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Women and Land

Privatisation, Gender Relations, and Social Change in Truku Society, Taiwan

Ching-Hsiu Lin

PhD in Social Anthropology
The University of Edinburgh
2010
Abstract

This research is based upon fieldwork carried out in 2005 and 2006 among Truku people, a Taiwanese indigenous group living in eastern Taiwan. It examines the transformation of the relationship between women and land, and explores meanings related to women’s ownership of land since the government introduced the privatisation of land ownership and cash cropping into Truku society in the 1960s. However, the imposition of these programmes of land reform and capitalisation has generated various types of conflict over land in Truku society. Since the 1960s, Truku people have suffered from loss of lands, arising from various governmental policies on economic development. Hence, many land reclamation movements have arisen, organised by Truku people in order to reclaim their land rights. Furthermore, the transformation of property relations has generated many conflicts over land and inheritance between different households and has created tensions between women and men in terms of land ownership in contemporary society. Most importantly, I reflect on the prevalent idea that women’s right to own land is not sanctioned by ‘traditional’ Truku culture, an argument which, I argue, is problematic, because the idea does not (neatly) fit into actual Truku practices of property transaction. Truku people strategically make use of this narrative of ‘tradition’ in order to strengthen their own tactical position in land disputes which arise between different households. Furthermore, I am critical of the emphasis placed on masculine or male Truku culture in this narrative, which is constructed by Truku activists in land reclamation movements in contemporary Truku society. Through investigation of the processes by which women obtain land in Truku society, I argue that women’s ownership of land cannot simply be regarded as a consequence of the implications of privatisation, but is also a result of kinship practices and their work in cultivating land and maintaining the economic well-being of the household in contemporary society. This research attempts to contribute to anthropological perspectives on property relations, economic anthropology, gender studies, kinship studies and studies of indigenous movements in Taiwan.
Signed Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed entirely by me, the candidate, Ching-Hsiu Lin. Unless otherwise stated or indicated, the work is all my own, and has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signed

Ching-Hsiu Lin
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Acknowledgments

First and foremost I must thank my Truku friends in my fieldsite, Fushih Village, in Taiwan. Without their participation this research project and my thesis would never have seen the light of day. They allowed me access to their community, gave me a Truku name—Watan, and generously shared their knowledge, experiences, personal life histories, and insights with me. So many of them assisted me in so many ways and whilst I cannot mention them all here, a special word of thanks to Mowna Rowty and his father, Rowty Yudaw, and to all the members of his family for helping me to enter and settle into their Truku community. They always made me welcome to share their food, to participate in various kinship events in their family, and to participate with them in their everyday lives.

I am deeply grateful to Jiru Haruq for teaching me the Truku language and culture, and to all members of the Ciwang Presbyterian Church for their kind hospitality and emotional support. I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity I had to learn Truku language, culture, ecological knowledge, and ways of cultivation with Daki Halong, Yaya Howat, Isaw Tadaw, Simi Tadaw, Lowsi Rakaw, Igun Shiban, Kuhong Shiban, and Yudaw Dangaw. Many thanks to Gujun, Ibi, and Sigi Tapan for providing me with comfortable and warm accommodation and kind hospitality, and to A-Chun and A-Lan for their hot and delicious meals and cold beer during my stay in Fushih Village. I remain immensely thankful to many younger Truku intellectuals, including Wilang Humiy, Hui-Ju Sigi, Kaji Cihung, and Siyat Ulon for sharing many thought-provoking ideas about various issues of the Truku and for their constructive criticism of my research.

I must extend an enormous thank you to my supervisors, Professor Janet Carsten and Professor Francesca Bray, both of whom showed me a great deal of kindness and patience. From the larger theoretical concepts to the grammatical problems, Professor Janet Carsten supported me at every step. I take this opportunity to thank also my thesis examiners, Professor Victor King (University of Leeds) and Dr. Dimitri Tsintjilonis (University of Edinburgh) for their careful analysis of my thesis and their thought-provoking observations during my viva. Special thanks go to Dr. Simon Scott (University of Ottawa) for his invaluable comments on my thesis and for sharing his knowledge of studies of the Truku culture and society with me. My appreciation goes to Professor Fan I-Chun (Academia Sinica, Taiwan) for providing academic encouragement and supporting financial assistance during the time of my fieldwork and writing-up period.

Over the years, I have benefited from the help and encouragement from many scholars. I thank Dr. Tobias Kelly for his comments on my Ph.D. research proposal, and other academic staff in the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Edinburgh--Dr. Richard Baxstrom, Dr. Stepan Ecks, and Dr Ian Harper for their intellectual support, and Professor Veena Das and Professor Signe Howell, whom I met in the STAR programme. Their generous sharing of experiences and wisdom were crucial to the achievement of this project. I must also extend my gratitude to Professor Chang-Yi Chang (National Taiwan University), Dr. Bor-Wen Tsai (National Taiwan University), Dr. Jeng-Guo Chen (Academia Sinica, Taiwan), Dr. The-I Kao (National Tong Hwa University, Taiwan), and Dr. Chun-Fa Tong.
(National Tong Hwa University, Taiwan) for their encouragement and intellectual support during the period of my fieldwork.

Many thanks go to my colleagues and peers for their emotional and intellectual support in the Department of Social Anthropology in the university of Edinburgh. Firstly, I must express my gratitude to Stuart Martin and Dr. Akshay Khanna for carefully proofreading the unpolished drafts of each chapter and their invaluable comments on my research. I acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. Jennifer Speirs, Dr. Pauline Nolan, Heather Lynes, Nichola Melanaphy, Sylvia Seldon, Harini Amarasuriya, and Angela Riviere for their continual intellectual support and help to proofread sections of my thesis during my writing-up period. JunHwan Park, Namju Ryo, Hyanchul Kim and Jinee Byum, Dr. Lucy Atkinson, Dr. Kelly Shhiell-Davis, Louise Oliver, and Anne-Laure Ashby-Cromphout offered sympathy, entertainment, and most importantly friendship.

For financial support for the completion of this thesis, I must firstly thank Pi-Chu Huang for her personal grants that provided for me in my first year in Edinburgh. Secondly, I am very thankful to the Academia Sinica, Taiwan for granting me an Academia Sinica Fellowship for Doctoral Candidates in the Humanities and Social Science for 2007 and 2008. I am also indebted to the Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange, Taiwan, for awarding me a Dissertation Fellowship for Taiwanese Students Abroad, and to the Royal Anthropological Institute for Radcliffe-Brown and Firth Trust Funds for Social Anthropological Research, for a grant during my writing-up period, which helped to deal with some of the pressing bills.

I am profoundly grateful for friendship, entertainment, Taiwanese food, and intellectual support shared with my Taiwanese friends, including Dr. Shu-Lin Chiang, Dr. Zung-De Lin, Kuan-Hsun Chen and Chia-Chuan Fan, and Chen-Ching Cheng, in Edinburgh. Many thanks to Chen-Ju Ong, Tsung-Hsiao Tiao, Kuen-Liang Lin, Shih-Cheng Chang, and Jiun-Yan Chen, and Wei-Shan Hsu for their lasting friendship, which always encouraged me to pursue my dream, despite the geographical distance between us.

During my writing-up period, my grandfather, Ching-Chi Lin (1923-2007), died in February 2007. He encouraged me to become interested in studies of humanity and social science. His great diligence in the pursuit of knowledge and studying Taiwanese culture will continue to inspire my academic life.

I am particularly grateful to my family who never doubted the path I chose. Special thanks go to my greatuncle, Dr. Tsang-Pi Chang, for his kind hospitality when I was in Germany. My mother’s letters from Taiwan always gave me strength and helped to conquer any problems that I had in Edinburgh. I also express my gratitude to my parents-in-law. Without their financial support and encouragement, the completion of this project would have been very difficult.

Finally, I would like to give special thanks to my wife, Yi-Fang Chen, whose patient love and creative ideas about my thesis enabled me to complete this work.
Map 1. The Distribution of Taiwanese Indigenous Peoples

Source: Council of Indigenous Peoples
Map 2. Sioulin Township (Source: Map of Sioulin Township, published by Ministry of the Interior, Taiwan, July 2006)
Map 3. Map of Taiwan showing Hualien County
Map 4. Fushih Village in Sioulin Township
International Phonetic Alphabet equivalents of Roman Alphabet

In order to assist with pronunciation of Truku words in my thesis, readers should use the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) system. The tables below show the IPA equivalents of the English language alphabet.

Consonant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Romanization writing system</th>
<th>The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>t</td>
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<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>d</td>
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<tr>
<td>k</td>
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<tr>
<td>g</td>
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<td>q</td>
<td>q</td>
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<td>c</td>
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<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>j</td>
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<td>s</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>h</td>
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<td>w</td>
<td>w</td>
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<tr>
<td>y</td>
<td>j</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vowel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Romanization writing system</th>
<th>The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this thesis, written Truku is reproduced using the romanised writing system of the Truku language. This system has been adopted because: (1) it is more popular in Truku society than other systems that are available; (2) according to the ‘Indigenous Peoples Language Skill Certification Procedure’[^1], this system is the official writing system for the Truku language; (3) it is also used by Truku people in their ‘Truku-Chinese Dictionary’ (Pusu Patas Kari Truku) (Sioulin Township Office 2006).

### Glossary

**Truku Language**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Truku Term</th>
<th>English Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alang</strong></td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anay</strong></td>
<td>A man’s wife’s <em>mnswayi</em> and <em>hlmadan</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ayus</strong></td>
<td>Boundary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bira</strong></td>
<td>Money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dara</strong></td>
<td>Blood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dgiyaq</strong></td>
<td>Mountain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dupan alang</strong></td>
<td>Hunting area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dxgal</strong></td>
<td>Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gaya</strong></td>
<td>A complex system of social and religious norms related to supernatural beliefs and ancestor worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gnhiyi</strong></td>
<td>Bridewealth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gnjiyax</strong></td>
<td>Brideservice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gxal</strong></td>
<td>A social/kin group that is shaped and reshaped through weddings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hakaw utux</strong></td>
<td>The rainbow spirit bridge which connects the human world to the sacred place where Truku ancestors live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hlmadan</strong></td>
<td>A man’s female cousin, including the daughters of his father’s and mother’s siblings, and a woman’s male cousin, including the sons of her father’s and mother’s siblings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hmici kari</strong></td>
<td>Curse or testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emb gala</strong></td>
<td>Atayal People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emb urux</strong></td>
<td>Separation or the process of bequeathing the parents’ properties to their children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ina</strong></td>
<td>Daughter-in-law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lhqwa</strong></td>
<td>A place where hunters take rest and sleep while on a hunting expedition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lng lngun lhbum</strong></td>
<td>A person without heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lohei</strong></td>
<td>Thieves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lutut</strong></td>
<td>The Ego’s siblings, cousins, parents’ kin groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kingal dara</strong></td>
<td>A kin group that shares blood ties with a common collective ancestor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kingal ruwan sapah / Kingal rqda</strong></td>
<td>A Household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kmlawa rudan</strong></td>
<td>To respect the elders and to take care of the elders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kmsrabang</strong></td>
<td>Greed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mgayi</strong></td>
<td>Following <em>gaya</em> hunting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mhowayi</strong></td>
<td>Generosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mnswayi</strong></td>
<td>The Ego’s siblings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mstrung</strong></td>
<td>Wedding ceremony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nniqan</strong></td>
<td>Dwelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pasniq</strong></td>
<td>Taboo, dirtiness, and misfortune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Patas dxgal</em></td>
<td>Land ownership certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Phiyug sapah</em></td>
<td>Building a house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Pnsaq</em></td>
<td>Ritually slaughtering a pig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Powda gaya</em></td>
<td>A ritual to deal with infringements of <em>gaya</em>, and the dangerous contamination which results or to celebrate the ancestral spirits’ blessings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Pusu bi kari</em></td>
<td>Ancestors’ words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Qngaya nadam uma</em></td>
<td>Dowry (literally something brought by the girl)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Rous</em></td>
<td>Dirty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Rqdat</em></td>
<td>Hearth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Rudan</em></td>
<td>Elder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Rudan gnda wa</em></td>
<td>The spirits have power over the harvest of wild game and the safety of hunters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sapah</em></td>
<td>House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sbriagan</em></td>
<td>A grocery shop/ A place of transaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Smbarux</em></td>
<td>To get out of debt. A system of reciprocity in relation to exchange of labour and gifts in kinship practices, economic activities, and ancestral worship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Slnbnun</em></td>
<td>An individual lives in constant fear of being punished by the spirits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Smliq gaya</em></td>
<td>The infringement of <em>gaya</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Smudal</em></td>
<td>Cultivated lands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tksiyuk</em></td>
<td>Uxorilocial residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Utux</em></td>
<td>Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Utux Rudan</em></td>
<td>The spirits of deceased elders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mandarin**

*Cin shang jia cin* (親上加親)  
To cement old ties by marriage as marriage between cousins

*Daishu* (代書)  
Land administration agent

Democratic Progressive Party, DDP (民進黨)  
The ruling political party in Taiwan between 2000 and 2008

*Ding Hun* (訂婚)  
A wedding feast held by the bride’s household.

*Guang bo jhan* (廣播站)  
A broadcasting station

*Hui* (會)  
A society or institution/ A savings and credit society in Truku society

Kuomintang, KMT (國民黨)  
Chinese Nationalist Party ruling Taiwan from 1945 to 2000

Shanditongbao (山地同胞)  
Mountain people

Yuanjhumin (原住民)  
Aborigines/ Indigenous people

Yuanjhuminzu (原住民族)  
Indigenous peoples
Chapter One. Introduction

Main argument

Daki was a Truku male elder whom I would often help as he worked in his fields. One day, as we were working together, I asked him ‘Whereabouts is your land?’ He stopped suddenly, pointed with his right forefinger towards the mining land belonging to the Asia Cement Company, and said ‘Most of my father’s land was there.’ He and many of his neighbours have lost land in the same way, land now occupied by the Asia Cement Company. In their fight to regain what was once theirs, they have organised an indigenous social movement in their village, led by a Truku woman called Igon.

Igon had been recovering from a stroke for two months at the time I first met her. She told me, ‘My illness was caused by the stress I have suffered fighting against the company and the state, because they have tried to stop me and my land movement’. More depressing for her though, was the fact that many of the landowners who had also lost land to the company did not join the movement. When I questioned some of these landowners, to find out why that was, some answered, ‘By custom, women were not allowed to own land.’ In fact, throughout her struggles leading the movement, Igon also came into serious conflict with her brothers, over ownership of land. Indeed, her brothers refused to support her in her campaign, even though they had inherited larger pieces of land from their father than the piece that Igon was fighting to reclaim from the mining company. Her story suggests that the transformation of the relationship between women and land is interrelated with the development of such land reclamation movements.

Is it true that women were customarily denied the right to own land, and if so, why? Why has this situation changed, relatively recently, to enable women to claim their land rights? What has been reconfigured in terms of the relationship between women and land in contemporary Truku society? And what are the internal and external
factors which have changed the role occupied by women in landed property relations and other social, economic, and political dimensions?

This research explores the meanings attributed to women’s ownership of land in contemporary Truku society. In examining the transformation of the relationship between women and land, I describe the changes which have occurred in gender relations, kinship practices, property relations, social relations and economic activities in Truku society, as a result of government-led privatisation and capitalisation in the 1960s. My intention in this thesis is to explore how the entanglement and intersection of land, gender, and the household is expressed in a variety of contexts. Through analysing the changes in women’s roles as a result of the reconfiguration of property relations and economic relations, I reflect on the notion that women were customarily denied the right to own land in Truku society.

**General description of the Taiwanese indigenous people**

I carried out research during fourteen months of fieldwork between October 2005 and November 2006 in Truku society in Taiwan. The Truku people are one of a number of different indigenous groups of Taiwan and their economic, social, and cultural development is deeply influenced by governmental policies towards indigenous people and the interrelationship between Taiwanese indigenous people and Taiwan’s mainstream society.

In this thesis, the term ‘indigenous people’ highlights the important common characteristics that these many diverse peoples share: ‘being original inhabitants of a land later colonized by others, and forming distinct, non-dominant sectors of society, with unique ethnic identities and cultural systems’ (McNeish and Eversole 2005: 6), although definitions of the term ‘indigenous people’ have become multiple and ambiguous. It is indisputable that dispossession, marginalisation and discrimination

---

1 In contemporary societies, self-identification has come to lie at the heart of indigenous identity, and ‘indigenous people’ has become a fluid term, one which has begun to develop important political currency. Hence ‘there is little agreement on precisely what constitutes an indigenous identity, how to measure it, and who truly has it’ (Weaver 2001: 240).
have frequently been part of indigenous people’s experience. In the relationship between the territory of indigenous peoples and colonialism, indigenous peoples are the disadvantaged descendants of those peoples who inhabited a territory prior to colonisation or formation of the present state.

According to archaeological and linguistic studies, Taiwanese indigenous people had lived on Taiwan for more than 6,000 years before Chinese migrants arrived in the 16th century (Bellwood 1991; Blust 1999). They are Austronesian people, and differ from the Chinese, who belong to the Sino-Tibetan linguistic family, and for centuries Taiwanese indigenous people have experienced economic competition and military conflict with a series of colonizing peoples (Simon 2005).

Before the Japanese colonial period (1895-1945), Chinese migrants classified the Taiwanese indigenous people as ‘fan’ (番), meaning ‘barbarians’. Additionally, they were classified as ‘raw’ (sheng 生) or ‘cooked’ (shou 熟), depending on their relationship to Chinese culture. The latter had adopted much of the Chinese culture, including the language, and they were gradually assimilated into Chinese society. By the 1930s, under Japanese rule, most of the ‘cooked’ indigenous people were classified as Chinese by the official census registration (Brown 2004: 9 and also see Shepherd 1993). Additionally, the Japanese colonial government initially named ‘raw indigenous people’ as ‘banjin’ (savage people), a derogatory term which reflected the prevailing idea that Taiwanese ‘raw’ indigenous people could not be civilized through adoption of the modern (colonial) social order (Fujii 1997). However, the government used ‘Takasagozoku’ (literally ‘the original people of the island’) to refer to ‘raw’ Taiwanese indigenous people in 1937 (Ching 2001: 211). In order to assimilate indigenous people, the Japanese colonial government compelled them to adopt Japanese names and to learn Japanese in elementary school (Harrison 2003: 345-6). Under the Kuomintang (KMT), the Chinese Nationalist Party regime, the descendants of the ‘raw’ indigenous people were called ‘mountain people’ (Shanditongbao 山地同胞) until 1994. However, for most Taiwanese indigenous people ‘Shaditongbao’ was a discriminatory term meaning that they had not been civilised yet by achieving sinicisation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regimes in Taiwan</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>1624-1661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jheng</td>
<td>1625-1683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cing</td>
<td>1683-1895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese colonial government</td>
<td>1895-1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuomintang (KMT) (Martial Law)</td>
<td>1945-1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government governed by the Democratic Progressive Party</td>
<td>2000-2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Regimes in Taiwan

When reflecting on the transformation of names among the Austronesian people in Taiwan, it is evident that their names were arbitrarily imposed on them by successive governments and by mainstream society rather than by themselves. Each change of name among the Austronesian people in Taiwan that was determined by a political authority is associated with a particular policy for indigenous people (e.g. Brown 2004; Fujii 1997; Ku 2005).

Taiwan is a multi-ethnic society (Corcuff 2002). Complicated relations between different ethnic groups have influenced the social and political status of the Austronesian people in Taiwan. In particular, after the KMT regime lifted martial law in 1987, the social and political situation changed dramatically. During the post martial-law period, the Taiwanese political system has become gradually democratised, and Taiwan is now a multi-party democracy. (Lee 1994). Consequently, there has been a significant increase in the number and types of anti-KMT government social and political movements since the 1980s (Corcuff 2002).

In order to improve their social and political status as well as to claim their land rights, the indigenous movements in Taiwan have endured through ten years of hardship and street demonstration since the early 1980s. (e.g. Allio 1998; Ku 2005; Simon 2009). Ku, a Taiwanese anthropologist, reflecting on the history of indigenous movement in Taiwan, argues that ‘the term “aborigines” (Yuanjhumin) was chosen for its implication of being the first inhabitants of the island, which gave the movement a stronger voice later, as it held the aborigines to be the original masters
of Taiwan’ (2005: 103). In the 1980s and 1990s, for many Austronesian activists in Taiwan, the first stage within these movements was to self-define themselves as ‘indigenous people’ and to claim the legal status of indigenous people. Ku illustrates that many indigenous activists understand that the term ‘indigenous’ or ‘aborigines’ can help them to broadly link their social and political movements with other indigenous movements around the world (Ku 2005: 104, also see Simon 2009: 57).

Since 1984, as a result of this situation, indigenous rights activists have advocated the use of the term Yuanjhuminzu (indigenous peoples). They organised a campaign for Name Correction, and this was finally adopted by the government in 1994 after decades of protests and demonstrations. The constitutional reforms in 1997 incorporated for the first time the term ‘Taiwanese indigenous peoples’. Since then, Taiwanese indigenous people have obtained legal status in the constitution and are officially recognized as an ethnic group in Taiwan. In 1996, the government set up the ‘Council of Indigenous Peoples, Executive Yuan’ (CIP), which is an official department in the central government, to deal with all affairs concerning indigenous people in Taiwan. The CIP has since taken a proactive stance on such issues as poverty, unemployment, economic and cultural development, and land rights (CIP 2008).

Legally, the definition of Taiwanese indigenous people is based on Taiwan’s ‘The Indigenous Peoples Basic Laws’, enacted in 2005:

1. Indigenous peoples: refers to the traditional peoples who have inhabited Taiwan and are subject to the state’s jurisdiction, and any other tribes who regard themselves as indigenous peoples and obtain the approval of the central indigenous authority upon application.

On the basis of the official ethnic classification of 2009, there are 14 indigenous groups in Taiwan: Amis, Atayal, Paiwan, Bunun, Truku, Rukai, Saisiyat, Puyuma, Tsou, Thao, Sediq, Yami, Sakizaya, and Kavalan. The population of Taiwanese indigenous people is just over five hundred thousand, representing 2% of the
population in Taiwan in 2009 (CIP 2009).

In terms of ethnic relations in Taiwan, Taiwanese indigenous people are a minority, whereas the mainstream society is composed of the other three ethnic groups, including Hoklo people, Hakka people, and Chinese mainlanders. Hoklo people and Hakka people are descendants of people who came from Mainland China, but had a different language prior to the Japanese colonialism; the ‘mainlanders’ were Chinese migrants and their descendants, i.e. those who came with the KMT regime after it had lost the civil war on the mainland in 1949 (Corcuff 2002: xi). In mainstream society, Hoklo people are about 70% of Taiwan’s population, Hakka people are 15%, and mainlanders are 13% (Hsiao 2000: 123).

In 1945, the KMT took over Taiwan without consulting the island’s people. Through the use of martial law, the KMT and its followers, who were mainly Chinese mainlanders, were able to retain power through tight control of the political system, police, military, educational system and media (Brown 2004). As a result, a series of discriminatory ethnic policies, by which the mainlanders were privileged over the others, generated ethnic tensions between Taiwanese identity and Chinese identity in mainstream society (Brown 2004). In general, the majority of Hoklo people and Hakka people tend to identify themselves as Taiwanese, distinguishing themselves from the Chinese who are mainlanders in Taiwan (Corcuff 2002). In this thesis I use the word Taiwanese to refer to Hoklo people and Hakka people, and Chinese in reference to mainlanders.

The tension between Taiwanese identity and Chinese identity articulates the contest between Taiwanese nationalism and Chinese nationalism in the post martial-law period. Generally speaking, the KMT regimes and most Chinese people support Chinese nationalism, but most Taiwanese people advocate that Taiwan does not belong to the Republic of China, established by the KMT in 1911, and is not a part of the People’s Republic of China, governed by the Chinese Communist Party in China. They argue that Taiwan should be independent from these two regimes in the future (Shih 1997). But the KMT and the Chinese Communist Party claim that Taiwan
should be reunited with China.

Reflecting on the increasing tendency of studies of ‘cooked’ indigenous people (pingpuzu) in the academic field in Taiwan since the 1980s, Brown indicates that in the process of the construction of Taiwanese identity, ‘aborigine contributions of culture and matrilineal ancestry are presented both as sufficiently present to make Taiwanese different from Chinese’ (2004: 21). Hence, the term ‘indigenous people’ is not only important for Austronesian people in Taiwan, but also to Taiwanese nationalism. Owing to the importance of the meanings of ‘indigenous peoples’ in constructing the narrative of Taiwanese nationalism, the indigenous movements received political and financial supports from the pro-independence camp. As a result, ‘it can be said that from the outset, the relationship between the aborigines right movement and Taiwan nationalism has been ambiguous’ (Ku 2005: 103).²

The discussion on the origins of Austronesian peoples as indigenous people in Taiwan has also taken place within political contexts. Stainton, a Canadian anthropologist, describes how there are three theories concerning the origin of the Austronesian people in Taiwan (1999). Theories of southern origin were advocated by western linguists, anthropologists, and Presbyterian ministers, as well as by Japanese anthropologists in the 19th century and the early 20th century. These theories locate the origins of Taiwanese indigenous people in Southeast Asia and argue that the Chinese mainland is generally irrelevant to indigenous people (Stainton 1999: 31). Those who are pro-independence in Taiwan have used these theories in order to attain distance from the Chinese nationalist project and to legitimise the case for an independent nation. On the contrary, theories of northern origin locate the origin of Taiwanese indigenous people in Mainland China. According to these theories, China is at the centre, and Taiwan is linked to the motherland from prehistoric times (Stainton 1999: 37). These theories particularly serve the needs of Chinese nationalist history (Simon 2009).

² Although indigenous movements received financial and political supports from pro-independence camp, it does not mean that there is always a harmonious relationship between the indigenous movements and Taiwanese nationalism. Ku points out that although the pro-independent camp gives support to Taiwanese indigenous movements, it does not fully advocate the idea of the indigenous people’s self-government (Ku 2005: 108).
Among the Taiwanese indigenous people, the theory that Taiwan is the Austronesian homeland is more popular than other theories. The theory of Taiwan as the Austronesian homeland is based on the refinement of the northern origin theory, and suggests that ‘Austronesian expansion moved from Taiwan, through the coastal Philippines, into Sulawesi and towards coastal New Guinea between about 3000 and 2000 BC (Bellwood 1996: 27). Moreover, Taiwanese indigenous people emigrated from south-eastern China in the remote past, but developed independently in the island (e.g. Bellwood 1991). For Taiwanese indigenous people, this theory, ‘like a voice from the sky’ (Stainton 1999: 39), is scientific proof that they are ‘indigenous’ people in Taiwan.

Although the theories of origins of the Taiwanese indigenous people are diverse and the definition of indigenous peoples are always negotiated with mainstream society and the government, most of my Truku friends in my field site identify themselves as indigenous people and take pride in their ways of life. In her book, ‘Decolonizing Methodologies’ (1999), Linda Tuhiwai Smith reminds researchers who devote themselves to studying indigenous people that the collaboration between researchers and indigenous people can contribute to the ‘good’ of society (1999: 117). In other words, ‘research can no longer be conducted on indigenous nations; it is conducted with them’ (Simon 2009: 54). Regarding the definition of the Taiwanese indigenous people, in this research, the ethical decision is to accept the claim that Austronesian people in Taiwan are indigenous. On the other hand, I also advocate the theories of Taiwan as the homeland of the Austronesian people, because Taiwanese indigenous people believe that these can contribute to empower themselves in claiming their land rights and improving their social and political status. If we consider the difficulties with which Taiwanese indigenous people are continually confronted, we can understand how the term of ‘indigenous people’ is so important to them.

The description of the complicated ethnic and political contexts in contemporary Taiwan is helpful in developing an understanding of where Taiwanese indigenous people situate themselves in these circumstances. During the period of the KMT
regime, Mandarin was the official language, whereas most people spoke the Hoklo language. Until the 1990s, Hoklo people, Hakka people and Taiwanese indigenous people were forced by the government to learn Mandarin in school. Furthermore, Taiwanese indigenous peoples were required by the government to take Chinese names. In addition, mainstream culture and values have been prevalent in indigenous societies through the influence of the mass media. As a result, an increasing proportion of indigenous peoples are unable to speak their native language fluently, and indigenous cultures have become difficult to preserve and develop. In order to make people aware of the crisis facing indigenous peoples, Paelabang, a Puyuma scholar, argues that Taiwanese indigenous people are ‘the evening ethnic group’ (1991). He describes the Taiwanese indigenous people as being like the sun in the evening: in the evening, the sun (indigenous people) still shines (are still alive), but darkness nevertheless inevitably approaches (i.e. they will vanish).

Taiwanese indigenous people are not only confronted with the displacement of their culture and languages, but also with the loss of their living areas. In order to gain control over Taiwan’s forests, mineral resources, water and potential for tourism, the Japanese colonial government sought to contain indigenous peoples in ‘Mountain Reservations’, slashing their territory from 200 thousand hectares to 24 thousand hectares, to which indigenous peoples had utilization rights but no right to claim permanent possession (Liao 1984: 81). The policy of land reservation for indigenous peoples, adopted by the KMT regime, and put into action from 1964 onwards, was inherited from the ‘Mountain Reservation’ policy promoted by the Japanese colonial government. In 1997, indigenous people’s land decreased to around 15 thousand hectares. Under the KMT regime, the state not only introduced various policies regarding indigenous reservations, but also brought the management and use of indigenous people’s land into the state legal system. In 1966, the government set up the

3 The area of indigenous lands might be smaller than stated in official statistics. Because indigenous people are by law prohibited from selling their land to non-indigenous people and corporations, many of them will illegally and secretly rent or mortgage their land to the Taiwanese or Chinese. As such, government statistics do not adequately reflect the reality of the reduction in indigenous territory (Yen and Yang 2004).
‘Indigenous Peoples Reservation Land Development Management Procedure’. By this procedure, the government regulated how indigenous people gained, used, transacted, and inherited their land.

This procedure should be regarded as one of the most important parts in the KMT’s policies concerning indigenous people’s land and economic development. First of all, owing to this procedure, Taiwanese indigenous people could have partial legal rights over their land. During the period of Japanese colonialism, all indigenous people’s land was state property. The KMT government also legally denied Taiwanese indigenous people the right to land ownership before the introduction of this procedure. In order to give indigenous people ownership of their land, the government carried out a ‘Survey of Indigenous People’s Land’ between 1958 and 1964. Furthermore, owing to this procedure, privatisation became part of the process of land registration, which was initiated by the government, and included a legal provision enabling individuals to apply for private parcels of land.

Alongside the government’s introduction of privatised land ownership in indigenous societies in the 1960s, indigenous societies themselves also gradually became capitalised. During the 1950s and 1960s, the government made a number of policies on land reform to encourage indigenous people to develop ‘economic agriculture’ (Huang 1991). Privatisation of land ownership and economic agriculture meant that indigenous people were able to gain money, which they then invested in growing cash crops and purchasing expensive farm implements (Chen 1986). Additionally, privatisation of land ownership also links to policies of taxation, since indigenous people must pay tax with money.

This research aims to look at how land reform, privatisation of land ownership, and capitalisation influenced Truku people’s relations with land and their social and economic life. I do not intend to discuss the complicated relationships between Taiwanese indigenous people, Taiwanese, and Chinese in contemporary Taiwanese society. Nonetheless, by reflecting on a brief history of the Taiwanese indigenous people, which I do in the next section, I demonstrate that the legal status of
indigenous people and policies governing indigenous people have been associated with the ethnic, political, and economic contexts in Taiwan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Policies on indigenous peoples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>Japanese Colonial Government established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>The government denies land rights to indigenous peoples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>1914-1925 the government initiates the ‘Undertaking of Arranging Forest-Land’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>‘Forest Plan System’ and policy of reservation areas for Taiwan’s indigenous peoples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Kuomintang (KMT) regime established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958-1964</td>
<td>The ‘Survey of the Indigenous People’s Land’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1966     | • The government sets up the ‘Regulations on Development and Management of the Lands Reserved for Indigenous People’.  
|          | • Registration of land ownership (1966-1971). |

Table 2. Timeline of important policies on indigenous reservations

Historical background of the Truku People

Since Truku people were not an officially recognised indigenous group, they did not have official delegates to represent and voice their rights on the Council of Indigenous Peoples, Executive Yuan (CIP) until 2004. As recently as 14th January 2004, the Truku people were recognized by the state as an indigenous group independent from the Atayal, another Austronesian group. The population figures given for Truku people in 2009 were 25,286; 12,298 male and 12,988 female (CIP 2009). Most Truku live in the eastern mountains and on the east coast of Taiwan. More than 44% of the population live in Sioulin Township, and about 17% in Wanrong Township in Hualien County (CIP 2009).

Truku people had been officially classified as Atayal in order to facilitate colonial administration. However, Japanese ethnographers have classified Truku people as one of the ‘sub-groups’ of the Sediq group, noting that their language, customs, and legends were different from the Atayal (Mori 1917). After the Japanese colonial period, the KMT government continued to recognise Truku as one of the subgroups within the Atayal. In studies of Truku culture and society, Chinese and Taiwanese scholars regarded Truku people as either one sub-group of Sediq group or of the
Atayal (e.g. Mowna 1998; Yu 1982). The emergence of the Truku group as an official indigenous group can be regarded as an achievement of the ‘Truku Name Rectification’ movement, which began to campaign in 1996 (Siyat 2004). In this context, more and more Taiwanese and Chinese anthropologists, following Truku people’s self-identification, began to adopt the term Truku rather than Sediq or Atayal in their studies of the Truku society and culture since the 1990s (e.g. Chiu 2004; Hsieh 2001).4

In this section, firstly, I compare the Atayal and the Sediq with other Taiwanese indigenous groups in order to explain how they culturally and socially differ from the others. Secondly, I shall compare the Atayal and the Sediq (including the Truku) with the other indigenous groups in terms of reacting with social and political changes in contemporary society. Finally, I will delineate the history of the Truku people.

Geographically, the Atayal and the Saisyiat are distributed in the northern part of Taiwan. Linguistically and culturally the Saisyiat people are different from the Atayal (Huang 1986). Prior to Japanese colonisation, the Saisyiat had continually faced the threat of the Atayal’s headhunting (Ino and Awano 1900; Mori 1917). The Sediq and the Bunun live in the middle part of the mountain areas on the island. For the Sediq, the Bunun were one of the main rivals for hunting areas in the mountain. They beheaded each other before the Japanese colonisation (Mori 1917; Mowna 1984). The Tsou, the Paiwan, and the Rukai live in the southern part of Taiwan; while the Amis and the Puyumma are in the eastern coast in the southern part of Taiwan. Finally, the Yami people live in an isolated island, Orchid Island, and they are linguistically and culturally closer to the Ivatan people of the Butanes islands in the Philippines than to other Taiwanese indigenous peoples (Huang 1986).

Prior to Japanese colonialism, all Taiwanese indigenous people conducted swidden agriculture and were hunter-gather societies (Mori 1917). Concerning social and

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4 I shall discuss in the next section why the Truku people determine to separate from the Atayal and the Sediq and how the ‘Truku Name Rectification’ movement can achieve its goal and describe the interrelationship between the Atayal, the Sediq, and the Truku.
political structure, Taiwanese anthropologists classify Taiwanese indigenous peoples into two categories: one is a hierarchical society and the other is an egalitarian society (Huang 1986). The Paiwan, the Rukai, the Puyuma, the Tsou, and the Amis are regarded as hierarchical societies. There was a social and political hierarchy between the aristocrats and the common people in the Paiwan, the Rukai, and the Puyuma (Huang 1986, Mori 1917, Taihoku Teikoku Daigaku Dozoku Jinruigaka Kenkyushitsu Chosa 1935). Furthermore, Tan (2001) and Cheng (2007) suggest that the Paiwan and the Rukai are ‘house-based society’. In Amis society, there is an ‘age-set organisation’, and the eldest male group has the authority to make decisions relating to public affairs (Yeh 2009). In Tsou society, there is a hierarchy between the clan and its sub-clan (Mobuchi 1951, Wei 1986).

Through the examination of the Japanese governmental statistical data and ethnographic studies of Taiwanese indigenous people, Huang indicates that the size of each community in hierarchical societies was larger than in egalitarian societies (1986: 7, see also Wei 1986: 112). Furthermore, in terms of religion, in hierarchical societies, Taiwanese indigenous people articulated the social and political hierarchy to their concepts of religion, but in egalitarian societies, indigenous people simply conducted ancestral worship and animistic beliefs (Chen 1956, Furuno 1945, Koizumi 1933). In egalitarian societies like that of the Atayal, political authority was not hereditary but the head of the community, who was usually the best hunter and warrior among the others, was chosen by common consensus from within the community (Huang 1986, Mori 1917).

Concerning social structure and kinship, Mabuchi (1960) suggests that the Amis and the Puyuma were matrilineal societies, and that the Bunun and the Tsou were patrilineal societies. Wei (1958) asserts that the Paiwan and the Rukai are ambilaternal lineal societies (also see Huang 1986). In studies of kinship in Atayal and Sediq societies, there is a debate as to whether or not both societies should be categorized as patrilineal societies. Wei suggests that Atayal is a patrilineal society, because the Atayal have principles of patrilocal resident and men have priority in inheritance (Wei 1958). However, Wang (1965) and Chen (1985) argue that Wei’s theory of
kinship in Atayal society is based on his assumption of patrilineal-centralism based on Chinese culture. They argue that the social organisation in Atayal society is flexible and consequently cannot be simply regarded as a patrilineal society. Hence, Chen suggests that it is necessary to understand the Atayal concept of kinship through the investigation of kinship practices in their everyday lives (1986: 105-107).

According to Japanese written resources, the Atayal society and the Sediq society were ‘male-oriented’ bilateral societies (Mabuchi 1960), and the basic social, economic, and religious unit was the household (Sayama 1917). Recently, most studies of the Atayal and the Sediq follow the theory that Atayal and Sediq society are bilateral societies rather than patrilineal. (see Kim 1980, Wang 2001, Chiu 2004, cf. Rudolph 2008: 9). In this thesis, I partially agree with Mabuchi’s theory that the Sediq is a ‘male-oriented bilateral society’, but I argue that it is not necessary to assume that for the Ego, his or her father’s kin groups are more important than his or her mother’s ones. I shall discuss Truku concepts of kinship in Chapter 3, 4 and 5. Furthermore, in Chapter 4, 5 and 6, I shall describe the importance of the mother’s kin groups and affines in kinship practices and ancestral worship in Truku society.

Although each indigenous group in Taiwan has its own particular culture and social organisation, each of them, being the ethnic minority, face similar economic, social, and political difficulties. In order to solve problems of poverty many Taiwanese indigenous people devise similar strategies, such as the use of tourism (Hsieh 1994), working as migrant labourers in the urban areas in Taiwan (Fu 1994), or emphasising their intellectual property rights (Lin 2007). Regarding the transmission of ‘traditional’ culture and economic development, many indigenous people devote themselves to various programmes of community building (e.g Cheng 2007; Rudolph 2008).

Although indigenous people may have similar strategies for dealing with their problems, many anthropologists note that each indigenous group, based on its own particular culture and social structure, reacts differently to social, economic, and political changes in contemporary society. For instance, examining the implications
of the state electoral system for Paiwan society, Ku argues that traditional idioms and the symbolic capital of chiefly titles are still influential in the local election, but that the persistence of chiefly titles also serves as a symbol of opposition to the encompassing Taiwan state (Ku 2008: 383). In addition, Huang (1992) illustrates that in Bunun society, which is egalitarian, people have been shaping an economic hierarchy between the wealthy families and the poor ones due to the imposition of capitalisation in contemporary society. Furthermore, this economic hierarchy shapes and reshapes social and political stratification in Bunun society. Concerning land reclamation movements, many anthropologists find that different indigenous people, based on their particular culture and ecological knowledge, will form different strategies and narratives in order to legitimate their movements (e.g. Kuan and Lin 2008, Sasala 2008; Simon 2005).

In comparing the Atayal and the Sediq (including the Truku) with the other indigenous groups in Taiwan, I have described the basic social and cultural characteristics of these societies and the social and political context in which they are located in contemporary society. Returning to the study of the Truku, it is necessary to describe the history of the Truku in order to provide an historical background to this research. The Truku people originated in the central mountain range in the western part of Taiwan. Mowna, a Truku anthropologist, estimates that the ancestors of the Truku people had, since the late 16th century, gradually migrated over the central mountain range and settled in the eastern part of Taiwan (Mowna 1978: 63). According to perhaps the first Japanese census records of Truku society in 1914, most communities were composed of less than thirty households, and on average about 80 to 100 people in total (Sayama 1917: 7-16).

Prior to 1914, Truku lands were not controlled by the Japanese colonial government. In 1914, the government waged war (the so called ‘Taroko Battle’), and finally conquered the Truku (Narasaki 1914; Teyra 2003). After the Taroko Battle, Japanese ethnographers in cooperation with the police and civil servants began to investigate Truku culture and society. From the writings of Japanese scholars and governmental reports on the Truku people, we can gain an approximate idea of Truku social
structure and culture prior to Japanese colonialism. However we cannot assume that their descriptions of Truku society and culture are reliable (Tsu 1999). These ethnographers presumed that Truku society and culture were consistent over time, but they ignored how the Japanese state had influenced the Truku people, and how the Truku people would reformulate their social and kinship system and continually redefine their customs in order to adapt to new circumstances.

One of the central aspects of Truku culture was territory, itself bound up in a complex set of relationships, which included a headhunting culture and ancestor worship. Truku respected their ancestral spirits, and believed that their territory must be regarded as ‘ancestral land’, which was sacred and inviolable. Protecting ancestral land and following ancestral words were basic to the social order and were associated with kinship practices, economic relations, and social and political relations in society (Chiu 2004; Kim 1980; Mori 1917).

The exploitation of the abundant forest resources found in the mountain areas of Truku people's territory figures significantly among the notable effects that the Japanese colonial regime had on Taiwanese society. In order to take advantage of these natural resources, the regime had to have dealings with the Truku people who lived in the mountain forests. Given this situation, the affairs of Truku people figured significantly in the government's plans. After the Taroko Battle, the government established a police force in every community with recruits from Japan, and in 1918 began to force the majority of Truku people to leave their homelands. As a result, from 1918 to 1944, Truku people were subject to strict state control. The colonial government set up reservations in the plains in the eastern part of Taiwan, and forced Truku people living in the hills to move into the reservations. At the same time, the government forced those living in the remote mountain areas to relocate to the reservations. As a result, Truku people moved from the highlands to the lowlands under the Japanese colonial regime.

This shift of the Truku from the highlands to the lowlands was not simply a change of geographical location; it also altered ways of cultivation. In the lowlands, the
Japanese government introduced new technologies for the farming of paddy fields and cash crops, and the construction of irrigation facilities. In the pre-colonial period, Truku society was a hunter-gatherer society, and people divided their territory into three zones: hunting areas; fields; and residential land (in the tribe) (Mowna 1998). However, when they moved to the reservations, the hunting culture declined because the hunting areas in the highlands were so far from the lowlands. The territory of the reservation was not big enough for the Truku people to continue to conduct swidden agriculture. Finally, Truku society was transformed from a hunter-gatherer society to an agricultural society.

Since the 1950s, more and more Taiwanese indigenous people have converted to Christianity, and therefore, Christians have become the majority in each indigenous society in Taiwan (Li 1983). Hsieh (1994), a Taiwanese anthropologist, suggests that when intensive contacts between indigenous peoples and the Han-Chinese appeared, assimilation increasingly impacted indigenous societies, and the traditional cultural system of aborigines was broken. Conversion to Christianity enabled indigenous people to maintain their social orders in society. Additionally, Hsieh points out that because Christians are the minority in mainstream society, being Christian has become the main symbol distinguishing indigenous people from the Han-Chinese and Taiwanese (Hsieh 1994: 194). Hence, it is impossible to discuss social and cultural changes in Taiwanese indigenous society without considering the influence of Christianity.

Many anthropologists suggest that in a hierarchical society, like the Amis, the Paiwan, and the Rukai, indigenous people prefer to convert to Catholicism rather than Presbyterianism; but in an egalitarian society, like the Atayal, the Bunun, and the Sediq, indigenous people prefer to convert to Presbyterianism (Chiu 2004; Huang 1986: 24-26; Rudolph 2008: 170-8). Due to the significant influence of Christianity among indigenous people, many anthropologists are interested in studying the interrelationships between Christianity and ‘traditional’ culture and religion in society. For instance, Tan (2001) describes how although Protestant Christianity denied the authority of chiefly houses and has different ideas of marriage from the
traditional practices in Paiwan society, the value of traditional concepts of conjugal
relations, the house, and marriage is preserved and even strengthened by
conversation to Christianity. Furthermore, Rudolph (2008) describes how indigenous
Christians make the effort to engage in the process of construction of the ‘traditional’
ritual in order to deal with the tension between Christianity and traditional concepts
of ancestral worship in contemporary Taroko (=Truku) society and Amis society
(also see Chiu 2004; Hsieh 1994).

According to ‘A Centennial history of the Presbyterian Church of Formosa’ (Hsu
1995), Truku people were the first Taiwanese indigenous group to convert to
Christianity. Many Truku people became Christians in the 1930s during the period of
the Japanese colonisation, even though the government strictly prohibited
Christianity in indigenous society. During the period of my field work, many Truku
Christians who were more than seventy years old recalled that they would secretly
get together in a certain cave to worship God, and that church members were
severely punished or even killed by the Japanese policemen in front of the police
office, if it was discovered that they worshiped God. In a study of the development
of Christianity in Truku society, Chiu argues that ‘the fact that Truku people
converted to Christianity might be understood as one of the Truku people’s practices
of resistance against Japanese colonialism’ (2004: 109, my translation). Nevertheless,
Chiu maintains that the interpretation of local meanings of being Christian in Truku
society might fall into the problem of ‘romanticising resistance’ in Abu-Lughod’s
terms (1990: 42).

After the Second World, between 1946 and 1949 more than 4,000 Truku converted
to Christianity and received baptism (Covell 1998: 184-187). The missionaries might
have amplified the number of Truku people converting to Christianity during this
period, but this record reveals that Christianity was becoming a popular religion in
Truku society. On the other hand, many Truku people argue that the influence of
Christianity made ‘traditional’ Truku culture and ancestor worship decline (Jihung
2004). During the period of my fieldwork, many informants would routinely attend

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5 During Japanese colonial period, Taiwanese people were permitted by the government to be
Christians (Chiu 2004: 161).
the Presbyterian Church in their community, but they did not stop practising ancestor worship and they still claim that they have to follow ‘gaya’ as a norm and to respect ancestral spirits. This thesis does not deal with the implications of Christianity for the Truku people, but I will discuss the influences of Presbyterianism for Truku concepts of gender relationships and marriage in contemporary Truku society in Chapter 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Historical events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1683</td>
<td>Cing Dynasty assumes government of Taiwan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>Japanese occupation and government of Taiwan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896-1906</td>
<td>Japanese troops lose several battles against Truku people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907-1917</td>
<td>The government sets up the ‘Defence Line of Frontier Guard’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Truku people lose the ‘Taroko Battle’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918-1941</td>
<td>The government conducts a policy of forced migration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>KMT period begins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966-1971</td>
<td>Truku people are requested by the government to register ownership of their land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>The Asia Cement Company is set up in Fushih Village.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Taroko National Park is established.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Timetable of Truku history

**Uncertain past: the Highlands and the Lowlands**

Land is the basic means of production for Truku. The reduction of their territory has caused the Truku people difficulties with subsistence and economic development. In moving from the highlands to the lowlands, many lost their ancestral lands, and the amount of land which they were allocated in the reservations represented a considerable decrease in living space. This nightmare, however, did not cease with the end of Japanese colonial rule, but instead worsened under the KMT. As a result, in order to claim their land rights and to develop and preserve their culture and language, there are a variety of social and political movements in contemporary Truku society.

Amongst these, the land reclamation movements for the Truku people should be regarded as the most important among the others which I shall consider in Chapter 2.
I illustrate why these land reclamation movements are so important for the Truku people and how they organised them. One which I encountered during my fieldwork was set up in 2005 to establish a ‘Truku Nation Autonomous Region’. This indigenous movement articulates the Truku people’s struggle for rights to subsistence and the resolution of problems associated with the loss of land. The movement had a well-known campaign slogan: ‘Dara nami ka dxgal; sapah nami ka dgiyaq’ (The land is our blood; the mountain is our home).

According to the ideas of Teyra, a Truku man and the leader of this movement, the territory of self-government should include the current living areas of the Truku people in the lowlands and the ancestors’ territory in the highlands (Teyra 2003). The return of the highlands to the Truku people is an ultimate goal for this movement. My data about this movement show that the practice of memory is located in political contexts. For example, Carsten reminds us to consider in what political circumstances the practices of memory are located in (2007: 22). The Truku slogan, ‘land is our blood; the mountain is our home’, clearly identifies a social movement concerned with land rights, which is committed to achieving self-government for Truku people. In order to claim land rights over the highlands, Truku participants in this movement have put particular emphasis on their traditional hunting culture and their knowledge of the land. For Truku people, the highland territory is not only a geographical location, but also the ‘keeper of memories’ (Carsten 2007: 14). Truku activists in these movements have tended to recount the history of their ancestors’ migration and to emphasise their local knowledge of place names and natural resources in order to back up their claims.

