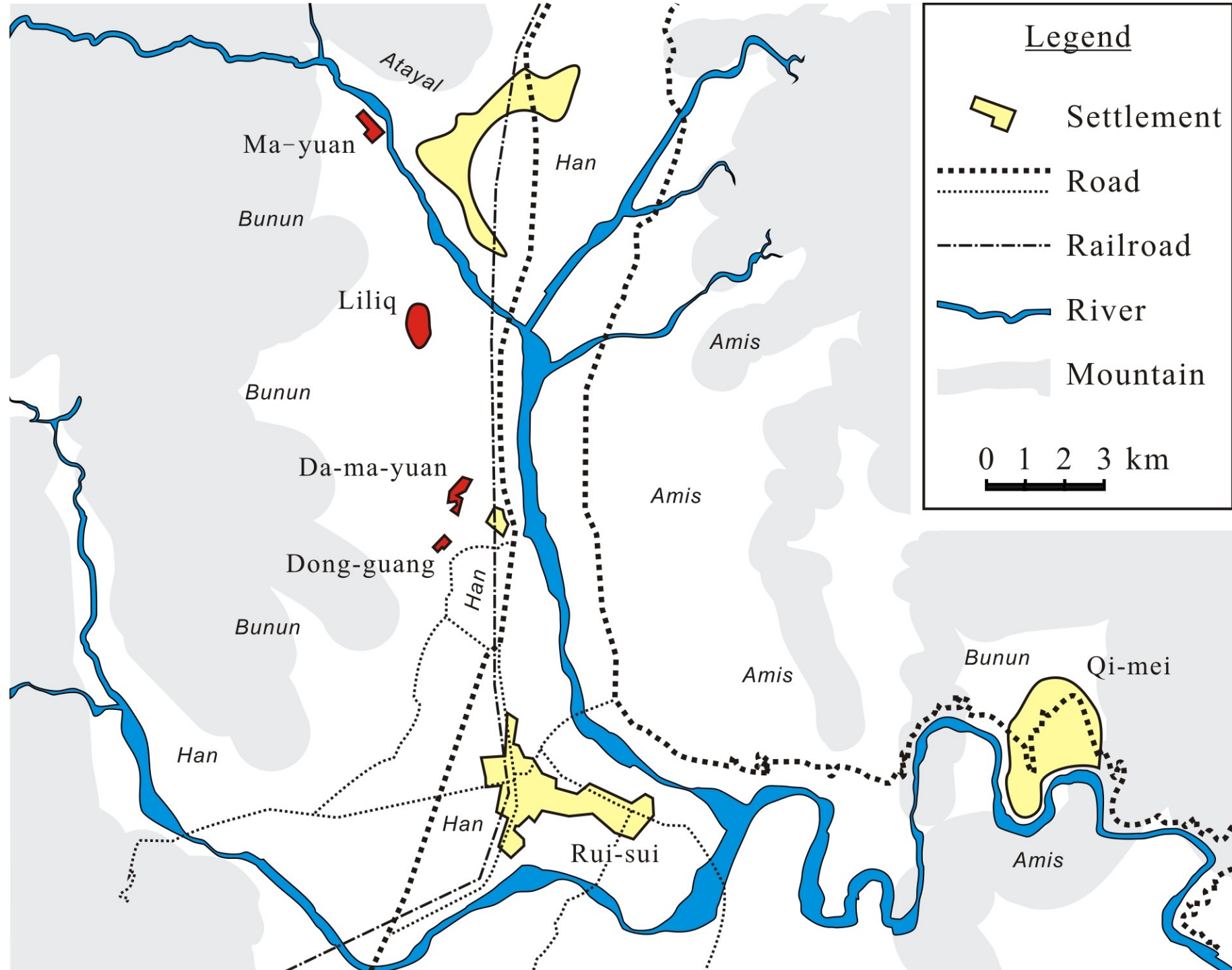
Imagery Date: 7/11/2004

23°34'41.03" N 121°21'45.98" E elev 185 m

Eye alt 1.72 km







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

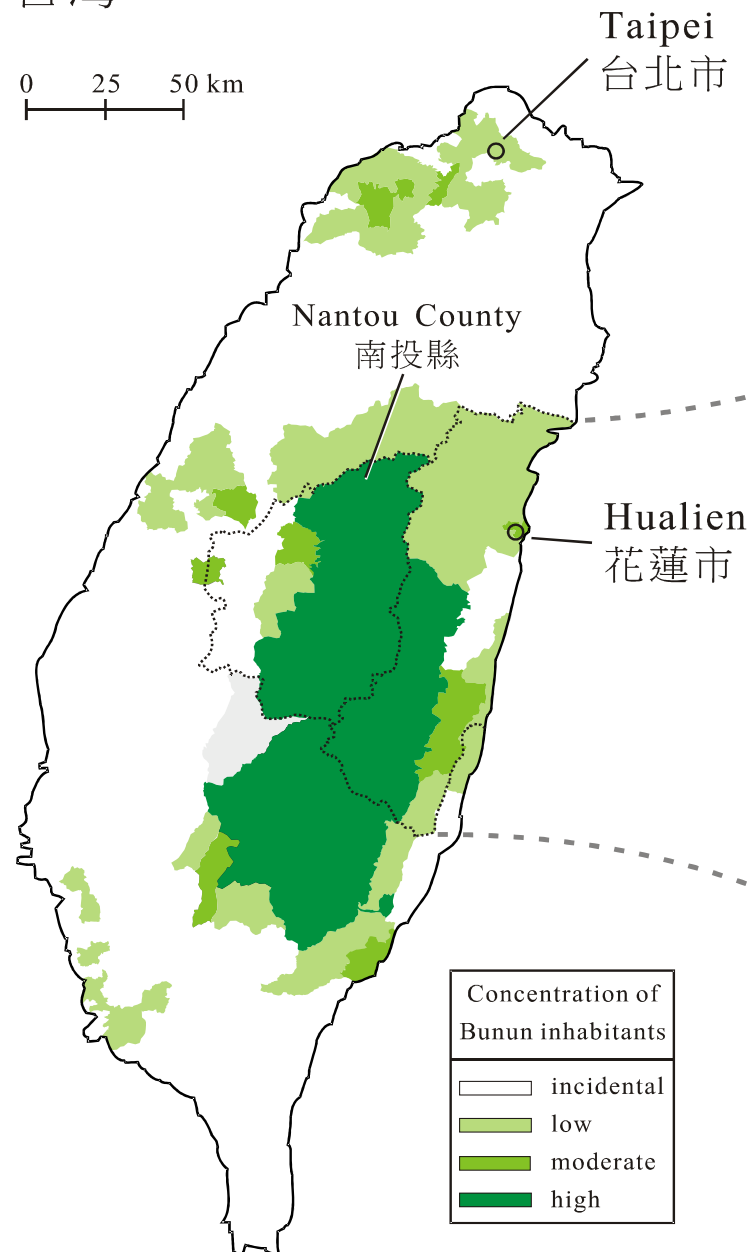
Population movement

- **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

TAIWAN

台灣

0 25 50 km



HUALIEN COUNTY

花蓮縣

Ma-Yuan
馬遠村

0 5 10 km



Population movement

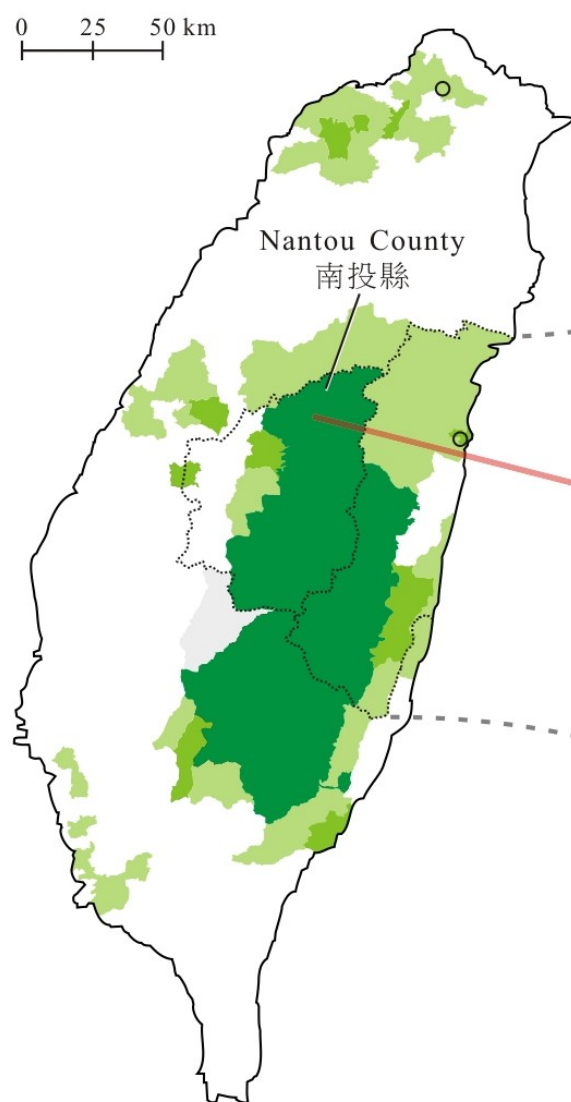
- **Japanese Occupation (1895-1945)**
 - The Japanese saw geographical dispersal of indigenous populations as a security risk and an administrative problem
 - Hostility of Atayal, Bunun and Paiwan towards Japanese entering the mountains to harvest timber