During the period of my fieldwork, the movement for establishing self-government was in its initial phrase. Although most of my Truku friends discussed or debated this social and political movement in their everyday lives, most of the active participants in this movement were Truku elites rather than commoners (Rudolph 2008; Simon 2006). In Truku society, I classify Truku elites in three categories: (1) the ‘political elites’, who are loyal to the KMT, and they might be local politicians, governmental servants, teachers, and policemen; (2) the ‘intellectual elites’ who are
well educated, but who are not loyal to the KMT. They might be ministers or Christians in the Presbyterian Church in Truku society; (3) the younger Truku elites who are descendants of both ‘political elites’ and ‘intellectual elites’. They might be under- or post-graduate students or have graduated from universities or colleges in Taiwan. Most of the younger Truku elites do not live in their hometown, while the political elites and intellectual elites are usually involved in various public affairs and local politics. The movement for the establishment of self-government were mainly organised by the intellectual elites in cooperation with the younger Truku elites. However, among most Truku villagers and political elites in my fieldsite there were diverse ideas about the establishment of self-government. Although my research is not about the investigation of this social and political movement for self-government, I suggest that this issue highlights the differences between the Truku and the Atayal, and those between the Sediq and the Truku.

According to the ethnic classification made by many Japanese anthropologists, the Sediq comprises of three sub-groups: Truku, Tausai (=Teuda), and Tkydaya (Mori 1917; Sayama 1917; Taihoku Teikoku Daigaku Dozoku Jinruigaka Kenkyushitsu Chosa 1935). Based on the migrant history of the Sediq, many Japanese anthropologists divide the Sediq into two groups: the Western Sediq and the Eastern Sediq. The Western Sediq lived in the western mountain area in Nantuo County in the middle part of Taiwan, and the Eastern Sediq settled in the eastern coast (Sayama 1916). The ‘Truku Name Rectification’ movement was mainly organised by the Truku people in the Eastern Sediq.

Diagram 1 The classification of indigenous peoples during the Japanese period
The Sediq people (including the Truku), claim that they are culturally and linguistically different from the Atayal (Mowna 1977, 1978; Siyat 2004; Teyra 2003). Firstly, the Sediq and the Truku argue that their original place is different from that of the Atayal. According to Japanese studies of the myth of creation in Sediq society and in Atayal society (Taihoku Teikoku Daigaku Dozoku Jinruigaka Kenkyushitsu Chosa 1935), the original place of the Sediq was Bunohon, which is located in the central high mountain area in Taiwan, while the Atayal’s original place was Pinsebukan or Papakwaqa located in the northern part of Taiwan. Secondly, the Sediq and the Truku claim that the Atayal are called ‘embgala’ in their language. Prior to the Japanese colonisation, the embgala were one of the enemies for the Sediq and the Truku and they beheaded each other. Thirdly, many Truku people and Sediq people tend to emphasise differences between themselves and the Atayal in terms of customs such as hunting culture, weaving culture, rituals, face-tattooing, and kinship practices (see Teyra 2003: 76-78). Finally, many Truku people and Sediq people claim that their concepts of kinship norms are different from those of the Atayal. In Atayal society, ‘gaga’ is one of the most important kinship groups, and it is associated with ancestral worship (Koizumi 1933; Wei 1958). Furthermore, ‘gaga’ should be understood as ‘cultural norms’ related to beliefs about the supernatural (Wang 2008: 26). However, in Truku and Sediq society, it is not necessary to suggest that ‘gaya’, a set of norms, is a kinship and social organisation (e.g. Chiu 2005). In this thesis, through the investigation of kinship practices in Truku people’s everyday lives, I will describe Truku concepts of gaya and gaya practices in Chapter 3, 4, 5 and 7.

Many Sediq and Truku people realised that because they were not an indigenous group that was officially recognised by the government, they could not have their own representative in the Council of Indigenous People in the central government. As a result, they did not have political power to increase their financial budget from the state. Additionally, this ethnic classification resulted in disadvantages to the transmission of their culture and language. Hence, most Sediq people and Truku people argue that they should be independent from the Atayal (Rudolph 2008; Wang
As noted, Truku people have been recognized by the state as an independent indigenous group from the Atayal as recently as January 2004 (Teyra 2006). Many anthropologists suggest that the success of this movement is not only based on Truku activists’ exertions, but also as a result of the transformation of the political context in Taiwan (e.g. Chiu 2005; Rudolph 2008; Simon 2006; Wang 2008). On the one hand, since the Democratic Progressive Party became the ruling party in 2000, Taiwanese indigenous people have had more political room to define their own identity. The self-determination of the Taiwanese indigenous people was engaged in the process of constructing Taiwanese identity and nationalism (Lin 2005; Rudolph 2008; Wang 2008). On the other hand, Simon (2006) states that the government decided to recognise the Truku as an independent indigenous group in 2004 because the Democratic Progressive Party tried to use this strategy to win more votes from Truku people in the general election. The population of the Truku people in Eastern Sediq is far greater than that of others in the Sediq group.

However, since the Truku became an indigenous group, there has been a contest between the Sediq identity and the Truku identity in Truku society. Under the ethnic classification in 2004, the government used the term Truku to describe the Tausai and the Tkydaya as well as Truku people. Nevertheless, many Tausai people and Tkydaya people and the Western Sediq people disagreed with this categorisation of themselves as Truku people. But many Truku activists suggest that the Truku can be the name for an indigenous group that includes the Truku, the Tausai, and the Tkydaya, because the ancestors of these three groups were from the same place and its name was Truku. Teyra, the chairman of the Truku Name Rectification Movement, explains that Truku is a word combining ‘tru’ with ‘ruku’; and ‘tru’ means three and ‘ruku’ means the living place (2003: 68). That is, in the past, the Truku, the Tausai, and the Tkydaya lived in Truku. However, many Tausai people and Tkydaya people do not accept Teyra’s explanation of ‘Truku’. They argue that in the past, the Sediq people lived in the central mountain area but not in a Truku place in Taiwan. Historically, the Sediq people gradually moved to different places,
formed different communities, and gradually shaped these three sub-groups (Wang 2008: 16).

In order to persuade Tkidaya people, Tausai people, and the West Sediq people to join the Truku, many Truku activists try to use ‘Taroko’ to replace Truku. During the period of Japanese colonisation, Taroko was a place name referring to a place where the Eastern Sediq people lived (see Simon 2006). Nevertheless, this strategy does not convince people who have Sediq identity. As a result, people who have Sediq identity decided to pursue an independent indigenous group identity from the Truku, and begun to organise the ‘Sediq Name Reflections Movement’ in 2005. In 2007, the government officially recognised the Sediq as an indigenous group in Taiwan. In 2009, there were 6,052 Sediq people, and the majority of them (5,024) are the Western Sediq and live in the western central range whilst there were only 1,028 Sediq people in the eastern coast of Taiwan.

Although there was a contest between Sediq identity and Truku identity in Truku society during the period of my fieldwork (2005-6), I adopt Truku rather than Sediq or Taroko to refer to the people whom I worked with. On the one hand, most of the villagers in my fieldsite have registered as Truku people, while the Sediq was not yet an official ethnic group. On the other hand, for most of the villagers, the contest between Sediq and Truku identities had arisen from the competition over political interests between political elites and intellectual elites. Moreover, many anthropologists suggest that the contest between the Truku identity and the Sediq identity is associated with the tension between the Truku congregation and the Sediq congregation in the Presbyterian Church (Chiu 2005; Rudolph 2008; Simon 2006). Nevertheless, most of the Truku villagers in my fieldsite were not directly or indirectly involved in the ‘Name Rectification Movement’ in both the Truku and Sediq camps. Many Truku villagers told me that their parents and elders always taught them that they are the Truku, so they identify themselves as the Truku.

The past’ and ‘tradition’ occur not only in the process of many social and political movements, but also in Truku people’s everyday lives. For Truku people, the
distance between life in the highlands and in the lowlands is more than a physical or spatial separation; it is also a temporal disjunction separating the past from the present. During my fieldwork, many of the informants I spoke with would use phrases such as, ‘When we (or our elders or ancestors) lived in the highlands…’, when they were describing something that had happened in the past. Many elders associated so-called ‘traditional culture’ or ‘traditional ideas’ with life in the highlands. Even though many informants were too young to have lived in the highlands, they would often use narratives of highland life when reflecting on or offering a critical appraisal of various matters. In this situation, it is necessary to show what I understand by the meanings of Truku people’s interpretation of ‘the past’ or ‘tradition’, since my thesis suggests a profound connection between this interpretation and the ways in which Truku people’s present lives are conducted.

It has been suggested that the process of constructing the past not only involves the practices of remembering (see Boyarin 1994) but also ‘selecting what of the past is to be obliterated’ (Bloch 1996: 229). Handler and Linnekin suggest that ‘there is no essential, bounded tradition; tradition is a model of the past and is inseparable from the interpretation of tradition in the present’ (1984: 276). In the context of Truku social and political movements, narratives relating to traditional culture in the highlands, especially hunting culture, play an important role in legitimating their claims for land rights. However, the Truku people do not live in the highlands anymore, and are prohibited by the government from hunting. In this situation, the narratives of the ‘traditional’ society in which such kinds of social and political movements are constructed, are not ‘bounded entities made up of bounded constituent parts, but a process of interpretation, attributing meaning in the present though making reference to the past’ (Handler and Linnekin 1984: 287).

Through a comparison between the past and the present and between the lowlands and the highlands, Truku people express what they think about the transformation of their society, and seek the right way (i.e. according to Truku concepts of norm) to deal with their tasks and interact with others in their everyday lives. In terms of conflicts over land, the emphasis of ‘tradition’ is not only one of the important
strategies in laying claim to their land rights against the government, but also involves many negotiations about disputes over land between individuals.

**Fieldsite and methodology**

I carried out my fieldwork in Fushih Village in Sioulin Township in the eastern part of Taiwan from October 2005 to November 2006. Fushih Village comprises the four communities of Kele, Bsn gang, Lotsin, and Skadang-Hohos. According to the official 2009 census, the village contains 2,158 residents, including 1,153 males and 1,005 females, and 635 households (CIP 2009). However, during my fieldwork there were approximately 1,100 people in residence, many others having left to pursue employment or education elsewhere, or having moved out of the village after marriage. Demographically, the majority of residents still living in the village were over the age of fifty, many of them in households with their unmarried children or grandchildren. Many younger Truku live and work outside of the village, and have left their children with the grandparents. In the village, there are a few households in which there is inter-ethnic marriage with the Atayal, the Sediq, the Bunun, the Amis, the Taiwanese and the Chinese, but the great majority of residents are the Truku.

Geographically, the 685.16 square kilometres which comprises the village are contained within the Takiri river (Liwu river) basin, which is 55 kilometres in length by the time the river reaches the Pacific Ocean. Topographically, the mountainous area, being over 1,000 metres in elevation, occupies about 85% of the territory of the village (Mowna 1977: 45). As I have described already, Truku history can be understood as a series of migrations from the highlands to the lowlands, and most residents live and farm in the river terrace near the Takiri river estuary. Taiwan is a subtropical island characterized by high temperatures and heavy rainfall. These conditions are suitable for agriculture, although the village suffers frequent typhoons in the summer and autumn seasons.

Historically, Fushih Village played an important role in transforming the way of agriculture from swidden agriculture to cultivation under the Japanese colonial
regime. In the pre-colonial period, only the Bsngang community lived in the village. Under the Japanese regime, the government set up reservation areas, and then forced many people living in the highlands to settle in the village. Afterwards in 1927, the government established the Kele community and in 1931 the Lowstin community; residents were provided with dry land on the river terrace near the Takiri estuary in the southeast part of the village, and on the hill in the village. In the late 1970s, under the KMT, those people living in the Skandang community and Hohos community, both highland communities which fell within the area of land proposed for Taroko National Park, were gradually relocated by the state into Fushih Village.

Fushih Village is highly representative of the problems which have affected indigenous Taiwanese peoples in terms of land and indigenous social movements. Many residents have lost or are threatened with the loss of their lands. A considerable number of those residing on the hill in Fushih Village have had their land occupied by the Asia Cement Company, a private enterprise, whilst many, especially from the Skadang-Hohos community, have found themselves in similar conflicts with the Taroko National Park. Moreover, some residents have had their land occupied by government corporations, such as the Taiwan Power Company and Taiwan Water Corporation. As a result, a number of indigenous movements have arisen over the last two decades, organised by local residents in order to claim their land rights in the village.

Prior to entering my field site in 2005, I gained the assistance of Rowty, a male Truku elder and retired teacher, who gave me permission to settle in the Kele community in Fushih Village. When I arrived at the village though, it became immediately apparent that finding a place for me to live was going to prove difficult for both Rowty and myself. He told me that I could stay with his family, but only for a short while because outsiders would not be allowed to stay in the household for long periods. It was better, then, for me to find an empty house. Better, but unfortunately, not easy. Rowty explained that, if I lived with his household, I would become a member of his household. If that were the case, they would become responsible for my behaviour. As such, if I infringed their norms, they would be
responsible and might well incur the anger of the ancestral spirits, and suffer the corresponding punishments. Eventually, we found an empty house in the Bsngang community, owned by a Truku widow by the name of Gujung, in which I lived for six months. Although I had become more familiar to the residents of the village, gaining permission to stay within a household remained problematic, and I ended up moving to another empty house, this time in the Lowtsin community. These experiences made me very much aware of the special importance accorded to the household by Truku people. In this thesis, I explain why the household is so important for Truku people in their concepts of ‘gaya’ in Chapter 3, 4, and 5, and discuss household economics in Chapter 6.

I am Taiwanese but am not fluent in the Truku language. Truku society is multilingual. During the period of my fieldwork, I learned the Truku language from elders who were over sixty years of age. Having received their education under the Japanese colonial government, they often taught me a combination of Truku and Japanese. After Japanese colonialism ended, Truku people were forced by the KMT to learn Mandarin in school. Those informants who were between the ages of 40 and 50, however, communicated with me in the Truku language and in Mandarin, although they were used to talking with each other in their native language. Younger Truku would usually use Mandarin when talking with their peers, but would use the Truku language when talking to their elders.

Although many elders would happily converse with me in Japanese or Mandarin in the early stages of my fieldwork, there was always the expectation that I would, in time, learn to communicate with them in the Truku language. As I gradually gained a better ability in the language, I came to realise that my social relationships with Truku residents had changed. At the beginning of my fieldwork, I spent more time working with Truku elites and younger residents who could speak Mandarin. As my ability to speak Truku improved, I began to work with ordinary people and elders in the village. Sometimes, residents would ask me to record their personal stories as a way of communicating with or for the benefit of their descendants, or to help them in translating government documents written in Chinese.
As my Truku language abilities improved, however, I realised that I was at risk of being drawn into various sensitive situations, including conflicts over land between Truku people and the state (or private companies), and between individual households within the village. I also became involved in local politics. As such, reflecting on my involvement in Truku society, it is clear that the boundaries between ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ were in fact blurred. I was forced to face and deal with many sensitive political issues in everyday life, and found that my social networks changed as a result, in that it was impossible to ‘fit in’ with all of the protagonists and interest groups concerned, representing as they did a variety of (sometimes conflicting) interests and positions. Nevertheless, these experiences gave me considerable insight into the thoughts, issues and emotions motivating Truku people involved in conflicts over land ownership.

In any communication which I had with informants there were several layers of communication that required careful translation and consideration. Ultimately, for indigenous peoples, the conceptual conflicts which arise in terms of privatised ownership also exist in terms of indigenous understandings of the relationship between people and land. In his study of the Kluane first nations people in the southwest Yukon, Nadasdy (2003) describes their land claim negotiations with the Canadian state, and points out that ‘first nations peoples must also be adept at speaking and thinking about land as ‘property’, a notion that is incompatible with many of their assumptions about the nature of land and their relationship to it’ (2003: 6). Handler (1991) also indicates that if, in the context of the modern nation-state, aboriginal people wish to ‘claim some form of control over lands, and they wish those claims to be seen as legitimate by others, they must speak ‘in a language that power understands’ (1991: 71; see also Sparkes 1998: 472). These studies make us aware that we cannot simply assume that notions of privatisation have subverted indigenous concepts of land when indigenous people use the language of private property to articulate the relationship between people and land.

In order to learn how land was used, and the concepts associated with the land, I
worked every day with Truku farmers in their fields on the river terrace or in the mountain areas. It is important to note that most of those who regularly engaged in farm work were women, not men. When we worked together, they would often share their personal stories with me. While many of the women were working in the fields, their husbands were either at home or looking for part-time employment; some husbands, though, would work with their wives in the fields. There were a few residents who had full-time jobs, including government servants and teachers in the village. In terms of agriculture, during the period of my fieldwork, most of the arable land has been converted from paddy fields to dry land, and the agricultural way of production has changed from commercial to subsistence agriculture.\textsuperscript{6}

I usually worked with married women or widows, and many of them had grandchildren. I was advised repeatedly to be sure to interact ‘appropriately’ with single women. In Truku society, people articulated the interaction between men and women through their concepts of ‘gaya’ (norm). The majority of informants paid careful attention to gaya in social interactions. For them, gaya events were always an intrinsic part of kinship practices, and vice versa. During my fieldwork, I also participated in kinship and gaya events. In this way, I sought to understand Truku concepts of kinship and gaya.

In Truku society, although people still practise ancestral worship and practise gaya, many people are Christians. There are four churches in Fushih Village, and each community has its own church. Most Christians in the same community tend to attend their community’s church, but some of them register in different churches in other communities. Participation in church activities and attending Sunday services were very helpful for me in communicating with Truku residents. For many of them, their churches are not only a religious centre, but also a place to preserve and learn their native language. Truku ministers in the Presbyterian Church preach a sermon through the Truku language, while people can read the Bible in the Truku version.

\textsuperscript{6} Many residents follow government fallowing policies, established in 1997. The government subsidises farmers who allow land to go fallow, allowing 90 thousand Taiwanese dollars (about £1,500) per year for each hectare.
In Fushih Village, the church had great influence between the 1950s and 1980s. Many informants who were over forty years old met their spouses in church or through activities organised by the church. At that time, people might cooperate with other church members to cultivate and to carry out other kinds of economic activities together. However, the influence of the church in the village has declined due to the significantly decreasing number of church members. I regularly attended the Sunday service and engaged in many events in Ciwang Church, which was the largest in terms of the number of church members in the village. Generally, there were only seventy members routinely participating in the Sunday service. Most of them were elders over fifty years of age, and there were more women than men. The church had a women’s fellowship comprising thirty-two women, but did not have any fellowship organised by men.

In Fushih Village, different generations have different experiences and memories of the highlands. Owing to the migration history of the Truku people, the highlands are located in the context of displacement. In the village, it was only elders who were over sixty-five years old who had experiences of living in the highlands. Many residents between fifty and sixty might have been to the highlands occasionally with their parents or grandparents to hunt, gather, and cultivate. For the younger generations there was no experience of working in the highlands, although some of them were hired by the Taroko National Park authority to work there and some of the younger male Truku still secretly hunted alone or with their elders there.

Residents who were over forty years old had been confronted with the process of the privatisation of land ownership and land reform, and many had experiences of being migrant labourers from the 1970s to 1990s. After the 1990s, owing to a policy of encouraging immigrant workers from the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam and the economic recession in Taiwan (Lan 2006), more and more Truku migrant labourers lost their jobs and returned to stay in the village. However, for the younger generations, after graduation from high school, there was a preference especially for the young men to seek part-time or full-time jobs in the neighbouring city, Hualien City, or urban areas in the western parts of Taiwan, rather than to stay
in the village. Although many young females also became migrant labourers after graduation, or moved to their husbands’ place, the number who stayed in the village was more than their male counterparts.

Different generations and genders have diverse experiences of the confrontation of capitalism and the transformation of the relationship between people and land, and different memories of the highlands in Fushih Village. In this situation, during my fieldwork, I investigated the gap between the elders’ description of ‘gaya’ and the villagers’ everyday practices. Because I usually worked with the Truke elders rather than younger Truku people, I carried out a number of unstructured interviews with younger informants, single men and women. I questioned them on what they thought about the various land issues and indigenous movements in the village and in Truku society in general. In doing so I sought to understand their perspectives on kinship practices and gaya, and their understanding of marriage.

**Literature review**

Why do I decide to focus on the implications of privatisation of land ownership for Truku society in this thesis, when I aim to understand how the transformation of economic circumstances is perceived to have changed Truku people’s social and economic life? For many Truku informants in my fieldsite, the problem of the reduction of their territory has significantly impacted on their subsistence since land reform and privatisation were introduced in Fushih Village in the 1960s. How to deal with disputes over land between the Truku and the state, and between individuals, is one of the central issues in Truku people’s everyday lives. Many consciously or unconsciously regard the transformation of the relationship between people and land as one of the significant reasons for them to be continually suffering from economic difficulties and facing various land disputes with each other.

In this section of the literature review, I begin by discussing the characteristics of property, with a particular focus on property relations in Marxist theory. The examination of property relations is central to understanding economic relations and
social relations in Marxism. However, Marxist concepts of property relations are based on the notion of materialist history. Strathern is critical that many studies of property, based on a Western concept of property relations, apply an analytical distinction which divides subject and object in terms of the relationship between people and things in different societies (1984b: 162). Strathern (1984b) asserts that the concept of property is a cultural construct. Following Strathern’s theory of property, I move my theoretical discussion of property relations from Marxism to anthropological studies of property relations. These anthropological studies argue that property relations are not only associated with social relations and economic relations in a Marxist sense, but also articulate kinship relations and culture. Secondly, through comparison of a number of case studies which describe the process of privatisation of land ownership in society, I examine the implications of the privatisation of land ownership for social and economic relations in post-colonial or indigenous societies. Finally, I examine case studies on the relationship between the privatisation of land ownership, land reform and gender relations.

In an analysis of 18th and 19th century theories of property such as those of Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson, Hann argues that ‘property was thought to be vital to individual liberty and the health of civil society, and it depended upon good government’ (1998: 23). In terms of Marxism, under the scope of materialist history, the advent of private property in the relations of production is a unique feature in the case of Western economic history. Marx illustrates how the process of forming private landed property accompanies the development of capitalism (1964: 27). Private property is central to the origins of capitalism. Property should be regarded as part of the superstructure; it cannot be separated from the social relations of production.

Robotham (2005) notes that in Marxism, the ‘means of production includes the objects of labour, such as land and raw materials, and the ‘means or ‘instruments of labour: tools and technology’ (Robotham 2005: 44). He further asserts that land is one form of property relations, and the relationship between people and lands links other social, economic, and political relations, and other kinds of property relations.
in society (Robotham 2005: 44). According to Marx’s concepts of private property, capitalist private property is the power possessed by private individuals in relation to the means of production, allowing them to dispose of their worker’s labour-power as they wish. Under private property people ‘carry on their work independently of each other […] and do not come into social contact with each other until they exchange their product’ (Marx 1967: 73).

Reflecting on the discussions of property relations, many western scholars tend to distinguish capitalist society and pre-capitalist society, and this great divide is simultaneously associated with the distinction between western and non-western, and between modern and primitive. According to the materialist theory of history, Marx distinguishes between capitalist society and pre-capitalist society through the examination of different modes of production in relation to property relations. Although Polanyi does not adopt materialist theory to discuss the nature of economies, he also wishes to separate capitalist society from pre-capitalist society (1957: 250). He argues that economies in pre-capitalist societies were integrated through reciprocity and/or redistribution, while economies in capitalist society are integrated through exchange in markets.

The separation between capitalist society and pre-capitalist society not only exists in Marxism and Polanyi’s theory of the meanings of economics, but also in anthropological studies of property in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In order to understand the concepts of property found in non-western societies or in colonised societies, many western anthropologists debated over whether land and other kinds of property were owned by the individual, or communally, in primitive (non-western) societies (e.g. Morgan 1907). However this debate can be regarded as the product of western ethnocentric bias. For instance, Nadasdy argues that ‘anthropologists want us to see ‘property’ everywhere […] in other words, “property” is an integral part of what it means to human beings living in society’ (Nadasdy 2002: 215).

Although Godelier also separates capitalist society from pre-capitalist society, and although he argues that western economic history provides the typical line of
development of humanity (1978: 246), he suggests that we can apply Marx’s theory of the capitalist mode of production to other modes of production. He invites us to think about how the economy plays a privileged role in pre-capitalist society.

Concerning the concept of property, Godelier reminds us that

A form of property only exists when it serves as a rule for the concrete appropriation of reality. Property only really exists when it is rendered effective in and through a process of concrete appropriation (Godelier 1986: 81).

In Godelier’s theory of property, many pre-capitalist societies have certain forms of property which are similar to private property. A researcher needs to examine the characteristics of property through the investigation of how people use, exchange, and inherit it in their specific contexts. Hence, different cultures might have similar or distinctive forms of property. In particular, Godelier invites us to take kinship relations into account when we discuss economics and property relations in pre-capitalist societies. Meillassoux, another French Marxist anthropologist, describes how in pre-capitalist society, kinship organises rights and obligations, and dominates the mode of production (Meillassoux 1981).

During the period of Japanese colonialism, many Japanese ethnographers and colonial administrators also had a debate concerning the question of whether or not indigenous people have concepts of private property (Fujii 1997). They used the concepts of private property to examine property relations in each Taiwanese indigenous society. However, I argue that in each of these societies the relationship between people and land could not be understood simply through the western concepts of property relations. Through studying the Japanese ethnographies of the Truku, Mowna (1998), a Truku anthropologist, concludes that property relations were associated with kinship in Truku society prior to Japanese colonialism. There were two categories of property: one was the property held by an individual household, and the other was communal property held by a community. Moreover, both individual household-held property and communal property were associated with kinship relationships and practices of ancestral worship (Mowna 1998: 183-204). Although this classification of property invites us to relate the study of Truku concepts of property relations to French Marxist anthropological theory, I suggest
that this would not help us to address the problem of applying the concept of ‘property’ to the investigation of the relationship between people and land in indigenous society. Can we simply apply Western concepts of ‘property’ or ‘rights’ to analyse indigenous understandings of the relationship between people and things (including land) in pre-capitalist society? In Chapters 3, 4, and 7, I describe how the relationship between people and land in Truku society is associated not only with economic and kinship relations, but also with their notions of ancestral worship and hunting culture.

Llobera (1979) criticises the attempts of French Marxist anthropologists to apply Marxist theory on the mode of production to the study of pre-capitalist societies, arguing that they still fall into the failures of materialist history which implies that economic issues play a privileged role in society. Nevertheless, is the social fulfilment of people’s needs always regarded as an economic fact? In her criticism of many studies on property in the western context, Strathern argues that it is inappropriate to apply western concepts of property in a cultural context where such a disjuncture between object and subject does not apply (Strathern 1984b, 1988). Instead, we should take the local context into account when we try to investigate the meanings of property in any society.

How, then, do we understand land as ‘property’ in a local context? For many anthropologists, property connotes a bundle of rights (Maine 1890) and duties (e.g. Whitehead 1984: 180), and represents an exclusive right over objects (Goody 1962: 284-5). However, property does not merely have legalist meanings relating to the definition of ‘right’ and ‘claims’, but also articulates to social, cultural and political relations in society (Verdery 1998: 161). Goody asserts that ‘a man without social relationships is a man without property’ (1968: 287). In addition, Leach (1961) and Obeyesekere (1967) suggest that relations of property in fact determine kinship relations.

However, Bloch suggests that kinship relations are not ultimately represented as property relations (1975: 211). Bloch (1975) compares Merina society with
Zafimaniry society in Madagascar in terms of the relationship between property relations and modes of production. The main mode of production in Merina society is irrigated rice agriculture, and land is scarce. In Merina society, landed property is associated with a bundle of exclusive rights, and people use marital strategies (e.g. people marry close relatives in order to reunite their land) to maximise the benefits of their asset (Bloch 1975: 205). By contrast, people in Zafimaniry society are shifting cultivators, and they represent property relations as part of social relations, and see production as the result of interpersonal relations (Bloch 1975: 212-3). In Zafimaniry society, property relations are inclusive and embedded in their social relations; the kinship system is part of the infrastructure. However, in Merina society, property relations are a part of the superstructure, and the connection between property and kinship is between two aspects of the superstructure, but not between the superstructure and the infrastructure (Bloch: 1975: 211).

Through the comparison between Zafimaniry society and Merina society, Bloch reminds us that in analysing societies we should not simply apply the Marxist doctrine that property relations and kinship relations are part of superstructure. Nevertheless, for Marxists (i.e. French Marxist anthropologists) and structural-functionalists, the great division between the capitalist society and pre-capitalist society involves them in a discussion of the role of kinship in society. Highlighting the functions of kinship in primitive societies seems to reflect a Western-centred ideology (e.g. Schneider 1980). Many structural-functionalists in the mid-20th century assumed that ‘primitive society’ is a stateless society, very different from the Western society with a state. For example, Fortes focuses on the description of the moral commitment and the jural nature of rights and duties in terms of kinship in a society (1949, 1970).

Yanagisako (2002) critiques Weberian and Marxist theories and argues that they were used to separate the economy from kinship, and points out that Weber divides economic actions from other social actions. Furthermore, in terms of Marxism, the study of economy or capitalism appears to be an attempt to separate economic relations from family and kinship relations (2002: 15). Strathern suggests in her
comparison between bridewealth society and brideservice society that kinship is ‘a way of thinking about the economy and vice versa (1985: 203). Reflecting on the classic anthropological studies of kinship, I argue that kinship relations cannot be separated from economic relations either in ‘primitive’ or capitalist societies.

From his analysis of the social and cultural meanings of property, Hann indicates that property should be seen as ‘a vast field of cultural as well as social relations, a symbolic as well as material context within which things are recognised and personal as well as collective identity made’ (1998: 5). In this thesis, I adopt the idea of property relations being interrelated with cultural, political, kinship and economic relations, and that these relations are interwoven in people’s social and economic life. Hence, if property relations are changed by internal or external factors, the social structure will be reconfigured.

Although Truku society has been capitalised, most Truku people’s economic activities are dependent on their kinship practices. For example, Truku migrant labourers prefer to encourage their relatives in their hometown to join them, if they find any opportunities in their workplace. Additionally, Truku civil servants also prefer, or are expected, to help their relatives to find part-time jobs in their offices, if the opportunity arises or they have the authority to do that. Hence, when I discuss how privatisation influences kinship and gender relations in contemporary Truku society, it is necessary to take the relationship between economic relations and kinship relations into account. In Chapter 3, I focus on how kinship practices are involved in farming in Truku society, and in Chapter 5 I describe the transformation of wedding rituals to examine how capitalism changed Truku concepts of marriage, conjugal relationship, and affinity. In Chapter 6, I illustrate the involvement of kinship practices in women’s small businesses.

Rather, reflecting on Truku people’s opinions in relation to land, I argue that to analyse the implications of privatisation and land reform for Truku society is simultaneously to understand how and why the extension of capitalism, along with many economic and political factors, has influenced the Truku people. Ronsbo (1994)
investigates how the colonial government carried out policies of privatisation of land ownership in Indian villages in order to control the Indian people in the 19th century in Central America. While the government carried out policies on privatisation of land, these policies, at the same time, were associated with other policies of ‘governmentality’, in Foucault’s terms, such as taxonomy, census and a state legal system. Consequently, Ronsbo argues that ‘through property, the nation state defines its political objects’ (1994: 68). Furthermore, Hann indicates that the extension of private ownership in society will introduce ‘new tax obligations, commercial crops, new forms of money, and possibilities of migration to highly commercialised urban environments where the domination of private property was unchallenged’ (1998: 16). In Chapter 2, I discuss how the extension of capitalism and commercial agriculture was associated with the introduction of privatised land ownership and land reforms in Truku society.

In terms of global economics, it appears that the practice of privatisation has permeated most societies around the world. Goody (1980) describes the case from Ghana where local people burned the harvest crops of strangers in order to resist the introduction of privatisation of land ownership. A group of strangers needed to register land as private property in order to take loans for agricultural development so that it was easily identifiable by a court, bank or government department as being linked, in effect exclusively, to a particular individual. However, local people felt that the strangers’ registration was a cause of local people losing their land, but they did not have the authority to force the strangers to leave their territory because of the security derived from registration.

However, in other cases the new forms of property relations were adopted by indigenous groups or partially by a certain social group in the same community. In his study of the Yolngu society of Australia, Williams (1986) notes that with the introduction of privatisation, a large number of complex disputes arose with regard to land tenure, disputes in which there was no simple, clear-cut division between indigenous peoples and non-indigenous settlers. In some cases, conflicts arose between two or more indigenous groups, in turn inevitably creating a number of
political and ethnic problems. Lesorogol (2003) invites us to think about how the introduction of privatisation results in social and political conflicts in society through her case study of Samburu society in Kenya. In this pastoralist society, there is a hierarchy of age relating to traditional principles of communal property in that the elders have the authority to manage resources. However, since the introduction of privatisation to the community in the 1960s, the younger and the older generations have had different perspectives on this new form of property relationship. The former tend to adopt privatisation in order to enable them to have autonomy to manage their own financial and landed resources. But the older generations perceive privatisation as an erosion of their social and political power on the basis of social hierarchy. In her study of property rights and legal pluralism in the Philippines, Wiber suggests that the ‘property system must be informed by concepts both of structure and of process’ (1991: 469-50). She suggests that when we focus on local people’s reaction to an adopted property system, we not only need to look at local concepts of land, but also should consider the process by which these laws have been manipulated by individuals in competition over resources.

Furthermore, the privatisation of land ownership is usually part of the process by which the state imposes a legal system on a local society. In such situations, the modern legal system and local customs will coexist in local society. In his investigation of the impact of privatisation on Yolngu society in Australia, Williams (1987) points out that after the introduction of privatisation, there were two types of law in operation in society, namely those relating to the customary relationship between people and land, and those relating to private property. Indeed, as Scott reminds us, when local people try to solve land conflicts or resist the privatisation of land ownership or land reform, their customs always play an important role (1998: 35).

These case studies have implications for privatisation along with an extension of capitalism for the local society, and remind us that local people might not always be in a passive position when facing the imposition of a new form of property relations. People in society are not homogenous, but different groups or individuals have
different strategies and perspectives towards the imposition of privatisation. Consequently, many contests over land between different groups or individuals will arise with the introduction of privatisation. In Chapter 7, I show that in contemporary Truku society, when people deal with problems of land, they usually juggle their customs (gaya) with the Taiwanese legal system.

In Taiwanese anthropological context, many studies of property relations focus on the impact of the privatisation of land ownership and commercial agriculture on social and kinship relations in the process of capitalisation in indigenous society after the 1960s (e.g. Chen 1986; Huang 1992). Nevertheless, most studies of the implications of privatisation for Taiwanese indigenous people do not concentrate on how private property and capitalism influence gender relations in indigenous society. On the other hand, many studies of the relationship between land and the Taiwanese indigenous peoples highlight social movements in indigenous society (e.g. Chiu 1989; Stainton 2002). However, Liu (1994), a Taiwanese anthropologist, argues that the role that women played in these land movements seems to be ignored in many studies of indigenous movements.

The relationship between gender relations and property relations is an important issue in anthropological studies. Both gender and kinship studies have been concerned with understanding the rights and duties that order relations between people defined by difference (e.g. Collier and Yanagisako 1987; Ortner and Whitehead 1981; Rubin 1975). For instance, many anthropologists have highlighted gender inequality as an aspect of the relationship between gender and property. Many feminist anthropologists argue that systems of kinship and gender are about difference and inequality, and that marriage is a mechanism of the production of gender inequalities (e.g. Goody 1973: 8; Modjeska 1982; Strathern 1984a: 53). In respect of hunter-gatherer societies, Woodburn and Barnard suggest that ‘men may more readily be able to control women’s destination in marriage than to control the yields of women’s productive labour’ (1988: 28-9).

The ethnographic work of the many feminist scholars who have examined gender
issues within an African context highlights the differences between men and women in their capacity to assert themselves as persons experiencing changing cultural, economic, and political conditions. In many African societies before they were governed by western colonial regimes, women had rights to access lands. Many feminist scholars argue that the introduction of privatisation and the modern legal system was the key to women losing their lands (e.g. Boserup 1989; Rangan and Gilmartin 2002). Patriarchal colonial societies, combined with colonial pressure on African men to grow cash crops, have also been instrumental in eroding women’s rights and emphasising men’s rights to land (Boserup 1989). Similarly, in Southeast Asia, privatisation, along with the legal system, which is based on patriarchal ideology, ends up with a gender balance in favour of men (e.g. Jha 2004; Li 1998).

In many African societies, although women lost their land rights because of privatisation, this does not mean that women do not have any possibility of regaining rights to land. Because women customarily had rights to land in many African societies, appropriating the customary system has become an effective strategy for women to fight for their land rights (e.g. Rangan and Gilmartin 2002; Rose 2002; Whitehead and Tsikata 2003). Furthermore, in many cases, privatisation of land ownership allows women to have equal rights to claim their land rights, although they are still subordinated to their menfolk and have very reduced and conditional property and other legal rights (Fineman and Thomadsen 1991; Moore 1994).

Moreover, the imposition of private property relations apparently creates a social and political space for women to claim their property rights. For example, Rao (2005) indicates that, in terms of the patrilineal customary systems of tenure in Jharkhand, India, women were denied ownership of land. These customary laws, though, have been eroded through privatisation in post-independence India, in that privatisation has enabled women to have the legal right to claim land. In contrast, men have used ‘respect for traditional culture’ as a way of seeking to continue to deny women the right to own land, to inherit family property or to have political power (Rao 2005: 728).
These case studies of the relationship between women and privatisation invite us to reflect on how private property relations imply a transformation of women’s social and economic status. However, these studies seem to be based on a clear divide between the ‘traditional’ and the ‘modern’, but might ignore a situation in which people would interpret or invent ‘customs’ to serve their present desires. In Truku societies, ‘gaya’ is always involved in the process of dealing with conflicts of land between individuals and in land movements. But, the principles of ‘gaya’ relating to issues of land are diverse. In this thesis, I argue that the relationship between women and land is always uncertain and flexible, because in different contexts, Truku people have different interpretations of women’s status in property relations.

Given the theoretical arguments presented and cross cultural patterns, it would seem that the privatisation of land ownership can be seen as a catalyst for the development of a capitalist society. In considering the relationship between gender and privatisation, I argue that it is necessary to address this issue within the context of both the local and global economy. The privatisation of land ownership usually involves a programme of land reform, which may change the way of agricultural production in local society. On this basis, the relationship between women and land has changed, and perhaps now mirrors the relationship which men previously had to the land. In addition, privatisation has also enabled women to lay claim to the products of their labour, in that it should belong to them, as autonomous individuals, and not to their husbands or other kinsmen.

This research not only addresses studies on property relations, privatisation of land ownership and the impact on local societies, but also gender relations, the household and the feminisation of agriculture. Truku society is an Austronesian society. In Chapters 3 and 4, I compare studies on gender relations in Truku society with studies on gender difference in relation to different prestige systems in various Southeast Asian societies. In Chapters 3, 5, and 6, I look at the household in Truku society, including a wide range of anthropological studies on the household, family and household economics. In Chapter 3, I compare studies on the role of women in cultivation with a number of cases studies on the implications of land reform for
women in Africa and Southeast Asia, and reflect on the notion of feminisation of agriculture.

**Mapping the Thesis**

This thesis is broadly structured along chronological lines. I start the thesis by situating my argument within the particular historical context in which my fieldwork was carried out. In Chapter 2, after drawing out some of the wider historical processes associated with the privatisation of land ownership and various programmes of land reform which affected Taiwanese indigenous people in general, I go on to look at the impact these processes have had on people in Truku society. I focus on how Truku concepts of property relations and land use have changed and how Truku society has been capitalised since the government introduction of privatisation and commercial agriculture in the 1960s. I point out that privatisation and capitalisation have caused Truku people to lose their land, and generated various conflicts over land between the state and the Truku, between different households, and between men and women in contemporary Truku society.

My argument proper starts in Chapter 3 in which I set out to do two things. Firstly, I focus on Truku concepts of the relationship between people and land in pre-colonial society. I argue that the household was the basic social and economic unit in control of land and access to land, and therefore, the analysis of concepts relating to land is also that of the relationship between the household and land. Secondly, by exploring Truku concepts and practices of gender relations, and by comparing Truku society with many other societies in Southeast Asia, I challenge the prevalent idea that women are subordinated to men in Truku society. Finally, I focus on the transformation of gender relations and sexual division of labour in household economics and cultivation which has emerged over time with the capitalisation of Truku society in the 1960s. I describe a process in which Truku women have increasingly come to play a more important role than men in economic activities, from the 1990s to the present day.
In Chapter 4, I focus on the importance of *gaya*, a complex set of norms in Truku society. In Truku society, *gaya* is associated with beliefs relating to ancestor worship. The rules relating to sexuality and gender are central to concepts of *gaya*. Furthermore, *gaya*, as they relate to ancestor worship and the rules relating to sexuality and gender, broadly apply to the practices of kinship. I argue that through practices of *gaya*, Truku people are forming relationships between households, and as a consequence contributing to social solidarity and conflict in society. Finally, in investigating *gaya* practices, I argue that despite the rhetorical insistence by Truku people that *gaya* rules must be strictly adhered to, in actuality these rules are flexibly interpreted and applied. Through an exploration of the flexibility of *gaya* rules, I reflect on *gaya* as an articulation of gender hierarchy in contemporary Truku society.

In Chapter 5, I start by describing Truku concepts of marriage and marital exchange. In Truku society, marriage not only creates marital alliance and affinity, but also a new household. Secondly, I focus on the impact that the privatisation of land ownership and capitalism have had on the building of new houses for married couples, the monetisation of bridewealth and the advent of landed dowry, since the 1960s. Furthermore, I discuss how the transformation of marriage has affected kinship practices, the interaction between affines and women’s status in Truku society. Finally, I discuss how the monetisation of the wedding ritual reinforces economic and social hierarchy in contemporary Truku society.

In Chapter 6, I describe the particular characteristics of women’s economic activities in contemporary Truku society. I suggest that the economic roles assumed by women are generally related to domestic affairs, kinship practices, marriage and interaction within their social networks. Therefore, I suggest that any discussion of the role of women in economic activities is also one of household economics. That is, a woman’s economic activity should be regarded as one aspect of household economics and related to the economic activities and situation of her spouse and children. After having described the particular characteristics of women’s economic activities, I turn to examine how and why women have played an increasingly important role in Truku society since the introduction of concepts of private property.
and capitalism into Truku society in the 1960s.

In Chapter 7, I concentrate on the role that women play in the long-term process of inheritance. Concerning Truku concepts of inheritance, I focus on exploration of the nature of words (testaments) of the testators (elders). After describing the concepts and practices of inheritance, I go on to look at how Truku women gain land from inheritance. I argue that many Truku women regard the landed property they inherit from their parents as being the result of economic activity and domestic work carried out in maintaining the household and taking care of elders. Furthermore, I analyse the significance of conflicts over land and inheritance between different households in contemporary Truku society. I suggest that these disputes usually extend beyond the household and may generate various tensions between different households amongst future generations. Consequently, tensions between different households generate social and kinship conflicts. In addition, I explore the strategic use of the legal system, interpretations of gaya and arguments over women’s right to own land, made by Truku protagonists in seeking to protect or increase their land holdings and economic position. Finally, by investigating the involvement of women in conflicts over land, I explore the meanings attributed to women’s ownership of land in contemporary Truku society.

In my conclusion, I return to a more general discussion of how this research describes the impact that privatisation of land has had on gender relations in an indigenous society, and is thus of relevance to major areas of interest in economic anthropology, the study of property relations, gender studies and studies of indigenous movements in Taiwan.
Chapter Two. Land Grab, Land Loss and Land Return: Land Reform in Truku Society

Two controversial land issues

Litu, a Truku neighbour of mine, is a kindly widow of about eighty years of age, and lives with her unmarried youngest daughter in the Bsngang community in Fushih Village. She has lived in the lowlands since the late 1960s when she moved from the highlands community of Skadang to Bsngang, with her husband, Karaw, and children. Litu and her husband were among the pioneers of Skadang in reclaiming new lands and settling in the lowlands. Litu’s husband decided to let her youngest sister, Lubi, use part of his land in Skadang. Litu said,

My husband was so kind. He thought that my sister did not have enough land to support her eight children, because her husband came from different community and therefore did not get land in Skadang.

Though initially secure in her land holdings in the highland Skadang and the lowland Bsngang, both she and her children were shocked and horrified when the indigenous people’s land registration policies, which came into effect in the 1960s, resulted in the loss of a considerable amount of land as it was turned over to the ownership of others.

On attempting to register ownership of the land with the local administrative authorities, Litu and her children were surprised to find that the large tracts of land, which she had freely loaned to her sister’s household, had already been registered by her sister’s husband and sons. This had only been made possible by government policies which came into being from 1956 to 1976, whereby indigenous people were allowed to register ownership of cultivated lands. Though Litu and her children insisted that the lands should be returned to them, her sister’s household resisted, claiming that they had legal rights and privileges to register the lands, which they themselves had cultivated. While most, including Litu, would have considered that the lands in question in Skadang would belong to her under traditional interpretations...
of land tenure, nevertheless full ownership fell to her sister and her sister’s householders.

Litu frequently visited her sister to try and persuaded her and her children to return the land to her ownership, sometimes receiving only insults for her trouble. But she would never give up. Her sister’s children argued that the ownership of these lands have been legally registered in their name through fully legitimate procedures. The dispute between Litu and her sister made the relationship between their descendants equally tense.

In another case, a piece of land near Litu’s house has been unilaterally seized by the local administration, as a base for local public enterprise. She claimed that this land was the first field reclaimed by her and her husband when they started to live in the lowlands, and the dispute over ownership of this area between her and the local office is the focus of an ongoing land reclamation action organised by her household and their neighbours. The land in question contains derelict company accommodation owned by the monopoly energy supplier, Taiwan Power Company (TPC). The derelict accommodation covers a wide area of about three hectares, advantageously located close to the main road.

This accommodation was constructed by the Japanese government in the early 1940s, and was then taken over by the KMT government after 1945. As Litu and her neighbours remembered it, the land was originally theirs and they had planted it with vegetables, fruits, and trees. Under the Japanese colonial regime, indigenous people were not allowed to own the lands they cultivated, and all areas in which indigenous people lived were considered national property. As such, the government freely expropriated the area as a location for TPC accommodation, although it permitted Litu and her neighbours to continue to farm the vacant spaces surrounding the buildings.

Despite this, under the KMT regime of the 1960s, Litu and her neighbours were abruptly excluded from their land by a stone wall constructed by TPC, and prevented
from farming there. With the advent of indigenous people’s land reclamation policies in the 1960s, most thought that they would, in time regain the land, and when in the 1990s the TPC announced that it would no longer be using the area in question, Litu and her neighbours went to the local office to register ownership of the land, land which they argued they had cultivated prior to TPC’s expropriation. However, their application was contested, with the government arguing that cultivation could not be proved, and proof of cultivation was a necessary condition to claim ownership of land reserved for indigenous people. On this basis, the government described the TPC property as ownerless land, and thus eligible for local public enterprise rather than private ownership.

As a result of this situation, Litu felt angry and upset and cannot understand why she has lost her lands when she has only sought to claim her rights under the law. She told me in Japanese, ‘If I sacrifice my lands to help the government to develop public infrastructures, it should help me to regain my properties when it decides to stop using them.’ Conversely, she could not provide any proof that she and her household recently cultivated the land in question because they were prohibited from working in the area by the government. She complained that, ‘everyday I see weeds covering my lands; I always feel sad. The government uses my land at my expense!’

As well as encouraging her descendants to work with the other land-user households to set up the land reclamation movement to secure the return of their ‘occupied’ lands, Litu also actively engages in the movement herself. Two years ago, in order to claim their land rights, activists climbed over the wall and entered the property in order to begin farming the land again as a protest against the local administration’s expropriation. Their actions resulted in prosecution for the illegal use of public property without official permission. The lawsuit is ongoing, and the claimants have turned from being landowners to being potentially criminalised.

Since the indigenous people were allowed to register the ownership of their land from the 1960s onwards, Litu has lost many pieces of land over time for a number of different reasons. Some of her lands were inherited from her husband’s parents, and
some reclaimed by her and her husband. In the past, she believed that the only way to increase and preserve a household’s land was by continual hard work. She has many memories and stories connected with the lands she has lost, lands that she, her husband and children have lived on and worked. Nevertheless, since beginning her fight against the government and trying to persuade her sister’s descendants to return her land, she has gradually come to realise that concepts of land and the legal system of land ownership are more complicated than she had previously thought.

Litu’s story is actually not an exceptional one; such cases are common in Truku society. Why and how have government policy and laws relating to indigenous people in Taiwan caused her to lose land? How could it be that her sister has legally appropriated her lands under the new land tenure system, against all contrary moral sense and argument? Litu’s sister also felt sorrow with regard to the conflicts of land with her sister, but is unable to complain about it. She did not want the conflicts over land to cause tensions with her sister, but she could not have legal authority to solve these problems. During the period of privatisation of land ownership, Litu’s sister was not involved in the registration, her husband was. Her husband bequeathed most of his land to his sons. Even though Litu’s sister told me that she had suggested that her sons return the land to Litu, her sons had their own ideas and rejected her suggestion. A dispute of land between different individuals not only articulates the contest between gaya (customs) and laws, but also generates many conflicts between different households within the same kin group or between different kin groups. In Chapter 7, I continue to discuss the dispute over land between Litu and her sister’s household. In discussing how both parties concerned have dealt with the dispute, I explore how private property relations have caused changes within Truku kinship and social relations.

In this chapter, I firstly describe the transformation of policies of land reservation for indigenous people from the time of Japanese colonialism to the regime of the KMT in Taiwan. I also highlight the impact of land reform in relation to the privatisation of land ownership and programmes of agricultural development on Taiwanese indigenous societies, including Truku society. I argue that while Taiwanese
indigenous people were allowed by the government to have legal rights over their land, they simultaneously lost their land and their territory due to these programs of land reform.

The new system of land tenure, which has been imposed by the government on the Truku is significantly different to Truku understandings of the relationship between the land and human beings before the introduction of the privatisation of land ownership. Others, though, those who are literate or part of the Truku elite, have taken advantage of the new, government imposed system. In this context of loss and gain, I discuss the influence of this legal system on the economic and political stratification of contemporary Truku society.

Taiwanese indigenous peoples do not always passively acquiesce to the new system of land tenure. Indeed, since the 1980s, some have worked continuously to organise indigenous movements in order to resist this legal system, and to reverse the unfair disadvantages it has imposed on them. Reflecting on land registration and the narrative of land reclamation movements, I argue that women are absent from the processes of land privatisation and land reform in Truku society.

**Land reservation for indigenous people: a particular relationship between indigenous people and land**

During the period of my fieldwork, when I talked about issues of land with my informants, many people complained that the government designated their lands as reservation lands. But in reality their lands are reserved for private enterprises, national parks, governmental institutes, and rich Taiwanese people, not indigenous peoples. Section 3 of the ‘Regulations on Development and Management of Lands Reserved for Indigenous People’ (Laws and Regulations Database of The Republic of China 2007a) serves as the legal basis for policies on land reservation for indigenous peoples, to safeguard their livelihood in Taiwan. Comparing the criticisms of informants of the policy of reservation land, we can find that there is a gap between the conception of this policy and its results in indigenous society.
The policy of land reservation for indigenous peoples, adopted by the KMT regime (1945-2000), and put into action from 1964 onwards, was in fact inherited from the policy of ‘Mountain Reservation’ promoted by the Japanese colonial government (1895-1945). In analysing the impact these land reservation policies have had on indigenous groups in Taiwan, it is necessary to understand the relationship between Japanese colonial ideologies and policy structures, and Taiwanese indigenous peoples. For the Japanese colonial government, the definition of ‘indigenous people’ was closely linked to a complex set of the relationships between people and land. Taiwanese indigenous people were defined by the Japanese colonial government as ‘banjan’, meaning ‘barbarian’. This definition reflected the prevailing idea that Taiwanese indigenous people could not be civilised through the adoption of the modern (colonial) social order (Fujii 1997). As a result, indigenous peoples’ land became ownerless land, and, in turn, was classified as the property of the state (Keimukyoku 1938; Ribanka 1933).  

The strategy by which the government denied indigenous people ownership and citizenship in its appropriation and exploitation of aboriginal lands was not only employed by the Japanese colonial government of Taiwan, but also by the western colonial government in relations with many indigenous peoples in Australia and America. Williams (1986) argues that aboriginal people do not relate to the land in ways that Europeans would recognise as constituting ‘property relations’, precisely because these relations were defined in opposition to how aboriginal people related to land. In other words, to speak of aboriginal-land relations as property relations is to deny, rather than merely gloss over, their essential dynamic (Nadasdy 2002: 252). This discussion is important in reminding us that we cannot ignore the role of the (colonial) state in the process of privatisation in indigenous society.

In order to exploit the forest resources, the Japanese colonial government systematically enacted a series of forest policies from 1910 to 1934, to map the indigenous territories and outline a ‘forest plan system’ in these territories.

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1 During this period, the Japanese colonial government granted Taiwanese people their land rights.
(Keimukyoku 1938). After that, the government divided the territories of Taiwanese indigenous peoples into three categories: (1) forest land in need of reservation, (2) forest land not in need of reservation, and (3) land reserved for highland peoples. Forest land in need of reservation was protected forest, while forest land not in need of reservation was open for the exploitation of timber and other natural resources. Those indigenous people who lived in these two areas were forced to leave and settle in the land reserved for highland people. These forest policies included detailed regulation of the relationship between indigenous peoples and the land. In the land reserved for highland people, each individual was allocated 3 hectares of lands, including 0.2 hectares for a dwelling place, 1.8 hectares of cultivated lands, 0.5 hectares of woodland, and 0.5 hectares for other industries (Keimukyoku 1938).

Through policies of mountain reservation relating to policies of migration, the establishment of an infrastructure, and the education of cultivation, the Japanese colonial government led the Taiwanese indigenous people to convert their swidden agriculture to rice agriculture. In Fushih Village, the very first use of paddy field farming methods occurred in 1922. In 1927 in order to encourage people to adopt rice cultivation, the government set up the first irrigation system in Truku society on the river terrace, as well as the first ‘agricultural training centre’ in 1931. As a result, it is possible that Fushih villagers were the first Truku people to come into contact with rice agriculture (Iwaki 1936). Government statistics from 1932 suggest that there were no more shifting cultivated lands for indigenous people. This record identifies 950 thousand hectares of paddy fields, 590 thousand hectares of dry lands, 390 thousand hectares of wastelands, and 2 million hectares of forest (Iwaki 1936: 65). At the same time, the government arranged for farmers to train indigenous people in the planning of agriculture, purchasing, and marketing and sale of crops (Iwaki 1936).

However, during the Japanese colonial period, the government did not force Taiwanese indigenous people to adopt commercial agriculture. Rather, indigenous people were expected by the government to conduct subsistence agriculture in order to provide sufficient food for their households. Then, indigenous people could
exchange their agricultural surpluses for money, necessities, sugar, alcohol and salt with the government. This would be conducted in the local transaction office for indigenous people, in the reservation area (Keimukyoku 1938). Nonetheless, under official regulations, indigenous people were prohibited from private bartering, although they sometimes secretly conducted exchanged with each other or with outsiders.

The Taiwanese indigenous people were not involved in the market until the KMT conducted land reform and privatisation of land ownership in the 1960s. Indigenous land reservation policies under the KMT regime were implemented with two main aims in mind: reservation and development. The government set up reserved lands for indigenous people to use and started to give them ownership of their cultivated lands. Additionally, it also attempted to transform the way of agriculture and introduce capitalism by means of controlling the land use of indigenous people, that is, government policy aimed to promote the economic development of indigenous society. The process of effecting policies on indigenous land reservation should in fact be regarded as the capitalisation of indigenous society. It is nevertheless the case that there is an important difference between the Japanese colonial regime and the KMT government concerning policies over the ownership of indigenous lands. Under the Japanese colonial regime, indigenous people were denied legal ownership of their lands; under the KMT regime, a series of policies established the right of indigenous peoples to have permanent possession of their lands. In order to grant land ownership to indigenous people, the government carried out a series of land reform programmes in indigenous society.

It is important to point out that under the KMT regime the land tenure system in indigenous societies was different from the one used in mainstream Taiwanese society. Firstly, the government held the title to all reservation lands, not indigenous landowners. Indigenous people were legally entitled to the usufruct rights of their lands, but were not granted legal land ownership. Secondly, indigenous people did not have the right to rent or sell their land to non-indigenous people. Thirdly, usufruct rights were granted only under the condition that crops were planted for ten
Furthermore, it had to be either cultivated or ceded to the government as state property. The latter condition eventually permitted Taiwanese or Chinese corporations to gain control of indigenous land with state support.

I suggest that it is necessary to take the transformation of economic circumstance in Taiwan into account, when analysing the development of policies of indigenous people’s land under the KMT regime. Taiwan’s economy suffered severe damage during the Second World War. The agricultural sector was the least affected, and, as the primary economic sector, became the foundation for Taiwan’s development in the early post-war years. In the 1940s, the KMT government actively promoted agricultural and industrial development, while at the same time implementing land reform in mainstream society. In the 1950s, the government focused on increasing agricultural production, and thereby provided the raw materials required by the agricultural products processing industry. In the 1960s, Taiwan’s economy experienced a period of rapid export growth. During this period, Taiwan became known for its cheap manufactured exports produced by small enterprises. Over the course of the 1970s, the overall growth rate for labour-intensive light industries rose to new heights, the economy as a whole continued to grow, and Taiwan began to develop a trade surplus (Ho 1978).

From statistical data on the economy, we can see that Taiwan’s economy overall expanded significantly between the 1960s and 1970s, and its economic development continued to flourish in the 1980s. However, it is important to note that the economic reality within indigenous society during these four decades might in fact be concealed by statistical data. The economic achievements of Taiwan were based on the development of industry in mainstream society, but there were few such industries in indigenous society. In indigenous societies, the KMT government conducted different economic policies to those in mainstream society.

Under the KMT regime, the government produced a series of policies on indigenous land reservation in order to affect ‘state-controlled capitalism’, as a means to

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2 In 1986, the duration of continuous cultivation was reduced to five years.
improve economic conditions in indigenous societies (Hsiao 1984: 135). Owing to the policies on paddy field agriculture and cash crops, education, and the development of forestry, the mode of agricultural production has become increasingly capitalised in contemporary indigenous societies. Consequently, indigenous land reservation policies have integrated the economy of indigenous society with the broader capitalist economic system, forming an economically interdependent relationship with mainstream society in Taiwan (Li 1983; Liao 1984). However, in this situation, many Taiwanese researchers point out that the function and meaning of indigenous land reservation has been challenged and reduced since the dramatic economic development of Taiwan in the 1970s (Wu 2000; Yen and Yang 2004).

While Taiwan’s economy became increasingly industrialised and capitalised in these two decades, the government in the meantime began to improve agricultural production through a series of land policies, thereby capitalising agricultural production in indigenous societies (Li 1983). Many indigenous peoples, with the encouragement of the government, became involved in long-term agricultural production, such as fruit farming and forestry, and growing special products, such as tea and sugar (Taiwan Province Government 1980: 35-38). Long-term agricultural products and special products are more valuable in the market than short term products, such as rice, potato, beans, and vegetables, taro, etc. (Taiwan Province Government 1980: 35-38). In order to increase the profit from these two sorts of agricultural products, most indigenous people used large areas for planting to enable them to produce for, and distribute to mainstream society (Li 1983).

Moreover, over the 1960s and 1970s, indigenous peoples suffered economic problems from the dispossession and expropriation of indigenous lands at the hands of a variety of government and private enterprise programmes, which were aimed at economic development. There were many structural problems related to agricultural production in indigenous societies. Li (1983), a Taiwanese anthropologist, points out that a shortage of finance and mechanised production, incomplete systems of irrigation and infrastructure, and comparatively low levels of agricultural technology
and knowledge were widely spread in indigenous societies. These difficulties not only held back the development of agriculture, but, from the 1960s, also led to increasing numbers of indigenous labourers forgoing farming their lands and instead becoming waged labourers. Hence, the absence of labour in cultivation, in turn, limited the development of agriculture in indigenous societies in Taiwan (Hsiao 1984: 13).

The indigenous land reservation policies have, in part, been seen by many indigenous people as one of the principal barriers to the economic development of indigenous societies. The policies promoted have implied a strong sense of government-controlled capitalism. Indigenous people have been legally impelled to follow the government’s programmes of economic development and policies concerning the management of natural resources and agriculture in the use of their lands, and are not allowed to use their lands for their own purposes. In addition, the legal restrictions placed on the utilisation, inheritance and transaction of indigenous land reservations has meant that indigenous lands are worth far less than land outside the indigenous reservations. During my fieldwork, Truku residents frequently mentioned that these land policies had made them effectively ineligible in respect of mortgage loans, and thus limited the ability of indigenous people to raise loans to invest in agriculture and commercial enterprises, such as opening stores and developing tourism.

Under the KMT regime, Taiwanese indigenous peoples territory was considerably diminished by governmental policies and the exploitation of unscrupulous entrepreneurs in cooperation with the colonial government. Firstly, the existence of plentiful natural resources (such as forests, water, minerals), and the potential for the development of tourism in indigenous people’s living areas, increasingly attracted growing numbers of private companies, governmental institutes and enterprises, and non-indigenous persons, during periods of rapid economic growth in Taiwan. In order to progress economic development in Taiwan, the government gradually set up a number of programmes for the economic development in indigenous people’s living areas and, in an authoritarian fashion, manipulated laws to help private enterprises and official institutes to expropriate or dispossess indigenous people’s
lands.\textsuperscript{3}

According to many studies of indigenous land reservations, both the overall area of land reserved for indigenous people, and the amount of land held by individual indigenous people, decreased dramatically after Japanese colonial regime (Yen and Yang 2004). Under the Japanese colonisation, the area of ‘Mountain Reservation’ measured about 277 thousand Jia;\textsuperscript{4} however, by 1966 the area of land reserved for indigenous people had decreased to about 248 thousand Jia (Department of Domestic Affairs 1996: 20-22). In terms of the average area of land held by individual indigenous people, this averaged 2.5 Jia between 1915 and 1925, decreasing to an authorised 2.3 Jai after the government began to implement the policy of Mountain Reservation in 1925 (Iwaki 1936: 57). However, the area of land held by individual indigenous people was merely 0.3 Jia (Department of Domestic Affairs 1996: 25). The government ignored the fallow grounds used by indigenous people in shifting agriculture, rejecting as evidence the validity of their claims that the land was being farmed.

Under the KMT regime, indigenous people gradually improved their legal status in terms of land tenure. However, Williams (1986) illustrates how from the perspective of colonialism, to speak of aboriginal-land relations as property relations is to deny rather than merely ‘gloss over’ their essential dynamic. Reflecting on the transformation of the relationship between the Taiwanese indigenous people and land, Buya, a Truku man, stated to me that ‘every indigenous person’s measure of area of cultivated land has been significantly and practically reduced by the government, although the KMT gave legal ownership of the land, while the Japanese government did not.’

During the period of Japanese colonisation, in order to extract the forest resources

\textsuperscript{3} Section 18 of the ‘Regulations on Development and Management of Lands Reserved for Indigenous People’ states that: ‘Upon acquiring ownership of reservation land, said ownership may only be transferred to another aborigine, except for land legally defined for a particular purpose. The aforementioned legally defined purpose refers to the land the government requires pursuant to national economic policies or public enterprise endeavours’ (Laws and Regulations Database of The Republic of China 2007a).

\textsuperscript{4} Jia ( xã) is a particular type of square measure in Taiwan. One Jia equals 0.97 hectares.
in Truku people’s living area in the highlands, the government forced Truku people to settle in the reservation areas in the lowlands. Subsequently, through various policies of land reform, in terms of ways of production, Truku people gradually shifted from swidden agricultural to rice agriculture. Under the regime of the KMT, various policies of land reform and economic development were introduced into Taiwanese indigenous society, including Truku society, since the 1960s. Reflecting on the impacts of land reforms and privatisation of land ownership on indigenous societies in Taiwan, I argue that such policies might not benefit most indigenous people in Taiwan.

Reflecting on the history of policies of land reforms relating to the Taiwanese indigenous people from Japanese colonialisation to the regime of the KMT, I argue that these policies are planned by the government based on the interests of the government and mainstream society in Taiwan, rather than on the local social, economical, and political contexts in Taiwanese indigenous societies. The phenomenon that the government-led development policies significantly influences local society occurs not only in Taiwanese indigenous society, but be found also in many other indigenous societies around the world (McNeish and Eversole 2005) and rural villages in developing countries (e.g. Goody 1980; Moore 1998; Peluso 1995). From the examination of the impacts of the national planning land development schemes on Eastern Malaysian people in Borneo from the 1950s to the 1980s, King (1988) indicates that there is a contradiction between policies of poverty alleviation and economic growth in centrally planned policies of development (1988: 264). Comparing the policies of land reform in Taiwan with those of economic development in Borneo as described by King (1988, 1993), I find that both Taiwanese and Malaysian governments faced the dilemma of choosing between the modernisation of agriculture and the exploitation of natural resources in local societies.

The title for the basic regulations on indigenous land reservation is, ‘Regulations on Development and Management of Lands Reserved for Indigenous People’. From an analysis of the practice of these policies, I argue that it is impossible for the idea of
reservation and that of economic development to co-exist harmoniously in indigenous societies. In particular, since the expansion of Taiwan’s economy in the 1960s, the idea of development has gradually assumed priority over reservation. Indigenous people’s cultivated lands and living places have progressively diminished since the government began allowing private enterprises to appropriate reservation land in 1966.

Furthermore, through investigating the impacts of centrally planned development policies on Eastern Malaysian societies in Borneo, King invites us to consider the other contradiction between a centrally planned mode of development and local level regional reality (1988: 264). He observes that ‘in general, land development schemes have tended to alienate local people from rather than integrate them into, the mainstream of national development and modernisation’ (King 1988: 294-5). On the other hand, he makes us aware that the presumption of the dichotomy between ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ involved in governmental policies has significantly influenced social relations and economic activities in local societies in Borneo (King 1988: 295-6).

In conclusion, in order to provide a historical background of my research, I focus on in this section the transformation of policies of land reforms and privatisation of land ownership in relations to the Taiwanese indigenous people from the Japanese colonial period to the regime of the KMT. Afterwards, in this chapter, I return to discuss the impact of land reform and privatisation of land ownership on Truku people since the 1960s. Moreover, I describe how Truku people react to such policies through organising land reclamation movements in society from the 1990s onwards.

**Literacy, land registration, and hierarchy**

Land reform in relation to Taiwanese indigenous peoples, under the KMT, not only reduced indigenous lands, but also significantly impacted on the social structure of indigenous society. In the context of Taiwanese indigenous society, privatisation is a process wherein title to land is transferred from the state to local residents. A legal
provision enables individuals to apply for private parcels of land during the registration of land ownership.

In explaining the ideology of privatisation of land ownership in relation to the programmes of the ‘Green Revolution’ in Ghana, Goody (1980) indicates that it is necessary for the government and banks to carry out privatisation of land ownership in contemporary society. He points out that ‘in order to make loans for agricultural development, some ‘security’ is required by both commercial and government banks. ‘Security’ means a regular income (i.e. being an employee), a saleable (i.e. not a mud) house, or land (one’s own)’ (Goody 1980: 144). Lastarria-Cornhiel suggests that commercial agriculture and/or development of the market is also necessary for the privatisation of land ownership (1997: 1326). In this sense, I argue that the tendency toward private property has continued in certain types of modernisation programmes, such as titling and registration of land and agricultural development programmes.

In Taiwan, programmes of land reform in indigenous society have included the investigation and classification of indigenous lands and the establishment of a land register from 1952 to 1976, and the registration of indigenous lands between 1966 and 1971. These programmes produced particular concepts of indigenous land rights (Li 1983: 104). According to the ‘Regulations on Development and Management of Lands Reserved for Indigenous People’, indigenous people can gain the title of the ownership of their land under two conditions: ‘(1) land that the indigenous people have opened and cultivated prior to the enactment of said procedure; (2) land that the indigenous people have leased for a forestation and completed a forestation work prior to the enactment of said procedure’ (Laws and Regulations Database of the Republic of China 2007a). Hence, we can see that the government has assumed that the land user is probably also the landowner. Moreover, cultivation is the essential premise for giving the right of land access, and usufruct rights were granted only under the condition that crops were planted for ten years.5

5 According to Section 8 of the ‘Regulations on Development and Management of the Lands Reserved for Indigenous People’ (Laws and Regulations Database of the Republic of China 2007a), ‘[t]he indigenous peoples should request the services of the Council of Indigenous Peoples in applying for cultivation rights registration with the land administration authority for the following indigenous peoples land reservations:
At the beginning of this chapter, I described the story of Litu. From her point of view, the land reform and privatisation of land ownership have not only enabled the government to legally occupy her land without consulting with her, but has also caused her to come into conflict with her sister Lubi’s household over land ownership. She said ‘the official gaya (law) makes many Truku people and the government become thieves, stealing the land of others. If we still believe in our gaya (norms), this practice should vanish’. Reflecting on the impact that land reservation policies have had on the reduction of indigenous territories, I believe that most Truku informants would partially agree with Litu’s point of view, that the government is a thief occupying many Truku people’s lands. Who, then, are the thieves created by the modern legal system in contemporary society? For Litu, her sister and her sister’s husband and children are thieves, as they have seized her land. On the contrary, Lubi’s household gained land, which was claimed by Litu as her property, through the manipulation of registration and legal system of private property. In this situation, if Litu, following Truku rules of land, were to arbitrarily use ‘her’ land, land that has been legally registered as the property of her sister’s household, then she would be the one being branded as a thief.

The government has claimed that it was necessary to introduce the surveying and registration of land to reduce the conflict between claim and counter claim in indigenous societies (Li 1983). However, privatisation of land ownership in indigenous society has, in reality, raised a number of conflicts over land ownership. With the government’s introduction of privatised land ownership in indigenous society in the 1960s, the fear of land scarcity, particularly as it might affect future generations, has created a heightened concern among families to preserve and extend land ownership in order to protect their own future interests.

In Truku society, many disputes over land between different households have arisen

- Land that indigenous peoples had opened and cultivated prior to the enactment of said procedure.
- Land that the government zoning plan designated as pastoral land and breeding land, or the Urban Planning Act has designated as agricultural zone, conservation zone farm, and arid land.'
as a result of the registration of land ownership. Most people did not have sufficient knowledge regarding the concept of privatisation, nor of the new legal system as it pertained to landed property, and most were functionally illiterate and thus even less equipped to deal with the government’s reforms. Indeed, the registration of land ownership is a process, which involves the use of written documents for the appropriation of permanent or temporary rights over land.

Truku people call the land ownership certificate the ‘patas dxgal’. ‘Patas’ is writing, such as found in books, documents, and applications, and ‘dxgal’ means land. During the land registration in the 1960s, it was difficult for most owners, who were also elders, to understand and conduct the complicated procedure of land registration. Apaw is sixty years old and the first Truku land administration agent (daishu). The land administration agent is a person who has expertise related to laws and practices to ensure the safety of real estate transactions and to protect the rights of people’s properties. He explained why he had decided to leave his job in a governmental institution in order to be a land administration agent, saying that,

It was so chaotic during the first period of land registration. Laws, policies, official announcements, and all application forms relating to the procedure of land registration were written in Chinese, but most of the elders were illiterate and could not speak and understand Mandarin. In addition, they did not have any idea about privatisation and land registration. Practically, if elders wanted to deal with any affairs relating to the land registration, they would visit the office of the local government. However, most people lived too far from the office, and they were not used to visiting it in their everyday lives.

Because most elders did not have sufficient knowledge and information about land registration at that time, a number of elders did not recognise that privatisation had been introduced until they found that others had occupied their lands. Awei, a Truku male resident who is over sixty five years old, told me that, ‘at the same time that I was trying to understand why and how we had lost our lands through privatisation, I also had to acquire knowledge about the rules of land registration and policies regarding ‘indigenous peoples’ reservation lands’.

The complexities surrounding land registration procedures were actually something of an advantage to Truku elites, who would often have the benefit of a higher education, a greater knowledge of the legal system, and better Chinese language
abilities. Through literacy, one could have access to bureaucratic jobs or political office, and through these one would have access to wealth. These Truku elites might be civil servants, teachers, local politicians, and other kinds of intellectuals. Access to education and contact with the state apparatus provided these Truku elites with human and economic capital that they then used to gain titles to land. Furthermore, they were also more familiar with the workings of capitalism than others. Greater familiarity with the cash economy would enable them to recognise the potential benefits of owning land. Thus, these Truku elites might desire private land for ideological reasons, but also as a way to make money from growing and selling crops, as well as leasing out and selling land. As a result, in Truku society the introduction of written forms of land registration was an invitation to create economic inequality, based on permanent or quasi-permanent rights in land (also see Goody 1980: 145-6). Many landowners, however, were illiterate, or had insufficient knowledge of the registration system, and so entrusted the affairs of land registration to those relatives or friends who were among the elite groups or were wealthier. However, some ‘elite’ Truku took advantage of the situation and ‘legally’ transferred land titles from their client’s names into their own.

An infamous example of this, in which an ‘elite’ Truku used knowledge of the legal system and privatisation to appropriate another’s land, is the dispute between Saki’s household and the household of a neighbour and relative in Fushih Village. Saki’s father was the head of the community in Skadang community when land registration came into force. Because Skadang, being in the highlands, was so far from the local government office in the lowlands, and because most residents did not know how to register their land ownership, most of them asked Saki’s father to deal with all affairs relating to the registration of their land. However, Saki’s father registered the title of all the lands belonging to the other residents in his own name. He persuaded them that this made the procedure of land registration easier and faster. During Saki’s father’s lifetime, all landowners whose land ownership had been registered in Saki’s father’s name still freely used their lands as usual, as if they were the real landowners. However, once Saki had inherited the lands from his father, he prohibited the ‘land users’ from using ‘his’ lands, claiming that, as he had legal title to the lands, he was
the legal owner.

There are a number of disputes over land ownership which are similar to Saki’s case arising from situations by which elites used their superior knowledge of the complex land registration system to appropriate other people’s land. Given that there are so many households involved in such conflicts these disputes over land ownership should be regarded as public issues in their communities.

Land registration has not only generated many conflicts between different kin groups, but also made relationships become tense within the same kin group or household. When registration began, in many cases parents did not have any idea how it worked, so they asked their children, usually sons, who had more knowledge about it, to deal with these affairs. However, in some cases children did not follow their parents’ wishes regarding the arrangements of land ownership, but instead registered parts of their parents’ property as their own. For example, Adaw said that,

My father, who is the son of my grandfather, expected to inherit most of the lands of his parents. However, during the period of the land registration, my grandparents and parents did not know how to deal with this business, so they asked my uncle, Pedian, to take responsibility for it. Pedian is the one and only son of my grandparents who could read and write Chinese at that time. However, he finally registered most of the land that my grandparents had decided to bequeath to my father in his own name. As a result, my father lost a great deal of land.

In some cases, like the story of Litu and Lubi, individuals did not register their lands, but rather their brothers or close kin secretly substituted them in registering their lands, without consulting them. Many informants frequently told stories similar to Adaw’s case or to that of Litu and Lubi, when I asked them about issues concerning land ownership. They would also point out that disputes of land ownership arising from land registration always created tensions between siblings and tensions within the same household. And these tensions between different siblings’ households would usually be passed down to the next generations.

The process of registration can never simply be the recording of existing rights. Based on an analysis of the relationship between property rights and law in northern Philippines, Wiber suggests that ‘law is a key area in which political incorporation is
attempted in the effort to facilitate economic integration’ (1991: 486). This land registration programme is beneficial for Truku elites rather than those illiterate Truku, and, thus is closely associated with a process of stratification in contemporary society. According to the Japanese ethnographies of Truku society (Mabuchi 1960; Mori 1916), there was not a strict social hierarchy in Truku society. Although each Truku tribe had a head of the tribe, and he should be regarded as a spokesman for the tribe, he did not have the authority to dominate the others (Sayama 1917). Most political and economical determinations relied on a common consensus among most elders in the same community. Nevertheless, when Japanese ethnographers studied Truku society, the Japanese colonial government imposed a police system on Truku people. The government assigned a particular person to be the head of each Truku tribe to assist the policemen and officials in governing the Truku people (Ribanka 1933). Many communities had a ‘traditional’ head of community and a new ‘official’ head of community existing concurrently. At that time, Japanese policemen and the official head of the tribe had more power than others in a political sense (Ribanka 1933). However, the official head of the community was subordinate to Japanese policemen and officials. In Truku society, therefore, there was no strict social and political hierarchy under the Japanese colonial regime, because policemen and officials were dominant.

Under the KMT regime, since the government introduced the privatisation of land ownership and commercial agriculture in Truku society in the 1960s, social and economic stratification perhaps had gradually formed in society. Chen (1986), a Taiwanese anthropologist, investigates how the imposition of privatisation and cash crops influenced the western Sediq people in the 1970s. He (Chen 1986) describes that in Sediq society, a few Sediq elites, who had better education and the ability to get more information than the others, benefited from privatisation and land reform. These elites had more economic capital to purchase expensive agricultural machines and fertilizer to improve the quantity and quality of their agricultural products, while most common people still suffered from the situation that they did not have sufficient money to invest in commercial agriculture. Consequently, a significant poverty gap occurred in Sediq society, and this economic gap was associated with political and
social hierarchy at the same time (Chen 1986: 360-364).

When many anthropologists discuss how the imposition of private property relations and commercial agriculture influence colonial, post-colonial or indigenous societies, they not only focus on how these new economic forms and privatisation reinforce or create social, economic, and political hierarchy, but also gender inequality. For instance, in many studies of the relationship between the transformation of agriculture and gender asymmetry in access to land resources in Africa, many researchers suggest that men applied modern scientific methods in the cultivation of cash crops, while their wives continued to cultivate food crops by traditional methods. To some degree, agricultural training and instruction are responsible for this peculiar polarization of sex roles, with men at the progressive end and women at the traditional end (Boserup 1989; see also Asiimwe 2002; Tripp 2004). From the reflections of these research studies, we can understand that the introduction of privatisation and land reform might reinforce gender hierarchy in which women are subordinated to men. Furthermore, these studies also invite us to consider how external economic and political factors influence gender relations in society.

During the period of Japanese colonialism, all lands in reservation areas were national property, that is, Truku men and women did not have the legal right to own land (Iwaki 1936). The colonial government defined the basic entity of holding property as the individual household, which was based on conjugal relations (Liao 1984). On the basis of a literature survey of Japanese historical documents on the politics of indigenous people’s land in Taiwan, Liao (1984), a Taiwanese sociologist describes how a couple and their householders were allowed by the government to preserve the land which was cultivated by them and enjoy the harvest gained from their cultivated land in reservation areas (1984: 36). He adds that if some parts of a household’s land were not continually cultivated, the government had rights to retrieve these lands and redistribute it to others (Liao 1984: 36).

After the introduction of the privatisation of land ownership under the KMT regime in the 1960s, the relationship between gender relations and land has been changed.
During the period between the 1960s and the 1980s, the economic circumstance and legal conditions of Truku women were disadvantageous. Regarding the legal system, under the KMT regime, most laws relating to women, based as they were on Taiwanese and Chinese customs, were dominated by patriarchy (Chen 2006). Lee (1999) illustrates that in Family Law in Taiwan the succession division regulates inheritance between relatives, basically according to their position and rank in the family tree. She asserts that in general, Family Law is based on the ideology of a male-lineage oriented clan model and based on a patriarchal family system (Lee 1999: 413). Furthermore, according to this law, women in Taiwan were legally subordinated to men in terms of access to and inheritance of property. In the registration of private landed property, husbands were usually regarded by the government as the head of their household, and this entitled them to all their household’s landed property in their name. Owing to Family Law, husbands had the right to manage, use, and deal with their wives’ property but not vice versa. In cases of divorce, husbands were able to transfer the ownership of property acquired during a marriage to a third party, leaving wives with less than her rightful share of the assets after divorce (Wang 1997).

In terms of economics over the 1960s, ‘70s and ‘80s, gender asymmetry in respect of land tenure was reproduced and reinforced by privatisation early on in the process of land registration. During this process, women were largely denied the opportunity to deal with affairs relating to land ownership. Before the 1990s, Truku men were more likely to control the financial arrangements of their household than women. The government’s patriarchal ideology not only existed in the legal system, but also in policies on economic development in indigenous societies. During this period, men rather than women conducted commercial agriculture, due to their knowledge and experience in both Truku society and mainstream society. From the 1970s, there were increasing numbers of male Truku migrant labourers working in urban areas in Taiwan. Although women, children, and elders remained to farm their lands, the majority of households relied on the stable income from male migrant labourers. As such, men paid all fees in the land registration process, and inheritance and land tax. Hence, most men had priority over women in terms of rights to land.
However, after the 1980s, the relationship between gender and land has changed because the external economic, political, and social contexts changed in Taiwan. In terms of the legal system, owing to efforts of the feminist movement in Taiwan, Taiwanese Family Law went through large-scale amendments in 1985, 1996, 1997, and 2002 (Kuo 2007: 384-5). The feminist movement in Taiwan, as it emerged in the early 1970s, generated impressive social change. Over the last three decades, feminists have been remarkably productive despite operating with limited social and economic resources and within a highly restrictive cultural and political environment (Wang 1997). One of the most important goals for feminist movements in Taiwan was to improve women’s legal status. Because so many feminists worked to modify the Family Law of the Civil Code, women gained a more equal footing in terms of legal rights over property and land. For instance, since 1985, wives are legally allowed to keep their own property registered in their name. And since 2002, women have rights to claim matrimonial property (Kuo 2007: 385). According to the matrimonial property regime, there are two kinds of conjugal property: conjugal communal property, and united property. With conjugal communal property, if a couple divorce, each party can receive a half of the property that was accumulated after their marriage. With united property, a woman can gain any land, the title of which is registered under her name, if she divorces (Laws and Regulations Database of the Republic of China 2009b). As a result, the revision of these laws influenced not only women but also men in terms of the management of their property within and outside the household in Taiwan.

Moreover, with the government’s introduction of foreign labourers from a number of Southeast Asian countries in the 1990s, increasing numbers of male Truku migrant labourers lost their jobs and were forced to return to their hometowns. As a result of this, many Truku men have suffered from unemployment. However, many Truku women continue to farm or run small businesses in order for their households to subsist. In this situation, where the economic environment of Truku society in the last two decades has transformed, this has led to a change in the relationship between gender and land. On the basis of my fieldwork, I discuss the change in the
relationship between gender and land in Chapters 3, 5, 6, and 7.

**Indigenous movements and land reclamation movements in Truku society**

With the rapid growth of the Taiwanese economy, political and social conditions have changed dramatically since the 1980s. In terms of the political situation, the KMT ended both martial law and the militarist regime in 1987. Since then, the Taiwanese political system has become gradually democratised, and democratisation has continued in all sectors of the society. The indigenous movements in Taiwan, with the progress in the political democratisation of Taiwan, have also endured 10 years of hardship and street demonstrations since the early 1980s (CIP 2008: 6). Indeed, land reclamation movements should be regarded as the core of a series of indigenous movements since the 1980s, because the issues of land are always associated with subsistence rights and economic development. Indigenous people have put forward the perspectives relating to a number of policies and ideas through the land reclamation movements of 1988, 1989 and 1993 as a means to finding possible solutions to the problems that have arisen from the logical and legal conflict between ideas of reservation and development in both policy-making and implementation, and to ameliorate those difficulties which have arisen (CIP 2008).

In respect of land reclamation movements organised by Taiwanese indigenous people from 1990s up to the present, I suggest that we can classify them into two types in terms of scale and purposes. The larger scale indigenous movements in Taiwan usually aimed to ask the mainstream society to be aware of indigenous peoples’ difficulties in economic, cultural, and political dimensions, and push the government to change the laws, which made them lose their land or face with assimilation. The smaller scale indigenous movements in local Taiwanese indigenous communities usually focused on claiming indigenous people’s land rights against a certain private or official institute. For the local indigenous people, these institutes were occupying their lands.
Returning to Truku society, there are many smaller indigenous movements (land reclamation movements) in Truku communities since the 1990s. During the KMT regime, in 1973 the government permitted the Asia Cement Company, a private enterprise, to set up factories and mining areas; in 1986 the Taroko National Park was established, and they then cooperated with the Taiwan Cement Corporation to establish Ho-Ping industrial park in 1994, all of these were in Truku territory. Consequently, Truku people have been subject to an endless nightmare in which they seem continually to lose their lands through a variety of projects and economic development.

Fushih Village, my fieldsite, is a Truku village in which most of the villagers have suffered continually from the depredations caused by loss of land. Fushih Village is at the foothills of the Taroko National Park. For most residents, their traditional territory or hunting lands are now the national park. In addition, according to the law, people are legally prohibited from working and living in the national park, thus the national park is a serious threat to their subsistence and living space. Furthermore, the Asia Cement Company has significant mining operations in Fushih Village. Since the Asia Cement Company was established in 1973, most residents have suffered not only from the environmental pollution created by the company, but also from losing their land to the company. Moreover, there are also many conflicts over land between residents and the government in the village. For instance, Litu (who described her situation at the beginning of this chapter) claims that some of her lands are occupied by the Taiwan Power Company.

Since the 1990s, many Truku people have organised land reclamation movements. There were two land reclamation movements in particular that were the largest and most radical amongst others in Truku society in Fushih Village. One is an indigenous movement against the Taroko National Park, and the other is a land reclamation movement against the Asia Cement Company. In this thesis, I divide these land reclamation movements into two different kinds, depending on the particular concept of land ownership involved. The indigenous movement against the Taroko National Park emphasises Truku concepts of the relationship between people and land who
lived in the highlands, a hunting culture, and the relationship between ancestors and 
territory in order to ask the government to return their ancestors’ land currently 
occupied by the government. The land reclamation movement against the Asia 
Cement Company is working to claim legal rights over land in order to secure the 
return of a plot of Truku land currently occupied by private companies, or non- 
indigenous people.

**Indigenous movement against the Taroko National Park**

In 1993, around two thousand Truku residents in five villages surrounding the 
national park, held several radical marches against the Taroko National Park, in order 
to make mainstream society and the government aware of how the national park 
constricts their rights to life, and destroys their traditional hunting culture (Yang 
1996: 72-89). Since the Taroko National Park was set up in 1986, residents have 
gradually become aware of the prohibitions against farming and hunting on their 
lands in the park. The national park took many residents to court for hunting or 
farming on its lands, prompting an angry and determined response in return. The 
main goal of these movements was to ask the government to return ancestral territory 
now belonging to the national park.

Whilst these social movements, organised by Fushih villagers, have declined, many 
new indigenous movements have sprung up against the Taroko National Park, with 
many villagers devoting themselves to these movements. In particular, these 
indigenous movements against the Taroko National Park are associated with the 
indigenous movement for the establishment of Truku self-government. This 
indigenous movement could be regarded as a consequence of the Truku Name 
Rectification Movement and many land reclamation movements. In 1996, a number 
of individuals set up the Truku Name Rectification Movement, in order to secure 
recognition of Truku ethnic identity as distinct from the Atayal group (see Chapter 1). 
Indeed, more than 20,000 people endorsed this movement, and the Truku group have 
been recognised by the state as an official indigenous group independent from the 
Atayal as recently as 14 January, 2004. Having succeeded with the name rectification
movement, Truku people have subsequently begun work on an indigenous movement which aims to establish Truku self-government. For most participants in the indigenous movement for the establishment of self-government, destroying the Taroko National Park or compelling it to return their ancestral lands, is the most important task the movement faces. Truku people have used many different methods to fight against the national park, in order to claim their rights over land in its area.

In the indigenous movement for the establishment of Truku self-government, by emphasising the image of the ‘ancestor’, and ‘ancestral lands’, Truku participants are attempting to empower themselves and attribute authority to their claims to land rights. As such, the land occupied by the Taroko National Park is not ‘national’ property, but belongs to the Truku ancestors and, by extension, to their descendants. Truku activists in the land reclamation movements have also used Truku ‘traditions’, and the authority and legitimacy that they convey, against the concepts and ‘norms’ of the modern legal system as deployed by their opponents. Although Truku ‘traditional’ practices and normative values have coexisted with modern laws and systems, the indigenous movements have tended to pay more attention to the former than the latter.

Huang, a Taiwanese anthropologist, suggests that many researchers are consciously or unconsciously disposed to ignore indigenous people’s subjectivity in their studies of Taiwan’s indigenous movements because they do not take indigenous people’s everyday lives into account (Huang 1991). Furthermore I argue that not only are the ‘common people’ and ‘local indigenous people’ ignored by the studies of Taiwanese indigenous movements, but also that indigenous women are absent in these studies. In particular, the role of indigenous women seems to be completely ignored in the narratives constructed in these indigenous movements and land reclamation movements. Within socio-political indigenous movements, indigenous participants have preferred to construct images of indigenous people as hunters and warriors, fighting against their enemies (mainstream society and the government) and bravely protecting their lands from occupation. For example, Walis Norkan, a famous Atayal novelist, describes the engagement of indigenous people in indigenous movements as

When Truku people held a march against the Taroko National Park in 1993, many protestors claimed ‘no forest, no hunters’. The hunter is culturally a symbol of masculinity. Indigenous women, however, do not have the indigenous knife and nor are they hunters. I argue that according to ‘traditional’ conceptions of hunting culture and the relationship between people and land adopted by the participants in land reclamation movements in contemporary Truku society, the image of the ancestor is probably male rather than female.

**Land reclamation movement against the Asia Cement Company**

Another important land reclamation movement is engaged against the Asia Cement Company, which is accused by many landowners in Fushih Village of seizing their lands. These landowners organised the ‘Return our Land Self-help Association’ in 1996. During the period of my fieldwork, the leader of the ‘Return our Land Self-Help Association’, Igon who is a Truku woman, of over sixty-five years old, showed me her collection of documents and news articles about the conflicts of land between this association and the Asia Cement Company. In order to invite me to describe a history of this land reclamation movement, she and her Japanese husband enthusiastically shared their ideas and information of this land reclamation movement with me. In particular, they also introduced me to many landowners who were faced with the same problem as theirs.

On the basis of Igon’s documents, the story of this land reclamation movement is that beginning in 1972, the Asia Cement Company entered into nine-year lease agreements negotiated by the local administration office for 272 plots of indigenous land. Additionally, in the subsequent few years the land rights to all but 61 parcels of land were cancelled and handed over to the company under circumstances that activists and legal representatives say are illegal and should render the company's claims to land use rights invalid. The original landowners received monetary compensation for the displaced crops and the promise that the land would be
returned to them after twenty years. However, in 1993, Asia Cement Company’s leases were set to expire. When some of the original owners tried to reclaim their land, they found that their property rights had mysteriously disappeared. The company claimed that the owners had relinquished their rights to the property in perpetuity, and that the company had the legal documents to prove it.

At the centre of the land reclamation movement against the mine are strong suspicions that the cancellations of land rights were obtained through forgery. According to Igon’s account of her fight against the mining company, copies of relevant documents show remarkably similar handwriting for signatures which are meant to be by different people, signing over the rights to their land. Some lack dates and all lack thumbprints, which are required in the case of a representative signing in lieu of someone who cannot write Chinese. Furthermore, an investigation in 1996 of the land right cancellations showed that none of the people interviewed could recall signing the waivers. In addition, Igon pointed out that although the company had promised one job to each of the more than one hundred households ceding land, only thirty people were employed in manual occupations as labourers, drivers, and machine operators.

The ‘Return our Land Self-help Association’ did not achieve any victories until they won cultivation rights in court in August 2000 (Simon 2005: 61). A decision was passed down by the Hualien District Court, which called for the Asia Cement Company to allow onto their land the holders of the cultivation rights of the 61 parcels for which the cultivation rights had not been waived. However, this did not mean that their struggles were over. Rather, it was just one step in a series of court actions and negotiations, with the next stage involving the cement company. The company has so far refused to do so and authorities have thus far failed to comply with the court's decision. The Asia Cement Company insists that the land rights were obtained legally and the Indigenous peoples’ claims to the land are moot.

Because this land reclamation movement is a long-term social movement, many Truku landowners seem to lose their patience in participating in it. Igon was also
particularly sad that so many of her parents’ descendants had turned away from the ways of their elders. After their parents had died, many of them chose to abandon the land reclamation movements. Igon often shared her memory and stories of things that had happened in the Asia Cement Company area in the past. I felt that for her, her childhood was a source of wonderful memories. She said,

When I was young, I often worked with my parents and grandmother in our field (in the mining area). We grew peanuts, sweet potato and corn there. I will never forget carrying back the basket full of crops, waiting for my grandmother, and then returning home with her. In those days, it was easy for a household to make its living by cultivation; the countryside was so clean and fresh, and there were no thieves in the village.

The past, as she say, is another country. Comparing to the wonderful ‘past’, she found that, due to the predations of the Asia Cement Company, everything had taken a dramatic turn for the worse, and that her beautiful hometown had changed beyond recognition. She said,

When I returned to my hometown, I was shocked by the levels of unemployment and poverty, by the polluted air and the dirty water. Worst of all, we had lost our land, lost our future!

Actually, Igon did not witness the process of the transformation of the Truku people’s social and economic life from the 1970s to 1990s. She left Truku society to learn hair dressing in Japan in the 1970s. Afterwards, she lived in Japan with her Japanese husband during the 1980s and 1990s. She and her husband decided to live in her hometown after they retired from their work in 1993. Her surprise at the extent of the changes which had occurred in her absence shows how profoundly privatisation and capitalism had affected social and economic conditions in Truku society.

**Conclusion**

The land reforms conceived and initiated by colonial governments, and brought about in Taiwanese society, have always been associated with the ideologies of colonialism and the intention of colonial governments to exploit the natural resources and lands of indigenous peoples. Since the advent of these land reforms in the 1960s, Taiwanese indigenous peoples have gradually been absorbed into Taiwan’s economy, and beyond that, into the world system. As a result of land reform, Taiwanese
indigenous peoples have come into contact with capitalism and modernisation.

The privatisation of land ownership has enabled Taiwanese indigenous peoples to have legal rights over their land, but it has also caused them to suffer loss of land and territory. Consequently, land reform is one of the main reasons why people fear poverty and the threatened subsistence of Taiwanese indigenous. In this situation, the Taiwanese indigenous people have set up many indigenous movements in order to fight for their rights over land and resist land reform.

Truku people have also continued to suffer from their loss of land, arising from land reform and the privatisation of land ownership. Since privatisation of land ownership was introduced through the policy of registration of land in the 1960s, the new system of land tenure has permeated Truku society. In this situation, Truku elites and well educated younger Truku have benefited under the new system of land tenure, particularly when land registration first began. However, this situation has also caused many disputes over land between different households or between different householders in the same family.

In respect of Truku society, when land reform and the registration of land ownership were carried out, women were effectively excluded. Furthermore, women are also absent from the narratives of the indigenous movements and land reclamation movements. In the next chapter, I discuss the relationship between women and land, and argue that, since the 1990s, it seems to have become closer than the relationship between men and land in Truku society.
Plate 1. A Truku couple in the field

Plate 2. Truku woman crops maize

Plate 3. Truku people’s farm versus Asia Cement Company’s buildings

Plate 4. A grocery in Fushih Village
Plate 5. Truku woman harvests

Plate 6. Truku men and women take a rest and drink together after farming

Plate 7. Truku land reclamation movement and showing masculine culture
Chapter Three. Gender Relations, the Household and Cultivation

In Chapter 2, I described the processes by which land ownership was registered in Truku society and how the imposition of privatisation has impacted on social relations by creating conflicts over ownership and use of land between Truku people and the government, and between different households. In this chapter, I discuss concepts of property in Truku society prior to Japanese colonial government. I also argue that the household is the basic social and economic unit and the foundation on which property relations are based in Truku society. Thirdly, I focus on gender relations in household economics and reflect on narratives relating to gender and land ownership in contemporary Truku society, including those discourses relating to ‘traditional’ society in which women were denied the right to own property. Finally, I discuss the feminisation of agriculture in Truku society over the last two decades, including the gradual transformation of the relationship between gender and economic life which has occurred continuously since the 1960s.

I argue that a gender hierarchy has been created and reinforced over time, based on a multiplicity of factors which have included gender relationships as conceived in particular views of Christian church in Truku society, patriarchal ideologies stemming from Japanese, Taiwanese and Chinese culture, governmental policies and the impact of capitalist economics, all of which have contributed to the formation of a gender hierarchy in contemporary Truku society. Furthermore, this hierarchy has been reinforced and articulated through narratives based on ‘traditional’ concepts of property relations and masculine culture in ‘traditional’ Truku society, notably in terms of hunting and headhunting culture, and has become prominent in land reclamation movements and other social and political movements in contemporary Truku society. These discourses based on ‘traditional’ values and practices have permeated the variety of land disputes which arise in everyday Truku society. Despite this, I argue that this gender asymmetry is an invented tradition. If we examine the role which women have played in cultivation and in general economic life, including the economic transformations which have occurred from the 1960s onwards, we will find that there is no concrete, enduring idea of gender hierarchy in Truku society.
Boundary and territory: the categorisation of relationships between people and land

Regarding the relationship between people and land, there was a debate in the late 19th century as to whether or not people had concepts of private property in pre-capitalist societies. In the anthropological field, on the basis of evolutionism, Morgan claimed that in hunter gatherer societies, ‘land, as yet hardly a subject of property, was owned by the tribes in common’ (1907: 537), and he implied that private property occurs only in agricultural society. In contrast, Forde argued that private property is to be found in very simple hunter-gatherer groups (1946: 15).