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

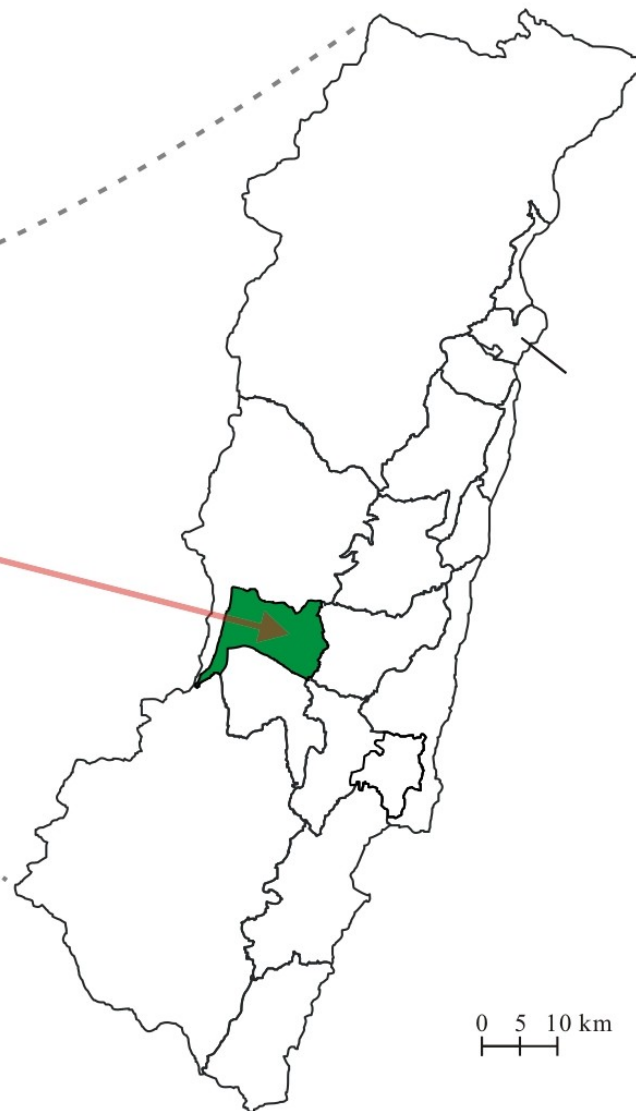
TAIWAN
台灣

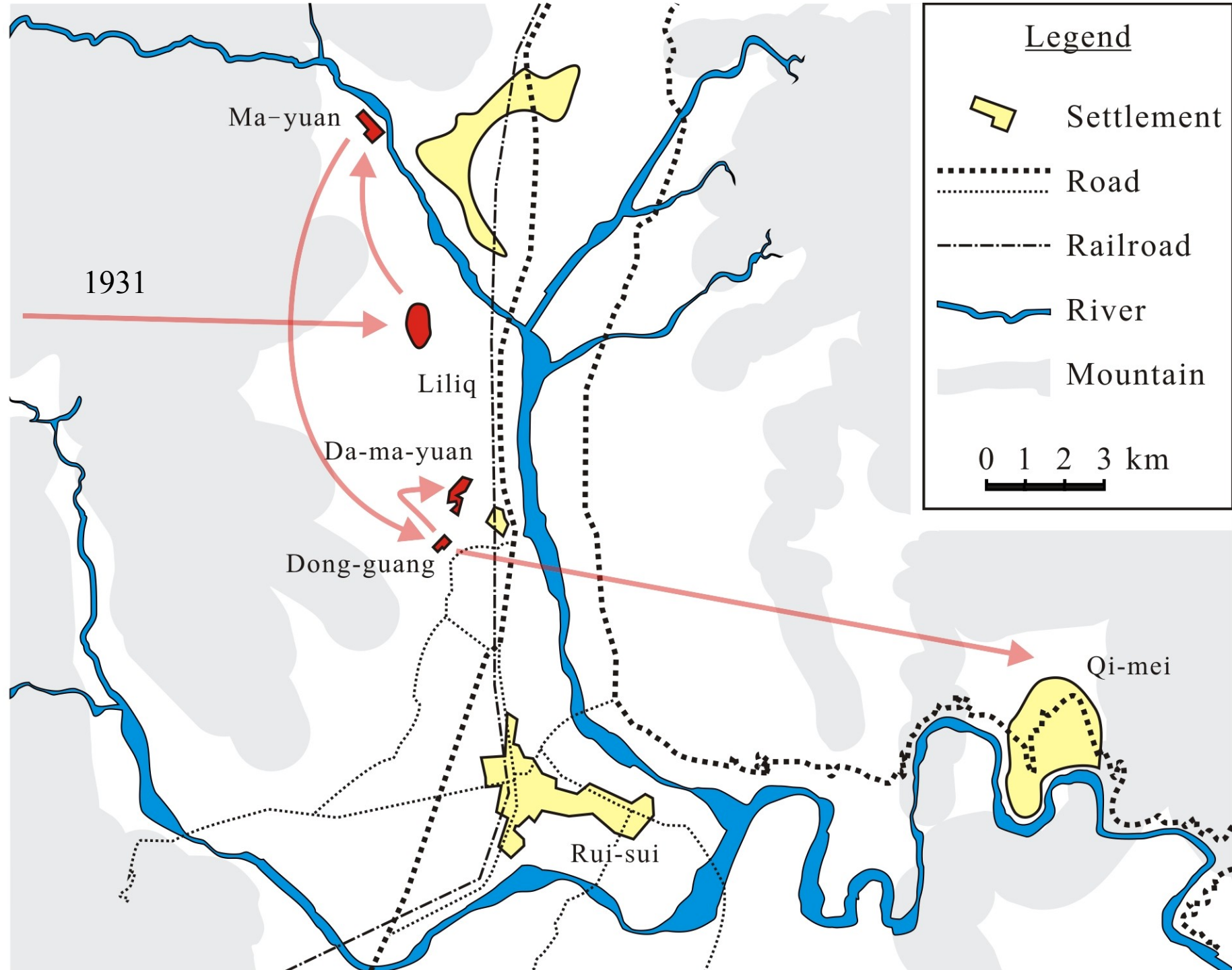
0 25 50 km



HUALIEN COUNTY