In reflecting on those studies of land ownership which have sought to apply a schema characterised by a continuum from communal to individual property, Gluckman writes that ‘it is too simple to talk of them as marked by either communism or individualism’ (1965: 41). Similarly, Malinowski remarks that studies of native concepts of ‘land property’, outside of western societies, should move beyond ‘the legal point of view’ and transcend the ‘false antithesis of individual versus community dichotomy’ (1935: 318-9). He also argues that ‘such systems cannot be understood except in the wider context of cultural beliefs and practices that give them meaning’ (Malinowski 1935: 320). Regarding studies on native ideas of land tenure, many anthropologists (e.g. Myers 1989; Scott 1988) also advise that there are distinctively non-western ways of relating to land which underpin rights over land and its usage.

The Truku anthropologist Mowna, who died in 2001, conducted his own research into pre-colonial Truku society, culture and migration, during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. His research was influenced by Japanese ethnographies on Truku society and culture and it reflects some of the theoretical foci of Japanese anthropological studies, including Truku concepts of property (whether Truku people conceptualised the relationship between people and things in terms of ‘property relations’) and the relationship between people and land in pre-colonial Truku society.

I suggest that understanding the concepts of property in the pre-colonial society described by Mowna is very important for investigating what Truku people, especially Truku elites who are well-educated Truku residents or activists in various land reclamation movements, think now about their ‘traditional’ notions of property
relations. During the period of my fieldwork, I was frequently advised by many informants to read Mowna’s books first, when I asked them about their ideas of property relations. Moreover, many Truku activists in land reclamation movements prefer to use Mowna’s research to support their arguments of ‘traditional’ concepts of territory in Truku society.

During the Japanese colonial period, most Japanese researchers (e.g. Fujisaki 1936; Mori 1917; Segaw 1956) tended to apply the dichotomous schema between communal property and private property to investigate various models of property system in Taiwanese indigenous societies. Following these Japanese researches, Mowna (1998) also tried to apply the same dichotomy, in order to analyse concepts of property and land tenure in per-colonial Truku society. According to his study of property relations during that period, communal property included communal forests, natural springs, arable lands, streams, wasteland, paths and roads. Various kinds of private property included immovable property, such as land (cultivated land, fallow land, and dwellings), forest, and buildings (house, barn, hut, pigpen, coop, etc.); and movable property, such as hunting and farming implements, cooking utensils, furniture, livestock, staples, and vegetables, etc.

| Communal property | Dxgal alang (Community landed property) | Forests  
|                  |                                       | Streams  
|                  |                                       | Springs  
|                  |                                       | Arable lands  
|                  |                                       | Wasteland  
|                  |                                       | Paths and roads  
| Dupan alang (Hunting area) | |  |

Table 4. Categories of property held by the alang (community) in pre-colonial Truku society (Mowna 1998: 22)

Although Mowna focuses on Truku concepts of property relations in pre-colonial society, I suggest that his studies partially coincide with native concepts of property in contemporary society. Firstly, Truku people tend to classify their own property into two categories: moveable property and immovable property. When I discussed concepts of ‘property’ with Truku informants who were more than seventy years old and could not speak Mandarin, they often asked me to specify exactly what kind of ‘thing’ or ‘land’ I want to talk about. Usually, they would ask me whether or not I
I want to know about ‘dxgal’ or ‘qnggaya’. ‘Qnggaya’ means moveable property, including money (bira), farming and weaving instruments, and vehicles (cars or motorcycles); and dxgal is land, an immovable item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Truku language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land</td>
<td>Cultivated land</td>
<td>Qmpahan dxgal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fallow lands</td>
<td>Qmpahan Smuda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dwellings</td>
<td>Niqang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lonao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buildings</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>Sapah</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barn</td>
<td>Lapon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hut</td>
<td>Pie</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pigpen</td>
<td>Libo papoe</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coop</td>
<td>Libo lotof</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Categories of property held by households in pre-colonial Truku society (Mowna 1998:184)

In recalling what they had learned from their parents about the principles of property relations which informed life in the highlands, many Truku elders maintained that each community (alang) had its own territory and hunting areas. In terms of access to communal property, they stated that people in the same community would collectively own that community’s hunting territory. However, they did not say that people in the same community collectively owned landed property; rather, they preferred to talk about their household’s landed property within the highlands community.

I have noted how following the imposition of the privatisation of land ownership on Truku society in the 1960s, there have been various conflicts over land between the state and the local people, and between Truku individuals in society. During the period of my fieldwork, I usually learned ideas of ‘ayus’ from the Truku villagers, when they talked about disputes over land. According to their study of property relations in hunter-gatherer societies, Woodburn and Barnard suggest that property rights involve a measure of socially recognised control over the ‘thing’ concerned, necessitating some restrictions on other people’s control over the said thing (1988: 13). Godelier (1986) also indicates that in pre-capitalist societies, people have their forms of property relations which are similar to the Western concept of private property. A number of informants liked to compare the concept of ‘ayus’ with that of
privatisation. They suggested that obedience to the rules of ‘ayus’ would probably end many of the disputes between households over land ownership, which arose from privatisation.

‘Ayus’ translates as ‘boundary’. Truku villagers taught me that each household has its own ayus of its landed properties and that every community has its own ‘ayus’ of its territory. Usually, Truku people use stepping stones or plant trees in order to delineate the boundary of their landed properties. The ayus of landed property had become significant evidence for every household in their claims to private ownership during the period of registration in the 1960s.

According to Mowna’s studies of ‘ayus’ (Mowna 1998), in pre-colonial society each household had ‘rights’ over the land within its recognised ayus, including the use of any natural resources and agricultural products (Mowna 1998: 26). If one of the residents of the community appropriated the natural resources or harvest of another’s land without the landholder’s permission, he or she would be seen by the landholder and the other residents as a thief. If this thief was a Truku person from another community, he or she might be subject to physically violent punishment, perhaps a thrashing conducted by the landholders and their neighbours.

According to Mowan’s description of property relations (Mowan 1998: 183-190; see also Mori 1917: 163-4), during the pre-colonial period, members of the community were allowed to share in the use of community lands and this was accompanied by a duty to protect the communal areas and followed the customs (gaya) pertaining to their use. The principle of pre-emption should be regarded as the key for the Truku people to gain landed property in the pre-colonial society. Basically, Truku people recognized that all such lands belonged to the community, although each household individually had its own land. Moreover, if a landowner could not bequeath his or her land to descendants, or to other relatives, then the land would be returned to the community holdings, once again to become community wasteland. A household that wished to plant crops or to reclaim wastelands had first to establish exclusive ‘rights’ over the land. When the members of a household had decided to farm a particular piece of wasteland, they would first stake their claim by making a statement to all the residents in the community that the land belonged to them, and they would do this by planting trees or setting up stone banks. After this ‘announcement’, everyone was expected to respect the household’s appropriation of the new land. As a result, the household would earn the title of the new land, since it had already cultivated it for a
period of time. Furthermore, in the pre-colonial society, Truku people could acquire new land through bartering cultivated land for game, labour power, or domestic animals with other residents in the same community (Mowna 1998: 191).

The restrictions of ayus’ however, meant that there was potential for quarrels to erupt between different households within the same community. It is arguable that, during the pre-colonial period, the extremely strict rules which constituted ayus were responsible for causing as many quarrels between different households as those arising from privatisation in contemporary society. For instance, traps are usually set to capture wild game but the term guyuq is used amongst Truku to mean a trap set in the fields to catch and punish thieves. Reflecting on the connotations of guyuq we can understand how Truku people might not always follow the principle of ayus in pre-colonial times. Additionally, I heard many stories from informants concerning ayus rules on land boundary marking, in which people sought to enlarge their own land holdings by stealthily moving the boundary stones between their own property and their neighbours, when they lived in the highlands.

In terms of territorial boundaries, every member of the community had an obligation to defend the community territory against invasion. Prior to the Japanese colonial government, headhunting occurred more frequently in conflicts over territory than for any other reason (Sayama 1917). Although it is difficult to discern the degree of accuracy which may be ascribed to Japanese studies of headhunting culture in pre-colonial Truku society, it is my experience that some Truku people still strictly follow their community’s rules on ayus in contemporary society. Many of those hunters over the age of sixty still tend to hunt wild game in the same highland areas which were the communal hunting preserves of their fathers and grandfathers. On one occasion, I met an older hunter who had stopped tracking a wild goat which he had shot after it had crossed over into the hunting territory of another highland community.

Younger Truku hunters born in the reservation areas also hold to concepts of ayus in relation to hunting areas. They prefer to hunt in the hunting areas belonging to their fathers’ communities. The principal reasoning behind this is articulated in terms of knowledge of the land and the ecology of the areas concerned, knowledge which they would not possess in relation to territories in which their fathers and grandfathers had not traditionally hunted. Some of the younger hunters do not follow the principle of ayus in terms of hunting areas and will hunt wild game anywhere in
the highlands. One young hunter said to me, ‘Our ancestral lands have been occupied by the Taroko National Park, so all the hunting areas belong to the national park and not to our ancestors. There is no ayus anymore’. He added, ‘I can hunt freely in the highlands, if I can avoid being arrested by the forest policemen.’

**Household and community**

Although as noted, Mowna divides sorts of properties into two categories, communal property and private property, this does not mean that an individual person had rights over land. According to Mowna’s research, the basic unit of landholding was the household rather than a person (Mowna 1998: 183). Prior to Japanese colonization, each community was composed of many households (e.g. Mori 1917: 2; Sayama 1917: 3-10). Every household in the same community collectively shared the same hunting area (Mowna 1998: 22). According to Mowna’s history of the migration of Truku people, Truku people in the highlands lived in scattered settlements, and the scale of each community or alang in the highlands was small, on average consisting of less than twenty households (Mowna 1998: 1).

In Truku society, the household consists of a married couple and their unmarried offspring and perhaps the husband’s parents. The Truku term for the physical house is ‘sapah’. Linguistically, sapah refers to the house as a building, but it is also a metaphor for the household. Truku people also use the term ‘ruwan sapah’ to represent the household, meaning ‘people living in the same house’. Therefore, the ruwan sapah is defined by co-residence rather than blood ties. Interestingly, sapah and rqdat are synonyms, and rqdat means hearth. Truku people also define the household as ‘kingal rqdat’, i.e. (sharing) a hearth.

The house was the centre of the household in daily life in the highlands (Sayam 1917), even though it was often small in size. There are many bamboo houses in the highlands and though most of them are now ruins, a few remain in good condition. These houses were the homes of previous generations of Truku when they lived in the highlands. When I climbed to these remote areas with some of the Truku villagers, I often saw such dwellings. In general, houses in the highlands are made of bamboo (djima), particularly the ceilings, walls, windows, and doors. The chief support pillars are made of wood (qhuni) while the foundations consist of stones (duux). Most houses are small, on average approximately 15 square metres (Chijiwa 1960: 16-7, 56). The interior design of a house is simple and resembles a studio
apartment in western terms. In other words, it is an open living space with no partitions. Many elders recalled that when they lived with their parents in the highlands, the beds also served as a work area for householders in the evening. Male householders would make or maintain their hunting implements or weave rattan baskets and other products for their household whilst Truku women would weave clothing there at night.

According to these older informants’ explanation of the functions of the house, the hearth was, physically and symbolically, the centre of it. During the period of living in the highlands, Truku people used the hearth to cook, boil and keep warm water on, and to smoke wild game. The weather in the highlands is very damp and cold at night and also in daytime during the winter. The heat of the hearth not only kept the house warm, but also dried the bamboo, which was prone to grow mould in the humid environment. Truku people believe that the fire and smoke of the hearth can protect them from attack by wild animals, such as wild pig, bears, and snakes. Thus, the hearth was a place for cooking and its heat essential to their general subsistence. It also protected people’s lives and extended the life of their bamboo house. In order to provide sufficient firewood and building materials, Truku people would plant a large section of bamboo forest around their house.

Harung is a Truku man aged seventy-five years old. His parents did not leave their house in Tausai community in the highland until the Japanese government forced them to move to the reservation area in the lowlands in 1932. He took me to his parents’ house in Tausai community. Because his parents’ house is in a remote mountain area in the Taroko National Park, it keeps in good condition. The remoteness protects it from deliberate destruction by others who might use it. From the description of this house and its surroundings, we can imagine the environment in which Truku people lived in the highlands. According to Harung’s explanation of his parents’ house, the immediate surroundings of the house comprise a courtyard (Inglinay), in which his parents grew vegetables and fruits, and reared domestic animals such as chickens and pigs. In addition, there were a pigpen, a coop, and harvest storage around the house.

In this thesis, I translate the Truku term ruwan sapah as ‘household’. This does not mean that I necessarily agree with the distinction between the family and the household (e.g. Bender 1967), that is, that the former is defined by blood ties and marriage and the latter is based on propinquity. Yanagisako (1979) is critical of this
distinction, believing it unnecessary because the definition of the household and family both fail in the presumption that domestic activities are central to these social fields, and that ‘reproduction is the essential function of the family’ (Yanagisako 1979: 199). Furthermore, through the analysis of characteristics of the household economy in peasant societies in Panama, Gudeman (1986) invites us to look at the relationship between economics and the household. And he indicates that in the household economy, ‘household, based on a division of labour between the sexes, was the central institution of the economic and constituted the primary unit of production and consumption’ (Gudeman 1986: 2). Additionally, from the examination of the relationship between family and economic activities, Creed suggests that it is not necessary to redefine the household or family when we come to the value of the family in various economic activities (2000: 345).

The main reason that I have translated ruwan sapah as ‘household’ for this thesis is because the household is not only a place relating to kinship practices, but also the basic unit of economic activity.\(^1\) In the Truku concept of kinship, one of the basic definitions of the household includes eating together (or sharing the same hearth) over a long period of time. If an outsider such an adopted child shares the same hearth in a household, he or she will become ‘ruwan sapah/ rqdat’, a member of the household. This conventional definition of household is still influential in contemporary Truku society. During the period of my fieldwork, I was usually invited to enjoy meals with my informants. I found that most houses have two eating places: one is in the kitchen and the other is the compound outside the house. The former is usually where all householders eat together, while the latter is a place in which the host shares food with his or her friends and neighbours.

However, the concept of ruwan sapah not only leads Truku to create a boundary between their household and that of others, but also enables them to recruit outsiders to their household. For example, most Truku people do not have a negative attitude towards adoption. In interviewing forty-six villagers over the age of sixty who had fostered children, regarding their arrangements for inheritance, thirty-one informants indicated that they would bequeath property to their foster children. Many insisted that there was no difference between biological children and foster children in terms

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\(^1\) In the last section of this Chapter, I describe the role of the household in agriculture. In Chapter 5, I describe the significance of capitalism for the interaction between different households in the process of marriage. In Chapter 7, I focus on how privatisation influences the interaction between members in the same household and between different households, in terms of dealing with disputes over land or inheritance.
of inheritance.

When a couple get married, they are expected by their parents to live in their own new house, and thus have their own hearth (or kitchen) and cook by themselves. Truku people call this process, in which a son sets up his new hearth/house and separates from his parents, as ‘emburux’, which means ‘separation’. The process of bequeathing the parents’ properties to their children is also emburux. When Truku people lived in the highlands, if the parents were unable to give sufficient land to the new couple, they would encourage their sons to cultivate community wasteland, or to leave the community and claim (kmealu) new land to set up their household.

The household is the basic unit of production and consumption. Each married couple is politically independent and relatively self-sufficient, economically. A married couple will take full control of the subsistence of their household. Before many Truku villagers became migrant labourers in the 1970s, a couple would usually bring their unmarried children with them to farm in their fields. Although a married couple and their unmarried children would co-operate with their kin groups in agricultural production, prior to the introduction of commercial agriculture to Truku society in the 1960s they would retain most of their harvest for themselves. At that time, a household would freely consume its own agricultural produce, decide when and how to cook its domestic livestock and store any surplus from its own harvest. With the introduction of cash cropping in Truku society in the 1960s, the household would exchange harvest for money through the Farmers’ Associations. A small amount of agricultural produce would be retained for the household and might be shared or exchanged with other households.

In respect of the relationship between different households in agricultural production, many Truku residents who are more than forty years old recalled that when most residents were farmers before the 1980s, during the height of the farming season, most members in a community would help each other. Truku people call this cooperation of production ‘smbarux’. In Truku terms, smbarux means to get out of debt. In receiving gifts or favours, the recipient becomes indebted to the giver. Therefore, the relationship between the giver and the recipient would not merely cease once the recipient had made good his or her debt as, in the process of vitiating a debt, the individual who initially gave became, in turn, a recipient, and so on. In this way, in the cycle of giving and receiving, the roles of ‘creditor’ and ‘debtor’ are continually switched. Under smbarux Truku would organize cooperative labour not
only in agricultural production, but also in the building of new houses (or huts) and in dealing with other complicated social and economic tasks.

In the memory of many Truku villagers who are over forty years old, the *smbarux* system was very important for them in cultivation between the 1960s and 1980s. During this period, they told me, the *smbarux* system helped Truku villagers to organise their work team for cultivation. Many Truku villagers say that the household’s kin group (including the kin groups of the husband and the wife) is the basic unit in the system. From the 1960s to the 1980s, they said, kin groups still played an important role but church members also became involved. Because Truku villagers abandoned commercial agriculture but returned to subsistence agriculture, they do not need a large labour force to cultivate. Hence, it was rare to meet people who farmed with the assistance of their *smbarux* system during the period of my fieldwork. However, *smbarux* has still applied to the distribution and sharing of food. In this respect, the concepts of the *smbarux* system are strongly associated with practices of kinship, marriage, and ancestral worship (see Chapters 4 and 5).

When we discuss what kind of social groups are involved in production, we must not forget the significance of hunting culture in shaping social relations between households in Truku society. There were many ways of hunting (*musa mksa*) when people lived in the highlands. At that time, although a single man was allowed to hunt alone (*qmlubung*), Truku hunters preferred to hunt in groups (*maduk*). All the adult males in each household were expected to join such group activity. In group hunting, a temporary hunting party made up of adult Truku men would first be organised, and then there would be discussion as to when, where, and how the hunting would proceed.

In the pre-colonial society, because the hunting area belonged to the whole community, and hunting was a collective effort, Truku people had rules requiring that the meat of wild game be shared without expectation of return, not as a gift for which eventual reciprocation was expected. Generally, according to many Truku elder’s memory of living in the highlands, small game was not shared widely, but was equally distributed to each participant of the hunt and hunters then shared their harvest of wild game with their householders. Large wild game was shared equally with all households in the same community, even though some of them did not engage in the hunt (Mori 1917: 54).
During the period of my fieldwork, hunting in groups has rarely happened in Truku society. Because hunting is illegal, Truku hunters are forced to work on an individual basis in order to avoid detection and prosecution. The prohibition of hunting has significantly reduced the number of hunters in Truku society. Sometimes, Truku will organise a small team of around three hunters in order to hunt or to set traps in highland areas. Yet for most hunters in contemporary Truku society, hunting is the principal means by which they maintain their households. The wild game which they catch is therefore sold rather than shared with kin groups or even householders as it was in the past. In order to avoid the forest policemen, Truku hunters prefer to hunt at midnight, secretly and out of sight of kinsmen and neighbours. Often, early in the morning, wives would offer to sell me wild game which had been caught during the night by their husbands. However, even though hunters no longer routinely share wild game with their kin groups or households, this does not mean that Truku people in general do not share wild game meat with each other. Truku villagers often liked to share wild game meat which they had bought by holding a small feast in their compound, to be shared with householders, close kin, neighbours and friends. For many Truku people, the sharing or redistribution of wild game meat still plays an important role in the communication between different households in contemporary society.

The indistinct rainbow: gender difference and gender asymmetry

Truku society, like many Austronesian societies in Southeast Asia, has a prestige system in relation to gender difference. In many studies of gender relations in Southeast Asian societies the relationship between prestige systems and gender is an important issue (e.g. Atkinson 1990; Hoskins 1989; Karim 1995). Through an examination of a variety of prestige systems in different cultures, Ortner and Whitehead (1981) argue that kinship enhances the prestige of men rather than women. However, Karim (1995) argues that the approach provided by Ortner and Whitehead towards the relationship between gender asymmetry and prestige systems does not fit in many societies in Southeast Asia. She also suggests that in Southeast Asia, ‘the flexibility of interpretation over prestige gives women and men sufficient leverage to operate power to the advantage of the “self”’ (1995: 14).

In Truku society, there is a gender difference in relation to different kinds of work. This gender difference in relation to different tasks is regarded by Truku villagers as
one of the fundamental characteristics of Truku society. Men are expected to be responsible for hunting while women are expected to weave cloth and make clothes. The concept of the gender difference in relation to work is associated with face-tattooing culture and belief in *Hakaw utux*, the rainbow spirit bridge which connects the human world to the sacred place where Truku ancestors live. The content of this myth as described by Hu (a Truku folk music artist) is that:

> On dying, a person becomes spirit. The spirit (*utux*) is invited to cross the bridge to the heavens. However, there is a judge who will ask the spirit to wash its hands in a water filled tub in front of that part of the bridge which is still in this world. If in so doing the water becomes red, the spirit is permitted to cross the bridge to the sacred heavens. The capacity to turn the water red comes only to those who have worked hard and conscientiously obeyed customs in their lifetime. In this respect, women should be skilful at weaving; men are supposed to be good hunters. If, however, the water in the tub is still clear, the spirit will be pulled into the stream beneath the bridge, and the crabs in the stream will eat it (Hu 2006: 13-4, my translation).

Examining this myth, we can see that Truku concepts of work in relation to personhood are similar to ideas about gender difference in Southeast Asia (e.g. Atkinson 1990; Carsten 1997; Errington 1990). Furthermore, gender difference in respect of work is associated with the prestige system in Truku society. Prior to the Japanese colonial period, Truku people, like the Iban people in Borneo (Hoskins 1996), believed that a man or a woman was not allowed to marry until he or she had acquired sufficient skills in hunting (and headhunting) or weaving respectively. In pre-colonial Truku society, this prestige system in relation to gender difference was associated with face-tattooing culture (Mori 1917; Sayam 1917). Young men who were sufficiently successful in capturing wild game, or in head hunting, would be regarded as good hunters and warriors, and were thus permitted to have a facial tattoo. If a woman was regarded as a good weaver with sufficient skill to produce a variety of clothes, she also was allowed to have facial tattoos. In pre-colonial society, it was those Truku who had facial tattoos who were regarded as ideal marriage partners, because the tattoos were a sign of accomplishments essential to the survival

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2 There is a Truku folk song concerning the concepts of *Hakaw utux*:
(I) *Hakaw utux! Hakaw utux! Sawbi ima ka! Muda hiya.* (Who can pass the spirit rainbow bridge?).
(II)*Niqan ka psaaw, mniq pusu hakaw! Muda rmbug qsiya do, ms dara kab aga!* (In front of the bridge, there is a judger who will ask people to wash their hand.)
(III) *Yaju snaw! Rmun snaw ni! Mnangal tunux Waw*
(I am a real man. I have pass the examination of this bridge because I have got some enemy’s heads)
*Yaku kuyuh! Mdrugut kuyuh ni mklla miri ha U.*
(I am a real woman, and then I have crosses this bridge, because I am good at weaving.) (Hu 2006: 15-6, my translation).
of the household (Jihung 2004; Mori 1917: 313).

The belief in *Hakaw utux* and the face tattooing culture were associated with family education in pre-colonial Truku society. According to Mowna’s description of family education (1998: 106-109), in everyday life, an unmarried woman would assist her mother with the work in the compound and in cultivating household land. They were expected to do house work and to weave with their mother at home. In working with her mother, a girl would receive considerable training and education, learning how to farm, to harvest, to pasture and raise domestic animals, and to deal with domestic affairs. In addition, they were required to become skilled weavers. Concerning the family education of men, it was necessary for boys to learn how to hunt, farm, raise domestic animals, establish buildings, and make bamboo and rattan goods. In particular, a father would teach his sons to recognize the precise location and boundaries of the household land and the community's hunting territory.

Prior to the Japanese colonialism, Truku men carried out hunting and headhunting as a practice to demonstrate their masculinity. During the period of my fieldwork, some informants showed me their family heirlooms. They displayed some special cloths with the decoration made by big shells or many small pearls and traditional flutes. According to their explanations of such family heirlooms, these clothes and flutes had belonged to their male ancestors who had successfully beheaded some enemies in the past. However, Truku women who were good at weaving did not have symbolic objects to celebrate their distinguished performance. In pre-colonial Truku society, the head of the community in the highland was always the man who was the best warrior and hunter (Mowna 1998: 2-3; Sayama 1917: 3). Hence, headhunting culture and hunting culture in the pre-colonial society is similar to those in Ilongot society as described by Rosaldo in which women and men share the same basic personhood but through headhunting, men would achieve a form of transcendence not available to women (Rosaldo 1980).

It is necessary to note that the ‘traditional’ basic gender difference in relation to different performance, in which men are hunters and women are weavers, has diminished in contemporary society. Today hunting culture is completely suppressed by the government. Although there are a few Truku men still continually hunting, if they are arrested by forest policemen they will be seen as criminals rather than warriors. On the other hand, people exchange clothes which have been brought from the market, for traditional ones, made by women. In terms of weaving culture, many
Truku women cannot or do not weave anymore. Furthermore, during the period of the Japanese colonialism, the government strictly prohibited headhunting and face tattooing in Truku society. As a result, during my fieldwork there were only three Truku elders in Fushih Village, who are more than eighty-five years old, who had face tattoos.

However, the influence of Hakaw utux in relation to hunting and weaving culture has not disappeared, rather during my fieldwork, it continues to be regarded as an important element of ‘traditional’ Truku culture. In elementary schools in Truku villages it is common to see students rehearsing dances based on the Hakaw utux myth. In these performances, boys play hunters and imitate the practice of hunting; girls play the role of hunters’ wives and practise various kinds of domestic work and weaving while they are waiting for their ‘husbands’. Finally, both boys and girls celebrate the wild game harvest together. When performing this play, they are asked by their teachers to draw face tattoos on their faces.

In addition, in many land reclamation movements in Truku society, the myths of hunting and headhunting culture are very important elements in the statements claiming Truku people’s land rights. For instance, when Truku villagers in Fushih Village organised a land reclamation movement against the Taroko National Park in 1993, the slogan of this movement was ‘beheading Taroko National Park’ (Yang 1996: 84). When I participated in many negotiations about the disputes over land between the Truku villagers and the governmental institutes in Truku villages, sometimes Truku participants would aggressively shout at the officials that ‘if we lived in the past, you would be beheaded by our ancestors.’ In many cases, Truku activists articulate the concepts of ayus to headhunting and hunting culture in order to show outsiders that Truku people have a strong sense of territory. Through the emphasis of these narratives, Truku activists in land reclamation movements strengthen their authority to claim their land rights. However, I argue that these strategies that are based on Truku concepts of hunting and headhunting culture may over exaggerate the sense of masculinity but downplay the role of women in Truku society, and therefore imply that men are superior to women in Truku society.

The emphasis of maleness over femaleness in the narratives of many land reclamation movements in Truku society cannot be understood simply as a result of the strategies for reclaiming land rights. I argue that the idea that maleness is more important than femaleness is perhaps derived from Christian concepts of gender.
relations in contemporary Truku society. Truku Christian church ministers usually play an important role in political and social movements, and land reclamation movements in contemporary Truku society (Chiu 2004: 200; Simon 2006). Moreover, Truku church congregations and ministers often use the *Hakaw utux* narrative to demonstrate the truth and authority of their ideas regarding proper gender relations.

For example, there is an idea about the ‘traditional’ family education in relation to gender difference for many Truku Christians. In ‘traditional’ society, it is suggested, girls learned to become good wives and mothers, through a system called *podayau* *snow* in which women learned how to assist men. Boys were trained to become good husbands and fathers, and learned how to be the mainstay of the household, the *pusu sapah* (the foundation of the household). Nonetheless, the idea that men are superior to women and the head of their household cannot be attributed only to the influence of the Christian churches. The Japanese, Taiwanese, and Chinese patriarchal beliefs made evident through the legal system, education, and mass media also bring the idea of gender asymmetry into Truku society. Furthermore, as I discuss in the next section, the imposition of commercial agriculture and privatisation influenced the reconfiguration of gender relations from the 1960s onwards in Truku society.

The emphasis of the importance of masculinity in Truku society is associated with a popular narrative that women are subordinated to men in economic activities and property relations. When I asked Truku villagers about their ideas of gender difference in relation to work and property relations, many of them regardless of their sex tell me that men are the head of the household, and that men are the main decision makers, although women are decision takers. For many informants, this concept of gender hierarchy is derived from the ‘traditional’ concept of gender relations. Many people take hunting culture as an example to explain that in ‘traditional’ society, hunting conducted by men was the main way in which meat was provided for the household and kin. The husband would usually be free to decide when he would hunt, without the need to consult his wife, even though his decision would usually have implications for the process and timing of cultivation and domestic work.

In terms of the gender relations in property relations in ‘traditional’ society, many informants suggested to me that women were denied the right to own land. Firstly, they would provide me with evidence that as with house names in Truku society, so with the naming of children, in that children would inherit their father’s names. For
example, with the name Yaya Howat, Howat is Yaya’s father's first name. In pre-colonial society, Truku people tended to use the first name of the husband to be the title of his household’s landed property. Moreover, marriage practices in Truku societies were usually exogamous and virilocal, that is, the woman married a man from outside her birth community and went to live in her husband’s father’s community upon marriage. By custom she could not control or access the land of her natal household or community. Finally, many informants insisted that the ‘traditional’ inheritance was based on principles of ultimogeniture or primogeniture (Mowna 1998: 203), that is, women were denied the opportunity to be heirs.

Is it true that Truku women were subordinated to men in ‘traditional’ Truku society? Based on Japanese ethnographies of Truku society, Yamaji (1986) argues that there was no system by which men were superior to women in pre-colonial society (c.f. Mowna 1998). Yamaji notes that husband and wife usually cooperated with each other in order to cultivate land for the subsistence of the household (Yamaji 1986: 19-23). In recalling life in the highlands, many Truku elders described parents and siblings farming, gardening and rearing domestic animals together. During the hunting season, from the end of autumn to the following spring, the mother would have more responsibility for cultivation than the father. According to many Truku informants, fathers would also engage in domestic work when living in the highlands. In studying economic activities and domestic work in the household, I argue that the division of labour in Truku society does not correspond with gender difference. During my fieldwork, husband and wife would cooperate with each other in carrying out domestic work. Many informants spoke proudly of the culinary skills of Truku men. Indeed, I often met men engaged in household work and in taking care of their children in their compounds.

Many informants argued that the custom for parents to bequeath property to their sons did not mean that women were denied the right to own land in Truku society. Although most Truku carried their father’s surname, some chose to adopt their mother’s surname. Often, in cases where the father had left the household or had died and where the mother raised the children by herself, children would be expected to adopt the mother’s surname. In order to safeguard the household’s subsistence, a single mother or widow would farm her husband’s land or bring her children to work the land belonging to her natal household. In such situations, the woman might hold in her own name the title deeds to the household’s landed property. In fact, this phenomenon is not new in terms of names on title deeds. According to many studies
of Truku society, this rule also existed when Truku people lived in the highlands (Mowna 1998: 211).

The narrative in which women are customarily subordinated to men is not only prevalent in various social and political movements and land reclamation movements, but also held unquestioningly by many people in contemporary Truku society. This narrative is articulated in the *Hakaw utux* myth, in headhunting culture and hunting culture, as well as in Truku conceptions of gender difference in work. When linked with these myths, narratives in which women are subordinate to men are regarded as ‘common sense’, as if they were an unquestioned aspect of ‘tradition’ in Truku society. However, this narrative fits neither in contemporary Truku society nor in the past. I suggest that we should understand the idea of gender asymmetry in Truku society as an ‘invented tradition’ in the sense of Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983).

Examining Japanese studies of Truku society (Sayama 1917), we can see that there was no clear sexual division of labour and gender asymmetry when Truku people lived in the highlands. Furthermore, these Japanese ethnographies do not tell us that women were completely denied the right to own land. In fact, these studies suggest that in pre-colonial Truku society a couple would have collective ownership and use of the household’s landed property, though such studies would also describe Truku society as a ‘male-oriented’ bilateral society’ (Mabuchi 1960). In their attempts to explain gender relations in ‘traditional’ Truku society, many male informants in land reclamation movements and social elites would suggest that I read these Japanese studies. In many cases, in their descriptions of gender relations in economic life and property relations, they would often use Japanese ethnographic studies or Mowna’s research to support their arguments. However, on examining their arguments in light of these Japanese studies, it is noticeable that many elite Truku men and male activists would tend to emphasise certain aspects concerning the importance of ‘maleness’ but pay less attention to the ethnographic descriptions in which women were not really subordinated to men.

However, the idea of there being a gender asymmetry in Truku society is not only found in many male elites’ descriptions and in narratives in land reclamation movements, but also in everyday life. I have described the interpretative framework which some Truku Christians place on Truku myths on the basis of their interpretation of Christian church concepts and teachings. In fact, when I participated in discussions on land disputes between different households, or when informants
wanted to give their opinion on particular land disputes in which they were involved, I would often hear Truku argue that women were denied land ownership rights according to custom. Truku people would therefore tend to use their interpretation of ‘tradition’ and ‘traditional’ rules in order to criticise current issues surrounding disputes over land.

Having investigated the various idealised models of gender relations in traditional Truku society, as articulated by many of my informants, I have found it difficult to pinpoint exactly the relationship between ideas relating to ‘tradition’ and an understanding of what constitutes the ‘past’. When asking informants to define what they meant by ‘traditional life’, some referred to the highland life their grandparents would have lived; others referred to life prior to the Japanese colonial government. Some informants argued that ‘traditional’ life had remained largely unchanged right up until the KMT took over Taiwan in 1945. In many cases, my informants would simply answer, ‘I just learned from my parents or grandparents’, or ‘I don’t know. I leaned from some elders.’ Many Truku people would argue that the concepts of gender relations are based on not only myths of Hakaw utux, but also ‘traditional’ system of norms (gaya) in Truku society. In Chapter 4, I examine how Truku concepts of gaya are more flexible in their everyday practices than in such narratives of ‘traditional’ gender relations.

From the head of the household to the heavy drinker of the household

Truku women have long played and continue to play an active part in agriculture by engaging in cultivation. However, reflecting on the narrative of gender asymmetry in contemporary times, it seems that there is a widespread idea that Truku men play a more important and active role than women in economic activities. In this section, I examine the relationship between gender relations and agriculture in the contemporary Truku society and I argue that the advent of the idea of gender hierarchy in Truku society is also associated with the development of commercial agriculture and capitalisation between the 1960s and the 1980s. I also focus on the discussion of characteristics of Truku women’s work and the relationship between men and women in cultivation in the last two decades.

Many feminist anthropologists suggest that in many societies in Africa the gender hierarchy is reinforced or shaped by various programmes of economic development
and the imposition of the new land tenure system, both of which are based on male bias, in the process of capitalisation (Boserup 1970). Similarly, Jha describes how for many communities in Southeast Asia, ‘previously equivocal indigenous notions of masculinity and femininity were increasingly influenced or replaced by ideologies introduced by external phenomena, including feudalism, colonialism, capitalism, modern statism’ (Jha 2004: 564). For instance, in many Indonesian societies, women were customarily able to participate in the decision making, but the state’s policy based on patriarchal ideology ‘ends up with a gender balance in favour of men’ (Jha 2004: 564). Through the examination of the transformation of gender relations in many postcolonial societies in Southeast Asia, Ong and Peletz (1995) suggest that the oppression of women cannot be understood without taking into account the impacts of global capitalist expansion and development.

From reflecting on the relationship between household and economic activities in capitalist society, Yanagisako (1979) illustrates how there is a presumption that the domestic sphere is the place concerning nurturance and procreation but that it should be regarded as an ideology produced by the evolutionalism and Marxism in the 19th century. Because the domestic sphere is associated with procreation and reproduction, women are thought to be agents playing an unchanging biological role and related to a romanticised community of the past. On the contrary, men in capitalist society are imaged as the agents of all social process (Collier, Rosaldo, Yanagisako 1997: 75). Feminists criticise that under Marxism, the devaluation of domestic work caused the subordination of the women in capitalist society (Boserup 1989).

I have described in Chapter Two the process of introduction of commercial agriculture and privatisation of land ownership in Truku society since the 1960s and how the process of adoption of commercial agriculture is that of capitalisation in contemporary Truku society. In the process of capitalisation, I argue, Truku concepts of the household are reinforced by the imposition of land reform and privatisation. At government level, although each indigenous individual has equal legal rights of land ownership due to privatisation, the basic unit in agricultural policy, development and land reform has been the household rather than the individual. For example, during the period of land registration in the 1960s, the government encouraged each household to register all members’ land in the name of its household-head (usually the father). In this sense, the household has become the basic unit in the official tax system and in terms of many kinds of government subsidies for important goods such as artificial fertilizer.
At the local level, the household, based on a couple and their dependants, still plays an essential role in economic activities. A married couple have the duty to maintain the subsistence of their household. Daki, a sixty-five years-old man, described how he worked with his parents and siblings from the 1950s to 1960s. Daki said to me, 

When I was young, my father usually poured cold water on his children’s faces in order to wake them up early in the morning. We usually went to the household’s farms together with our one and only water buffalo, going first to work on those paddy fields which were farthest from our house. When the routine farming work was almost done, my parents would leave their children to finish all the tasks there and would take the water buffalo to the other fields. When my siblings and I finished all our work, we would go to the other field and work with our parents again. We did not return home until sunset.

The sort of cultivation done by Daki’s family was typical for most Truku households at that time. In terms of the division of labour within a household, many Truku villagers recall that during the period of cropping between the 1960s and 1980s, the father was the decision maker, and he would plan all the farming work for all his householders. In the field, although women and men worked together, men were expected to take responsibility for the heavy physical labour. In contrast, women would be in charge of cleaning the hut and field, and for preparing lunch in the field. Regarding the division of labour, many informants suggested to me that the sexual division of labour was vague, but that in cultivation there was a division of labour by age. Children would be regarded as assistants to their parents, rather than ‘co-workers’. Sons customarily followed their fathers to the farm, but daughters assisted their mothers in cultivation. The elder children were expected to take charge of more heavy physical labour and of those tasks in need of more skill, as well as taking care of their younger siblings.

The situation of a couple cooperating with their children in cultivation has changed since the government imposed a ‘Nine Year Compulsory Education’ in 1968. Schooling has superseded the household in the formal education of the young. In school, hunting and weaving culture, and even agricultural knowledge and skills, are not important. While children spend more time on schooling than working with their parents, the absence of their labour has become a problem for household farming. At the same time, tuition fees and school expenses have continued to increase the financial burden on most households.

Truku society is not isolated from the economic changes which has attended
globalization in Taiwan. These economic changes had not only led many indigenous landowners to lose their land (see Chapter 2), but had also contributed to the reduction in the number of male agricultural labourers since the 1970s. In the 1980s and the 1990s, Daki was a migrant labourer, and worked in Singapore for five years and in Taipei city for more than ten years. When he got a full-time job in a restaurant in the Taroko National Park, he returned to the village. While he was a migrant worker, his wife single-handedly farmed and took care of their daughter, his parents and two adopted children in the village. After the 1970s, increasing numbers of Truku men, like Daki, left their household and became waged labourers. This trend of economic migration has gradually declined since the government allowed the introduction of foreign labour to Taiwan in 1993.

The advent of migrant labour has created a new form of sexual division of labour in Truku society. Many Truku men went to the cities alone, while their wives, older parents, and children remained at home. The earnings of these male Truku migrant labourers constituted the major proportion of the income of the household back in the village. Most of these migrant labourers worked together on urban construction sites with their kinsmen and perhaps a few kinswomen, usually in part-time jobs with low salaries. They would keep some money to meet their daily expenses while staying away from home, but sent most of their earnings back to their households at home. These earnings from migrant labour enabled them to maintain a connection with their household. In Chapter 5, I describe the particular context in Fushih Village, where wages from migrant labour have been used to pay household costs, such as bills, taxes, and tuition fees, and to refurbish or construct houses. In addition, these male migrant labourers were expected to save enough money to furnish the costs of their own or their sons’ wedding rituals and bridewealth. In Chapter 6, I focus on how a couple used the earnings from the husband and their unmarried children, all migrant labourers, in order to build up their own small business in the village.

Although male migrant labourers were absent from the village, the contribution of their earnings to household income has afforded them a more active and important role than their spouses in terms of the subsistence of their households. As a result, male migrant labourers have been seen as the main economic providers for their households. Consequently, the idea that men are decision makers and play a more active role in economic activities is not only formed by the consequences of the imposition of commercial agriculture and privatisation between the 1960s and the 1970s, but is also reinforced by the advent of migrant labour from the 1970s onwards.
Though most migrant labourers were men, from the 1970s onwards some Truku women also preferred to seek part-time jobs in urban areas. Pisaw, who is sixty years old, and his wife, Masa, both remember pleasing their parents when they left to work in Taipei for ten years, from 1976 till 1986, leaving their children in the care of the grandparents. Between the 1970s and 1990s, many couples like Pisaw and Masa chose to work together in urban areas in Taiwan, in order to ensure the subsistence of their households. Furthermore, many Truku women fondly remember the time that they spent with female friends and kinswomen, working for a while in urban areas after graduating from high school. Some made romantic attachments while living away from home, while others first met their husbands-to-be in the workplace. Although many Truku women in the village had had experience of migrant labour, there were far more men than women working as migrant labourers and, over the 1970s, ‘80s and ‘90s, male Truku migrant labourers stayed in such urban areas longer than migrant female labourers.

While the proportion of the labour force working in agriculture declined over the 1960s, the proportion of women working in agriculture increased. As a result, I argue that this process, in which many men have become migrant labourers, also forms a long-term process of feminising agriculture in contemporary Truku society. Emphasising the sexual division of labour in agricultural economies, many researchers have argued that the feminisation of agriculture has become an increasingly significant phenomenon in many rural societies in Africa (e.g. Mtshali 2002), in Latin America (e.g. Deere 2005; Katz 2003; Lastarria-Cornheil 2006), and in Asia (e.g. Jha 2004; Kelkar 2009). In particular, from the early 1980s, the feminisation of agriculture has occurred in many of the agricultural sectors of developing regions within the broader context of neo-liberal economic policies and an increasingly global economy. Lastarria-Cornhiel defines the feminisation of agriculture as:

1. An increase in women’s participation rates in the agricultural sector, either as self-employed or as agricultural wage workers; in other words, an increase in the percentage of women who are economically active in rural areas.

2. An increase in the percentage of women in the agricultural labour force relative to men, either because more women are working and/or because fewer men are working in agriculture (Lastarria-Cornhiel 2006: 2).

In such situations, women have become principal farmers as men either migrate for
extended periods or engage in off-farm employment. As part of these changes in agriculture, women and gender relations play an important role. Nevertheless, reflecting on the income of female farmers, many studies argue that in terms of the feminisation of agriculture, farming is usually poorly-paid compare to other forms of work. Farming by women involves their exploitation because the work tends to be poorly paid (e.g. Kelkar 2009; Lastarria-Cornhiéd 2006). From the reflection of the relationship between women and men in cultivation in Truku society since the 1990s, I find that the work remains ‘feminised’ because the low pay does not attract male labourers who were migrant labourers between the 1970s and the 1990s.

With male labour absent in the village, the economically sustainable agriculture that was encouraged by the government in the 1960s and 1970s gradually disappeared. Most of the paddy lands which were reclaimed in the 1950s had become dry lands, and the villagers (women and elders) decided to grow short term plants, such as sweet potato, peanuts, beans, and vegetables. During the period of my fieldwork, many female labourers suggested that the recent way of farming is similar to what they did in the previous two decades. Recently, in farming, a farmer will invest about 6,000 Taiwanese dollars in seeds, pesticides, and fertilizer in order to plant approximately 0.2 acres of spoon cabbages. After three months, he or she will have earned only about 2,500 Taiwanese dollars in total. In addition, for the farmer raising chickens in the compound, the price of each chicken is about 500 Taiwanese dollars, but the cost of buying baby chicks, maintaining the chicken farm, and planting forage crops for feeding, is on average 200 Taiwanese dollars per chicken. Generally, the farmer can sell ten chickens per month. Furthermore, most Truku farmers will let some of their land become fallow in order to receive the government subsidy, receiving up to 60,000 Taiwanese dollars every six months. As such, a farmer can usually earn about 15,000 Taiwanese dollars per month by cultivation.

Regarding income, the average earnings from cultivation have recently dropped to considerably less than the salary from wage labour, which is, on average, 20,000 Taiwanese dollars per month in the village. Most of those men who used to be migrant labourers think that agriculture is not a reliable and economically productive livelihood. Although there are very few job opportunities for waged labours, most Truku residents can get part-time rather than full-time jobs. Most young villagers, regardless of gender, also prefer to be migrant labourers after leaving school, as wage labourers or governmental servants, rather than farmers. Consequently, even though unemployment has prompted many male migrant labourers to return to their village
to live with their household, most prefer to wait for the next opportunity to become a migrant labourer again, rather than go back to working as a farmer.

During the period of my fieldwork, even on the return of men to the village, women and a few elders continue to cultivate the land. In the village more female farmers regularly work on their fields than male in their daily lives. Not only do women work in their fields away from their house, but also many women who are too old to work in the fields decide to routinely plant vegetables and raise chickens or ducks in their compounds. In Fushih Village, I sometimes worked with Atung, a Truku woman of about sixty years of age. Her husband, Tadaw, returned to the village after he lost his job in Taipei city ten years ago. In the daytime, Atung regularly farms crops and vegetables from 4 a.m. to noon, and prepares lunch for her householders (including her husband, their only son, and one granddaughter), and returns to work between three p.m. and five p.m. She usually works alone. When she takes a rest in the field, she ordinarily visits her mother’s hut which is near her field, to chat with her mother and relatives. She mainly cultivates sweet potato, vegetables, and sweet corn. She generally shares or exchanges her agricultural products for different crops with her relatives, neighbours, and friends. However, her husband and son seldom help her. Her son is a well-known hunter in the village, and spends most of his time chasing wild animals in the mountains. Her husband is a part-time constructor. If he is not employed, he follows his son hunting in the mountains, rather than help his wife in the field.

According to many studies on the feminisation of agriculture, cultivation in terms of neo-liberal markets does not empower women in economic, social, and political status, but reinforces the subordination of women in society (e.g. Deere 2005). In respect of Truku society, the feminisation of agriculture has resulted in many Truku women suffering low paid working conditions, in addition to the double burdens of maintaining household subsistence and domestic work, exacerbated when their husbands remain unemployed. Despite these difficulties, Truku women have succeeded in empowering themselves through their agricultural work and in working to ensure the subsistence of their households.

When I worked with Atung in the village, I was often invited to join in the drinking parties organised by some of the female farmers, held in one or other of the villagers’ fields as early as six o’clock in the morning. By that time, the women would already have been labouring for about two hours, making use of the cool of the day. Many of
the women farmers liked to drink cold beer with their friends when taking a rest from working in the fields. Sometimes, I got very drunk. My excuse being that I was drinking on an empty stomach. For them, drinking was a release from physical tiredness and the aches and pains of working in the fields, as well as helping to energise them for their next work session. Many of my female informants advised me to study this phenomenon, whereby women could drink alcohol freely with friends while socialising by the street vendor stalls, in karaoke shops and in village grocery stores. They would sometimes explain, ‘we (women) work, so we can have the privilege of drinking and even of getting drunk’. In the village, local Truku people had their own particular definition of what constituted alcoholism. If a person who does not have a job gets drunk, he or she will be labelled as a heavy drinker and villagers would have a negative reaction to and attitude towards the person concerned. Those who work, though, and contribute to the subsistence of their household, can drink without fear of being labelled in such a way and of attracting the opprobrium of being labelled an alcoholic. Drinking in this case would be an acceptable release from the stresses and responsibilities of working life. Many villagers would comment, ‘if you are too lazy to work, you can just furtively drink at home.’ In referring to their husbands, many Truku women dismissed them as ‘the heavy drinker in my household’.

Conclusion

By examining the implications that privatisation, the commercialisation of agriculture and the advent of migrant labour have had for Truku society, I argue that the household is not only the basic unit of the landholder, but also the primary economic unit in cultivation. When Truku people lived in the highlands, households in the same community would cooperate to cultivate, hunt, and protect their territory. In commercial crop agriculture between the 1960s and 1980s, cooperation between different households still played an important role in economic activities.

Secondly, through examination of Truku concepts of gender difference in relation to different types of work and of the implications which privatisation, capitalisation and increased intervention of the state have for Truku society, I reflect on widespread notions of gender asymmetry in which women are said to be subordinated to men and are denied the right to own land. By comparing Japanese ethnographies on gender relations in pre-colonial Truku society with the narratives of gender asymmetry in contemporary society, and by comparing Truku society with many
other societies in Southeast Asia, I argue that the idea that there is a gender hierarchy in Truku society is problematic. The views of the Christian churches and the Taiwanese education and legal systems, based as they are on patriarchal ideologies, may have influenced such ideas and perceptions. Furthermore, narratives of gender asymmetry should be regarded as a consequence of the over emphasis of masculinity in a process of constructing ‘traditional’ ideas of land in land reclamation movements and other social and political movements in contemporary Truku society. Moreover, the idea of women’s subordination is also involved in complex land disputes between different households.

Finally, I focused on the transformation of gender relations and sexual division of labour in household economics since Truku society was capitalised in the 1960s. When Truku elites or activists in land reclamation movements have created narratives articulating ‘traditional’ interpretations of the relationship between Truku people and land, they have intentionally or unintentionally downplayed the role of women involved in agriculture and economic activities, both in the present and in the past. However, the way that men are viewed in everyday life has changed, from being the economic head of the household to ‘the heavy drinker in my household’. The image of Truku men has changed in contemporary society. In many households, men are not the main provider of the household income anymore.

Although many informants, regardless of sex, say that men should be regarded as the head of the household, they also suggest that cultivation by women is the most important source of household subsistence and income. At first glance, this may seem contradictory. Nevertheless, I suggest that this fact reflects a complexity inherent in gender relations in economic life in contemporary Truku society. The idea that men are the economic head of the household is shaped and reinforced by privatisation, the cultivation of cash crops and the advent of migrant labour between the 1960s and the 1990s. On the other hand, in the last two decades, in many households, women play a more active role than their husbands in economic activities and in maintaining the subsistence of their household. While women continue to farm, many men are suffering from unemployment. As a result, women have closer ties to the land in many households than do their husbands.
Chapter Four.  *Gaya and Social Relations*

Early in the morning of the 17th August 2005, before the sun rose, I accompanied Yaya, a Truku woman, to her farm in the mountain terraces, about one thousand metres above sea level. The distance between her house and her area of work is more than ten kilometres and includes a very dangerous, rugged, and rocky mountain trail of four kilometres, and a narrow seven kilometre long mountain ridge at an altitude of one thousand metres. After 30 minutes of climbing, I found myself out of breath, my heart pounding, and had to slow down. Yaya did not wait for me, but kept up her pace, half climbing and half running. After a while I lost sight of her, but continued the journey on my own up the mountain.

As I continued alone towards Yaya’s work place, I gradually left behind the community at the foot of the mountain. I had completely forgotten myself in the dense tropical forest and finally I could not hear the first ringing of the Presbyterian Church’s bell, which usually pealed so loudly at five o’clock in the morning that it would waken me. While I was enjoying my solitary journey, I was suddenly scared by the piercing scream of a pig from one of the households in the community below. It screamed as if to warn me, ‘Don’t forget! You are still in Truku society’.

This pig’s scream prompted a memory of my first culture shock, at Rowty’s son’s wedding on the day of my arrival in Truku society in 2001. It was an unforgettable experience. Rowty bought 12 pigs from a pig farm in order to prepare sufficient portions of pork as wedding gifts for his householders’ kin groups, neighbours, and friends. I followed about ten of his kinsmen to catch pigs from the piggery at around five o’clock in the morning. As each pig was about to be roped and carried up to the truck, it burst dramatically into screams, excreting faeces and urine. I was totally panic-stricken by the shrieks and foul smell, even as I tried to grab pigs. Unfortunately, the nightmare did not end after leaving the pig farm. When we brought the pigs to Rowty’s compound, I had my first experience of slaughtering livestock. At the point of death, the pigs emitted bloodcurdling screams, their blood staining Rowty’s yard red.
Over a span of two years, I became accustomed to these spectacles where the pigs were slaughtered, and learnt that they were in fact associated with various forms of kinship and religious practices. For Truku people, the scream of a pig carries symbolically meaningful messages to every resident in the community. Yaya also understood the meaning behind the screams as she climbed to her fields. When I met her in the mountain area, her first question to me was ‘Did you hear the screaming?’

There are so many reasons for us people to kill them. Many of my informants expressed this idea to me in trying to describe pigs and their significance in Truku terms. Indeed, slaughtering pigs, offering them as sacrifice to the ancestral spirits, and sharing pork are most essential in Truku ritual processes. In particular, in the recent past, both the groom’s and the bride’s household at a wedding were expected to prepare in excess of ten pigs for sacrifice to the spirits, and to share pork with the various categories of people within their respective social networks. As such, weddings with a large number of people participating in the slaughtering of pigs and taking part in the complex system of exchange centring around ‘pork-gifts’, are an important public event in Truku society.

In this chapter, I describe the relationship between normative concepts, gaya, and worship, in order to understand the meanings attributed to ‘pig screaming’ in Truku society. Before the introduction of the modern legal system in Taiwan, gaya, for Truku people, was the only complex system of norms in society. Gaya is based on ancestor worship. The authority of gaya depends on people’s fear of punishment as meted out by ancestral spirits, or, conversely, by the desire to receive blessings from the ancestors. In this chapter, I focus also on discussing the relationship between gaya and rules of sexual behaviour and gender relations, in order to describe indigenous concepts of gaya.

1 In this thesis, I only discuss heterosexual behaviour in Truku society. Firstly, when Truku informants talked about issues relating to sexual behaviour, they never spoke about homosexuality and secondly, the study of Truku concepts of homosexuality requires more exploration.
The study of *gaya*

Early Japanese research (e.g. Mori 1917) and recent studies done by anthropologists (Chiu 2004; Kim 1980) argue that the close relationship between pigs and people is associated with Truku concepts of *gaya*. Generally, *gaya* means a complex system of social and religious norms related to supernatural beliefs and ancestor worship. The concept of *gaya* is closely connected to ideas of (ancestor) spirits, *utux*. One of the basic definitions of *gaya* is ‘ancestors’ words’ (*pusu bi kari*);² and the practice of *gaya* is regarded as obedience to norms and principles established by the ancestors (Chiu 2004).

The spirit, *utux*, is omnipresent and exists within the same space as the living. Following this belief Truku people commonly offer a few drops of anything that they are about to drink, using their fingers to sprinkle a few drops on the ground while emitting a ‘sus’ sound loudly, as an invitation for the spirits to partake. When a household elder, a *rudan*, dies, he or she will become a spirit. The spirits of deceased elders are called ‘*utux rudan*’. Many anthropological studies of *gaya* (e.g. Chiu 2004; Kim 1980; Mowna 1998) show that in Truku ancestor worship, an ancestor’s spirit is believed to wield great authority, having special powers to bless or curse, and to determine the well-being of their living relatives. Kim (1980), who defines *gaya* as the ‘natural order’ indicates that when Truku people consider something to be out of the ordinary, such as sickness, accidents, and death, it is considered that someone has broken *gaya*, and consequently the relationship between living householders and ancestral spirits is transformed from one of harmony to one of tension.

The relationship between the living and their ancestral spirits is of great importance in daily life. If people do not obey *gaya*, the relationship between *utux* and the living will become tense. This tension is considered to be a source of many adversities in society, and is believed to cause people to have nightmares, accidents, sickness, lethal injuries or death (Cao 1998). Jihung (2004), a Truku anthropologist, describes that in Truku society, if someone becomes ill, it is described in terms of the person

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² *Pusu* means ‘fundamental’, and *kari* means ‘words’.
being caught, ‘gmrap’, by an ancestral spirit, such that his or her own spirit is drawn into the spiritual world by the ancestor. Similarly, during the period of my fieldwork, Truku people taught me that when they suffer persistent bad luck or adversity, such as poor crop harvests, poor harvests of game, accidental death etc, such conditions are often viewed as punishment manifested by a displeased ancestral spirit. The manner in which events are interpreted, and just which events are considered unfortunate or adverse is within the province of householder elders, and is thus substantially subjective. Hence, gaya has multiple meanings, including norms, ritual regulations and taboos, words spoken to ancestors, and customs in everyday life.

Although many studies of gaya (e.g. Kim 1980; Mori 1917; Sayama 1917) argue that it has multiple meanings in abstract terms related to religion, society, and culture, for Truku, it is principally a system of regulations which guide individual behaviour and social interactions in daily life. Significantly, linguistically, the term gaya is used to denote law and Christian doctrines and principles. For example, modern laws that are made by the state are ‘koka gaya’ (national laws), and the biblical ‘ten commandments’ are the ‘ten gaya’.

According to my investigation of practices of gaya in Truku people’s everyday lives, most of the Truku strongly believe that it is necessary for people to sacrifice to the ancestral spirits as soon as is possible after an event out of the infringement of gaya, being very much afraid of the potential punishment which might possibly be inflicted by the ancestors. Many Truku informants told me that they believe that if an individual has infringed the gaya order, the offender has put his or her householders and kin groups in a very dangerous situation. Based on this concept of gaya, children are taught to automatically confess any misbehaviour as soon as possible to their parents and elders. When an individual encounters messages of bad fortune, or unfortunate events or illness, he or she assembles the entire household and asks them to reflect on their behaviour and confess any possible misdeeds.

The only way to obtain an ancestral spirit’s blessing is to completely and respectfully obey their words, gaya. In giving thanks for good fortune and success in respect of
hunting and harvest, Truku people naturally wish to share their happiness with their ancestral spirits, to thank them for the blessings they have bestowed (Koizumi 1933; Mori 1917). In this situation, the relationship between the living and their ancestors is viewed as harmonious, and members of the household willingly offer celebratory sacrifices to the ancestral spirits (Sayama 1917).

In trying to understand and establish the norms and concepts of *gaya*, Japanese anthropologists found that even where a particular principle was shared by two or more communities, they might have different ways of putting it into practice (Mori 1917; Sayama 1917). In his study of *gaya* in different Truku communities, Yamaji, a Japanese anthropologist, concludes that there were seven categories of crime, including stealing, murder, disruptive behaviour, beating and injuring, adultery, divorce, and employing a witch to curse someone (1986: 25-30). Each of these categories is further subdivided into a number of offences, each with a distinct, corresponding penalty and compensation (Yamaji 1986: 47-53).

Although Yamaji’s study of *gaya* invites us to understand with which kinds of norms Truku people were significantly concerned in the pre-colonial period, his research can be critiqued for downplaying the flexibility of *gaya* in the dynamic process of everyday practices. I argue that there is no set of authoritative and fixed norms that may be considered *gaya*, because it is always interpreted by the elders (*rudan*), regardless of gender difference, in each household. I was always taught, though, that ‘we do not have a clear idea as to where the principles of *gaya* originated. We learnt *gaya* from our elders, our parents and grandparents, who taught us what they had learnt in turn from their *rudan*.’

Given that it is commonly held that *gaya* principles should be strictly obeyed, each household has its own particular norms, made and passed down by the elders. These elders are not merely the founders of regulations in their household, but also the most authoritative arbitrators in determining whether or not a particular member of the household has broken *gaya*. In addition, they are also responsible for deciding which rituals should be employed in order to heal the rift between the household and the
ancestors, carefully taking into account the specific context and the degree of perceived offence against gaya. For instance, many informants attribute their unhappy marital relationship to being rushed into marriage by their parents, based on parental interpretations of gaya. Generally, sexual relationships outside of marriage are defined as a serious offence against gaya. Many elders believe that if an unmarried child visits the house of his or her lover’s parents, it means that the young couple may have had a sexual relationship. In such a situation, it is necessary to hold the wedding as soon as possible, otherwise they risk offending gaya. For some unmarried couples, then, marriage may come earlier than expected. Many households, however, do not have this strict sense of gaya.

Truku would have different ideas and interpretations of gaya in different contexts, or create or change rules of gaya in order to adapt to new social, economic, and religious situations. For instance, many Taiwanese anthropologists (e.g. Chiu 2004; Hsie 2001) describe how Truku Christians tend to teach their younger generations that Christian values are also gaya. Additionally, the elders might use their authority of interpretation of gaya to serve their personal desires. For example, there are many diverse taboos of food in Truku society. Many of them are associated with a situation of the younger generations not being allowed by the elders to enjoy the most delicious dishes in the feast or meal. Interestingly, when I asked Truku villagers about the meanings of these taboos of food, many of them, even though the elders, would answer that the elders perhaps just do not want the others to snatch their delicious food.

However, the flexibility of the interpretation of gaya can make the interaction between different households become more complicated than between different members in the same household. When people were confronted with conflicts arising from different ideas towards the same situation, they judged which party was ‘correct’ by means of headhunting, prior to the Japanese colonialism (Mori 1917; Mowna 1998; Yamaji 1986). Each party in a certain serious dispute in which it was difficult for people to clearly judge which party was correct (e.g. adultery and conflicts over land) was expected to send at least one adult male, who was usually the
main character involved in this dispute, to engage in a competition of headhunting with the other party. The person who beheaded more in the enemy’s territories was seen as the winner, and his opinion, in turn, was more correct than the other’s. Truku people believed that the result of this competition was regarded as the judgement made by ancestral spirits (Yamaji 1986: 49). However, during the period of the Japanese colonialism, the government strictly forbade headhunting. Afterwards, Truku people used the competition of hunting animals to seek the judgment made by the ancestral spirits in serious disputes in which people had contradictory ideas of *gaya* and they could not persuade the others to adopt their opinions (Mowna 1998: 75). Under the KMT, because the government prohibited Truku people from hunting, during the period of my fieldwork, the examination of the ancestral spirits’ judgements by means of hunting competitions seems to have vanished.

However, emphasis on the competition of headhunting or hunting in seeking the judgement of ancestral spirits does not mean that Truku people merely had one way to reach solutions to conflicts between different households. The competitions of headhunting and hunting should be regarded as the last method to deal with serious conflicts between different households. During the pre-colonial period, people would ask the head of the tribe to deal with these conflicts (Mori 1916; Mowna 1998). Under the Japanese, it was the person named as the official head of the tribe by the Japanese government who dealt with conflicts between different households. If the official head could not persuade each party to accept certain suitable methods to resolve the conflicts between them, then the Japanese policemen in the tribe had the legal authority to make the final decision (Keimukyoku 1938).

After Japanese colonialism, the common people tended to ask some Truku influential persons, such as local politicians, government officials, ministers, and intellectuals to help them to deal with certain serious disputes between their households and the others. But the elders of the households involved in these disputes have the authority to make decisions in cooperation with these influential persons’ suggestions. Under the KMT regime, the government imposed the modern Taiwanese legal system on Truku society, and *gaya* was privileged by the system. In this situation, if Truku
people cannot solve their disputes among each others, they might try to seek a resolution by means of the Taiwanese legal system, that is, they ask the court to give them an answer. However, seeking the solution to deal with disputes between different households through the legal system is not common for Truku people. During the period of my fieldwork, Truku villagers prefer to negotiate with each other in order to seek the suitable ways to deal with their conflicts before presenting their problems to the court.

Reflecting on how the elders define and judge gaya in their households and the transformation of methods of judgement of gaya between different households, we can understand that the definitions of gaya are always flexible and changeable. Particularly since the state (including the Japanese colonial government and the KMT) imposed the modern legal law on Truku society, gaya has not been the most authoritative and powerful regulation for Truku people. In other words, gaya and the legal system coexist in their society. Furthermore, since Christianity was introduced into Truku society in the 1940s, Christian teachings have continually influenced Truku concepts of norms. Consequently, Truku concepts of gaya are interwoven with the modern legal laws, Christianity, and ‘traditional’ norms, and always changing. In Chapter 7, I describe how these flexible concepts of gaya are involved in processes of disputes over land in Truku society.

**Gaya as rules on sexual behaviour and gender relations**

Although gaya as norms is flexible and diverse, when I asked Truku informants what gaya is, they would immediately describe the idea that gaya is a complex of regulations surrounding gender relations and sexual behaviour. During the period of my fieldwork, when I investigated Truku concepts of gaya, many informants, even younger people, would give me a ‘negative list’ concerning their ideas of inappropriate ways of communicating with the opposite sex. These norms not only strictly stipulate the proper modes of interaction between unmarried men and women, but also extend to relationships between sister and brother, wife and husband, and kinsmen and kinswomen.
For Truku people, the regulations relating to gender relations and sexual behaviour influence everyday life more deeply and widely than any others. It is easy and commonplace for individuals to wilfully or unwittingly offend against these regulations. The majority of informants attributed most of the accidents and misfortune which they experienced to someone’s offence against rules of gender relations and sexual behaviour. Such offences will incur ‘pasniq’, a term which carries multiple meanings, including taboo, dirtiness, and misfortune.

In explaining concepts relating to gaya, elders often reminded me that the prohibition against speaking ‘dirty’ words, or words relating to sexual behaviour, is the basic rule of gaya. Menses, umbilical cord, placenta, blood from childbirth, pudendum, and penis are categorized as ‘rous’ (dirty) things. In other words, any words which might imply procreation and sex are rous.

In particular, important rules about gender relations and sexual behaviour are also associated with proper ways of communication and interaction in the practice of kinship. According to kinship terminology, ‘mnswayi’ refers to one’s sibling. ‘Hlmadan’ refers to a man’s female cousin, including the daughters of his father’s and mother’s siblings, and a woman’s male cousin, including the sons of her father’s and mother’s siblings. ‘Anay’ is defined as a man’s wife’s mnswayi and hlmadan. Amongst Truku, any words which relate to sex and sexual behaviour are forbidden when communicating with mnswayi, hlmadan, and anay. The regulations relating to the appropriate way of communication with the opposite sex has become a significant symbol for the Truku for showing the function of gaya in strictly guiding their behaviour in everyday life. There is a well-known fable about the ‘pasniq’ in Truku society:

Once upon a time, dogs could speak human language. One day a man met a dog while it was licking its lips. He asked it, ‘What have you licked?’ The dog answered: ‘I have just passed your sister’s excrement.’ Suddenly, the man became extremely angry and cut out the dog’s tongue, because it had used ‘pasniq’ words related to his sister’s body and sexual behaviour. Ever since, dogs have been unable to speak human language.

On the basis of this fable, dogs are referred to as ‘holing’, and ‘mholing’, which also
refers to someone who uses *pasniq* words or sentences in front of women; and *smuling*, referring to frivolous words and utterances. This story is written in the textbook of the Truku language used in elementary school (Yang 1996). During my fieldwork, I saw two elementary schools teach their students to act a drama based on this story. However, if we examine the identity of the editors of the textbook, we discover that there are seven Truku Presbyterian ministers amongst the ten editors of the editorial board (Yang 1996). Hence, I argue that this story conceals the ministers’ thoughts about appropriate ways of interaction between women and men in terms of their Christian values. My argument is based on my experience of hearing this story from Truku Christians, given that many Truku people who were not Christians knew this story too but did not automatically share it with me unless I asked them about it.

There was a probably ‘extreme’ story relating to concepts of *pasniq*. Lowsi was more than seventy years old and an elder in the Presbyterian Church. When he tried to teach me the meanings of taboos of sexual behaviour in concepts of *gaya*, he told me,

> I am the first person to study at the National Military School. When my mother visited me at the school with my sister, many of my classmates met my sister. After my mother and sister left, some of them expressed an interest in dating my sister. I felt so angry that I fought with them, because I thought that their words implied a sense of ‘*smuri*’ (dirt and impurity) violation in Truku terms. Afterwards I was almost forced to leave the school because I had caused serious physical wounds to some of my classmates.

Lowsi also explained that one ought not to say ‘have a lovely baby’, when one congratulates a new couple on their wedding in Truku society. He added that any utterances concerning sex or sexual behaviour are prohibited in terms of *gaya*.

Although most informants know the rules of speech relating to *gaya*, many seem not to take them seriously any more in their everyday speech. In fact, villagers often share sexual jokes with each other when drinking and eating together. In October 2006, when I participated in a workshop in which five Truku women wove Truku traditional clothes, Atuy who was about eighty years old, visited her younger female friends with her sister. In order to tide the women over a long and boring period of weaving, Atuy and her sister shared many funny jokes with them. One of the jokes, Atuy said,
This is a story that I heard from my father. In the past everyone lived very closely in a community. A married couple of spouses surreptitiously made hlarma, a Truku sticky rice cake, in the house at night. Because they were very afraid to let their neighbours know that they have hlarma without sharing it with them, they decided to turn off the light whilst steaming it. While they put it on the bed in order to wait for it to cool, however, they were so nervous and it was dark and consequently the wife mindlessly sat on the hlarma which was hot and sticky. Immediately, the shape of the wife’s pudendum was imprinted on the hot hlarma, but she needed to bear her severe pain and could not shout out. What pain she endured! In particular, she was not wearing underpants.

While Atuy finished this joke, every woman there exploded with laughter. Reflecting on this story, we can understand that although people acknowledged the rules of gaya relating to sexual behaviour, such as taboos of using ‘dirty’ words, they might not strictly obey them. Additionally, in quarrelling, some individuals will deliberately or inadvertently use ‘dirty’ words. Many villagers, men and women alike, will commonly use ‘dirty’ words in daily life, to show their aggression or anger.

This division between ‘ideal’ and ‘reality’ in respect of the gaya rules governing speech also applies to the gap between Truku concepts of incest taboos and their practices. Sex before marriage is prohibited, and the violation of incest taboos is particularly prohibited, including sexual intercourse with people belonging to forbidden marriage groups. In Truku society, ‘incest taboos are extended bilaterally to all second cousins, but third cousins are marriageable’ (Mabuchi 1960: 129).

For most Truku people, infringement of an incest taboo is regarded as one of the most serious offences of gaya. The offence of violating the incest taboo is also viewed as the ‘dirtiest’ occasion in Truku society. Truku people believe that children and descendants will be significantly influenced by the consequences of the incest taboo and also will be living in, and cannot avoid, a very dangerous situation. In this sense, Truku people do not like to allow their children to marry someone whose parents or ancestors have offended the incest taboo in the past.

However, although most people know the rules of the incest taboo, there are many cases of people marrying their second cousins in Fushih Village. When many
informants who do not come from Skadang community tried to explain their notions of the marriage and incest taboo in Truku society, they frequently described the case of Skadang community in Fushih Village. When most Truku communities had been forced to leave the mountain area, Skadang people were allowed to stay in their original living place. However, the separation between most Truku people and Skadang people made them unable to communicate easily with each other. Furthermore it was so difficult, in Skadang community, for young unmarried people, and widows and widowers, to marry someone out with their community. Owing to these difficulties, many Skadang people married a first or second cousin, and broke the basic principle of the incest prohibitions in Truku society, while they lived in the mountain area. According to my fieldwork, there were more than ten marital relationships based on the marriage between close cousins in Skadang community and these ten couples are more than fifty years old.

After Skadang people moved to the specific residential area that was designed by the government in the Fushih Village in the 1970s, there were many ‘misfortunes’ such as traffic or hunting accidents and suicides in the Skadang community. In addition, I knew of at least five young people with epilepsy in this community. In this situation, many Truku informants who are not Skadang people tend to attribute these ‘unfortunate events’ to the punishment that is bestowed by the ancestor spirits to Skadang people, because some of them have seriously offended the rules of incest prohibition. In general, I found that many Truku residents who are not Skadang people in Fushih Village had negative perspectives on the communication or marriage between their children and someone from Skadang community. However most Skadang people were said to believe that these misfortunes were the result of being made to reside in the plain area rather than punishment for violating the incest taboo.

In contrast, when Ijung, a Skadang woman aged 54 whose husband Masaw is her second cousin, explained the phenomenon of marriage between first or second cousins, she told me,

When we lived in the mountain area, our parents and the other elders in the community usually encouraged us to marry our cousins. Firstly, we usually
played and worked with our siblings and cousins in everyday life. We were mutually intimate with each other for a long time before our marriage. Knowing each other very well would be better for our married lives. Like Taiwanese society, we also consider that the marriage between the first or second cousin is ‘cin shang jia cin (親上加親)’ that is to cement old ties by marriage as marriage between cousins.’ Secondly, the marriage between cousins probably helped us to avoid the reduction in both our natal household’s lands, because it seems to be impossible for outsiders to share with and access the land resources and property.

From reflecting on the case of the Skadang in terms of the incest taboo, we can understand that both the ideal rules of incest taboo and the practical ones co-exist in contemporary Truku society. Although most Truku informants are familiar with the knowledge and principles of the incest taboo, the reasons for incestuous marriages are always personalised, and rely on different contexts.

From the 1960s onwards, most young people learn what is considered to be appropriate behaviour with members of the opposite sex at school and at the local Presbyterian Church, not in their household. They can communicate with members of the opposite sex in school, at church events, and in everyday life. In particular, as unmarried young people often have part-time jobs after school, often in urban areas, they have ample opportunity to meet and socialise with the objects of their affection. During my fieldwork, I often attended barbeque parties organised by groups of young Truku, at the beach or by streams, or sang and drank in karaoke bars with them. In the evening, it was common to see young people meeting on the outskirts of the community, socialising with members of the opposite sex, and driving around on motorcycles.

Unmarried children are not allowed to date for long periods of time, without a view to marriage. The parents and elders of a household often worry that their children or young unmarried householders might have sex before marriage because it is one of the most serious and impure offences against gaya. Most Truku believe that young people who date for a long time without marrying are bound to succumb to the temptation to have sex, and, in such a situation, those in question are usually forced into marriage by their parents or kin-group elders, whether or not they had already decided to marry. Otherwise, it is necessary for both households to ritually vitiate the
tension between the household and its respective ancestral spirits, with the marriage usually following soon afterward.

**Hunting culture and gaya: who is it that hunts?**

The concept of *gaya* is closely linked to hunting culture. For Truku people, when they lived in the highlands, hunting was not merely the practice of subsistence production, but also a process of ancestor worship. In particular, hunting articulates a complex of taboos of sexual behaviour and gender relations. From the investigation of the relationship between hunting culture and *gaya*, we can understand the meanings ascribed to *gaya*.

When hunting in the highlands, hunters would always remind me beforehand to take sufficient cigarettes (*tabaco*), betel nut (*spiqi*), and rice wine (*sinow*), in order to offer them as a sacrifice to the ancestral spirits (*utux rudan*) and spirits (*utux*) during the hunt. Truku people believe that hunters and spirits co-exist in the area and during the period in which the hunt is conducted. When I followed Truku hunters in mountain areas and they came across a ruined dwelling (*nniqan*), an old community site (*alang*) and cultivated lands (*smudal*), or *lhqwa*, which were places where hunters would take rest and sleep while on a hunting expedition, they would stop to sacrifice to the spirits. The ritual of offering is very simple. The hunter first lit a cigarette, and put it with a betel nut on a stone, and then he sprinkled a cup of rice wine on the earth. He would whisper to the spirits, ‘I do not intend to disturb you. I come here for hunting in order to maintain the subsistence of my household. I hope you don’t feel angry, and that you will help me to catch wild game and protect me from deadly accidents.’³ According to beliefs called ‘*rudan gnda wa*’, the spirits have power over the harvest of wild game and the safety of hunters.

Truku people describe hunting as ‘*mgaya*’ (‘following *gaya*’) that is, hunters and

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³ When I accompanied hunters to the highlands, they would add a sentence when they addressed the spirits, saying that ‘Watan (my Truku name) is a researcher and loves our Truku culture. I hope you don’t mind that I will bring him to your place.’ On one occasion, my informant asked me to stay at a particular location and wait for him while he hunted for more than two hours at night in the highlands, because he felt that the spirits did not want me to enter their place.
their households must strictly obey the rules of *gaya* in order to receive blessings from the ancestral spirits, to ensure a successful hunt. They also believe that wild game should be regarded as a gift given by the spirit (*utux*) or the ancestral spirits (*utux rudan*) rather than as the achievement of the individual hunter. Hunting is always extremely dangerous. During their trips, hunters are not only faced with arduous conditions in remote mountains, but also threatened with deadly attacks from wild animals such as wild pigs, snakes and bears. Moreover, even if they survive such threats, there is no guarantee that sufficient quantities of game will be found. In order to survive and have fortune in hunting in the remote mountains, hunters are required to obey *gaya* in their everyday life.

In Chapter 3, I have described how in Truku society, like many societies in Southeast Asia, men and women have to cooperate with each other in cultivation. Given that there is a division between feminine and masculine in relation to different performances and tasks in economic, political, and religious fields, the sexual division of labour is not necessarily based on gender difference (e.g. Atkinson 1990; Carsten 1997; Li 1998; Jha 2004). In many societies in Southeast Asia, Karim suggests that ‘[b]oth sexes are valued for their ability to cultivate the roles of man and woman, husband and wife, and power is defined in the way so-called natural differences are cultivated to the optimum, to bring out the best in the person in relation to the other’ (1995: 36).

It is significant that most taboos concerning gender relations and sexual behaviour were strongly related to hunting culture. According to the Japanese ethnographies (e.g. Mori 1917; Yamaji 1986), in describing the relationship between hunting and male-female interaction, it was the regulations concerning conjugal relations which were identified by their informants as the strictest and most important amongst all rules on gender relations and sexual behaviour in Truku society. These ‘traditional’ taboos of sexual behaviour relating to hunting culture were seemingly important for many Truku hunters during the period of my fieldwork. Many Truku elders who used to be or still do hunting suggested that most serious are those offences in which the wife has offended against *gaya* rules regulating sexual behaviour, or has committed
adultery, and such offences are considered to have the most powerfully negative effect on the conduct and success of a hunt, indeed on their lives in general. Truku people call this ‘smliq gaya’, which means ‘the infringement of gaya’. They believe that smliq gaya committed by a wife of a member of the hunting party not only places the expedition in great danger, but also the husband’s male siblings and hlmadan, and those of the wife.

In view of this, I was taught that hunters tend not to begin their hunting journey until they are sure that any and all infringements against gaya are completely resolved through ritual action, and that the forgiveness of the ancestral spirits is therefore secured in advance. Moreover, when a hunter is hurt, or when less game is caught than anticipated, every member of the household, even the elders, is subject to close and careful questioning to determine if they have violated any of the gaya principles of gender relations and sexual behaviour during the period in which the hunt was conducted.

In reflecting on the relationship between hunting and gaya, we can see that men are not the only actors in the practice of hunting. Indeed, in Truku terms, it is the ancestral spirits who provide the wild game, rather than the skill of the hunter. Moreover, in terms of the relationship between hunting and gaya, it is the proper observance of gaya regulations and conditions, by the hunter’s wife and the wider household, that determines success or failure (and possible misfortune) in hunting. In this sense, hunting culture in Truku society is similar to that in Ma’Betisék society as described by Karim (1981). In Ma’Betisék society, hunting culture is based on concepts of ‘tulah’, which is not only associated with the relationship between hunters and natural species (plants and animals), but also the code of proper conduct between elders and youngers (Karim 1981: 32). Nevertheless, in Truku society, hunting culture is not only reliant on the relationship between hunters and ancestral spirits, but also on the bond in the relationship between men and women. Without such cooperation from the wife and the householders, the hunter could ensure neither the safety nor the success of the hunt. Thus, whilst hunting engenders the sexual division of labour, at the same time its success depends on the hunter, his wife and
his householders uniting in their efforts. Hence, ancestral spirits, the men who hunt, their wives, and fellow householders are all involved in hunting at the same time. With this in mind, who is it that hunts in Truku society? I argue that the basic social unit in hunting was the household rather than the male hunter himself.

**Powda gaya: communication between ancestral spirits and human beings**

One of the categories of property rights described by Woodburn and Barnard (1988: 14) includes rights over meat, harvested vegetable foods and other foods and raw materials. In Chapter 3, I described the rules pertaining to the sharing of wild game meat, and how they differed from the sharing of the agricultural harvest. However, in respect of wild game, when Truku people lived in the highlands it was expected that after the hunt there would be an appropriate and equal distribution of the produce with the other households in their community, without expectation of return (Mowna 1998: 73).

Informants often drew my attention to the phenomenon of ‘pork distribution’ as it occurred in everyday contexts. In the field, I learnt that the loud screams of pigs in the morning would invariably indicate that the practice of pork distribution was underway. Pork distribution is itself one of the basic steps in the process of ritual. Truku people will hold a ritual to beg for forgiveness from the ancestral spirits, but also as thanks for their blessings. In terms of gaya, ritual is a dynamic process of worship where the living communicate with the ancestral spirits by making offerings, such as livestock, food, and drinks. Truku people call this kind of ritual ‘powda gaya’. From the examination of various explanations of powda gaya which I recorded during fieldwork, in its original meaning powda refers to the process of enabling something to pass through, or move on, successfully. In this sense, powda gaya refers to the easing of tensions in the relationship between living and dead kin. When powda gaya specifically refers to a ritual to deal with the offence of rules of sexual behaviour and gender relations, powda linguistically implies two meanings. Firstly, if the offender is a young unmarried person, powda gaya refers to a ritual to
beg the ancestral spirit to let him or her have one more chance to start with a clean slate. In this case, the meaning of powda is to ask the ancestral spirit to construct a new ‘road’ for these young offenders, and lead them correctly on the path of gaya again. Secondly, if the offender is a married person, powda means not only holding a ritual to pass through a period of dangerous and impure difficulty, but also means to ask the ancestral spirits to help ensure that their descendants do not commit the same mistakes again in the future.

There is something interesting about the meanings attributed to the term powda gaya. A number of my older informants suggested that some clarification needs to be made here, in particular, that powda gaya referred specifically to rituals relating to offences against rules of gender relations and sexual behaviour. However, most of my younger and older informants tended to use this term to refer to all rituals. From the investigation of Truku residents’ thoughts of gaya, I find that powda gaya is more broadly used to refer to any kind of ritual in which people sacrifice to the ancestral spirits, whatever the reasons for it may be.

In this thesis, on the basis of my fieldwork, I classify powda gaya rituals into two categories: one is for celebration of the blessings from ancestral spirits, and the other is to relieve the tension between the ancestral spirits and the human being arisen from the offence of gaya. For Truku residents, the powda gaya ritual deals with infringements of gaya, and the dangerous contamination which results. As such, it is only the offender’s household, the offender’s sibling’s and parents’ households, which have a duty to conduct this ritual. Moreover, only one pig is slaughtered for the powda gaya ritual. In the powda gaya for the celebration of the ancestral spirits’ blessings, such as to share the blessings which come from the ritual and from the host’s good fortune, the social groups involved include the host’s household and their kin groups, including households of the host’s siblings, parents, first (or perhaps second) cousins, and the host’s spouse’s kin groups. In these ceremonies, the host’s household provides at least two pigs. In terms of powda gaya for celebration, for Truku people, the wedding is the largest scale event. The household of both the bride and the groom, and their kin groups, neighbours, and friends will be involved in the
wedding. All households involved in the process of the wedding are categorized as \textit{gxal} group (feast group). Later in this chapter, I describe the definition and functions of a \textit{gxal} group.

I was told that Truku people believe that the \textit{powda gaya} for the infringement of \textit{gaya} is a dangerous ritual space, because they are afraid of the punishment carried out by the ancestral spirits. This belief is derived from Truku beliefs that the infringement of \textit{gaya} will make the blood of the offender and their household become contaminated. The Truku word for blood is ‘\textit{dara}’, and ‘\textit{kingal dara}’ (one blood) refers to a kin category in which people share the same blood. Broadly, \textit{kingal dara} also refers to a kin group that shares blood ties with a common collective ancestor. From my examination of Truku concepts of \textit{gaya}, according to Truku thought, if at a particular time an individual violates \textit{gaya} rules, then the blood becomes impure. The contamination associated with an infraction of \textit{gaya} rules affects not only the individual, but potentially the whole household, as the ancestors’ anger may fall severely and swiftly on any one of them.

As conceived by Truku people, blood is by nature a medium that may transmit fortune or misfortune (impure blood), and therefore has the capacity to become infected. According to many Truku informants’ explanations of native concepts of blood, an individual’s blood may become contaminated by intentionally or accidentally touching, or by eating with, someone whose blood is contaminated. The person who breaks \textit{gaya} rules always affects his or her household, incurring potential danger for all. In such situations, those outside the household will tend to avoid the house in order to reduce the possibility of infection. Contamination of blood, and by extension the household, thus temporarily severs all sorts of social relationships, resulting in the segregation of the contaminated household from the community. As such, the household of the offender of \textit{gaya} is expected to hold a \textit{powda gaya} ritual to deploy sacrifice to relieve this dangerous situation.

Because the \textit{powda gaya} ritual to relieve the tension between the ancestral spirits and human beings arising from the infringement of \textit{gaya} is dangerous and contaminated,
people who are not close kin of the offender of *gaya* do not like to engage in the ritual. During the period of my fieldwork, I often heard someone complain about how he or she is unfortunate because of having to participate in a certain *powda gaya* ritual in relation to the infringement of *gaya*. He or she would add that his or her feelings were of deep misgivings after participation of this ritual. Although participants in the *powda gaya* ritual for dealing with the offence of *gaya* will receive a portion of meat (pork) from the ritual, many of them tended to quietly get rid of it this ‘gift’ rather than share with their households or friends. In Truku people’s everyday lives, if people share the meat with others, the receivers will ask the givers where the meat came from in order to avoid consumption of contaminated food.

I did not have the opportunity to participate in the *powda gaya* ritual to deal with the offence of *gaya*. Firstly, most informants did not announce this ritual event to outsiders. Secondly, even if I knew someone would hold a *powda gaya* ritual relating to the infringement of *gaya* and asked his or her permission to engage in it, I would not ever have been allowed to do so. The main reason is that my informants worried that I would be situated in a dangerous environment in the ritual. However, sometimes, I suspected that they might not want me to know what kind of infringement of *gaya* had occurred in their households. Finally, in such *powda gaya* ritual, involving slaughtering a sacrifice (a pig) and conducting ancestral worship, was usually secretly held in the garden or backyard in the house of the offender of *gaya*. Hence, it is difficult for outsiders to participate.

Hence, it is necessary to note that all *powda gaya* rituals in which I participated were those for cerebration, to thank the ancestral spirits’ blessings. In addition to contamination, blood can transmit good fortune from one person to another. Receiving an invitation to attend a celebration is always a happy occurrence, as it is an opportunity for people to share in the spirit power of their host. Participants in the celebration come into contact with the sacrificial blood and eat the pig-blood porridge and thus share in the good fortune of this host. Truku people like to participate in the *powda gaya* ritual for celebrating the blessings from ancestral spirits. In this ritual, the host will not refuse access to outsiders at his or her
celebration. In this chapter, the description of the process of the *powda gaya* ritual is based on my experiences of involvement in such rituals for thanking the ancestral spirits’ blessings.

In terms of the labour force which is involved in *powda gaya* rituals, it is the household which serves as the basic unit. All those households which are expected to be involved in a particular ritual will send at least one of its members to join in with the ritual. On the day of the ritual, all attendants will proceed individually to the site of the ritual. Usually, it is necessary to provide at least five men to slaughter and butcher a pig, and five women to wash its organs. Although there is no dress code stipulated for this type of formal ritual, men will usually bring their knives, while women will normally wear galoshes. Young people in the guests’ households are encouraged to attend the ritual in order to gain the necessary skills and knowledge for the ritual.

The sharing of domestic animals with the ancestors, as food, is a core aspect of *powda gaya* for the celebration of the blessings for the ancestral spirit. In the ritual itself, the first step involves inviting the ancestral spirit to join in the ritual and share the food offered. In Truku understanding, the squealing of the pigs as they are slaughtered draws the attention of the ancestral spirits, summoning them to the ritual. Indeed, the louder the squealing, the more sincere the host’s invitation. The action of ritually slaughtering a pig is called ‘*pnsanq*', while ‘*sang*’ describes the sound of a pig’s squeals.

After slaughtering a pig, the chief celebrant, who leads the ritual, and who is usually the most senior male member of the host household, cuts the sacrifice into portions. Firstly, with care and due reverence, the extremities and internal organs available at the right side of the pig are removed. These parts include the pig’s ears, nose, tenderloin, rump, stomach, intestines, liver and rib. The celebrant then gathers these pieces of meat, and internal organs, and puts them into a bag made of plastic or of leaves. This bag and its contents become a symbol of the pig itself, of the offering,
called a ‘qselang’. The elder secretly takes the bag to the periphery of the host’s compound where he or she digs a small hole in the ground.

In the ritual, great significance is placed upon the blood of the pigs sacrificed and, as such, the act of making the first cut in the process of slaughtering and dividing is spiritually important. Usually, the male elder, who is thought to be most skilled, is responsible for the first cut. I was taught that great importance is placed on the ability of the elder to quickly and effectively cut the throat of the pig from the trachea to the heart in order to maximise both the production of blood and the cries of the dying animal. At the same time that the first cut is made, the blood which emits will be caught in buckets by those assisting the elder, after which, the female participants will begin the process of cooking the blood into a porridge, which will duly be eaten by the participants. Due to the importance vested in the pig’s blood, the task of cooking the blood is usually accorded to those female elders considered sufficiently skilful. Equally important is the amount of blood produced on the first cut because failure to produce a sufficient volume of blood leads to the ritual itself being regarded as a failure, with the sincerity of the individual hosting the ritual thus coming into question.

After the ritual sacrifice is made, communication between living kin and the ancestral spirits immediately ceases. The sacrificial process itself normally takes about ten minutes to complete. The preparation prior to sacrifice, and the sharing which occurs afterwards, takes more than four hours, compared to which the time spent on the actual sacrifice itself seems brief. Although the sacrificial act, the sharing of the food with the ancestral spirits, is the essential motivation behind the organisation of the ritual, in fact more time is spent distributing pork between living kin than is spent sharing with ancestral spirits.

Based on my experiences of participating in many powda gaya rituals in Fushih Village, the organisation and execution of the ritual are determined according to local understandings of the gendered division of labour and hierarchy of age. After

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4 *Qselang* refers to the action of ‘pinching’, or plucking, the flesh. Truku people use this word to represent the offering in the ritual.
the elders skilfully slaughter and dissect the pig, younger male participants are asked to burn and clean the pig’s bristles and so the ritual site immediately becomes a work place, taking on the characteristics of a well-organised abattoir. Usually, there are three work areas in which the labour is strictly divided – the butchering area, the area in which the pig’s flesh and viscera are washed, and the cooking area. The area in which butchering is conducted is a male preserve, while females have responsibility for washing the meats and cooking. In order to ensure that the ritual runs smoothly and effectively, the host usually respectfully asks the eldest male present to act as manager of the workplace.

I was always given the role of learning how to butcher pigs in the powda gaya rituals. In the butchering section, the men divide themselves into two sections, one for the elaborate preparations that are made with the pig’s head, the other section to cut up the pig’s body. The pig’s head meat will be delivered to the cooking area, and will be steamed in order that it may become a dish for communal consumption. In butchering, firstly the pig’s body is opened, and the viscera removed (then to be steamed in the cooking area). Afterwards, the body of the pig is cut into twelve parts, including tender loin, chop, pigskin, rack, intestines, lung, bacon, rump, collar butt, kidney, lean meat, and liver. The slaughtering process is, by nature, organic and impromptu. Each participant can engage in any part of the area, and rest when they wish. Equally, the only principle which must be applied to the butchery is that each section of meat must be equal, carefully cut to size and weighed. This is supervised by the workplace ‘manager’ and the other elders present, as they are freed from the work of cutting and preparing and can ensure that all is done in the required way.

After the butchering is finished, the twelve different types of meat cut are put into their appropriate piles. Participants, men and women, will sit behind each pile and, taking a plastic bag, will place one portion of each cut into a bag, then passing the bag to the next pile. Finally, each bag will contain a cut from every one of the twelve piles, and be of equal weight and size, and is considered in total to represent one ‘portion’. Once done, the host, for example the groom’s parents or the bride’s parents, will read off the guest list, and each guest named will pick up a portion (i.e. bag) of
pork.

While the host distributes the pork, the participants begin the feast, including three principle dishes – pig-blood porridge, steamed pig-head meat, and steamed viscera. All of the participants eat, drink alcohol, and chat with each other, waiting for the host to call them to share the pork portions so carefully produced. The sharing of the feast and the moment when the pork portions are distributed are considered the most important and enjoyable aspects of the ritual. The household is the basic entity in the distribution of pork. Each participant’s household is allowed one portion of pork. Even where a household has sent more than one member to the ritual, only one ‘portion’ of meat is allotted.

In Chapter 3, I have described Truku concepts of alcoholism in relation with that of work. In this section, I discuss the meanings of alcohol in the powda gaya ritual for celebration of the ancestral spirits’ blessings. When some Truku elders criticised a serious social problem of alcohol abuse in contemporary Truku society, they would tell me the way of drinking of their parents or grandparents in the past. Prior to the Japanese colonialism, Truku people had their own alcohol culture. They only drank alcohol at the moment of the powda gaya rituals for the celebration of the good fortunes and the weddings, but not in everyday life. Truku people had their particular way to make alcohol. However, in the Fushih Village, there are no villagers who know how to make alcohol using the traditional methods. During Japanese colonialism, some Truku elders recalled that they could exchange their crops for alcohol in the official transaction place in their community. Under the KMT regime, it was very easy for the Truku people to purchase alcohol in groceries in their communities. Hence, it was not necessary for them to make alcohol themselves. Recently, the powda gaya rituals are not the only social space for the Truku people to enjoy drinking, singing, and dancing. Rather, they can drink in their everyday lives, and enjoy drinking, dancing, and singing in karaoke shops, an aspect which I discuss in Chapter 6.

Although Truku people drink in both powda gaya rituals and their everyday lives,
they can only receive portions of pork (as gift) and enjoy the porridge, a dish that mixes pig blood soup with rice, boiling pig blood, in the ritual. Truku people consider the eating of the porridge to be enormously important, without which it would seem as if the ritual had not taken place. Many Truku participants in the *powda gaya* ritual told me that they believe that consumption of the porridge in the *powda gaya* ritual and of the pork received from the ritual will transmit some of the good fortune of the host of the ritual to them.

By reflecting on the meanings attributed to blood in Truku culture, we can see that eating is not only a subsistence practice, but also regarded as a process by which the vitality of food is transmitted to human beings in the course of everyday life. Sharing food with those who have transgressed *gaya* carries the risk of coming into contact with contaminated blood. Conversely, consuming pork which is the product of a *powda gaya* ritual, the purpose of which is to give thanks for the blessings of the ancestral spirits, will transfer the blessing contained in meat into the body of those who take part in the feast.

In his studies of ritual theory and ‘vitality theory’ (1985, 1992), Bloch highlights the symbolic meanings attributed to sacrifice, and the ‘vitality’ contained in ritual processes. For example, he argues that ‘eating meat and more especially drinking cattle fat, as the Merina say, are evocative images of wealth, of acquiring strength and of individual well-being’ (1985: 638). Similarly, in Gibson’s study of Buid sacrifice (1985, 1986), which lays great importance on the killing of the animal, the vitality of animals is shared with the spirits of fertility in Buid rituals, and in these cases, ‘the controlled release of animal vitality brings men into contact with the benevolent spirits’ (1986: 151).

Bloch interprets such rituals as involving violence, in the sense that the mundane ‘selves’ of those participating are ‘conquered’ by the transcendent power within the ritual, and that violence is generated when the now partially transcendent participants return to society, themselves conquering and consuming vitality to incorporate it into the mundane world. Bloch points out that rituals share a common, non-culturally
specific base because ‘the symbolism of ritual is an attempt to solve problems intrinsic to the human condition’ (1992: 23).

Based on the analysis of native concepts of the *powda gaya* ritual, I assert that pigs are the main resource of meat and economic subsistence in everyday Truku life. In becoming sacrificial animals in the processes of ancestor worship, the meanings ascribed to these animals are changed. In the ritual, these animals are considered to be sacred because they serve as mediators between the human realm and the ancestral spirits, and because they contain a source of vitality which can be tapped by human beings. By understanding how the pigs are slaughtered, we can see that these sacrifices are, in effect, processes by which the vitality inherent in these animals is appropriated and controlled.

Moreover, I suggest that within the process of the *powda gaya* ritual there are two distinct periods: the separation and the union. When the sacrificial pig is brought into the ritual place, the period of separation is initiated by the first cut and the opening of its body. The process by which the pig’s body is sacrificially dissected is complex, the end result being that the pig is cut into twelve parts, with each part then subdivided into small, equal pieces. In addition, there is a distinct apportioning of labour according to gender relations, in that men are responsible for slaughtering and women are responsible for washing and preparing the organs, and for cooking for the feast. Cooperation is required between the different participating households, but, at the same time, the practice of offering also reinforces the boundaries between them. The opposition between the ancestral spirits and human beings is also enacted and emphasised through the ritual of offering.

Once the systematic dissection of the pig carcass is completed, the period of separation is ended and people then enter a period of union. This period of union begins with the apportioning of the pork, during which the participants work together to equally divide the meat, with one piece from each of the different piles of body parts going into a plastic bag. Each part of the pig, which has been dissected and separated according to type, is then ‘reunited’ by being put into the bags, each bag
representing a ‘portion’. As such, each bag of meat is a synecdoche of the pig, symbolically representative of the whole pig. The distribution of these bagged portions creates a connection between the different participating households, a relationship which will include future ritual events. Finally, all of the participants, regardless of gender or age, enjoy the feast together, and it is believed that the ancestral spirits also enjoy the ritual offering within the same shared ritual space. Through the shared distribution, cooking and eating of the pork meat in the feast, the boundaries between different households, between men and women, and between ancestral spirits and human beings, is blurred but also reshaped.

**Gxal and social organisations**

It is through the medium of ancestor worship, and through obedience to gaya rules and obligations and the practice of powda gaya rituals that Truku people form social and religious communities. It is through the gaya concepts which underlie ancestor worship that the sharing of foods and labour, either in ritual practice or everyday life, gain their importance and power. As such, the cohesion of Truku society cannot be understood without reference to notions of collective vulnerability to spiritual or otherworldly aggression, and the need to sustain a broad alliance amongst households in order to counter it. This alliance is achieved through a series of powda gaya rituals.