花蓮縣

0 5 10 km





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

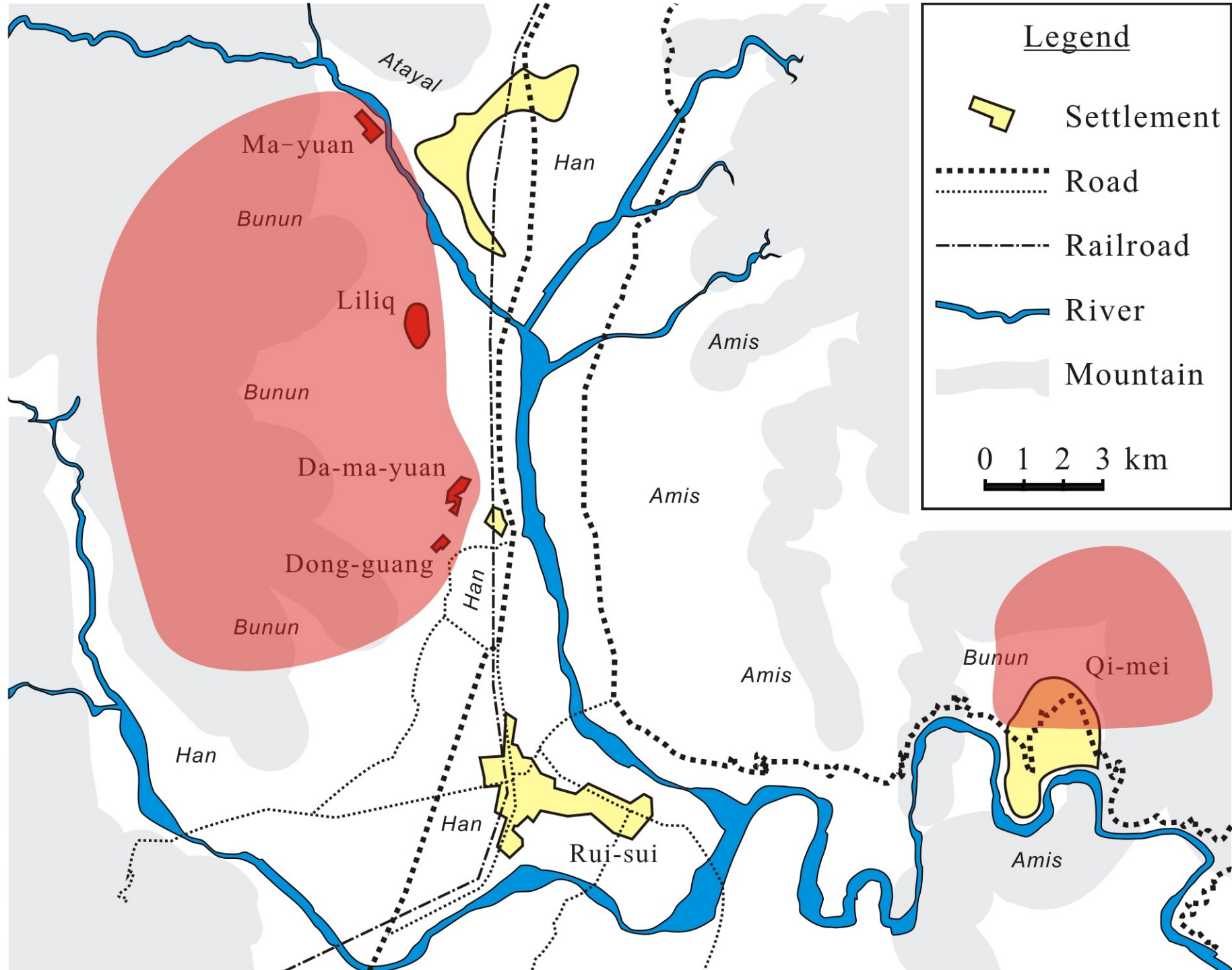
- **Modern Taiwan (1980s-now)**
 - 1984: National Taiwan University + Yushan Theological Seminary (玉山神學院) = Alliance of Taiwan Aborigines
 - 1993: Official recognition of indigenous groups
 - 1996: Council of Indigenous Peoples (原住民族委員會)