In reflecting on Truku concepts of gaya, I suggest that the practices of gaya (including powda gaya rituals) integrate each individual Truku person into the whole community. Through sharing foods and communicating in the course of everyday life, and through sharing the vitality of the sacrifice in the ritual, individuals are bonded together. In terms of the relationship between sharing, sacrifice and social solidarity, Truku society shares similarities with Buid society as described by Gibson (1986). He notes how individual desire is always subordinate to, and dependent on, the society and the minds of which society is composed (1986: 129). Unity is expressed through sharing in which each part of the whole gives to every other part of the whole without reference to past transactions. Hence, he points out that
‘fertility itself derives from the solidarity of the community’ (Gibson 1986: 176). In both Truku and Buid society, people offer their own animals to others in order to create and maintain a social bond.

Reflecting on the process of the powda gaya rituals, I argue that the household is the basic social and religious entity, not the individual. The powda gaya ritual can be seen as a social field in which different households interact with each other. When a guest household receives an invitation, it is expected to send more than one adult person from the household to represent the household. Representatives are not only duty bound to take along their own portions of pork, but they are also required to assist the host in the process of the ritual. Assisting the host during the ritual is regarded as a form of formal labour exchange between households. If an individual or couple who expects to be invited is for some reason omitted, he or she will usually visit the site of the ritual anyway, in order to remind the host and so obtain an invitation. The exchange of labour in the process of the powda gaya ritual is also based in the practice of ‘smbarux’ (see Chapter 3). Hence there are two different types of exchange within the smbarux system of relations as applied to powda gaya rituals. In respect of the distribution of pork, the host, having been a debtor, holds the ritual or celebration in order to offer equal reciprocation to his guests (the creditors) by paying each one portion of pork. In this sense, all participants at the ritual hold positions of both creditor and debtor, and must reciprocate by fulfilling the parallel obligations at the same time, represented in the exchange of pork and labour. In addition, while fulfilling existing exchange relations, both guests and hosts shape new obligations in labour and pork distribution, for the next powda gaya.

Truku society was a classless society, in which people easily incorporated outsiders who came from different Truku communities (Mabuchi 1960; Mowna 1998). Although Truku society was changed by the imposition of the Japanese colonialism and by capitalism under the KMT regime, the disposition of the incorporation with outsiders seems to have remained in practices of gaya and powda gaya ritual for the celebration of the blessings from the ancestral spirits. In particular, Truku people form the gxal group through weddings. In reflecting on the meanings of the gxal
group in Truku people’s everyday lives, I assert that the *gxal* group can be regarded as one of the most important social and kinship groups. A *gxal* group includes the Ego’s household, and the households of its *mnswayi* (siblings), *lutut* (such as the Ego’s siblings, cousins, parents’ kin groups), affines, and also non-kin such as neighbours, colleagues, Church congregation, and friends. I suggest that the concept of *gxal* group is similar to Mabuchi’s study of the ‘feast group’ in Truku society. In Mabuchi’s description (1960), Truku used ‘feast groups’ as a term to describe ritual groups. The ‘feast groups assemble for marriage festivities and for ceremonial pig sacrifices, as well as more informally to distribute the meat of wild game and to drink millet beer and feast on pork in slack periods of the agricultural cycle’ (Mabuchi 1960: 130). In this sense, I suggest that the ‘*gxal* group’ resembles the ‘*kaban*’ in Buid society as described by Gibson (1985), and in both cases the ‘idiom of companionship implies that social actors come together as autonomous agents to pursue a common goal’ (Gibson 1985: 72-3).

Based on the investigation of Truku notions of the *gxal* group, I describe how a *gxal* group is composed of many households, and is ‘inherited’, that is, it is passed on from one generation to the next. Many Truku informants taught me that in the past, most Truku people were illiterate, and so household elders gave oral instruction to the next generation, teaching them exactly which households were in their *gxal* group and with whom they had exchanged labour and food, informally (on an everyday basis), and formally (during *powda gaya* ritual). During the period of my fieldwork, it has become common to hand down a written list rather than orally transmitted instructions. Regardless of this change in practice, many Truku people continue to consider the *gxal* group to be a permanent fixture of their household.

Despite the importance placed on the *gxal* group as inherited down the generations, this does not mean that the *gxal* group is fixed and immutable. In fact, it is subject to change in its constitution as those who share social relations with the household are potential candidates for recruitment into the *gxal* group if they receive portions of pork. In this sense, a household’s *gxal* group, as a form of social network, is able to grow as each household increases its social network through marriage (affines) and
new social relations (such as friends, neighbours, and colleagues). In contrast to this, a *gxal* group may also be subject to diminution. If a whole household of the *gxal* group fails to meet their obligations, informally or during formal rituals, they will be regarded as selfish and rejected by the *gxal* group.

When asking informants what they considered a *gxal* group to be, most answered instinctively that a *gxal* group is in fact kinship. However, when I inquired further on the differences between kinship relations and the *gxal* group, given that there are many non-kin in a *gxal* group, many respondents gave confused responses. After some consideration, some of the respondents asserted that kin status might not necessarily translate into membership of a *gxal* group, as the composition of the *gxal* group is determined by the practice of sharing rather than by blood ties. Some insisted that the *gxal* group is the only ‘close’ social group, and therefore is thought of as kinship in essence. Reflecting on the interaction between different households within the same *gxal* group, I argue that there are two meanings of the ‘close’ social group. The close social group is a kin group, composed of a certain household’s close kinfolk. However, if close kinfolk live too far away to participate (or have some reasons not to participate) in the *powda gaya* rituals or weddings organised by a certain household in their *gxal* group, they will not be included in the group until they start to engage in these rituals. On the other hand, the close social group can also include a household’s neighbours and social networks. Both neighbours and social networks continually maintain a close neighbourhood or social relation with their *gxal* groups.

In their everyday lives, though, sharing food and labour in informal situations is an interaction which occurs not only within *gxal* groups, though it also plays a part in maintaining and strengthening *gxal* group identity. For most Truku people, if they do not maintain their own *gxal* group, they risk suffering a shortage of labour for *powda gaya* rituals especially, for example, wedding rituals which they may wish to hold in the future.
Conclusion

The screams of the pig as it is slaughtered for ritual represent more than merely its passage from life into death. For Truku, pig screams are multivalent in terms of *gaya*. They are an announcement to the community that a ‘*powda gaya*’ ritual is underway; and also a respectful invitation to the ancestral spirits, asking them to enjoy the ritual offering. Most significantly, the screams of the pig possibly link offences against the norms of gender relations and sexual behaviour. That is to say, they make every resident in the same community aware that someone has offended against the rules of *gaya* concerning sexual behaviour and gender relations.

The ideas underlying *gaya* are based on a fundamental division between human beings and the ancestral spirits, between men and women, and between different households. However, these divisions are blurred and reshaped by the practice of *gaya*, including the *powda gaya* ritual. Although hunting culture is based on a basic gender division of labour, it cannot simply be understood as a practice that is conducted by men. In fact, the successful capture of wild game, and the safety, indeed, the lives of the hunters, are dependent on the blessings of the ancestral spirits as well as on the obedience of their wives and householders to the rules of *gaya*. In this sense, hunting should be regarded as a practice based on the cooperation between a male hunter and his wife and householders. Therefore, I argue that the basic unit of hunting is not a man, but rather a household.

As well as the death screams, the blood which emits from the pig as it dies is also of great importance. It is the screams of the dying pig that signal an end to the tensions between the individual who has offended against *gaya*, and his or her kin group and social relations; also those between living human beings and the ancestral spirits. Finally, the screams of the pig are an invitation to the ancestral spirits to participate in the *powda gaya* ritual, just as they are to the household, its kin-groups and other relations. For Truku people, participation in *powda gaya* ritual is one of the most important practices of kinship and social interaction in daily life. Listening to the pig’s screams, and understanding its meanings, are essential skills for Truku people.
Plate 8. Butchering pigs and washing pigs’ organs in the wedding

Plate 9. Making wedding gifts in groom's father’s compound

Plate 10. Displaying part of wedding gifts
Plate 11. Wedding feast in contemporary Truku society

Plate 12. Author learns to butcher at a wedding

Plate 13. Author learns to build a bamboo house in the highlands
Chapter Five.  Marriage, Landed Dowry, and the Monetisation of Bridewealth

I have described how the household is the basic social, economic, and religious unit in Truku society. The household is based on a conjugal relationship which is established by marriage. In Chapter 4, I described how the wedding ritual is the most important and largest *powda gaya* ritual. Through the wedding ritual, Truku people not only form their affines, but also their *gxal* group. In addition, the concepts of marriage are associated with notions of gender relations in Truku society. Hence, it is necessary to examine concepts of marriage in order to understand gender, social, and kinship relations in Truku society.

This chapter focuses on how the imposition of privatisation and cash economics has influenced practices and concepts of marriage in contemporary Truku society. I argue that since Truku society was capitalised in the 1960s, the payment of bridewealth, the establishment of the house, the way of giving dowry, and practices of wedding ritual have all been changed. Consequently, the transformation of marriage has implications for Truku concepts of gender relations and the relationship between affines. In this chapter, firstly I describe how the process of marriage is like that of building a new house. Secondly, I portray the process of the wedding ritual and the marriage exchange in Truku society. In this section, I describe firstly the conduct of marriage and the meanings attributed to marriage prior to the 1960s, and then I focus on the transformation of marriage in contemporary Truku society. Thirdly, I discuss the advent of landed dowry and its meanings in household economics, gender relations, and relationships between affines in Truku society. Fourthly, I concentrate on the implications of the monetisation of bridewealth for Truku concepts of marriage and social and kinship relations in contemporary Truku society. Finally, I discuss how the monetisation of the wedding ritual reinforces economic and social hierarchy in Truku society.
Building a new house

When Truku people lived in the highlands, the process of getting married was equated with *phiyug sapah* (literally ‘building house’). The principal marital residence was virilocal. In terms of understanding indigenous concepts relating to the house, many anthropologists of Austronesian societies have suggested that the house is at once both a physical entity and a social group (e.g. Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995; Fox 1993; Joyce and Gillespie 2000; Sparkes and Howell 2003). The house is not merely a site where various social and ideological processes intersect. Carsten and Hugh-Jones suggest that in a ‘language of house’, people and the physical house must be investigated on the same terms, not as analytically distinct phenomena (1995: 19). In other words, studies of the house should focus not only on the relationship between people within the house and between houses, but also on the relationships between people and the physical house itself.

In life in the highlands, the new house was provided entirely by the groom’s household. All building materials (bamboo, wood, and stones) and the building site itself, came from the groom’s household’s land. The groom and his male householders, with the help of close kinsmen from within the same community, worked together to construct the new house (Mowna 1998: 21). However, with the absorption of Truku society into the Taiwanese economy in the 1960s, building a new house has become increasingly expensive. In the first place, owing to the shortage of land, many people do not have enough land to provide building sites for their sons. Furthermore, the privatisation of land has significantly increased the market value and price of land. In terms of building materials, most new houses are now insulated concrete buildings. If the groom’s household wants to build a new house, they need to spend a considerable amount of money on building materials. Although many Truku men now work in the construction industry and thus have the requisite skills, even between close kin it is still considered necessary to pay for labour. In many cases, people will go to the expense of hiring a construction company to build the new house. In addition, if we take upholstery and furnishing into account, the cost of building a new house has increased significantly. Generally
speaking, the average cost of a new house is in excess of £20,000. In terms of individual monthly income in Truku society, 37.4% of Truku people over the age of fifteen do not have a regular income, and 35% regularly earn less than £500 per month (CIP 2005: 96).

Given this situation, most Truku people are too poor to afford the expense of building and equipping a new house. Many informants complained to me that because by law their land cannot be purchased by non-indigenous people, they are unable to mortgage their land in order to finance the building or furnishing of the house. Although owning a house is an important priority for most people, earnings are in most cases insufficient to meet the building or purchase costs. As a result, excluding a few wealthier households, for most Truku people it takes a long time to secure the financial resources to build a new house, time and resources which cannot be generated within the marriage process.

If a person wants to have a new house built, but does not have enough money to do so, a ‘semi-finished’ house may be built instead. There are many semi-finished concrete houses, and they have become something of a new landscape in Truku villages. Specifically, ‘semi-finished houses’ are identifiable as single-story concrete buildings with steel bars protruding from their flat roofs. Those who live in semi-finished houses usually plan to construct the second floor, once funds have been secured. Often parents living in such houses will describe the ground floor as the common living area, with the intended first or second floors above reserved for married sons and their households. In fact, building a semi-finished house is not the only way that parents seek to provide a new home for their newly married son(s). Some parents prefer to build a simple hut within the household compound, or in a field belonging to the household. When the first son gets married, the parents then move into the hut and give their original house over to the son, for his household. Other parents might choose to redesign their house, adding new rooms, in order to provide space for the households of their married sons. In such cases, each ‘household’ within the house will have its own rooms or floor space, with a shared kitchen in which members of all of the households eat together. In these situations,
the households are ‘joint family’ rather than nuclear family units.

Living in the parental house after marriage would normally be regarded as a temporary solution for newly married couples because they are usually expected to move out from the husband’s parental house as soon as possible. It is commonly thought that living for any length of time with the husband’s parents will lead to quarrels between the two households. Usually, as soon as the couple have the ability to purchase or build their own house, semi-finished house, or hut, they will move out of the husband’s parents’ house. In many cases, the newly married couple will rent a flat and try to find work in an urban area in Taiwan. In such situations, most couples prefer to ask their parents to take care of their children. The children will remain in the village with the grandparents, with the parents returning to see them at the weekends and during holidays. Thus, even where married couples live in their own households, separate from the husband’s parents, their children may end up living together with the grandparents and unmarried siblings.

By analysing the impact that the introduction of capitalism and privatised land ownership has had on housing, my research on issues of building a house in Truku society shows that these economic transformations have deeply affected the construction of the new house for the newly married couple and the principles of marital residence in contemporary times. In the following sections, I focus on how the cash economics and privatisation of land ownership influence wedding rituals in Truku society.

**Stages of the wedding ritual**

The process of wedding rituals includes various stages of marital exchange. The main participants at the rituals are the groom, the bride, and their respective households and *gxal* groups. Although there is a normal procedure of the wedding ritual, every household might have different ways of arranging and change the order of the ritual. The stages of the ritual described in this thesis is based on the combination of my experiences of participating in several occasions in certain
informants’ wedding rituals and the recounting by many Truku villagers of their memories of their wedding.

Stage 1. *Pnsruhugan*: The groom’s parents entrust one or two elders from among their close kin to ask the bride and her parents informally for their decision about whether to accept the marriage offer, or a decision about timing of the wedding ritual on the marriage. If the bride and her parents decide to start the marriage process, the elders from the groom’s side will negotiate with the bride’s parents or the bride’s household representatives regarding the numbers of pigs to be included in the bridewealth, the details of the brideservice, and the procedure for the wedding ritual.

Stage 2. *Smdangi*: betrothal. This is the first time that the groom and his parents, siblings, and close kin will visit the bride’s house in the process of the wedding rituals. There are many steps in this stage, as detailed below:

1. Giving gifts to the bride’s households: The groom’s household will bring a domestic pig, some small game (such as goats or squirrels), and decorative ornaments to the bride’s house. They are also required to give a hunting knife and a piece of pig thigh to each unmarried brother of the bride.
2. Asking the bride for her final decision: the bride’s parents will ask the bride for her final decision on the marriage. If she holds serious reservations, her parents will return all gifts given by the groom’s household, and refuse the marriage. Afterwards, they may return to stage 1, or, the groom’s side may cancel the marriage. If the bride consents to the marriage, they will continue to the next step.
3. *Pnsruqan kari*: the groom’s and the bride’s parents, on the basis of the results in stage 1, will come to a consensus on bridewealth, brideservice, and the precise procedures for the wedding ritual.
4. A feast is held by the bride’s household: after the groom and his household leave. The bride’s household will slaughter and cook the pig and wild game brought by the groom’s household and they will invite the bride’s parental household, including the bride’s parents’ siblings, close kin and neighbours, to join in the feast.
Stage 3. **Snjiyax**: fulfilment of brideservice.

**Stage 4. Empbkal**: communication/interaction between the groom’s and bride’s households. Before the wedding ceremony, the bride’s householders are welcome to visit the groom’s house. The groom’s household prepare drinks and foods to serve their affines. At the same time, in order to fulfil the brideservice, the groom and his kinsmen and kinswomen also frequently visited the bride’s house.

**Stage 5. Mstrung**: wedding ceremony.

**Stage 6. Wedding ceremony in the Church**: If the bride’s or the groom’s household are Christian, they will hold the wedding ceremony after stage 5 in the church. Generally, this kind of wedding ceremony is held in the groom’s parents’ church. The congregation will decorate the church and participate in the whole process of the ceremony. If the bride is Christian but the groom is not, the wedding ceremony will be held in her church and congregation.

**Stage 7. Dndlian**: after stage 5 and 6 (if necessary), the groom’s household hold the wedding feast.

**Stage 8. Ding Hun**: Ding Hun is a wedding feast held by the bride’s household.

**Marriage and marital exchange**

Before discussing the Truku concept of marriage and marital exchange, I briefly describe how Truku people choose their spouses or children-in-law. The information from my fieldwork about Truku people’s considerations of their children’s marriage leads me to conclude that in Truku society, the significant criteria for Truku people to choose their spouses or children-in-laws are age, economic abilities, religious identities, and rules of incest taboos.
Since the extension of the period of compulsory education from six years to nine years in 1968, most Truku people finish their school life when they are about 16 years old. In this situation, Truku parents insist that their children cannot marry until they are 16 years old. Secondly, parents will tend to be extremely concerned with their potential children-in-law’s personality and ability to work. The virtue of working hard remains the most important factor when parents examine their potential children-in-law. Usually, the parents tend not to permit their daughter’s marriage until their potential son-in-law has a stable job. Furthermore, concerning the ability of the subsistence of the potential son-in-law, Truku parents will also consider the economic conditions of his household, such as his parents’ lands and occupations. Similarly, the parents will seriously consider the economic condition of their potential daughter-in-law’s household, and her characteristics and ability to work. Thirdly, in terms of religious identity, most Truku parents who are Christian will ask their children to avoid marriage with a non-Christian.

Many elders suggest that their parents had unchallengeable authority to decide or refuse the proposal of marriage of their sons or daughters, so their marriage was not determined by themselves. Nevertheless, during my fieldwork, all weddings which I attended were based on marriages that were not determined by the groom’s or bride’s parents, but by the young people themselves. When talking about marriage, many Truku parents complained to me that nowadays they play a passive role because they are usually informed rather than consulted by their children about their decisions to marry. They added that they could not make a decision about their children’s marriage, but they would actively help them to complete the process of the marriage. All information collected by the parents seems not to be determinate, but is still useful for the young unmarried people to carefully anticipate the future of their marriage and thus make a good decision. However, it is important to point out that the parents would also take account of the incest prohibition, when they try to know the background of the household of their potential son-in-law or daughter-in-law. In Chapter 4, I have described that in general incest taboos are extended bilaterally to all second cousins, but that third cousins are marriageable. Nevertheless, many Truku villagers insist that their household’s $gwal$ group is also an incestuous group. In this
situation, incest taboos are extended bilaterally to more than second cousins. Most Truku parents will strongly reject their children’s proposal of marriage, if they find that it is possibly an incestuous marriage. Although there is a set of strict rules of incest taboos in Truku society, in Chapter 4, I described how Truku people sometimes break or change these rules in order to serve their interests in contemporary society.

The *mstrung* stage (stage 5) is the most important stage in the process of the wedding ritual. At this stage, the groom and his close kin, excluding his parents, deliver bridewealth to the bride’s house. Subsequently, the groom will bring the bride and her dowry, including clothes, furniture, weaving instruments, agricultural tools, to his parents’ house (I discuss Truku ideas of dowry later in this thesis). After this exchange of the bridewealth for the bride, the marriage alliance between the bride’s and the groom’s households has been established, and the groom and the bride have become husband and wife.

In Truku society, marriage can be understood as a long-term process in which bridewealth and brideservice are exchanged for the bride. The main element of the bridewealth is the pig. Before the monetisation of bridewealth in the 1960s, the parents would rear at least 3 pigs to coincide with their sons’ attainment of marriageable age. Normally, the groom’s household would provide one pig at the stage of betrothal, and two or three for the wedding ceremony stage. On average, it would take three years or more to rear a pig for bridewealth for the wedding. Indeed, if parents wanted to indicate that their son was not old enough for marriage, or did not yet possess the requisite abilities to establish and maintain his own household, they would say ‘our pigs are not big enough for the wedding.’

Illustrating the native concept of marriage exchange linguistically, the groom’s parents would describe their son’s marriage as ‘*mangal ina*’, that is, taking (*mangal*) a daughter-in-law (*ina*). From the perspective of the bride’s parents, they would describe their daughter’s marriage as ‘*empowsa laqi kuyuh*’, that is, ‘sending out (*empowsa*) my daughter (*laqi kuyuh*). Furthermore, Truku people call bridewealth
‘gnhiyi’. ‘Hiyi’ means body, and ‘gnhiyi’ is the exchange of one’s body. Therefore ‘gnhiyi’ is the exchange of bridewealth, provided by the groom’s household, in return for the bride’s person. Similarly, the brideservice is called as ‘gnjiyax’. Jiyax means ‘time’; and ‘gnjiyax’ refers to the exchange of time. A Truku man who is seventy-three years old explained the meaning of ‘gnjiyax’ that ‘we (the man’s side) take the bride’s body (labour) from her household, so we need to redeem their loss of the bride’s labour by means of our brideservice.’

Truku concepts of marriage exchange also apply to the practice of ‘uxorilocal residence’ (tksiyuk). As I describe Truku concepts of the household, Truku people easily cooperate with outsiders. Generally, if parents do not have any sons but only daughters, they try to effect tksiyuk through the marriage of one of their daughters. A tksiyuk man is regarded as an object. His wife and her household give of their wealth in exchange for his labour and semen, and he is required to live with his wife and parents-in-law. For Truku people, tksiyuk men are in effect almost equivalent to long-term labour hired by the parents-in-law. In addition, the son-in-law has no rights over his wife’s household land.

Concerning the brideservice, the groom’s household should provide between fifty and eighty jiyax for the bride’s side. Jiyax (literally ‘time’) is a unit of time, and one jiyax is equivalent to an adult’s working day. Prior to the monetization of brideservice in the 1960s (I discuss this issue below), the groom and his parents would organise a working group to work for the bride’s household in order to fulfill brideservice. The members of this working group were the groom’s parents, siblings, cousins, and close friends. In order to fulfill brideservice, they worked with the bride’s householders and kin groups. Generally, the bride’s household would decide on the particular type of work to be carried out by the groom’s side, such as building or refurbishing a house, reclaiming lands, converting dry land to rice land, etc. In the working day, the bride’s household might prepare food and drinks for the groom’s workers.

Marriage cannot merely be interpreted as an exchange between the bride’s and the
groom’s household. The *g*xl groups on both the bride’s and the groom’s side play an important role in the process of the wedding rituals. The *g*xl group is the main source of labour for the groom’s household, from which they can recruit members and organise a work team for the brideservice. Similarly, the preparation of the bridewealth is also based on the assistance of the groom’s *g*xl group. In Chapter 4, I argued that the making of wedding gifts in the wedding ceremony is the most important kinship practice of the *g*xl group. In addition, the groom’s household also cooperates with their *g*xl group to organise the wedding feast. Before the monetisation of the wedding feast, each household of the groom’s *g*xl group would be expected to provide one chicken, vegetables, rice, some wild game meat and alcohol. At the end, the groom’s household and their *g*xl group would enjoy the wedding feast with the bride’s household and *g*xl group in the groom’s parents’ compound. Now that the wedding feast has effectively been monetised, each household within the groom’s *g*xl group will give a red envelope containing money to the groom’s household to help them to pay for the feast.

The bridewealth, comprised of pigs, is not consumed by the bride’s householders, but by the *g*xl group. When the bride’s householders receive the bridewealth from the groom’s side, the bride’s parents are duty bound to distribute one portion of the wedding gift to each household of their *g*xl group. Hence, the number of pigs required depends on the number of households in the bride’s *g*xl group involved in the marriage process. The groom’s householders seldom bargain with the bride’s side over the number of pigs. By sharing the bridewealth in this way, the bride’s parents can reconfirm and reinforce kinship identity within their *g*xl group.

From the analysis of the role of *g*xl group involved in process of the wedding; I suggest that if the *g*xl group is the most important kin group in the organisation of weddings, the bridewealth can be understood as the means by which a sister helps to secure marriage resources for her unmarried brothers. I have explained that the groom’s household is expected to cooperate with his parents’ *g*xl group in order to prepare the bridewealth and wedding feast and fulfil the brideservice. His parents’ *g*xl group is unified and recreated through the distribution of his sisters’ bridewealth.
Therefore the marriage not only forms an alliance between the groom’s household and the bride’s household, but also creates an alliance between their respective *gxal* groups. After the marriage, the newly formed household belongs to both *gxal* groups.

In Chapter 3, I described a narrative that women were denied the right to own land in ‘traditional’ Truku society. One of the essential points to support this narrative is that the denial of land rights and inheritance to women was associated with the marriage system, because married women’s parents would have received bridewealth from their husbands’ households. In addition, because the husband’s household pays bridewealth for the bride, the wife’s labour and her children should belong to the husband. Furthermore, the subordination of women in accessing landed property is also derived from the principle of marital residence. After the marriage, many Truku male informants insisted, women were discouraged from visiting their natal household. Many elders regardless of the sexes told me that if a married woman visited her natal community too often, or for long periods, her husband and his natal kin group would consider it an infringement of *gaya*. Actually, the idea concerning the discouragement of women from visiting their natal family is common in the Fushih Village. During the period of my fieldwork, some female villagers who are over 40 years old complained that they would be condemned by their husbands or parents-in-law, if they frequently visited their natal family. In some extreme cases, women who have been subjected to domestic violence at the hands of the husband are condemned rather than protected by their parents on returning to the parental household.

The idea that women are prohibited from frequently visiting their natal family is associated with the notion that women are seen as an object in the marital exchange and that there is a gender hierarchy in economic and property relations in Truku society. However, these concepts are problematic and can be understood as ‘invented tradition’. Like the idea that women are subordinated to men in Truku society, Christian churches, Japanese colonialism, and Taiwanese and Chinese patriarchal cultures in contemporary society might influence and shape the idea of the relationship between women’s social status and marriage. Although many informants
insist that the belief existed in ‘traditional’ Truku society, it is very difficult for them to define the period of ‘tradition’ (see Chapter 3). When I ask them what they mean by saying that women were subordinated to men in ‘traditional’ society, most of them will tell me that they learnt it from their elders. However if we examine the interaction between affines and between married women and their natal family, we find that there is a gap between the idea that women should maintain a distance from their natal family and the actual practices of married women.

After marriage, women retain their family name, taken from their father’s first name. Moreover, from the investigation of divorced women’s lives in Fushih Village, I found that if a woman divorces her husband, she and any children they might have had can move back to her parents’ house. Concerning the compensation arising from the divorce, if the divorce was caused by the husband’s adultery, the husband and his parents’ household have a duty to provide pigs to the wife’s household by way of compensation to be used in the powda gaya ritual. In addition, a widow has the right to live either in her husband’s community, or move back to her natal community. Although married women are expected to stay in their husband’s community, their parents, brothers, and male cousins are free to visit them. It was said that in Truku society it is very important to maintain a good relationship between affines. All Truku people are taught to respect their affines. The complex rules that regulate how people communicate with their affines are closely associated with concepts of gaya. If they anger or upset their affines through bad manners, the elders and their affines will condemn them. Ideally, men should avoid complaining about their wives or using any improper words relating to sex in front of their affines.

When I asked Truku villagers about issues of divorce in Fushih Village, most elders who are more than sixty years old told me that there are few cases of divorce in Truku society. However, the actual divorce rate in the village might not correspond with these informants’ assertions. During the period of my fieldwork, there were three couples involved in divorce, thirteen villagers living apart from their spouses and seven divorced people who had remarried, their spouses also having divorced previously. In addition, there were more than twenty young women living with their
parents who had their child when unmarried, and there were seventeen divorced villagers living with their parents. More than ten young Truku men, aged under thirty complained to me that their wives ‘run away’ to somewhere. Although I did not statistically investigate the condition of marital relationship in every household in my fieldsite, from the observations of my fieldwork in Fushih Village, it is unnecessary to say that the rate of divorce is low in Truku society.

When the Taiwanese anthropologist Yu investigated the divorce rate in Sioulin Village, which neighbours Fushih Village, he estimated that out of 100 couples in 1978 there were around 21 divorces (Yu 1979: 48). However, Yu does not explain the particular definition of divorce which he used. On the basis of his survey, he suggests that the rate of divorce in Truku society in 1978 was higher than in mainstream Taiwanese society (Yu 1979: 48). In addition, he also states that according to government statistics in 1978, the crude divorce rate in Sioulin Township was 1.76, while in mainstream society it was 0.41 (Yu 1979: 49). Reflecting on his statistical analyses, Yu argues that the ‘high divorce rate in Truku society is a ‘social’ problem’ (Yu 1978: 50-51).

However, this Taiwanese researcher is using a particular concept of marriage in attempting to study Truku marriage. In terms of Truku concepts of marriage, I argue that Truku people do not have strict principles of divorce. For many Truku people, divorce is loosely related to morality but more associated with complex rules of compensation. Divorce is described as *mqqada* or *smleq gaya*. The former describes withdrawal from something, while the latter is an infringement of *gaya*. When I asked Truku informants about the meanings of divorce in their society, many villagers aged over sixty told me that because divorce is seen as an infringement of *gaya*, close kin groups of the divorced man and woman, including their parents and siblings, should hold *powda gaya* rituals in order to placate their ancestral spirits and so avoid punishment. Hence, divorce is associated with complex principles of compensation. According to my investigation of ways of dealing with the compensation arising from divorce in Truku society, generally, the man or woman who first asks for a divorce is expected to provide one or two pigs by way of
compensation. The recipient will sacrifice these pigs to their ancestral spirits in the *powda gaya* ritual. At the same time, the man or woman who first asks for a divorce will hold a *powda gaya* ritual with his or her parents and siblings. Furthermore, the remarriage of divorced women or men should also be regarded as a *powda gaya* occasion rather than as a wedding ceremony. The complex relationship between ‘divorce’ and principles of compensation occurs not only in the present but is also recorded by many Japanese anthropologists in relation to Truku life in the highlands (Mori 1917: 232-237; Sayama 1917: 80-82). In this understanding of divorce as it is related to principles of compensation, I argue that Truku people, both men and women, are not strictly prohibited from dissolving a marriage. As such, women are not necessarily oppressed or bound within the institution of marriage.

In terms of the relationship between the production and exchange of pigs and gender inequality, Mojeskas (1982) argues that the women are clearly at a disadvantage, jurally, in central New Guinea, in that the pig is seen as the exclusive property of men. Although the rearing of pigs is based on cooperation between men and women, women have access to land only through men. In Duna society, marriage can be understood as a process in which a pig is exchanged for a bride. Therefore, if the pig is the property of the man, men can also be said to ‘own’ their wives and children. Nevertheless, although many Truku informants suggest that the process of marriage is equal with that of exchange the bride to ‘pigs’, I argue that we cannot simply assume that the exchange of pigs and brides automatically meant that women were at a disadvantage in Truku society.

Women occupy important roles in the marriage process as brides, sisters, kinswomen, and as mother to the groom. In life in the highlands, women had a role in generating bridewealth due to their work in rearing pigs. Indeed, with the monetisation of bridewealth, the groom’s sisters, regardless of marital status, are also expected to sponsor his marriage financially. During my fieldwork, I frequently heard women complaining that they helped their brothers’ weddings, but that their brothers did not contribute to their (i.e. their sisters’) children’s weddings. Although the betrothal is regarded as the formal social occasion for the bride’s and the groom’s respective
households to negotiate the bridewealth and brideservice, the actual details of marriage exchange are agreed through a number of informal negotiations prior to this. I was said that these informal negotiations are usually conducted by the bride’s and groom’s mothers or their elder kinswomen.

Hence, if we take the role of women in the process of marriage into account, we find that marriage, and the exchange of the pig for the bride, cannot simply be understood as an arrangement between men, but is also an exchange between women. Therefore, when identifying the main social and kinship agents involved in the process of marriage in Truku society, we cannot apply a simplistic division between men and women. In Truku concepts of the marriage exchange, I assert that the main actor is not a particular individual, but the household. The marriage should be understood as a process by which two households arrange the exchange of bridewealth and brideservice for the bride.

A story of marriage

In order to highlight the subsequent transformation of the wedding ritual, it is necessary to describe how Truku people conduct wedding rituals and marriage exchanges in contemporary Truku society. During my fieldwork, I took part in the wedding of my landlord’s daughter. Gujung’s daughter, Mary, is over forty years old and has two daughters. Prior to this particular marriage, she had been divorced twice. Her husband, Dogu, has a daughter, and he himself has been divorced once. As I have discussed the situation of divorce in Truku society, the marriage between Mary and Dogu is not unusual. For many people, this kind of wedding is seen as a celebration, but some insist that it is a serious gaya occasion relating to powda gaya ritual. On announcing that they were going to get married, the negotiation of bridewealth and the process of the marriage began.

Dogu’s household is regarded as being among the richer households in Truku society. Dogu is a policeman, his father is a retired civil servant, one brother is a teacher, and the other a doctor. Gujung’s household is also richer than most of those in Fushih
Village. Her husband was the local policeman and all of her children, including Mary, are civil servants.

Gujung is the aunt of Rowty, who was essential in facilitating my research in Fushih Village. Rowty runs a Non-Governmental Organisation dedicated to the preservation and strengthening of Truku culture. Every day I visited his house and helped him to farm his field, and through this I was able to learn Truku language and culture, and become involved in some of the affairs organised by his association. I often met his householders, and as a result I was allowed to have lunch or dinner with them regularly in their house. One day, after working, Rowty and I returned to his house to have lunch. While we were there, I was fortunate to witness the wedding negotiations being carried out between Gujung and Dogu’s parents. Dogu’s parents were accompanied by the head of their village, whose wife is Rowty’s sister. Although the meeting was a private and confidential, Rowty suggested that I participate, and helped me to gain the necessary permission from all of the participants.

When Dogu’s mother asked Gujung for her opinion on the marriage and the bridewealth, Gujung becomes upset and talked about how hard it was for her to bring her children up without a husband, and how sad and unfortunate Mary’s experiences of marriage had been. Then she said, ‘Mary has had two marriages. I just hope she will finally have a good spouse and a good family. I will give her two pieces of my land after the marriage in order to make sure she will be okay for the future.’ Dogu’s mother just said, ‘Don’t worry, we will take good care of Mary’. while Dogu’s father said,

    Dogu has also had an unsuccessful marriage and has a daughter. I help him to buy a new house for his first marriage. This time I will give Dogu and Mary two hundred thousand Taiwanese dollars to refurbish Dogu’s house. I think we can use this bridewealth to help them. This is not a huge sum of money, but I think it is worth it to buy my son’s happiness.

He also added ‘Please tell me how many pigs we should prepare. Should we slaughter the pigs first in our house or ask the pig farm to deliver them directly to your house?’ Gujung did not respond to Dogu’s parents, but just told them that she would need to discuss things with Mary and some of the elders as soon as possible.
After two months of negotiations in Rowty’s house, Mary and Dogu held the wedding feast in the compound of Dogu’s father’s house in Sakura Village. Dogu’s household organised a banquet with more than thirty tables, and more than three hundred people attending the wedding feast. They invited both their relatives, and Mary’s relatives, neighbours, and friends to join the feast. However, many of Mary’s elders decided not to join the feast, and secretly told me ‘It is gaya’. And they added that the scale of their wedding should be smaller than usual, but in fact their wedding feast is significantly larger than most ordinary marriages.

In addition, the cost of Mary’s wedding and the amount of bridewealth are much higher than in most ordinary marriages, because Dogu’s household not only provides the pigs which are requested by Mary’s mother for Mary’s household, but they also share wedding gifts with members of their own gxal group. When I asked Dogu’s father what he thinks about this wedding ceremony, he answers ‘I want to show how I value this marriage to my daughter-in-law and her natal family, and to my own kin group and friends’. Hence, there is a significant difference of opinion between Mary’s elders and Dogu’s father, as well as a difference of opinion on the practice of marriage and its practicalities.

Comparing Dogu’s father’s management of his son’s wedding to the negative perspectives of some elders in Mary’s kin group towards this wedding, we find that there is not a strict rule about marriage in Truku society. For many Truku people, marriage is a part of gaya. Everything relating to gaya should be regarded as a serious issue, but it implies that everyone can have his or her own interpretations. Hence, I suggest that Truku rules of gaya are as flexible as gaya. The flexibility of rules of marriage enables Truku people to continually create and change ways of organisation of the wedding in order to react to the implications of capitalism and privatisation for kinship practices in Truku society.

**Dowry system and landed dowry**
In the process of marriage exchange, in addition to the exchange of bridewealth and brideservice, there is also a simultaneous transfer of dowry, from the bride’s household to the newly married couple’s household. The dowry is described as ‘qngaya nadam uma’ (literally something brought by the girl). According to Japanese ethnographers (Mori 1917; Sayama 1917), when Truku people lived in the highlands, a dowry would include clothes, personal dressing articles, weaving instruments, and various sorts of agricultural tools. The clothes were the most important element of the dowry. The bride, her female householders, and each of her parents’ siblings’ households were expected to provide more than one piece of clothing for her marriage. In contrast to the bridewealth system, according to Mori’s description of the marital exchange in life in the highlands, the number of articles of clothing would depend on the decision of the bride’s household, and was not based on negotiations between the bride’s household and the groom’s household (Mori 1917: 234-6). The provision of clothes for the marriage of a daughter or close kinswoman was the main reason behind the household production of clothes by women on a daily basis. During my fieldwork, dowry includes traditional garments, personal dressing articles, bedding and pillows, and furniture.

Goody suggests that ‘it must be clear that the question of whether or not land was included in a woman’s portion, either as dowry or as inheritance, is of fundamental importance for other aspects of the social system’ (1973: 21). Land was customarily excluded from the dowry system in Truku society. In life in the highlands, due to the practice of exogamy, and the exclusion of land from the dowry, the married women’s husband and children were denied the use of their natal household’s land (Mori 1917: 234; Mowna 1998: 129). If parents gave landed dowry to their married daughters, it was usually related to uxorilocal marriage (Mowna 1998: 130).

However, the practice of excluding land from the dowry changed with the introduction of privatised land ownership in the 1960s. Particularly, after the 1980s, owing to the efforts of feminist movements in Taiwan, the Family Law of the Civil Code makes women able to gain a more equal footing in terms of legal rights over property, inheritance, and land in Taiwan (see Chapter 2). For many parents the
privatisation of land ownership has meant that their daughters have the legal right to own and control landed dowry, rather than control being exercised by her husband or parents-in-law. Secondly, landed dowry should be regarded as one of the strategies by which parents deal with the issue of inheritance.

Reflecting on the implications of policies of migration made by the Japanese colonial government for Truku society, I suggest that the distance between the bride’s natal household and the groom’s has changed since the end of life in the highlands due to population control and land reform policies introduced by the Japanese colonial government in the 1930s. Prior to this, each community in the highlands was based on a consanguineous kin group with incest taboos operating between different households in the same community (see Chapter 3). Under Japanese rule, Truku people were forced to migrate to the lowlands, with households from the same highlands communities being forced to live in different reservations in the lowlands. Through the analysis of the impacts of migration on Truku society, I argue that owing to these governmental policies, marriageable groups might find themselves living in the same reservations, while groups which were forbidden to intermarry were scattered across different areas. In addition, although Truku villages were scattered across the lowlands, the improvements in transportation meant that people were able to communicate with one another far more easily. As a result, the principles of marital residence started to lose force and meaning. As a consequence, if a bride’s parents give their daughter landed dowry, in many cases, it is not difficult for her and her household to use it.

When I asked those parents who had given landed dowry to their daughters, why they had made the decision to do so, many said that they hoped their daughters would have a ‘better life’ as a result. The assumption was that the landed dowry would contribute to the future economic wellbeing of their daughter’s household. For many parents, the main reason behind giving their daughters landed dowry is to improve their daughters’ status in their husband’s kin group, after the marriage. Therefore, if women are able to own land, this situation can change. Many parents also believe that landed dowry can make their daughters more economically
independent from their husbands. Even if they divorce their husbands, they can use their landed dowry to look after themselves and their children. As I have noted, the rate of divorce in Truku society is high and marital relations in many households are not stable. In addition, many Truku elders think that if their daughters’ husbands are suffering from unemployment, their daughters can farm in order to provide for themselves and their household.

The introduction of landed dowry can not only increase the status of women in their own households, but have also redefine relationships between affines. In the process of working the dowry lands as farm lands, regular communication is maintained between the wife, her husband and children, and the households of her parents and siblings. Indeed, I find that many married couples choose to build their houses on land belonging to the wife or mother, and thus live with either the affines or the mother’s kin groups respectively. While the relationship between affines has become increasingly close due to the use of the landed dowry, landed dowry has also contributed to raising tension between sisters and brothers in terms of disputes over inheritance. This tension, though, has arisen more from the issue of inheritance directly, than from the practice of landed dowry.¹

**Monetisation of bridewealth**

Many informants suggested that there has been a dramatic increase in the amount of monetary bridewealth, due to the fact that increasing numbers of Truku people have become wage labourers since the 1970s. However, in analysing the recent history of marriage in Truku society, I find that the practice of using money in bridewealth originated in the economic developments of the 1960s. None of the 27 marriage stories of informants who married before the 1960s included the giving of money as payment of bridewealth. Moreover, the fulfilment of brideservice was an element in all of the 27 marriages. However, most of those informants who married in the 1960s and the 1970s indicated that money had become part of the bridewealth. Despite this,

¹ Discussion of the relationship between landed dowry and inheritance and its implications for the siblingship and kinship practices is too complicated to address in this chapter. I analyse this issue in Chapter 7.
the groom’s household still had to rear pigs in order to afford the bridewealth, and still worked to meet the requirements of brideservice prior to the wedding ceremony. However, among 43 cases of marriage conducted after the 1970s, in 39 instances the payment of bridewealth and brideservice was made entirely by money.

Before discussing the monetisation of bridewealth, and how Truku people accumulate sufficient money to pay it, it is important to note that monetised bridewealth cannot be interpreted as a process in which money is exchanged for a bride. In practical terms, the bride’s parents cannot increase their income through monetised bridewealth. In Truku society, monetised bridewealth is used entirely to purchase pigs for the provision of wedding gifts for the kin group. Indeed, if parents were to keep their daughter’s bridewealth, it would look as if they had sold their daughter, and they would meet with the disapproval of relatives, neighbours, and friends. Their daughter’s marriage would also be dishonoured as a consequence because, for Truku people, human beings cannot be transacted for money.²

In terms of the monetization of brideservice, the value of one jiyax is based on the worker’s average daily salary, and on average ranges between one and two thousand Taiwanese dollars. I was said that customarily, the groom’s household would provide from fifty to eighty jiyax. In other words, they would have to give monetary brideservice of between 50 to 160 thousand Taiwanese dollars to the bride’s household. Although pigs are the most important element of the bridewealth, Truku people are increasingly buying pigs from pig farms rather than rearing them themselves. Before the 1970s the groom’s household and gyal group would prepare the wedding feast by themselves; now, however, they pay money to a catering company to do it.

During my fieldwork, I participated in seven weddings. At each wedding, in excess of ten pigs and twenty tables (ten people per table) were required for the wedding

² There is a famous story on this topic from my fieldsite, regarding a man who, behind his back, had been named ‘Watan one hundred thousand dollars’ by his fellow villagers. One of his daughters was raped. The court’s judgement was that in addition to the prison term, the criminal had to give one hundred thousand Taiwanese dollars to the victim. Many of Watan’s relatives advised him not to take the money, that if he did take it, it would mean that he would be equating his daughter with the money.
feast banquet. On average, the price of a pig was 8 thousand Taiwanese dollars, and the cost of a table in the wedding feast was about 3.5 thousand Taiwanese dollars. Hence, each of these weddings costed in excess of 150 thousand Taiwanese dollars. However, if we also take the monetized brideservice and the cost of gifts given by the groom’s households into account, in addition to the donations made to the Church (if required), the cost of each wedding is in excess of 250 thousand Taiwanese dollars. In fact, the costs of marriage are far too high for most Truku people to afford. According to a government report in 2006 (CIP 2007) over 70 percent of Truku households earned less that the average Taiwanese disposable income of 413 thousand Taiwanese dollars per year.

If poverty is so widespread, how do households meet the expense of weddings? During my fieldwork, people accumulate the money for the bridewealth and the wedding feast in various ways. In times past, land and labour would provide the bridewealth; now, the production of bridewealth has become much more difficult, especially for poorer households. Often, Truku people will take on work as migrant labourers in order to enable themselves, or their brothers or sons, to pay bridewealth and afford all of the expenses of the marriage exchange process.

The gxal group and other kin groups and social networks, such as friends, colleagues, and neighbours, also play an important role in collecting money for the bridewealth and wedding feast. In addition, Truku people use the ‘red envelope’ system to sponsor the wedding feast. I suggest that ‘red envelopes’ are normally associated with Taiwanese and Chinese weddings in Taiwan. Normally, if a guest is invited to join a wedding feast, he or she will bring his or her householders, and give a ‘red envelope’ containing over 1,000 Taiwanese dollars to the host. The basic principle of delayed reciprocity operates: if you give one thousand Taiwanese dollars to the host, he or she will give you more than a thousand Taiwanese dollars in return, when you or your children hold a wedding ritual. So, if 1,000 Taiwanese dollars is given, more than 1,000 Taiwanese dollars is given in return.

According to my investigation of ‘red envelopes’ culture in Truku society, for most
households the new setup for wedding feasts, including the use of ‘red envelopes’, is something of a gamble. The money which is collected from the wedding feast can be understood as the ‘wedding fund’ for the process of the wedding ritual. Most people worry about how much they will receive from the ‘red envelopes’ as this is their principal source of finance for the wedding and the wedding feast. If there is any money left over after expenses are met, the groom’s household can use the remainder to pay for any other expenses incurred by the wedding, or to contribute towards the building or refurbishment of the new home. If there is insufficient money from the ‘red envelopes’ to cover the expenses of the wedding and wedding feast, then the groom’s household may be faced with severe economic problems.

In the practice of wedding feasts, each household within the same gxal group has a duty to support the other households in organising wedding feasts and, in return, has the right to attend the wedding feast. In recent times, the groom’s or the bride’s household send a wedding invitation to each household within their gxal group and social networks.

Those who receive an invitation are expected to attend the wedding feast and also give a ‘red envelope’. Whether or not the recipients of the wedding invitation attend the wedding feast, they are expected by the host to give their ‘red envelopes’ with the proper amount of money. I was taught that if the recipients cannot attend the feast, then they can reduce the sum of money in their red envelopes. However, if guests do not follow the rules regarding ‘red envelopes’ as described above, the host will be put in a most difficult position. Such a situation might lead to quarrels between the host and the guest in the future, and perhaps even cause them to sever their gxal relationship. Hence, the practice of giving red envelopes seems to have become embedded in Truku concepts and practices relating to the gxal group. In this way, I argue, the circulation of wedding funds, based on red envelope ‘culture’, ensures that most people have enough money to meet the cost of the wedding feast and perhaps also the monetary bridewealth.

From exploring various ways in which sufficient money is accumulated in order to
organise a wedding in Truku society, I found that although the funds raised through the giving of red envelopes can cover the expense of the wedding feast, it is not enough to meet all of the costs of the wedding process. Another effective way to gain sufficient money is to borrow money from richer relatives, or from the banks. The groom and his parents may borrow money from or sell parts of their land to their wealthier relatives, neighbours, or friends. Moreover, they may be forced to mortgage land to the banks in order to pay the bridewealth. In addition, they may have to borrow money from richer members of their social network.

Masan is 27 years old. He and his wife, Iwar, have a 7-year-old daughter and live with his parents. Although their marriage has been legally registered, they did not hold a formal wedding ritual. Hence, his parents and parents-in-law did not consider the marriage to be fully ‘established’. Masan and Iwar had actually infringed gaya, by having sex before marriage. Because of the infringement, eight years ago Masan’s parents were obliged to pay two pigs in compensation to Iwar’s parents’ household. However, at the time, Masan and his household were too poor to afford bridewealth or organize the wedding rituals. Masan’s parents were farmers and he and Iwar were part-time workers. In 2005, the government bought two pieces of his father’s land, and thus Masan’s parents had enough money to organize the wedding. Although Masan’s parents-in-law asked for six pigs rather than a monetary sum for bridewealth, the sum of money given by the government was insufficient to meet the costs of a full wedding ritual. Because of this, Masan’s father asked a number of his relatives to help him to pay for his son’s marriage.