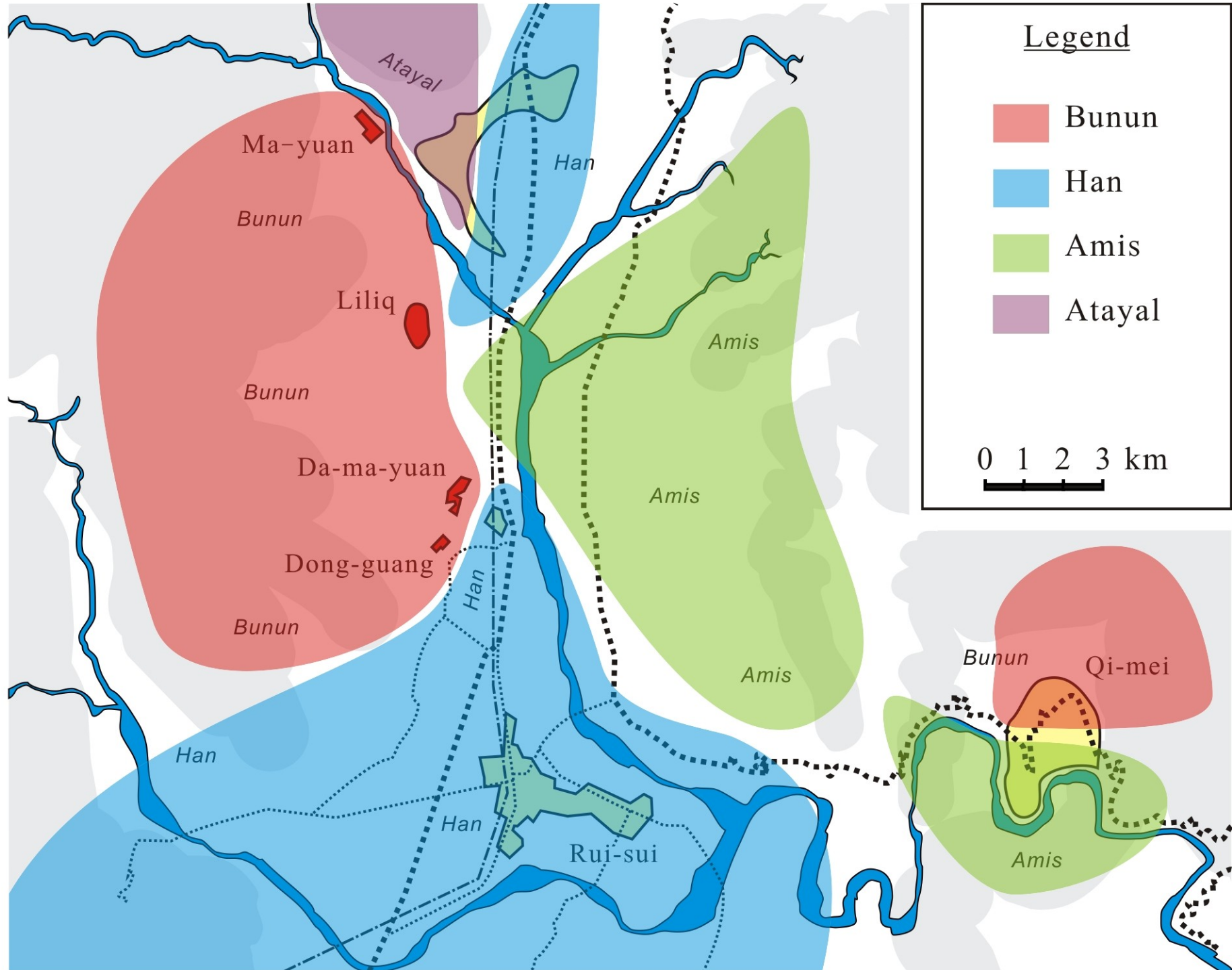
Population movement

- **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

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