Rowty is one of Masan’s uncles and is a man of wealth in Fushih Village. Masan’s household did not own a car, but Rowty freely provided three cars for the wedding. Rowty asked me to drive one of the cars on the wedding day. After finishing the early morning wedding powda gaya, I took Iwar to her natal family in Branow Village. Masan is absent. On the way, she said

One of Masan’s brothers married twice and another married brother committed adultery. In order to organize the weddings for Masan’s brothers, and compensate for the infringement of gaya, (her parents-in-law) had to completely exhaust their reserves of money and lost a great deal of land. It was unfair, particularly because when Masan worked as a migrant labourer, he was regularly asked by his parents to help his
brothers, but his brothers did not contribute to our marriage. My parents wanted to
have a wedding ritual because of gaya, but we were so poor, you know. Even though
my parents wanted to help Masan, they were actually as poor as my parents-in-law.

From Masan and Ivar’s marriage story, we can see that monetization of bridewealth
and marriage has made it difficult for many poor Truku families to hold wedding
rituals. In order for the groom’s household to be able to afford the expense of the
marriage, the groom and his parents must find different ways to earn the money,
even to the point of selling land. In addition, poorer households are increasingly
reliant upon relatives or friends in meeting the costs of wedding rituals. Nevertheless,
while most Truku people suffer from economic difficulties in respect of wedding
expenses, the monetization of weddings has created a social and political space for
wealthier Truku people to display their economic success.

The performance of wealth

The pig not only plays an important role in the marriage process, but is also the main
offering in the powda gaya ritual. Many Truku elders aged over sixty told me that in
life in the highlands, because the pig was the most valued and important element of
bridewealth and sacrifice, it would not be consumed in the normal course of daily
life. Meat that would be eaten at feasts would include domestic chicken, wild game,
and pork given by the kin groups or affines. Hence, pigs were valued not in terms of
daily use, but in terms of exchange in the pre-capitalist period.

Many Truku villagers aged over sixty liked to link the number of pigs with wealth,
when they taught me about the meanings of pigs in the past, that is, before the 1960s.
Prior to the 1960s, pigs symbolized the household’s economic strength. In rearing
pigs, people would need land to cultivate crops for pig feed, to provide living space
for the pigs, and would spend a great deal of time in rearing and caring for them.
Consequently, the pig should be regarded as the surplus of economic production, and
as the principal indicator of wealth. So if a household had many pigs, it meant that it
was wealthy enough to afford the necessary land and labour. In this respect, the
number of pigs it possessed directly reflected the wealth of a household.
Many Truku elders explained that in pre-capitalist times, if the groom’s household was able to afford the number of pigs required by the bride’s household as bridewealth, it meant that the groom’s household had the land, resources and economic ability to ensure the bride’s future. Conversely, if a household was unable to make sufficient payment in pigs in the marriage exchange, they were deemed too poor to request a marital alliance. Generally, if the bride’s household found that the groom’s household was unable to afford an appropriate number of pigs for the wedding ritual, they might reject the marriage as soon as possible or suggest that the groom become a tksiyuk.

With the monetization of bridewealth, the symbolic value of pigs as representative of wealth has in fact increased. During my fieldwork, the average number of pigs involved in the wedding rituals in which I participated, was ten. The maximum number of pigs in the wedding ritual was fifteen, and the minimum was six. Of these wedding rituals, four were held by wealthy households, with at least twelve pigs involved. According to many Truku villagers who are more than fifty years old, before the monetization of bridewealth in the 1960s, the average number of the pigs was only three. Compared to the past, the number of the pigs used in wedding rituals has increased considerably. In addition, in Masan’s case, which I described in the previous section, his household set up only twenty tables for the wedding feast. Recently, in wedding feasts held by the richer households, there have been usually more than thirty tables.

If we consider the number of people involved in slaughtering pigs, in making wedding gifts, and involved in the wedding feast, we can see that the wedding ritual is not only a social space for the richer households to display their wealth, but also an opportunity for them to show their social and political strength. In Masan’s story, I mentioned that his household was too poor to afford the expense of the wedding, and had to ask for help and economic support from Rowty, his father’s cousin. Rowty and his wife are retired elementary school teachers. After retiring from school teaching, he became the deputy head of the local government. They have three sons, two of them are also teachers and the other is a doctor. In contrast to most of those
residing in the village, he and his wife and children have stable full-time jobs with high salaries.

For his eldest son’s wedding ceremony in 1998, Rowty provided twenty-two pigs and set up fifty tables for the wedding feast. The expense of the wedding ritual was almost 500 thousand Taiwanese dollars, twice the average cost of weddings in Truku society. According to Rowty’s memory of his eldest son’s wedding, there were more than 70 adults involved in making the pork wedding gifts, with each pig divided into twenty-five portions; more than 550 households received gifts. He continually recalled that around five hundred guests, including his householders’ kin groups, neighbours, colleagues, and friends, attended the wedding feast. For many informants, this wedding was an unforgettable event in Fushih Village. The wedding was more than simply a kinship event for Rowty’s kin group; it was a public occasion for the village. According to gxal group principles, those who had received wedding gifts from Rowty’s household became members of his gxal group. Therefore, the wedding ceremony not only afforded Rowty an opportunity to display his economic status, it also allowed him to extend and strengthen his household’s social network.

When I asked Rowty why he had provided so many pigs for his eldest son’s wedding, he replied ‘I must do that. This is a social expectation. Honestly, most residents of the village expected me to show my ‘mhowayi’ (generosity). On the other hand, the household of my daughter-in-law is as wealthy as my household’. In saying this, Rowty indicates the importance of this extravagant wedding for two different kin groups: his own kin group and neighbours, and that of his affines. When Truku people lived in the highlands, people would show their ‘mhowayi’ by sharing their wild game with others. Recently, however, people tend to show their ‘mhowayi’ through the distribution of wedding gifts and provision of extravagant wedding feasts. In Chapter 4, I described Truku beliefs regarding the eating of the wedding gifts and the wedding feast, that in eating these foods they believed that they would share in the host’s good fortune and the blessings of his ancestors. In respect of these beliefs, many of the informants from wealthier households said that ‘they did not want to
make their weddings so involved and luxurious, but that the expectations of their kin
group and social network compelled them to do so.’ Hence, while wealthier
households use the wedding ritual to show their wealth and ‘mhowayi’, the ritual
process is also a social space in which the guests can share in the host’s good fortune
through the consumption of the wedding gift and the wedding feast. Holding an
extravagant wedding thus seems to have become a social obligation for the wealthier
households in contemporary Truku society.

The other reason for Rowty to hold a large-scale wedding ritual for his eldest son is
related to the economic status of his daughter-in-law’s household. By further
analysing the implications of Rowty’s speech at his eldest son’s wedding (and also
the one from Mary’s wedding), in which he emphasised the particular social aspects,
we can see that, as in many societies in Southeast Asia (e.g. Carsten 1997), there is
an element of competition between affines in the process of marriage. I argue that
this competitive element is important in motivating Truku people to arrange
weddings which are beyond their economic means. Most Truku people believe that
the only way for them to show the correct attitude towards their own or their
children’s weddings to their affines is to make the scale of wedding as large as
possible. Most people think that the more money the bride or the groom’s household
have invested in the wedding, the greater the benefit to their reputation. If the
wedding represents an alliance between wealthy households, the scale of the
wedding is correspondingly large and the expense increases dramatically.

Rowty’s eldest son’s wife, Limay, comes from another Truku village, and her
household is also wealthier than others in the village. Her father is the first Truku to
attain high rank in the police force, and she is also a teacher in the elementary school.
Limay told me that, for her wedding, her parents provided ten pigs by themselves.
When they added the ten pigs given by her husband’s household, there were up to
twenty pigs which were shared with her household’s kin group and social network.
Compared to the traditional practice of bridewealth, we can see that there is a
significant difference in this wedding ritual. Firstly, there were a total of twenty-two
pigs provided by Rowty’s household but not all were given over to the bridewealth.
When many Truku villagers who are over fifty years old recalled their wedding, they said that the groom’s household would give all its pigs in bridewealth to the bride’s household, but the groom’s kin group would not receive wedding gifts. However, their wedding in terms of giving bridewealth is different from Limay’s wedding.

After giving ten pigs to Limay’s household, however, Rowty kept twelve pigs for his kin group, gxal group, and social relations. Secondly, according to the memory of the wedding of many Truku villagers who are over fifty years old, the bride’s household was not obliged to prepare any pigs themselves for the wedding ritual. However, Limay’s parents contributed ten pigs to the wedding. Moreover, her parents also organised a wedding feast for a different day from the one held by Rowty’s household. Limay described that there were about thirty tables set for the wedding feast organised by her household. In the past, though, this wedding feast would only have included the bride’s household and gxal group.

The events organised by Limay’s household for her wedding were actually related to the Ding Hun, the engagement ceremony. This is an innovation in the wedding ritual, not traditionally included in Truku weddings. Ding Hun is a Mandarin term referring to engagement in Taiwanese and Chinese culture in Taiwan. When I asked Truku villagers how to say Ding Hun in the Truku language, many of them answered that Ding Hun is Ding Hun, because ‘we did not have this culture in the past’. But a few people use ‘smiyu’ to refer to Ding Hun. Smiyu means mutual exchanges. These villagers explained that Ding Hun (smiyu) is a feast organised by the bride’s household in order to share food with the groom’s household, because the groom’s household also invites the bride’s household to join its wedding feast.

The Ding Hun ritual is held by the bride’s household, and is a wedding feast specifically for the bride’s household and kin groups. In organising this wedding ritual, the bride’s household will slaughter pigs and distribute wedding gifts to members of their kin groups and social relations. On the groom’s side, if the bride’s household holds a Ding Hun ritual, both the bride’s household and the groom’s

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3 I did not attend Rowty’s eldest son’s wedding, but participated in his two younger sons’ weddings. In these two weddings, he also prepared twelve pigs for sharing with his kin group and social relations.
household distribute wedding gifts separately. It is important to point out that the
groom’s household is required to give the bridewealth (pigs) to the bride’s household
during the Ding Hun ritual. At night, the bride’s household will have a wedding feast
and invite their guests to join. Ding Hun rituals seem increasingly to be seen as an
essential part of the process of wedding rituals. Even those from poorer households
will insist that the Ding Hun ritual is necessary when they or their daughters get
married.

Although many households are too poor to hold Ding Hun rituals, the Ding Hun
ritual provides many wealthier households with the opportunity to display their
social, economic, and political status at their daughters’ weddings. In recent times,
increasing numbers of parents (of the brides) have used the Ding Hun, and to an
increasing degree, to show how much they value their daughter’s marriage. The
larger the scale of the Ding Hun ritual held by the bride’s side, the more they
demonstrate their valuing of and commitment to the marriage. However, because of
this, the wedding has become a competition between the bride’s household and the
groom’s household. For the groom’s household, the number of pigs to be prepared
usually depends on the performance of the Ding Hun ritual, and vice versa. Because
of this competition between the bride’s and the groom’s households in the marriage
process, many informants described the wedding ritual as a competition in
slaughtering pigs.

Most parents expect that their daughter will gain status from a larger scale Ding Hun,
and will thus be treated more respectfully by the husband, parents-in-law, and affines.
The bride’s parents also use landed dowry to show how much wealthier they are than
their affines, again, in order to increase their daughter’s status. The giving of landed
dowry is related to the economic status of the parents. Many poor households cannot
afford to provide landed dowry for their daughters. Those who own sufficient land
are able to offer landed dowry to their daughters. During my fieldwork, landed
dowry seemed most often to be given in marriage exchanged between the wealthier
households. The performance of the Ding Hun ritual and giving of landed dowry on
the bride’s side, also influence the interaction between affines in the future. Many
informants said ‘We don’t want our affines looking down on us.’

**Hierarchy and the wedding**

The house represents not just a social unit, but also a variety of hierarchies and divisions. Hierarchy and divisions exist within the house, but also between different houses (McKinnon 1995). The house is not only a social space, but also a physical site. In considering the materiality and continuity of the house, we must also consider how the ‘house’ is related to systems of economic stratification and to hierarchies of status, prestige, or ritual power (Waterson 1995: 51). Hence, Gillespie suggests that ‘viewing these objects as the materialization of historical memory of the house, and not merely as proof of one’s wealth or economic status, adds a new dimension to understanding their [local people’s] values’ (2000: 19).

For richer people, the organisation of a luxurious wedding is not the only way to display their wealth and honour in Truku society. They also can use their house, as a symbol, to represent their honour and wealth. In pre-colonial society, the bamboo house was not permanent, and Truku people would often destroy their house and construct a new one in a new place. Although each bamboo house was structurally simple and small, people would use the skeletons and teeth of large wild animals, and the skulls of enemies, to display the honour of their household (Mori 1917: 236; Sayam 1917: 22). This culture still remains in contemporary Truku society. Many Truku people prefer to display teeth or skeletons of large wild animals in their living room or use them to decorate their house. When I visited their houses, they would proudly explain the history of these collections, some being their ancestors’ heirlooms and some the trophies of their hunting.

Most luxury houses or villas in Fushih Village are owned by Truku elites. Most of these elites are government servants, teachers, local politicians, police officers, etc. Given that, by comparison, most people do not have full-time jobs or stable incomes, these elites are significantly richer. Moreover, they also occupy dominant positions in terms of politics, in that local political affairs are controlled by them. For these
Truku elites, the way to show their honour and wealth is not to use wild animal skeletons or enemy heads, in decorating their houses, but to build beautiful concrete houses in a modern style, or a villa with a well-designed garden, and to use their own or their children’s wedding ceremony to display wealth. In Fushih Villages, the owners of large and impressive houses are usually members of these elites.

These luxury houses and villas are scattered across Truku communities and are an arresting part of the landscape. Rowty’s villa, for example, is luxurious. It is a large concrete building, with two floors of around 350 square meters, and a well-designed landscaped garden of more than 400 square meters. Rowty’s brother, Kinjaw, lives next to him. Kinjaw is a full-time worker in the Taroko National Park and his wife has a small-scale grocery shop. Kinjaw and his householders, including his wife and three children, live in a single-story, semi-finished concrete house, measuring only 80 square meters. Kinjaw and his wife decided to use two thirds of the house to run a grocery store, and one third for their living space. There are two rooms in his house. One is a bedroom for all the householders, and the other is a children’s study room.

Most of the houses surrounding Rowty’s villa are either semi-finished concrete houses or poor houses.

For Truku people, the house is regarded as a symbol of economic success. Although Kinjaw’s house is far simpler and smaller than Rowty’s, his house is nevertheless his most important and valuable item of property. He was a professional soldier for ten years, and used his retirement pay to build his house. Similarly, when migrant labourers have earned a lot of money the first thing that they usually do is build, purchase, or refurbish their own or their parents’ house. In many cases, when people receive a large amount of money as compensation from the government in respect of land expropriation, they start to build, refurbish, or purchase a house. However, it is important to point out that most people, in order to own a new house, would have to work very hard for a long period of time.

If the measure of a household’s wealth is reflected in the condition and appearance of its house, the differences between luxury houses and semi-finished houses, or poor
houses, offers a means of gauging the extent of the wealth gap in Truku society. With the privatisation of land ownership and the monetisation of bridewealth, the cost of weddings now exceeds the economic capacity of most Truku households. In order to gather sufficient money to invest in a wedding, most people need to ask their richer relatives for help, or borrow money from them. However, for most poor people, the amount of money borrowed from richer relatives is too much to pay back quickly, and turns into a long-term debt. Consequently, after the expense of a wedding, the relationship between households is often transformed in that the poorer family and its richer relatives become debtors and creditors respectively.

Furthermore, many people decide to sell their land to their rich kin in order to secure enough money to organise a wedding. As a result, wealthier households increase their share of landed property, while land shortage has become a serious issue for many poor households. Therefore, the monetisation of weddings has effectively worked in the favour of richer Truku households, in terms of land distribution, with rich families becoming increasingly influential in society. For many poor Truku villagers, the accumulation of wealth in these richer households is seen as immoral. They accuse the wealthier people who are politicians and civil servants of ‘selling out’ their ‘people’. During the period of registration in the 1960s, they ‘stole’ many villagers’ land and then become rich. Furthermore, they are the mediators between the local people and the state, so they control the management of the financial resource given by the state in the village.

Reflecting on both Rowty’s eldest son’s wedding and Mary’s wedding, we can see that both are based on a marriage alliance between Truku elites. In fact, Truku elites prefer to form marriage alliances with each other. If the parents of young people do not agree to a marriage, they will try to delay it. In order to do so, parents will often articulate their disagreement with the marriage in terms of an infringement against *gaya*, on the part of the young couple. As such, one or two pigs will be provided, as compensation, by the household of the lover of their son or daughter. Although this does not mean that they altogether refuse the marriage, by delaying the wedding the parents can use this strategy to communicate their opinions. Conversely, most poor
households cannot afford such a strategy. Thus, with the monetisation of bridewealth and wedding rituals, marriage not only provides elite households with the opportunity to create alliances with one another, it also functions to produce and reproduce a social and political hierarchy between wealthier households and poorer households.

**Conclusion**

I have shown that the process of marriage is not only the process of forming a newly married household and a marital alliance, but also involves the building of a new house. The fulfilment of the bridewealth and the building of a new house for the newly married couple are essential elements of Truku marriage. Prior to capitalisation and the privatisation of land ownership in the 1960s, the most important objects in the bridewealth were pigs. However, after the 1960s, although pigs are still included in the bridewealth, they are purchased from the pig farm rather than reared by hand. In addition, the preparation of the wedding feast has also been monetised. Moreover, cash economics and the privatisation of land ownership have greatly increased the cost of building a new house; as most households are suffering from poverty, they cannot afford to build a new house. Overall, we can say that the transformation of the economic environment has had a significant impact on Truku marriage culture.

Many Truku male villagers suggested to me that gender hierarchy in Truku society is based on the marriage system. However, I argue that the connection between gender hierarchy and marriage is problematic in Truku society. From analysing the process of marriage; we can see that women in both the bride’s and groom’s household play an active role in the practices of marital exchange and organising wedding rituals. After marriage, the wife still maintains close relationships with her natal family and kin groups. Furthermore, after privatisation was introduced into Truku society in the 1960s, the advent of landed dowry has made many Truku women become more economically independent from their husbands and gain the economic ability to provide for their households. Hence, marriage is not a mechanism to make Truku
women subordinated to men in gender, economic, and property relations

While many people are finding it difficult to prepare for weddings, weddings also provide a few wealthier households with the opportunity to display their economic status and household honour. In Truku society, the most meaningful symbols of wealth for most households are the pig and the house. Richer households can display their wealth by giving more pigs than expected by the bride’s household, and by providing a beautiful house for the newly married couple. However, most householders are too poor to afford the costs of the wedding, or the building of a new house. By analysing the relationship between the economic conditions of a household, and weddings in contemporary society, I argue that the wedding is one mechanism by which economic inequality between households is converted into a social and political hierarchy.
Chapter Six. Small Businesses and the Women Entrepreneurs

In this chapter, I focus on household businesses in Fushih Village. Shops are one of the most important aspects of household economics, and most of the shopkeepers in the village are women. The significance of these shops lies not only in the fact that they are run by women, but also because they are a place where women can exchange agricultural products which they have cultivated, discuss how to increase their income through mutually shared opportunities, and share information in general. Furthermore, these shops are the centre of a social network, which is created by women through economic and kinship practices in everyday life. By examining the local meanings and roles of such shops, I describe the characteristics of the various economic activities undertaken by women, and reflect on the transformation of the social and economic status of women in contemporary Truku society.

In his study of the transformation of the relationship between the shopkeeper and customers in England, Carrier (1994, 1995) points out that before the eighteenth century, shopkeepers in England made relatively little distinction between family and business. At that time, most English people were peasants, and their way of life and village institutions were dominated by the linked values of localism and self-sufficiency. As such, ‘trade was not seen as differentiated from social relations more generally, but was coupled and subordinated to them’ (Carrier 1994: 364). Shopkeepers and householders commonly ran these small businesses together. However, the shop was also part of the shopkeeper’s house. The relationship between the shopkeeper and the customer was based on close personal relations and kinship. Compared to the ‘traditional’ model of such trade, the relationship between the shop and customers has become an impersonal one; after the eighteenth century the shop and the shopkeeper’s household gradually emerged as separated institutions (Carrier 1995: 77-8).

The characteristics of the shop in the village are similar to those described in Carrier’s
study. The shop is intrinsically part of the shopkeeper’s house, household, kinship, and social relations. As with Truku society in general though, the shops in Fushih Village are also part of the larger Taiwanese economic context (i.e. capitalisation). In their analysis of household economics in capitalist society, Gudeman and Rivera (1990) provide an account of households that run small businesses in order to increase their earnings, and discuss the household model of the market in rural villages in Colombia (1990: 59-60). They suggest that the household should be seen as an important practical and conceptual unit in terms of economics, kinship systems and political organisation. In this chapter, I analyse not only the local meanings of village shops, but also situate this discussion in the context of economic development in both Truku society and in Taiwan.

In describing shops as business operations, and the various types of economic activities in which women engage, I seek to situate the place of household economics in contemporary Truku society. In this chapter, I discuss how women have become increasingly important in Truku society as a result of the processes of capitalisation of Truku society within the politico-economic and social dimensions of communities.

**The decline of male-led economic activity**

During a period of economic growth in Taiwan, from the 1970s onwards, increasing numbers of Truku people abandoned their cultivated lands in order to become waged labourers or migrant labourers. There was also an increase in non-agricultural income and an accompanying decrease in agricultural income. For example, agricultural earnings in Sioulin Township in 1967 counted for 73.9% of the total income, while non-agricultural earnings were 26.1% (Hualien County 1967). In contrast in 1972 the rate of agricultural earnings decreased of this total dramatically to 47.7%, while non-agricultural earnings increased to 52.3% (Hualien County 1972). In 1985, non-agricultural earnings amounted to 82.2% of the total income in the township (Hualien County 1985).

Reflecting on these governmental statistical records, we can see that there is a trend that
the agricultural income has significantly decreased from 1972 to 1985. However, it does not mean that cultivation was not important for the subsistence of the household during this period. These statistics were investigated by how much harvest of cash crops was put in the market in Sioulin Township. Nevertheless, in terms of agriculture, with large numbers of men becoming migrant labourers in the 1970s, women began to farm their own or their husband’s lands. Subsequently, the way of agriculture shifted from economic agriculture to subsistence agriculture. Most agricultural produce was not sold at market, but was used by female farmers to contribute to the subsistence of their households or to exchange and share with their neighbours and relatives. As such, the economic contribution made by women has been significantly underestimated by official statistics.

Because household income from the 1970s to the 1990s depended heavily on waged or salaried income earned for the most part by men, it was men, as fathers and husbands, who were in effect ‘heads’ of households. During this period, the earnings from absentee migrant labour constituted a large part of the economic income of the village. The particular household affiliation of a migrant labourer was expressed in terms of a continuing responsibility to contribute towards household maintenance. The contribution to household earnings made by migrant labourer in Truku society is similar to that depicted in Murray’s ethnography of migrant labourers and their families in Lesotho. He argues that ‘the capacity of particular households to invest in the domestic economy is thus largely determined by their wage-earning capacity in the industrial sectors’ (1981: 88).

Though largely absent from their hometowns, Truku men retained their authority in the household because their earnings were, in most cases, the mainstay of household income. However, increasing unemployment and economic recession from the 1990s onwards, has meant that increasing numbers of Truku men have been unable to support their households economically, and has also contributed to changes in the sexual division of labour. Moreover, increasing numbers of unemployed Truku men have fallen into alcoholism over the last decade. Furthermore, most households, due to considerable economic difficulties, are threatened by poverty, and the position of men
in the household has been challenged. During the period between the 1970s and 1990s, while Truku men have worked for the most part as waged (migrant) labourers far from their cultivated lands, Truku women have taken up agricultural work in addition to their pre-existing domestic duties. Since the 1990s, while men have worked as migrant labourers, or been unemployed, women have created their own businesses and contributed in various ways to their households and economic development.

Shops in Fushih Village

My fieldwork could well have focused entirely on the many different activities which occur within various small businesses. In the morning, many residents have breakfast at their favourite breakfast bars before work, and women often have a drink with their friends in these bars after finishing the first period of work, which begins at around four a.m. in the fields. I regularly had breakfast, met informants, and chatted with them at breakfast bars or vendors’ premises. I often alternated between different village snack bars for lunch and dinner. During work periods I met many informants in front of the grocery shops and snack bars, gained a great deal of local information in doing so, and was able to relax with my informants in these places after work. At lunchtime, many labourers enjoyed taking a break with their friends in snack bars, karaoke clubs, or grocery shops, and many farmers bought snacks, beverages, and alcohol from grocery shops, to bring to their huts to share with their friends in the fields.

Between meals, many Truku women gossiped and drank in front of the grocery shops, or sang with their friends in karaoke clubs. In the evening, teenagers would have fun with their friends in karaoke clubs, or played computer games in Internet coffee shops after school. After dinner, many residents liked to enjoy the cool evenings, met their friends, and relaxed in their favourite shops. At night, I was often invited to sing and drink in karaoke clubs with informants. In addition, these grocery shops provide for daily necessities in the field.

These shops are the most popular public place for Truku residents in the village. The younger generation call these places ‘community broadcasting stations’ (guang-bo-jhan...
in Mandarin), where adults publicly exchange any information about the affairs of others, scandals, and funny stories. Parents can even learn about what their children are up to outside of the family home. The number of shops in Fushih Village is significantly high. During my fieldwork, there were fifty-seven commercial shops managed by residents, in a village with less than fifteen hundred residents and 635 households. This amounted to approximately twenty-six residents, or eleven households, per shop. In other words, each shop depended on only a small number of customers to survive.

Among the many different kinds of shops, snack bars and grocery shops are the most important and popularly attended in the course of everyday life. Snack bars not only provide food, but are also sites for people to congregate for relaxation and conversation. Adults (men and women), adolescent peer groups, and members of households all socialise in snack bars after work and on the weekends to share food and enjoy karaoke.

In respect of grocery shops, there are 20 premises, including 4 betelnut shops, in the village. These grocery shops are multi-functioned, commercial venues that provide daily necessities and offer various forms of entertainment. Each grocery shop provides beverages, alcohol, cigarettes, snacks, candy, ingredients, daily necessities, and betelnut. Larger shops, such as ‘bargain’ shops, provide special commodities, such as cooking utensils, farm implements, clothes, stationery, and household wares. Grocery shops also function as sites for amusements and leisure. Some shops have a karaoke machine out front, while others have a number of computers for younger Truku to play on-line games on. Often grocery shops become temporary indoor or outdoor bars, and friends buy and share alcohol and snacks there. Indeed, residents often brought their own bench from their house to their favourite grocery shop in order to sit and chat with friends.

It is important to point out that there are other businesses which supplied household goods. Although residents can buy fruit and vegetables from local shops, many also buy from commercial trucks. Each morning there were four commercial trucks operated by people who are either Taiwanese or Chinese, which would stop at the village to sell those special fruits and vegetables not easily available in indigenous communities. In

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1 Appendix I shows the details of each shop from 2005 to 2006 in Fushih Village.
the evening, two commercial trucks, again run by either Taiwanese or Chinese, would go around the village selling sundry goods and household products. There was no butcher or fishmonger, so the residents buy meat and fish in the nearest Taiwanese village, Hsienchen Village, or in the nearest city, Hualien City. If residents want to get fish, they will wait for itinerant fish vendors or go to the closest harbour. In addition, there were twice-weekly night markets in the square in front of the village office, on Wednesdays and Sundays, where large numbers of vendors would provide food, snacks, clothing, and daily products. Truku people usually ran the night markets, though most of them were not residents of Fushih Village.

**Female shopkeepers and their shops**

It is Truku women, rather than men, who run the majority of shops. In Fushih Village, there were 57 shops, 43 of them run principally by women, with only 14 shops operated by men. Of the 43 female shopkeepers, more than a half were over 40 years old, and 16 were grandmothers over the age of 50. In terms of marital status, only 4 shopkeepers were divorced, 4 are widows, and one was unmarried; the rest of the female owners were married. Table 6.1 gives a breakdown of the principal shopkeepers by gender:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of shop</th>
<th>Gender of principal shop keeper</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grocery</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snack bar</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast bar</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betelnut shop</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barber-shop</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest-house</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Gender of principal shopkeepers, Fushih Village (2005-2006)

The female shopkeepers conduct business, make decisions about the shop, and have complete managerial authority. Indeed, I often heard the men who assisted said ‘I dare not make any decision without permission from my wife or mother. Instead, if you (the

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2 Hualien City is more than 15 kilometres from the village, and it takes more than thirty minutes to Hsienchen Village by motorcycle.
3 Among those shops run by woman, there were 16 grocery shops, 11 snack bars, five breakfast bars, four betelnut shops, four barbershops, and three other types of shop. Compared to this, there were only six snack bars, four grocery shops, and three guesthouses run by men.
4 Three of those women who own shops in the village were of unknown marital status.
customer) have any questions, please wait and ask her.’ Furthermore, many female managers’ husbands complained to me that ‘we are always misunderstood by friends as being too stingy to let them take something on account from my wife’s shop. Actually, I do not have any right to suggest how to run the business, because it belongs to my wife!’

Although such shops are for the most part controlled by women, the husband and unmarried children usually volunteer or are expected to assist in the business of the shop. Sometimes, shopkeepers would ask their friends or neighbours to help them to take care of their shop for a while. However, there is a significant difference between assistance provided by the shopkeeper’s householders, and assistance provided by friends. Only members of the owner’s household are allowed to sit behind the cash desk and have the key to open the cash register. Friends or neighbours are not allowed the cash register key, and are expected not to deal with any transaction, but to carefully watch the shop, or tell the customers to wait for the shopkeeper. As such, the shop should be regarded as a small-scale co-operative enterprise for the female shopkeeper and her household, although the managerial authority is in her hands.

The opening hours of shops run by women largely depend on domestic duties, such as taking care of children, grandchildren and elders, cooking meals, and dealings in relation to their husbands etc. Female shopkeepers often decide to close for brief periods in order to attend to various domestic duties, because of which most shops do not have regular or dependable opening hours.

Meiying makes wonderful coffee, and has opened an ice cream café in the village. She is 45 years old and has a son who is a junior high school student. Her customers are always reminded to ‘please remember to call me to check my schedule first, before you go to my shop.’ In order to provide a better quality of education for her son, she decided to register him at a school in a Taiwanese area, far from Fushih Village. She had to take him to school early in the morning and pick him up after school. Sometimes, she had to take her mother downtown, far from Fushih Village. At night, she prepared meals for her son and husband, and often takes part in church activities. Because of her busy daily
life, the opening hours for her café were somewhat erratic. Similarly, Hana, a widow of more than sixty years of age, ran a grocery shop. The opening hours of her shop were fitted around her domestic affairs, taking care of her grandchildren, and farming. When she took a rest at midday, the shop was closed.

In terms of location, I found that most shops are attached to or part of the shop-holder’s house. Some are on the ground floor while others are in the household compound. The geographical admixture of commercial space and domestic space not only enables female shopkeepers to tackle both domestic affairs and the operation of the shop at the same time; it also means that the business of the shop is embedded in the daily life of the household.

**The shop as a women’s centre**

The shop is central to Truku women both in terms of domestic affairs, and as a means to improve their individual and household income. Shops enable women to effectively add to their household budget, in terms of household subsistence. As Truku women are often without regular, dependable individual or household income, shops allow them to supply their household subsistence needs in that they offer both savings and credit facilities.

The married couple is the basic economic unit of the household, and the earnings of the husband and the wife are regarded as joint property. The person who controls the household budget is the wife rather than the husband. In order to do so, many Truku women organise a savings and credit society, *hui.*⁵ Women often use money collected from the *hui* to afford the larger household expenses, including, housing (e.g. type and value of dwelling, mortgage, additions, renovations and installations); food and shelter; household operation (e.g. communication, child care, household supplies); household furnishings, equipment and transportation; healthcare; education (e.g. tuition and supplies); and payment of the children’s bridewealth or dowry and wedding.

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⁵ *Hui*, a Taiwanese term ‘會’, refers to a society or institution.
The hui is a mode of saving which usually involves about fifteen to twenty members, called friends of hui. One of the members would be nominated as the head of the hui. At the beginning, all members must determine the deadline for handing over ‘hui’ money (i.e. a date in each month) to the head of the hui, and determine the fixed amount of hui money, which ranges from 10 to 20 thousand Taiwanese dollars. Each month only one member receives the total amount of money collected from all other members. The hui will be terminated after each member has received the total collection once. Afterwards, all members decide whether or not they wish to continue the hui. In terms of deciding who will receive money, the hui in Truku society is similar to ‘kut’ in Pulau Langkawi, in that ‘the order in which the different member receive the total sum is fixed by drawing lots or by mutual agreement at the beginning of the kut’s existence’ (Carsten 1989: 133). In addition, a small sum is often deducted from the hui money to give to the head of the hui.

Being the head of the hui is in fact both difficult and risky. The head of the hui has to ensure that all of the members have paid their money before the deadline. The head of hui is always expected by members to administer the hui honestly and responsibly. However, some members are not able to hand over the money on time. In this situation, the head of the hui is often expected to help these members make their payments. Afterwards, these members have to repay hui money to the head of hui as soon as possible. Therefore, the head of the hui is not only an honest person, but should also have sufficient financial resources to deal with members’ credit. Interestingly, many heads of hui in Truku society are also female shopkeepers. Hence, the shop is not only a place of transaction, but also a centre for hui members (usually women) to deal with the business of the hui. The heads of hui usually prefer to recruit people they know and trust as hui members. Members must be reasonable and reliable, capable of committing themselves to giving a fixed sum every month over a period of more than one year. Most of them are close relatives, neighbours, and friends of the head of hui. If the head of hui is a shopkeeper, most members are his or her regular customers.

Secondly, the shop is a place for Truku women to exchange their agricultural products and barter craft produce. Because of the detrimental impact of government policies on
agriculture, including the declining involvement of men in agricultural work, agriculture is now principally the province of Truku women. As such, Truku women usually work alone in their fields, and the main goal of cultivation is not to produce high-profit cash crops, but to support the subsistence of their household. Cultivation also enables women to conduct exchange with relatives and friends, for different sorts of agricultural products. The shop is the most suitable venue for them to conduct this exchange. Although Truku women are not inclined to barter their agricultural products in the shop, it serves as a useful social focal point and opportunity to share products with other people.

Thirdly, shops often serve as ‘job centres’ for women. In recent times, increasing numbers of craft studios and Non-Governmental Organisations have been founded and run by women in the village, with the assistance of the government. The main aim of these craft studios and Non-Governmental Organisations is to preserve and transmit weaving culture to the next generation, and to produce ‘traditional’ style clothing and commodities, combining both innovative and ‘traditional’ methods of weaving. The government encourages women to set up these studios by providing a financial subsidy; they can also sell their products to increase their income. Hence, these studios and Non-Governmental Organisations are often a source of part-time and full-time employment and income for residents. Importantly, it is female shopkeepers who operate many of the craft studios and Non-Governmental Organisations. Their shops serve as venues for the craft studios and Non-Governmental Organisation offices. As such, shops are not only places of commercial transaction, but also the sites in which ‘traditional’ Truku weaving is produced and transmitted to younger residents.

Craft studios and Non-Governmental Organisations can be viewed as all-female work forces, including the leadership. The female heads prefer to hire female relatives, friends and neighbours who live close to the studio. They might ask their children to go directly to the studio after school, dealing quickly with their housework in working hours. In preparing meals, they cook and share foods together, and welcome the householders of those who assist them in their work. In terms of the distribution of work time, women workers tend to arrange their domestic and working duties together.
Finally, a shop is a public place, an information centre and an unofficial ‘human resource’ for female residents. As few women have a full-time job, these shops can help with the heavy burdens of domestic work. They often ask shopkeepers to look after their house, or leave children and elders in the shop, when they work outside. Female farmers will look for part-time assistants or volunteers to work with them at busy times. In fact, most women prefer to work with their kin groups, close friends, and neighbours. The customer base of most shops is based on the shopkeeper’s kin group and social network. Therefore, I suggest that the shop represents a multi-functional centre, based on the economic activities of kinswomen and female neighbours.

**Economic transformation, kinship practice, and the emergence of shops**

The emergence of commercial shops, I argue, is representative of the development of capitalism in contemporary society. Exploring the development of commercial shops helps us understand how capitalism influences married life, marriage, the sexual division of labour in the household, and gender relations in respect of economic life in Truku society. Truku people call grocery shops ‘sbrigan’, which means a place of transaction. Before the 1960s, a ‘sbrigan’ referred specifically to a shop run by Taiwanese near Truku communities. Many informants told me that ‘our ancestors indeed did not know how to conduct business, but they were used to bartering and exchanging goods.’ In addition, linguistically there is no Truku term for ‘snack bar’, as the snack bar has only existed in Truku society for around ten years.\(^6\)

I argue that shops are embedded in the kinship practices of the shopkeeper. By examining the sources of the funds which initially support the founding of the shop, I found that the establishment of the shop is the result of a complex of kinship practices based around the marital relationship and the sexual division of labour within a variety of economic activities. Initially, the shop was founded on the husband’s money as a way

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\(^6\) Rather than say they ‘visited a snack bar’, Truku people would say that they went to someone’s place to have a meal or drink.
for the wife to help make up for any financial shortfall in the household. However, the profits from the shop have, in some cases, gradually changed in significance, from supplementary to subsistence, due to the increase in unemployment and difficult economic circumstances.

**Shops as the result of marriage strategies**

It was only after Chinese soldiers came to live in Truku communities in the 1960s, and opened businesses, that Truku people also became involved in starting up and operating local shops. The economic and social structure of Truku society changed significantly with the creation of the mountain road from the village to the western urban area. The road was established in 1960, and constructed by Chinese soldiers who were brought in by the KMT at the end of the 1940s. While the road was being built in 1960 the government established ‘Sibaw Veteran Farm’ for Chinese soldiers, near Fushih Village. When the Chinese soldiers originally came to Taiwan, most were single or forced to separate from their wives. After settling on the veteran farm, increasing numbers of veterans went on to marry Truku women. More than two thirds of the 100 veterans who married Truku women, moved to their Truku wife’s natal community (Lin 1988: 27). During my fieldwork, there were fifteen households which are based on intermarriage between a Truku woman and a Chinese veteran in Fushih Village.

Although marriage is regulated by practices and rules in most societies, Leach suggests that ‘in all viable systems, there must be an area where the individual is free to make choices so as to manipulate the system to his advantages’ (1962: 133). According to

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7 At the end of the 1940s, the KMT lost the fight against the Chinese Communist Party and, as a result, fled to Taiwan. During this period, the KMT brought two million Chinese soldiers to Taiwan in order to organise a counterattack against the Chinese Communist Party and regain authority in China. However, this struggle was eventually in vain. The KMT government therefore began a series of work programmes to exploit resources in the mountains and forest areas where most indigenous people lived in order to build infrastructure. The work was done by Chinese soldiers, and most soldiers were prohibited from marriage. Upon finishing, though, soldiers were allocated land to cultivate (veteran farms) which were usually seized from indigenous people legally or illegally.

8 Chinese soldiers on the veteran farm were angered by those Chinese officers who were allowed to bring their householders and relatives to Taiwan. Most of the soldiers were unmarried men and did not have relatives on the island. Many of my Chinese veteran informants in Fushih Village said that they had been forced to fight in the Civil War by the KMT. They were only teenagers at the time, and were torn from their family and social networks.
Bourdieu’s practice theory, in order to maximize the economic and symbolic profits associated with the setup up of new marital relationships, people would manipulate various matrimonial strategies to pull off a ‘fine marriage’ rather than just a marriage (1990: 148). Individuals might stretch, twist, ignore and otherwise violate the rules to suit their personal desire. Lipuma suggests that ‘marriage is never simply the execution of the rule but the strategy and logic whereby societies insure their future’ (1983: 769).

Many Truku elders aged over sixty suggested that when they were young (probably before the 1960s), they were discouraged by their parents from marrying non-Truku people. From the 1960s onwards, Truku parents were increasingly willing to allow their daughters to marry Chinese veterans in order to help to ease the pressures of poverty and to improve their position in the social and cultural hierarchy of Truku society. On the one hand, the income from Chinese veterans, including pensions and earnings from agriculture, offered a stable and substantial support otherwise unavailable to Truku people. On the other hand, in order to maintain Chinese hegemony, the KMT used government policies and Martial Law to ensure that Chinese soldiers and administrators, who came from China after 1945, occupied prime economic, political, and cultural positions in Taiwanese society.

Many of those Chinese veterans who married Truku women went on to live in the wife’s natal community, and set-up grocery shops. In Fushih Village, during my fieldwork, there were still seven grocery shops which were originally founded by Chinese veterans. In the past, veterans and their Truku wives would co-operate in the running of grocery shops. Now, many of the veterans are over seventy years of age, and too old to handle day to day business. Many have died and the businesses have been inherited by wives or children. Though veterans would usually provide the financial means to set up the business, the shop was largely under the control of the wife. Indeed, then and now, it is the wife’s social network, including kin-groups, neighbours and friends, who provide the pool of customers upon which the shop depends.
Kinjaw, a forty-three years old Truku man, is an official in Taroko National Park, and was a career soldier for ten years. After retiring from military service, he used his pension and savings to open the first grocery store to be totally supported by Truku people, in Kele community in 1990. With pride he said, ‘my wife’s shop is the second shop in Kele community, in the village, to be entirely set up by Truku people.’ He added that ‘before that, there were three grocery shops, but they were founded by Chinese veterans who married Truku women from the community. For us, we were too poor to afford it (a shop)’. In the 1990s, a large number of grocery stores were founded by Truku people. Misa is the owner of the largest grocery shop in Fushih Village, as well as being the current head of the village. Her shop was founded on her husband, Watan’s, income, and from that of her sons. In the 1980s, her husband brought her sons to Taipei City to work in construction, which they did for more than five years. During this period, they saved their earnings to invest in their own grocery shop in Kele community.

With the introduction of Southeast Asian immigrant labour, as a result of government policies established in 1989, increasing numbers of Truku migrant labourers have gradually returned to their hometowns, and to unemployment (Fu 1994: 89). In addition, Taiwan has experienced long-term economic decline since the mid-1990s. Undergoing this economic difficulty, many shops were closed because the shop keeper could no longer afford the business running costs and overheads, exacerbated by a drop in customer spending caused by rising levels of debt.

I was told that in respect of the history of the development of small businesses from the 1990s onwards in Fushih Village, while many shops were closed, at the same time, many new shops were established in the late 1990s. Various factors account for this, including the willingness among many people to takes risks, investing their savings generated by wage labour into grocery shops. However, rather than serving as symbols of success, these investments are more often a last-ditch attempt to provide a buffer against the impact of poverty. When having lunch in a snack bar one day, I met three
female shopkeepers, two of them in some financial difficulties. When I asked them why they had decided to run such small businesses, one of them told me,

We realise that we won’t be able to earn any more money than before, but it’s quite difficult for us or our husbands to find good jobs again. So, we opened a shop to ensure the subsistence of our household.

Other shopkeepers added in pessimistic tones, ‘we do not expect to gain a lot of money through running the shop, but we can at least use the food and necessities from our own shop.’ They continued, ‘We provide goods and foods for our customers as well as ourselves, so we don’t need to worry about not being able to afford necessities in everyday life, and at least we will probably be able to escape starvation.’

Since 2000, those Truku residents who have prospered, obtaining more secure positions in the politico-economic hierarchy of Truku society, have been more inclined to help their households in the running of grocery shops or snack bars. In particular, of 39 shops established since 2000, approximately one third are supported on the salaries of civil servants and higher-income industrial workers. Both of these groups sit at the top of Truku politico-economic structures, supported by higher, more secure salaries.

Wealthier households are naturally able to invest more in their shops than shop owners from relatively poor households. During my fieldwork in 2006, the average amount of money invested in a snack bar or karaoke bar is around 200 thousand Taiwanese dollars, including the cost of all equipment, decoration, drinks and cooking material. The costs involved in establishing a betelnut shop ranged from between 50 to 70 thousand Taiwanese dollars. Many of those who owned stores established before 2006 estimated the costs of opening a small-scale business at between 150 and 200 thousand Taiwanese dollars. However, there are seven shops which each received investments in excess of 200 thousand Taiwanese dollars. Three are bargain shops, one is a snack bar, and three are guesthouses, and all are established by wealthy households. For example, almost one million Taiwanese dollars is invested in each of the guesthouses. Two of the guesthouses concerned are established by husband and wife couples who are both

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9 According to statistics on individual income in relation to occupation, in indigenous society in 2006, more than fifty percent of indigenous civil servants earned from forty to sixty thousand Taiwanese dollars; 48% of industrial labourers earned more than fifty thousand dollars. 45.2/5 of labourers in agriculture, forest, livestock, and fishery industries, earned less than ten thousand Taiwanese dollars (CIP 2007).
public officers; the other guesthouse is established by a Taiwanese husband and Truku wife. In 2006, the Taiwanese husband sold some of his land in his hometown, and used the proceeds to build the business on land belonging to his Truku wife. In addition, in the 1990s there are two bargain shops built in the village, in which are invested in excess of 500 thousand Taiwanese dollars. One of the owners is the first female head of the village (2005-2009), and the other’s husband is the first police officer in the village.

**Analysis of the investment in shops**

Shops should be regarded as an aspect of household economics, and as embedded in the kinship practices of everyday life. In terms of financial investments and start-up costs, in one sense we could view the household shop as being the creation of the husband’s earning/financial power (for example, Chinese veterans’ pensions, the wages of migrant or full-time labourers etc), through which they have established the business in order to contribute to household subsistence, and have then passed the running of the business over to the wife. This analysis, however, does not take into account the contribution of land frequently made by the Truku wives; while husbands may indeed have funded the initial set-up costs, it was the Truku wives or parents-in-law who would provide the land on which the shop would be built.

When I asked informants about the household income, most married couples describe it as jointly held. In most households, whether or not the wife earned money, the husband will hand over the majority of his earnings to his wife. Household economics are largely, often entirely, the wife’s province. It was said that if the household income is insufficient to ensure the household’s subsistence, then both husband and wife would be equally responsible for finding financial solutions, either in terms of finding part-time work or in terms of borrowing money from friends or kin. If the husband is unemployed, the wife carries the burden of ensuring the financial survival of the household. Hence, the subsistence of a household is based on economic cooperation within marriage, although the wife is usually expected to take more responsibility than her husband.

This model of household subsistence can also be applied to the model of investment for
shops in the village. In terms of financial establishment, of the 41 of the shops in the village owned by women, 32 are based on investment by both husband and wife; six shops are financially supported solely by women.\(^{10}\) Many of the female shopkeepers pointed out that the investment for the shop came partially from the husband, while some was from their own savings or earnings. In addition, there are around ten female shopkeepers who mortgaged parts of their landed dowry in order to secure investment from the banks to set up their shops. Moreover, many of the wives’ parents also contribute financially or provided land for the establishment of their daughter’s shop.

**The characteristics of the women entrepreneurs**

By the time of my fieldwork, there were apparently about thirty-five women actively involved in such businesses, and many female residents had shared in such enterprises and experiences in the past. From the 1970s onwards, many women attempted to run such shops, though many of these businesses eventually failed. These shops have become an important representation of women entrepreneurs in the village. The emergence of shops makes us aware that women have assumed an increasingly important role in economic activities in present day society. According to my fieldwork, while men work predominantly as wage labourers and civil servants, woman engage in a variety of work in order to gain income and contribute to subsistence activities. In addition to managing shops, women have continued to cultivate their lands and plant vegetables and fruits, to provide necessities for the household and for exchange with relatives or friends, while men have generally abandoned agriculture in favour of temporary, wage labour, often waiting long periods to secure it.

Owing to the legal prohibition on hunting, and to the particular course of economic development in Truku society, ‘traditional’ cultures of weaving and cooking have gradually become more important than hunting, both economically and culturally. In addition, many women have set up other types of studios or Non-Governmental Organisations to promote ‘traditional’ cooking and to work on creative developments,

\(^{10}\) Four shops were established by the female shopkeeper’s appropriation of her husband’s inheritance, and two used their alimony to maintain their shops.
in order to promote local agricultural products to tourists in Fushih Village. As such, official economic policies in Truku society have accorded an increasingly important role for women in economic activities and increased the significance and status of weaving and cooking culture.

To sum up the characteristics of women entrepreneurs, firstly, managerial authority lies with women, and its practices are deeply interconnected with domestic life. Secondly, this economic activity should be regarded as a type of household business. Although managerial authority belongs with women, this form of economic activity is based upon the marital relationship. Thirdly, in discussing women-led economic activities, it is necessary to take into account the economic capacities of the shopkeeper’s household and spouse. It is evident that there is a difference between the different degrees to which households depend on shop income. Historically, the shop functioned as a reward for the owners in a way, and as a way for the household to display its wealth. In recent times, though, the main purpose of the shop is to rescue its owners from poverty and starvation.

For many households in difficult economic positions, the other kinds of economic activities which are also carried out by women are just as essential as the shop. Yabung, a seventy-year-old widow, is a famous weaver and craftswoman in Truku society. Her husband, who died four years ago, was among the first generation of migrant labourers in the village at the end of the 1970s. Yabung recalled:

When my husband lived with me a decade ago, he decided not to work hard anymore. He claimed that he'd spent more than ten years being a migrant labourer for this household.

She added, ‘however, how could we live without any income, if he did not work? Besides, he did not save enough money.’ After her husband gave up being a migrant labourer, Yabung had to assume the responsibility for the subsistence of their household. From that point onwards her duties were twofold: to produce skilled craft produce, selling her weaving at the visitor centre in Taroko National Park, and to continue planting vegetables and crops in her compound and the fields near her house. Her husband became her assistant.
During my fieldwork, Yabung was busier than ever. In the early morning she worked in the field and took care of her grandchildren. Then she worked for eight hours, making and displaying her craft products for the visitor centre. After work, she farmed again in the evening, and was responsible for taking care of her grandchildren and domestic affairs at night. Her sons and daughters-in-law lived with her, but they were unemployed and waiting for opportunities in wage labour. Yabung had no chance to take a rest, she said:

‘I am almost too old to work, but I need to help my sons to pay the interest on the mortgage on our lands. If I cannot afford it, the ownership of these lands will be transferred to the bank.’

She added, ‘My sons are unemployed and do not like to actively seek work. If I am unable to work hard, what will happen to my grandchildren and household?’

Yabung’s story emphasises the importance of women’s economic activities for the subsistence of poorer households. Does this also apply, however, to the wealthier households in the village? I argue that, reflecting on women entrepreneurs in wealthier households allows us to understand that women interweave a social and economic network through their economic practices in daily life. Most residents in the village, through this network, guarantee economic subsistence on the one hand, and, on the other, use it to increase their income and improve their politico-economic position in Truku society.

Debt, social networks, and rising status of Truku women

Many shop owners complained to me that they do not earn a lot of money from the income of their shops even though the shops are well established in community life. Over half the shops make a profit of about 15 thousand Taiwanese dollars per month, with the larger shops making a profit of between 20 and 30 thousand Taiwanese dollars per month. Smaller shops sometimes earn less than ten thousand dollars. Shop profits, however, are much smaller than the monthly turnover, after the regular expenditure and overheads are taken into account.

Indeed, it is difficult for some to afford the operating costs of the business. Most shops
are threatened by heavy liabilities which are exacerbated by the debts incurred by customers running up ‘tabs’. Indeed, residents sometimes likened shops to ‘neon lights’, scattered across the neighbourhoods, some flashing into existence, others suddenly winking out of existence, in describing their economically precarious conditions. As already noted, most shops have multiple functions in order to attract customers and increase profits. However, karaoke machines and computers are too expensive for most Truku people to afford. Such equipment is not bought, but is rented from special companies that are run by Taiwanese who provide various kinds of amusement equipment. If the shop signs a contract with these companies, it is required to pay out half of the income from the amusement machine on a monthly basis. The shops, moreover, have to meet the cost of operation, such as utility bills, high business rates and amusement taxes, and wages.

The effective operation of grocery shops depends significantly on efficient management and turnover of goods, and on warehousing. All items in the grocery shop are bought from Taiwanese businessmen who bring in commodities from urban areas. Given this situation, because customers sometimes buy goods ‘on account’, shop owners find it difficult to meet the expenses of running and supplying the business. Many owners are consequently forced to ask Taiwanese businessmen, friends, relatives, banks, or government institutions for loans in order to maintain the shop. As customer debt rises, shop owners become unable to maintain the shop, and are forced to close as a result.

Based on my fieldwork, I argue that these shops are not only sites of consumption, transaction, and amusement in the daily life of residents; they are also a place of assembly for the shop owner’s kin group on particular social occasions and for feasts after certain rituals. Most shop owners like to lend their shop to their kin group to hold feasts, because they can earn money from loaning their catering and kitchen equipment, selling drinks and alcohol, and karaoke facilities. For shop owners, allowing their shops to be used as feast venues for kin groups is seen as a favour to their social network. For those who do not own shops, the normal expectation is that they will hold feasts in shops belonging to close kin.
The relationship between customers and shops, while interdependent, can also be a source of tension in Fushih Village. Firstly, this relationship is based on kinship and social networks on both sides. Given the high number of shops, and the comparatively small, and continually declining, village population, the life of the shop is thoroughly dependent on kin groups and other kinds of social networks. From the customer’s point of view, most residents have a strong sense that kin should help kin. In terms of kinship, it is taken for granted that people will remain loyal to shops owned by their kin and close friends, and thus give them their business and patronage.

However, given the nature of this reliance, shop owners often face acute problems when members of their kin groups and social networks run up debts on account. From exploring the relationship between shops in the village, I found that there is a competitive relationship between shops due to geographical proximity and a relatively small, shared customer base, but also because the goods and services they offer are often very similar. Shops share their customer base with other businesses, which are both nearby and very similar to their own. When I asked shopkeepers if they had strategies to attract customers, most stated that the most important factor was their decision about whether or not to allow customers to buy on account. Most residents prefer to shop at establishments which will, on occasion, permit them to buy on account and run up debt. Shops that offer this facility therefore benefit from increased custom and turnover. There is, though, naturally a risk to this strategy, in that shopkeepers may go bankrupt if a large number of their customers fail to repay their debt in sufficient time; on the other hand, if they don’t offer this facility, they may not attract enough customers to keep their business going.

When explaining why they prefer to shop in businesses belonging to kin and friends, most residents said that it is easier to owe money to their kin or to friends. In difficult economic conditions, most residents are too poor to afford their daily necessities, and it is commonplace for them to run up debt in local shops as a result. Consequently, it is impossible for shops to avoid carrying customer debt. In this situation, most shopkeepers insisted that ‘although we are careful about allowing customers to build up debt, trusted kin and friends are usually allowed to delay payment of their bills.’ It is
essential to point out that there is a difference between ‘kin’ and ‘friends’ in terms of the decisions shopkeepers make about outstanding bills. Friends may run up debt depending on their individual credibility; the owner’s kin, though, seem to have the automatic privilege to buy on account. Mijang, a Truku woman who has a karaoke club, said ‘We can refuse our friends who do not pay their debt in time and lose their credit due to outstanding bills, but we can not reject the same requests from our close kin.’ She added, ‘You know, lutut (kin relations) is always important to Truku people. We do not want to break our kin relationships because of the problems of debt.’

Many shop owners told me that one of the critical periods in the regular business life of the shop is the beginning of the month, when customers might (or might not) settle their accounts on payday. Indeed, often, after settling their outstanding debts in the shop, customers will then immediately buy on account again. Most shop owners will allow their debtors to run up bills again because of their credit. Hence, the relationship between the customer and the shop appears to be an endless, complex cycle of credit and debt.

The existence of these commercial shops draws Truku residents into complex relationships of debtor and creditor. These relationships, I argue, are a particular way to enable Truku people to satisfy their needs for necessities and recreation. Because many Truku people are irregularly employed or unemployed labourers and farmers, their individual and household income is extremely unstable and minimal. Hence, these shops provide Truku people with an opportunity to meet their daily subsistence needs by buying on account. Sometimes, to help ease the economic pressures on customer, shop owners also treat their customers to a meal or drinks, offer a reasonable discount, and give small gifts or candy to children. Consequently, these shops have gradually come to play a key role in the subsistence of their patrons in contemporary society. This ongoing cyclical relationship between debtors and creditors in respect of household subsistence means that shop holders (and their households) become, in effect, benefactors to their kin groups and other social networks.

Because of this, many shopkeepers have gradually improved their social and economic
status in the village, because of the dynamics of the debtor-creditor relationship. In studying the social, political and economic roles of female shopkeepers, we can see that the shop as a business enables them to translate their economic position into social and political capital in contemporary society. On the one hand, opening and keeping a shop means that its owner’s household’s economic capacity is better than that of other households. On the other hand, allowing customers to owe money enables shopkeepers to possess significant social and political positions. As a consequence, the shop is not only a physical and commercial focal point for the owner’s kin groups and social networks, but is also a social institution in terms of kinship and socialisation.

Many of the shops in the village also serve as venues for studios and Non-Governmental Organisations, and shopkeepers are also the heads of these institutions. Such institutions enable residents to preserve and practice their ‘traditional’ culture, and to put into effect various programmes of economic development for the village. Gujung, a Truku woman of more than sixty years of age, operates the largest grocery shop in Bsngang community. She sets up a studio to enable women to get together to make crafted leather products, based on fine Truku weaving patterns. She not only displays crafted leather products made by her studio, but also provides a space for other Truku craftsmen to sell their work, such as wooden arrows. Similarly, Ijung, a fifty-year-old woman, has separated her shop into two sections; one is a breakfast bar, and the other is a studio where her husband teaches Truku rattan weaving skills and displays his own work. In addition, she provides space for the community development association to run a computer class for students, and a meeting place for the committee of the social institute. These shops are combined with her house, and her domestic space therefore is multifunctional, at the same time a domestic, commercial, social and public place.

From the examination of meanings of ‘gendered domains’ in Pulau Langkawi, Carsten suggests that ‘while the division between the domestic and the political may be central to Western thought and to anthropological analysis, we cannot assume this division to exist in the same way in the societies anthropologists study’ (Carsten 1997: 20). Furthermore, many anthropologists argue that people in many societies in Southeast Asia do not have Western concept of the division between the domestic and the public
(e.g. Rudie 1995), and that this division might have been imposed by the state on the local societies in the colonial or post-colonial past (e.g. Blackwood 1997). From the examination of functions of the small businesses mainly conducted by Truku women, the boundary between the domestic and the public is blurred.

I argue that these shops can be regarded as an instrument for the advancement for women, particularly female shopkeepers, in order to extend their influence from the domestic sphere to the public. For example, Fushih Community Development Association, which is comprised of all adult residents, is the largest and most important Non-Governmental Organisation in the village. The committee of this association is made up of fifteen commissioners who are elected by residents voting every four years, and has the authority to make decisions and initiate policies concerning community development. There are twelve commissioners who are shopkeepers or heads of household, and of these eight are female shopkeepers.

In addition, a shop is also a political place for all residents to gain information and discuss public affairs, and local government officials and politicians also like to ask shopkeepers to help them to announce new policies and post messages for their customers. Many Truku local politicians informed me that shops are important locations for them to maintain contact with their constituency. Mijing, a female karaoke bar shopkeeper, proudly told me that, ‘it is necessary for all candidates to visit my place several times if they want to gain the votes of my customers.’ A shop has become a place for both politicians and their constituency to communicate with each other and debate issues and public policies, such as the direction of village development, and how to deal with land disputes between the government or private enterprises and local residents. In this situation, the practice of shopping and using the facilities in shops also enables residents, directly or indirectly, to be involved in various kinds of public events.

Not only do female shopkeepers have the power to influence developments in politico-economic and cultural arenas through the business of the shop, but shops also provide a space for women to become involved in the running of communal events in the village. They can discuss or debate public issues in the shop and join social associations, such as
craft studios or Non-Governmental Organisations that are run in some shops, and participate and play an active role in society. Many shops, especially those controlled by female shopkeepers, are regarded as a point for women to assemble in social solidarity, as a force to influence and actively work in public affairs. Under the leadership of a female shopkeeper, more and more women have engaged in the public arena.

**Conclusion**

By reflecting on the relationship between shops and the economic activity of women in contemporary Truku society, I assert that women are not simply housekeepers, but are central to the financial institutions of credit, savings and investment. Women’s management of household money can be seen as a new aspect of the sexual division of labour. In many households, women now take on the majority of household organisation, both in terms of domestic labour and childcare, and also in terms of household finances and cultivation.

In her research on kut, the rotating saving and credit society in Pulau Langkawi, Carsten suggests that ‘in organizing the kut, women actually create a community of households, a female community, by linking houses together in a chain of dapur-centre consumption’ (1989: 138). In Truku society, the operation of ‘hui’ and shop business also bears a functional similarity to kut, in terms of binding different households into a female community. As a result, ‘individual male money becomes shared-female-money’ (Carsten 1989: 135). Due to the important economic position which women and female economic networks now occupy, the social and cultural status of women has increasingly improved in contemporary Truku society. Many women, especially female shopkeepers, have become influential and active in local politics. However, although many shops routinely contribute to the solidarity between different households, the relationship between the shopkeeper and the customer is also one of creditor and debtor. Hence, such businesses, particularly those founded by richer households, reinforce an economic and political hierarchy in the village.
Chapter Seven. Inheritance and Women’s Land

In this chapter, I focus on exploring the symbolic meanings of women’s land and the role of women in conflicts over land between different households in contemporary Truku society. Firstly, I discuss the relationship between the legal system in Taiwan and gaya in conflicts over land in Truku society. Inheritance is the most important way for the Truku to gain land. Many disputes over land between different households have arisen because of issues relating to inheritance. Truku elders usually control the arrangement of inheritance. As such, I describe the process of inheritance in Truku society and examine how Truku elders make decisions about inheritance. Furthermore, I focus on how Truku women gain their land through kinship practices and use of the modern legal system. Finally, I examine how Truku people strategically use the modern legal system in Taiwan, as well as concepts related to gaya, to deal with disputes over land between different households in contemporary Truku society.

Creating ‘thieves’: the story of Litu and Lubi

In Chapter 2, I described Litu’s experience of losing her land, some to the government and some to her sister, Lubi. In 2008, Litu and her children invited Lubi and her youngest son, Isaw, to the conciliation board at the local government office, in respect of a dispute over land ownership. After the conciliation, Litu realised that it would be almost impossible to retrieve her land from her sister through the modern legal system. In the conciliation meeting, Isaw had shown all of the certificates proving his ownership of land in respect of land that Litu regarded as her own. The lawyer and civil servants advised Litu that, because of the certificates of ownership held by Isaw and Lubi, she would be unable to recover the land unless they gave it to her freely. After the conciliation meeting, Litu felt so depressed that she asked her children to take her to her husband’s burial place. She cried alone at the graveside while her children watched with concern.
During the Japanese colonial regime, Isaw’s father, Tadaw, moved to highlands Skadnag from another Truku community. As Tadaw had no land of his own in Skadnag, Litu’s husband, Karaw, lent him some land so that he might provide for his household. After some time, Karaw brought his household to the lowlands, to settle and farm. However, when the government began its programme of land surveys during the 1950s and 1960s, and asked people to register their land, Tadaw registered the highlands land he had borrowed from Karaw as his own. Litu said to me, ‘rmingat dįgal Karaw ka Tadaw’ (Tadaw seized Karaw’s land). Hence, she views Tadaw and his household as thieves (lohei). In Truku society, if an individual is regarded as a thief, he or she is seen as a person without heart (Inglingun lhbum). This implies that thieves do not have a sense of shame and do not follow gaya, and thus might not be human beings (ini sediq Truku).

Isaw, who inherited most his father’s land, has been put under great pressure by the dispute over land ownership between his parents and Litu. He told me, ‘it is of the utmost importance that I have the land ownership certificates. The ownership of my father’s land is definitely protected by the government and the legal system.’ He added,

My father and I are not thieves. We opened and cultivated these lands. These lands should be regarded as the achievement of my parents’ hard work. All of my parents and siblings have good memories from there. My father gave me his land. I have a duty to protect it and pass it on to my descendants.

Nevertheless, he still greatly fears a ‘hmici kari’ (curse) from Karaw or Litu, and thinks that the accident that caused his father’s death in the highlands might be a result of their curses.

Not only does Isaw live in fear of being cursed by Litu or Karaw, his mother and siblings also live in fear of such a curse. However, Isaw’s mother and one of his brothers held a different opinion to Isaw with regard to the disputed land. His mother has promised to return all of the highland’s land in her name to her sister. Isaw’s brother Simi has also returned the land he inherited from his father to Litu, even though he too possesses certificates of ownership. He told me that neither he nor his mother wished to live under fear of ‘sinbun’, whereby an individual lives in constant fear of being punished by the spirits. He added that, ‘I do not wish to occupy any
disputed lands (*mbndxgal*). I am a hunter, if I occupied another’s land, I would be in very serious trouble.’ Interestingly, compared to Isaw, Simi is relatively poor. If he cultivated or sold the highland lands in question it would provide significant and much needed income for his household.

In Litu’s household, too, there were those who differed from her regarding the disputed land. Kincyang is Litu’s only son and he expects to inherit most of his mother’s property. Nevertheless, he remained pessimistic regarding the dispute, as he believed that holding the legal certificates of ownership is more important than traditional practices of land ownership and inheritance. Indeed, he told me, ‘I am not very interested in this dispute because I don’t want to weaken the relationship between the two households in case it breaks altogether!’ Before the land disputes of the last decade, the relationship between Kincyang’s household and Isaw’s was very close. They would often help each other and work together while their children would often play together. However, this dispute has reduced communication between the two households to a minimum. Although they participated in one another’s *powda gaya* events, thus maintaining essential *gaya* practices and principles, they tended to avoid general social contact as much as possible, and Litu’s and Lubi’s children and grandchildren were often embarrassed when they met one another inadvertently. Unfortunately, most of them live very close by, in the same village.

The story of Litu and Lubi and their dispute over land was not unique, and it was easy for me to learn of many more during my fieldwork in Fushih Village. Such stories show that, even though land privatisation and the modern legal system may have displaced ‘traditional’ practices and understandings of land ownership, the role of *gaya* is far from displaced and remains of considerable importance. If the legal system had completely displaced *gaya*, there would have been no need for Lubi and Simi to willingly return their land to Litu. Also, if *gaya* were not influential in Truku society, Isaw and many other village residents would not have attributed the accidental death of Tadaw (Isaw’s father) to an infringement of *gaya* or a curse put on him by Litu or her husband.
In discussing such land issues, many of the residents of Fushih Village would mention the story of Tapan. Tapan was the head of Fushih Village at the time the Asia Cement Company was about to set up its mining operations in the village. At that time, Tapan was suspected of helping the company to persuade landowners to give up their land, in return for financial payments and full-time employment for his son. After the establishment of the company, though, the landowners realised that Tapan had betrayed them, that he had made empty promises regarding the benefits they would reap in return for their land. Two years after the establishment of the Asia Cement Company, Tapan had a stroke and could not speak or stand up. His sons lost their positions in the company. Many of the village residents interpreted Tapan’s illness and his sons’ unemployment as the result of a curse laid on his family by the disgruntled landowners, and as punishments meted out by the ancestral spirits in respect of infringements against gaya. The general feeling was that, because the money won by Tapan had been gained through immoral means, ‘our ancestral spirits (utux rudan) would not let him have the chance to enjoy his wealth.’

The jurisdiction of the modern legal system is based on the power of the state while the authority of gaya is based on belief in the ancestral spirits. When Truku people link gaya with a belief in ancestor worship and a fear of curses placed by elders, gaya become authoritative and compelling. In this sense, gaya is seemingly as concrete as the modern law. In terms of dealing with conflicts over land between different households or persons, the modern law is legally more powerful than gaya. However, gaya is not abandoned by the Truku, but still involved in these conflicts over land. If Truku people can use or follow gaya to deal with disputes over land, they will not seek a solution by means of the modern legal system. In such situations, there is a contest between gaya and the legal system in many disputes over land between different households or persons, like the story of Litu and Lubi, in contemporary Truku society.

I discussed the nature of gaya in Chapter 4, and argued that gaya is made or interpreted by the elders in every household in Truku society. Hence, the contents of
*gaya* are diverse and people are flexible in interpreting, changing or creating *gaya*. With the advent of a modern legal system and privatisation of land ownership in Truku society in the 1960s, the laws and *gaya* have become two main strategic resources for Truku people to draw upon when dealing with various conflicts over land in contemporary society. But how is *gaya* used strategically by Truku involved in land ownership conflicts? In the next section, I focus on the ways in which Truku landowners link their decisions regarding property management and inheritance with their understandings of *gaya*.

**The words of the elders and inheritance**

The principle of inheritance is diverse in Truku society. Some Truku villagers claimed that ‘traditional’ inheritance practices were based on ultimogeniture (like Mowna 1998: 67); others insisted that primogeniture had become a ‘new’ custom, or suggested that both rules of inheritance should be regarded as Truku customs. Some of them explained that under the Japanese colonial government and the KMT regime, increasing numbers of Truku people adopted the rule of primogeniture, the main principle of inheritance in Japanese, Chinese, and Taiwanese culture. Under either primogeniture or ultimogeniture, women were denied the right to be heirs. However, if we examine how testators deal with their inheritance in contemporary Truku society, we will find many Truku people follow neither ultimogeniture nor primogeniture, but bestow parts of their property on their daughters or wives, while some divide their property equally between their children, regardless of gender.

Inheritance is one of the most important elements of the relationship between people and land in Truku society. Inheritance is a long-term process with various kinship relationships involved in it. Even though there is significant diversity in rules of inheritance practices as described by Truku informants, most Truku villagers prefer to firstly bequeath their properties to their spouses after they die, and then their spouses will have authority to deal with their property or follow the testators’ wish to pass their property to certain heirs. In this process, the elders (*rudan*) are not only the holders of the property, but also the testators in terms of determining and dispensing
the inheritance. Truku people describe the action of parents bequeathing certain kinds of property to their children as ‘dxgal (land) or qngqaya (things) hciun (bequeath) na (to) laqi (children)’. When describing the origins of property inherited from parents, Truku would say ‘dxgal/qngqaya hni ci (is bequeathed) rudan (elders)’.

An elder’s testament is considered sacred, unchangeable, and unchallengeable. This authority not only comes from respect for the elders, but also from the concepts of ancestor worship in Truku society. From the description of gaya given in the Chapter 4, we can see that the elders (rudan) would be regarded as the guides of gaya and as the ‘spokesmen’ for the ancestral spirits in the human world. The elders have a duty to teach and explain the rules and ideas of gaya to their descendants. They are also responsible for ensuring that their descendants obey gaya as far as possible, and have the authority to judge whether or not their descendants have infringed gaya. After elders die, they become the ancestral spirits. Hence, based on the concepts which inform gaya and ancestor worship, Truku elders have religious and legal authority in society.

Truku people call the words of the dying ‘hmici kari’. ‘Hmici’ means passing down; ‘kari’ is word. Hmici kari has sacred and religious meanings. There are four different meanings ascribed to ‘hmici kari’ in Truku society: the curses of the dead, the blessings of the dead, teachings of the dead, and testament. Although ‘hmici kari’ has many different meanings, when Truku people used this term it usually referred to ‘curse of the dead’ or to the concept of ‘testament’.

If an elder wants to put a curse on someone, be it the elder’s children or children-in-law, or a person with whom he or she has some enmity, the name of the intended person is secretly whispered in the curse. While the meaning of blessings, teachings and testaments is usually made clear and definite, elders do not usually disclose the content of their curses to others. Thus, it is necessary for the living descendants to discern both the existence and the particular characteristics of a curse. As such, the curses of the dead are always perceived differently in various contexts and from different perspectives.
The concept of ‘hnici kari’ is customarily associated with that of ‘kmlawa rudan’ in Truku society. ‘Kmlawa rudan’ has two particular aspects: to respect the elders and to take care of the elders. In Truku society, children were expected to take great pains in caring for their parents. Many of those Truku villagers who argued that there was a principle of ultimogeniture in traditional society pointed out that, in the pre-colonial period, the youngest son would inherit his parents’ house, live with them and had a duty to take care of them, and would therefore inherit his parents’ estate. However, those Truku over the age of sixty often said that their parents preferred to live with their youngest brother, because the parents or elders thought that their youngest son might be too young to maintain his household by himself. According to this account, the parents would live with their youngest son in order to help him maintain the household but did not expect him to take care of them. Although Truku villagers had different explanations for the parents’ preference to live with the youngest son, they argued that children would share equally in caring for their parents even though they did not live with them. To maintain a good relationship with the parental household and to take care of parents is still important to many Truku villagers in present day society. During my fieldwork, I often saw family members from different generations meeting in the parental household to discuss family affairs, and parents visiting and sharing meals with their married children.

Given that ‘kmlawa rudan’ is still one of the most important rules of gaya in contemporary Truku society, many elders were worried that they might be deserted by their children or would not receive good quality care. During my fieldwork, many of those elders who were living in a household belonging to one of their children would complain about unsatisfactory relationships with the children and in-laws. Some reported that their children would require them to hand over their old age pension (3,500 Taiwanese dollars per month) and other welfare benefits, in order to increase the household income. In many of those households affected by unemployment and poverty, ageing parents were often required to work or farm for their own subsistence and to contribute to household maintenance.
Many Truku villagers suggested that, if I wanted to study Truku concepts of ‘kmlawa rudan’, it was important to understand that filial affection might stem from fear of being cursed, as much as from the morality of kinship practices. The relationship between kmlawa rudan and the curse is based on indigenous concepts of death. For Truku people, there are two antithetical types of death, the good death and the bad death. Basically, the definition of ‘good death’, malu hngil, is one where the elder is at the point of death and at least one of his or her children or grandchildren is present, moved by sincere concern, and holding on to the dying elder’s wrist, feeling for a pulse. Symbolically, ‘malu hngil’ represents an ideal in which the elder is not alone or abandoned by his or her children in the period before death; it also represents a ‘natural death’ (wada ngalun utux), that is distinct from death which results from an accident or violence. In other words, in ‘malu hngil’ the dead or dying person has at least one of his or her descendants who follow the principle of ‘kmlawa rudan’. Truku people believe that whoever grips the pulse of the dying person will not only receive blessings from the person in death, but also symbolically inherits part of the dead person’s vitality, fortune and wisdom.

At the opposite end, ‘mqdunuh’ means ‘bad death’, i.e. a state of death in which there is no-one to grip the dying person’s pulse, even though he or she dies inside the house. This kind of death is seen as a consequence of neglect, where the children and descendants have not taken responsible care of their elders (parents or grandparents). In this sort of situation, Truku people believe that the dying person will probably lay a curse (hmici kari) on those children who did not show sufficient filial care and respect.

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1 The wrist pulse is ‘utux baga’, baga meaning ‘hand’.
2 The other kind of bad death is ‘mqlyax’, that is, a state of death that results from accidents or suicides and occurs outside the house. This death is customarily regarded by Truku people as the result of a punishment, meted out by the ancestral spirits because of the infringement of gaya (ini pgaya) (see chapter 4). During my fieldwork I met a Truku man, Pihu, whose wife had asked him to change out of all his clothes, including his T-shirt, pants, socks and shoes, in front of his house. While he was changing out of his clothes, his wife scolded him ‘you are bad luck. Why did you meet the dead in the field?’ She was scolding him because on returning home Pihu had, quite by chance, found his neighbour Sudai dying from a heart attack. Unfortunately Sudai had no other company with him, no kinsfolk to care for him while he died. This is an example of a bad death and to Truku people Sudai’s ‘bad’ death is potentially dangerous, whereby Pihu could suffer the negative influence of Sudai’s bad luck. Because of this, Pihu had to change out of his clothes and burn them before returning home, and Sudai’s household were expected to give him money by way of compensation.
Because the elder’s curse is always secret, the recipients are not immediately aware
either of its existence or of its content. By contrast, those who are dutiful and caring
towards their parents and grandparents will receive blessings and good fortune from
the elders. Many Truku people attribute their achievement or another’s successes to
such blessings. Indeed, discussion of ancestral curses is a popular topic of
conversation and gossip in everyday Truku life.

Another important meaning ascribed to ‘hmici kari’ is ‘elder’s testament’. This
‘testament’ usually relates to the disposition of an elder’s property and again is
interpreted in terms of gaya concepts and norms, respect for the elders and ancestral
spirits etc. When I asked Truku elders or property owners about their own intentions
regarding their bequests, some would say nothing, merely smiling, others would
simply state that they would ‘follow gaya’. There were very few elders who would
speak of their own plans regarding the disposal of their estate and, if they did, they
would usually make me promise not to mention to anyone anything that they
disclosed. Such information was privileged and confidential. Indeed, the decisions
which would have to be made regarding the disposal of property, the best ways of
achieving it, when to announce the details of the bequest and how to deal with the
tensions which would arise between children once the details were known, were all
considered highly vexing.

Indeed, Truku people are expected not to talk publicly or privately about the details
of inheritance and related decisions made by elders. Many Truku elders insisted that
it is virtually taboo for children to discuss how their parents should dispose of their
estate, and to do so risks being branded ‘ini pgaya’, as someone who flouts the rules
of gaya. During my fieldwork, most of those informants who were not household
elders, or who did not own land, usually declined to answer my questions concerning
inheritance and land ownership. The most common reason for them to refuse from
answering my questions was that ‘my elders are still alive’. Truku people also
described unacceptable behaviour of this type by using the gaya term ‘kmsrabang’.
‘Kmsrabang’ is a synonym of ‘greed’. Truku people believe that ‘kmsrabang’ always
results in serious quarrels between siblings and threatens kinship solidarity.

Although the villagers had many differing ideas on the issue of inheritance, there was general insistence on there being a set of principles of inheritance in relation to gaya. At the core of this set of principles of inheritance is the imperative to respect and follow the testaments of their elders (testators). Hence, Truku elders not only articulate the rules of gaya, but also make decisions on the arrangement of their inheritance. For the descendants (or heirs), the testaments of the elders are sacred and unchangeable. Though elders have acquired much of their knowledge pertaining to gaya rules on inheritance from their parents and elders, nevertheless they are prepared to innovate as they see fit in relation to their own bequests to their spouses or children. Their decisions on inheritance are as flexible as their own particular interpretations of gaya. Decisions might also be influenced by their Christian beliefs, by the patriarchal principles of inheritance which stem from the influence of Japanese, Taiwanese, and Chinese culture, or by the Family Law statutes in the Civil Code in Taiwan. Furthermore, they may take into account the degree of filial respect which their children have shown them, when deciding how to apportion their bequests.

In addition, many Truku elders will consider the economic situations of their heirs, when making decisions on inheritance. In the current climate of economic difficulty, many Truku households are suffering poverty. Often, the son who is economically better off than his siblings, will gain a greater share of the land left by his parents. Giving most of the land to the economically stronger household makes sense, as the better off son would have had the resources to offer more filial support than his siblings; moreover, he would be far less likely to sell off the land he inherited. On this basis, many elders when questioned said, ‘the most important factor to consider in arranging inheritance is not how to partition the property, but rather to think carefully about who can best protect the land bequeathed by ancestors.’ Many elders were worried that, after they bequeathed their land to their descendants, it might be sold for monetary gain. To avoid this fate an elder would often prefer to leave lands to the child who had suffered least from unemployment and poverty, and would thus
be least likely to sell the land. However, such decisions were always upsetting for parents, as they would naturally wish to use their estate to help those among their children who were suffering from poverty. In general though, decisions relating to inheritance would usually result in conflict between elders and their children, and between siblings.

Ownership and personhood

Due to the ‘gender neutral’ laws in which privatised land ownership has been enshrined, women have been able to claim legal rights over land and ownership of land, in contemporary Truku society. Moreover, since many social movements that fought for the modification of Family Law were organised by Taiwanese feminists in the 1980s, the status of women (including indigenous women) has gradually become more equal with men in property relations in the legal system in Taiwan. This phenomenon, in which women have been empowered to own land by modern legal systems, applies not only to Truku society but also to many societies across the world.

On the basis of a case study of the politics of rural reform in South Africa, Rangan and Gilmartin suggest that an ideology of ‘gender equality’ will ‘redefine the relationships between women and men so that they have similar abilities to gain access to livelihood resources, create spaces of public and private activity, and achieve power and status in communal realms of their everyday lives’ (2002: 635). And, they assert that the process of combining the aims of gender equality with land reform becomes a complex geographic project because it calls for the simultaneous redefinition of the institutionalised relationships and customary practices of women and men in communities dependent on land-based production and livelihoods (Rangan and Gilmartin 2002: 636). However, they (Rangan and Gilmartin 2002) also point out that such land reform inevitably creates more problems than it solves, because it challenges existing custom and erodes men’s privileged access to land and natural resources in rural communities.
In many societies, ‘gender neutral’ laws cannot guarantee women similar rights to men in terms of access to and control of land. The privatisation of landownership implies that land has become a commodity on the market. In other words, anyone, regardless of gender, can use money to buy land in the marketplace, and that ‘if kinship and socio-cultural factors are not predominant in determining access to and transfer of land, then women should face few obstacles’ (Lastarria-Cornhiel 1997: 1326). How, though, can women accumulate enough money to purchase land in this way? Lastarria-Cornhiel (1997) asserts that because women’s labour and its products are often customarily regarded as jointly owned, often controlled by their husbands or other kinsmen, and appropriated in order to contribute to household maintenance, women often enter the market with no property, little income, and minimal political power.

Furthermore, Freudenberger (1994) reminds us that gender discrimination may be perpetuated via customary practices relating to the sale of land. In his study of traditional authority and the sale of land in Gambia, he argues that, despite formal laws, women have a minor role to play in the allocation of land and the management of land. Examining the transformation of women’s status in rural villages in China from the 1950s up to the present, Bossen (2005) argues that since the government’s introduction of decollectivisation policies in rural villages in China in the 1980s, these land reforms have not in fact empowered women to own land, a right which had been supported under land reform provisions in the 1950s. Rather, she argues that women have played a minor role in inheritance of land due to the influence of patrilineal ideology in household property relations (Bossen 2005).

In many cases, privatisation and land reform might not empower women to have more equal rights over land, but in fact place them at a disadvantage in terms of access to land. Indeed, privatisation and land reform might reinforce or create gender privilege in which women are subordinated to men in terms of access to land in contemporary society. I have argued, in Chapter 2, that the registration of land ownership and privatisation, which was brought into effect in the 1960s, should be regarded as a social and political mechanism through which men gained an
advantage to become the landowners of their households’ property as well as the main provider of their household income. However, this situation does not mean that women do not have any possibility of regaining their rights to land.

When Mohanty reflects on ‘Western’ feminist analyses of women in the ‘Third World’, she is critical of the way in which ‘Third World’ women are often characterised as a singular group on the basis of a shared oppression (1991: 337). She argues that such simplistic formulations are both reductive and ineffectual in understanding the contradictions inherent in women’s position within various structures, and that effective political action and challenges can be devised. Hence, she suggests that feminist studies should be based on an analysis of a particular local context. Returning to the discussion of women and land ownership in Truku society, I argue that we cannot simply regard women’s ownership of land as a result of the privatisation of landownership under ‘gender neutral’ laws, but must also take into consideration the changes to gender and kinship relations due to the introduction of the modern legal system and capitalism in contemporary Truku society.

While many scholars have concentrated on analysing the relationship between privatisation and women’s ownership of land, they have often forgotten to ask how women have gained their land in the first place. Do women gain their land via purchases in the marketplace, or from bequests? Are there other ways for women to gain ownership of land? In respect of Truku society, I argue that most female landowners have gained their land through the bequest of their husbands or parents-in-law, or as landed dowry given to them by their parents, but not through purchases in the marketplace.\(^3\) Hence, we can conclude that most Truku female landowners have gained their land from their spouse and elders.

Yaya is a fifty-eight-year-old Truku widow whose husband died twenty-two years ago. After the death of her husband, she took care of her children (including two sons and four daughters) and parents-in-law by herself. In fact, her husband had two brothers. Generally speaking, after the death of her husband, her parents-in-law

\(^3\) I have discussed the issue of landed dowry in Chapter 5.
should have moved into one of their sons’ houses. However, one of her brothers-in-law committed suicide many years ago, and his wife subsequently remarried another Truku man and brought her children to live with her new husband. The other brother, who is the first son of Yaya’s parents-in-law, refused to let his parents live in his household. Yaya’s father-in-law died before his wife, so he bestowed all his property on his wife. When Yaya’s mother-in-law was at the point of death, she said to Yaya ‘I know you always paid me careful attention, unlike my son and his wife. After my death, I will leave my blessings to you, but I will put my curse on my son and his household.’

Yaya believed that one of the causes of the poverty of her brother-in-law’s household was the curse of her mother-in-law. She said that,

After the death of my mother-in-law, when my brother-in-law tried to hunt wild game and collect valuable wild orchids in his father’s hunting land and in the land where his parents had worked in the highlands, he met his mother’s spirit. She tried to stop him from entering her land by causing him to fall down several times. After the death of my mother-in-law, the economic condition of my brother-in-law’s household steadily worsened.

Yaya also believed that the fact that she had gained most of her parents-in-law’s land was due largely to the blessings of her mother-in-law. Initially, her mother-in-law had partitioned her land into three portions. Her original intention was that Yaya’s household, the household of her eldest brother-in-law, and the household of the first son of the brother-in-law who had committed suicide, would equally inherit one part of his parents’ inheritance.

In order to deal with the complex affairs of inheritance and to successfully gain her land, Yaya did her best to acquire the necessary legal knowledge relating to ownership and inheritance, and paid a real estate notary to help her to complete the whole legal process. According to the legal systems of inheritance and real estate in Taiwan, Yaya, to her surprise, found that she and the other heirs needed to pay a lot of money, including inheritance tax, property tax, title and land administration agent’s fee, and the fee for the land registration and land survey. However, they were all too poor to afford the costs of inheritance. Hence, the other two heirs decided to give up their rights of inheritance, and entrusted Yaya with the conduct of all the
necessary affairs. Just at the point when Yaya was about to give up her inheritance, she suddenly received compensation from the government, paid for the land which they had expropriated when they asked her to move her mother-in-law’s tomb, in order that the main road could be broadened. Finally, Yaya could use the compensation to pay the cost of the inheritance. As a result, most of her parents-in-law’s land has become Yaya’s property.

When I asked female landowners how they had gained their land, most, like Yaya, were willing to share their personal history with me. The competition from migrant workers brought into Taiwan by the government in the 1990s, large numbers of Truku men were therefore unable to provide sufficient income to maintain their households, and, as a result, women started to play a more active role in economic activities and household subsistence (see Chapter 6). In order to maintain the household, many Truku women worked hard at subsistence agriculture, while their spouses preferred to work as part-time wage labourers. There are now more women than men involved in cultivation in contemporary Truku society. As such, women now have a closer relationship with the land than men. In many households women have become the economic ‘head of household’, as well labouring in agricultural cultivation, taking care of the household, its members and the household lands. For many Truku elders, it is their daughters or daughters-in-law who care for them and their ancestral lands, rather than their sons. When I asked those elders who had bequeathed land to daughters why they had done so, many quickly replied that it was because the daughters ‘were more “sweet” than the others’.

With Yaya’s story in mind, I argue that Truku women have become heirs and landowners, not only because of the changes to inheritance practices wrought by privatisation and Family Law in Taiwan, but also because the transformation in household economics has reconfigured the relationship between men and women, and between siblings and generations. Women’s ownership of land should be understood as a consequence of holding a more active role in maintaining the household and caring for elders. As a consequence, Truku women have come to inhabit a new social and economic role in society. Whitehead suggests that,
Bound up with the concepts of property are concepts of the person, and that these concepts of the person in turn can be characterised by their degree of individuation within social relations, an extraordinarily powerful one to being thinking more generally about women (and men) and property (1984:180).

When Yaya spoke of her feelings about being a landowner, she said,

When I received the land ownership certificate for the land I inherited from my parents-in-law, and saw my name printed on the title identifying me as the owner, I felt that suddenly I had become a real person.

And she added that,

Before that, although I could freely use these lands, I always felt that I was just a land user rather than landowner. I always worried that these lands would be taken over by my husband’s siblings or kin someday. But when I received these land ownership certificates, everything seemed to have changed.

Conflicts over land between brothers and sisters

Yaya not only worked to ensure the subsistence of her household, but also engaged in many indigenous social movements in the village. Most of her land was in the highlands, in the Taroko National Park. Due to the laws and policies, which established the park, Yaya and her householders are unable to cultivate and use their land. Even though prior to the park they had cultivated the land, gathered wild vegetables and herbs, built a hut/bamboo house, and hunted, to do so after the establishment of the national park risked criminal prosecution and fines. These discriminatory policies and laws have prevented Yaya and her household from working their lands in the highlands. In response, she has devoted herself to a number of land reclamation movements, organised by other landowners in the highlands, against the Taroko National Park, in addition to a variety of indigenous movements relating to the establishment of Truku self-government. In her opinion, if Truku self-government can be established, Truku people will be free to administer the national park in a manner which complements Truku culture and daily life, and she will be free to use her land without fear of offending unjust laws.

There were an increasing number of Truku women in Fushih Village who, like Yaya, had begun to engage in the various land reclamation movements in order to claim

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4 I have described the Truku indigenous movements for the establishment of self-government in Chapter 2.
their land rights and fight for the return of their land from public and private institutions. Although there were many Truku women working within the land reclamation movements, such social movements were not always ‘empowered’ by their involvement. In Chapters 2 and 3, I discussed that various narratives of the ‘traditional’ concepts of the relationship between people and land, involved in land reclamation movements, downplayed the role of women in property relations in Truku society. Furthermore, because most of these land reclamation movements are organised by Truku male elites and ministers, they unintentionally or intentionally brought the patriarchal ideology in the process of making such narratives.

While some Truku women have decided to work within the land reclamation movements, many Truku landowners, who would otherwise have stood to gain if the land reclamation movements were successful, have negative perceptions of their work and refuse to become involved. As a result, many land reclamation movements have failed due to lack of support from Truku villagers. When I asked villagers why they had decided not to participate in movements which were working for the return of their occupied lands, many indicated that it was because of their own illiteracy. Most land reclamation movements in Truku society were founded and run by members of the Truku elites, and many of the non-elite Truku were worried that these self-same elites would appropriate land for themselves, as they had done during the land registration drive in the 1960s. As discussed in Chapter 2, the changes brought about by the processes of privatisation and land registration in Truku society in the 1960s, have contributed to fermenting conflict and tension over land issues between elites and ordinary Truku people.

Furthermore, the registration of private landed property has not only generated tensions between the elites and ordinary people, but has also created various conflicts over land and inheritance between different households in Truku society since the 1960s. As such, conflicts over the inheritance of household assets and lands have caused relationships between many siblings to deteriorate, and these tensions have deeply affected the relationships between householders and their descendants. Conflicts over inheritance within households has thus affected kinship solidarity
within wider society, and the tensions arising between siblings with regard to inheritance rights has contributed to the reconfiguring of social and kinship relationships beyond the household. Consequently, the failure of these land reclamation movements is due more to the inability of the people involved to work collaboratively. I have described the tensions between Truku elites and ordinary Truku people in Chapter 2. In this section, I focus on the implications which land conflicts between different households have for land reclamation movements in contemporary Truku society.

In illustrating the above, I offer the experiences of Igon, a sixty-five-year-old Truku woman, and her involvement in the land reclamation movement against the Asia Cement Company in Fushih Village. Igon is a committed and passionate activist who leads the ‘Return Our Land Self-help Association’ in Fushih Village. She married a Japanese man and spent much of her life in Tokyo, but returned to Fushih Village, her hometown, in 1995 and became involved in the movement against the Asia Cement Company. Through her tireless efforts, the land reclamation movement has campaigned continuously from 1996 to 2006. She said,

On the first day that I arrived back in my hometown, there was a coordination committee meeting to discuss the disputes over land ownership between the Asia Cement Company and Truku landowners in the village. The coordination committee was set up after increasing numbers of Truku landowners found that the Asia Cement Company had occupied their lands without their agreement. When I attended the coordination committee, I was astonished to learn that my father’s land, which had comprised over fifty hectares in the area appropriated by the Cement Company, had been reduced to a mere 0.4 hectares.

In order to reclaim their land rights, Igon worked together with Truku landowners and residents of Fushih Village to set up the ‘Return Our Land Self-help Association’, and over the last 12 years they have carried out a series of land reclamation movement activities and demonstrations against the Asia Cement Company. In addition, Igon, as the representative of the landowners, has lodged legal complaints against the company’s occupation of their lands, and against the local administrator’s malfeasance and corruption.

Although the land reclamation movement organized by Igon can be seen as a successful social movement in Truku society that is not to say that it has been an
easy struggle. Igon suffered a stroke in 2003 that almost killed her, brought on at least in part by the stress of the case. She had been under considerable pressure from the company and the government. This had been exacerbated by the fact that many of the landowners and their descendants refused to support her or to recognise the achievements of the ‘Return Our Land Self-help Association’. On the contrary, many of the local landowners, residents, and local administrators feared the influence of the company and central government, and were afraid that opposing them might endanger their own interests. On this basis, many were openly critical of the land reclamation movement and blamed Igon for local discontent. It is Igon’s brother Kimi who leads the opposition to the land reclamation movements.

Igon often liked to visit the public cemetery in Fushih Village, in which many of her partners in the land reclamation movement against the Asia Cement Company were buried. There, in front of their graves, she would report to them on the achievements and progress of the movement, and this served as a source of comfort for when the pressures of the campaign grew too great. During my fieldwork, I sometimes accompanied her in her visits to the cemetery, and often saw her in tears at the gravesides of her colleagues and friends. She said to me,

I often asked them, through my tears, why they had passed away so prematurely, leaving me alone to face the pressures from the cement company, the state, and even my kin. If only they had lived longer, we could have fought them together, and enjoyed the achievements of the movement together.

Igon often complained that so many of the landowners and residents refused to support the land reclamation movement. Did they want to regain their lands or not? She could not understand why they simply acquiesced to the illegal occupation of their lands by the company. She said to me,

I always remind landowners and residents that the basic responsibility of the modern state, such as the state in Japan, is to protect rather than violate the private property of its citizens.

In her affirmation of the role of the modern state and legal system is an implicit belief that the cause, which she espouses is just and that the Truku people will ultimately succeed in reclaiming their land. Her understanding of the modern legal system is reflected in her strategies concerning the land reclamation movement. She has organised many demonstrations against the mining company, and she and the
other landowners have been unafraid to make a number of accusations against the mining company, as well as the local government.

When Igon’s father died in 1989, he left no will regarding the inheritance his children were to receive. According to Family Law in Taiwan, as the father had died intestate, Igon and her siblings were entitled to an equal share of their father’s property. Igon has two sisters and four brothers. Igon’s eldest brother instructed a land administration agent to petition the government, arguing that his sisters had waived their rights to inherit, and Igon felt strongly that he had done this without consulting her or her sisters. In the end, the estate was divided among the four brothers, which led Igon and her sisters to regard them as little more than thieves. As a result, in 1995 the sisters launched a legal action against their brothers, suing them for forgery and for illegally appropriating property. This was the first lawsuit of its type in Fushih Village, in which a sister made legal recourse to the courts in order to settle a dispute over inheritance with her brothers.

Her brothers have criticised her actions, stating that it was irrational and unreasonable for Igon to go to court over an inheritance which clearly represented the wishes of their father, and they argued that his decision to leave his property to his sons is supported by ‘traditional’ gaya rules of inheritance. On her part, Igon argued that her labour contributed to the household’s land cultivation for over twenty years, and that she has many cherished memories of working with her grandmother and parents on these lands. In addition, she argued that she has equal rights of inheritance under the modern legal system. Ultimately, Igon and her sisters lost the lawsuit. According to Igon and her eldest brother, the judge was of the opinion that Truku ‘tradition’ did not sanction the right of women to own land, and asserted that Igon’s brothers were merely following their father’s wishes in distributing the property solely between his sons.

Igon’s father, Sibal, was the first Truku local legislator in Hualien County, and was an influential figure in Truku society. He had a lot of land and was relatively wealthy. He had three daughters and four sons, and bestowed most of his land and property on
his sons rather than his daughters. Two of his sons, Guhung and Kimi, are as influential and well known as Igon is in contemporary Truku society. All of them have devoted themselves to public affairs, though their causes have differed. Sibal’s eldest son, Guhung, is interested in the development of local tourism. He and his wife operate a guesthouse and run a Non-Governmental Organisation, which works to preserve and develop ‘traditional’ Truku culture. In doing this, he often works in cooperation with the Taroko National Park, the Asia Cement Company, and other governmental institutions. In his view, although these institutions have occupied large areas of Truku land, including land inherited from his father, they can assist in developing Truku culture and society by providing financial support to him and other Truku people.

However, Guhung is insistent that these institutions should return Truku lands at some point in the future. While he has sometimes assisted in the legal prosecution of those involved in the land reclamation movements, equally he has supported other individuals and land reclamation movements in their work to reclaim lands. He has sometimes quarrelled with his sister, Igon over her work in the land reclamation movements and his relationship with her has at times been tense. Interestingly, though, there have been occasions on which he has helped Igon in her work for the land reclamation movements, even offering the office of his Non-Governmental Organisation as a space for his sister and her fellow activists to meet. Thus, his feelings regarding her work, and issues relating to land, have varied according to context, and at times he has appeared inconsistent.

The inconsistencies evident in Guhung’s thinking have been articulated not only in public life, but also in kinship practices in everyday life. Igon has laid accusations against him and his brothers regarding their inheritance. During my fieldwork, I witnessed a number of quarrels between the brothers and their sister. Even though the tensions and disagreements over inheritance remained, they did not sever connections with one another; all of the siblings participated in powda gaya events, whether organised by Guhung or Igon, despite the ongoing conflicts.
Kimi was interested in face-tattoos in Truku culture and had a gallery in his house in which he displayed his research, including photographs of elder’s face tattoos and examples of the materials and tools used in face-tattooing. He too was in legal dispute with Igon, in a civil suit relating to the inheritance. His relationship with Igon though, seemed somewhat disconnected, and they tended not to participate in one another’s kinship events. This tension arose not only from the dispute over the inheritance, but also due to their different perspectives on the land reclamation movements. In 1998, Igon launched a campaign for election to the township’s representative body in Sioulin, in order to further her work in the land reclamation movement. At that time, Kimi was working full-time as a labourer in the Asia Cement Company, and as a township representative for the village. With the support of the company, he encouraged his wife to run in the same election, against Igon. In the end, Kimi’s wife was victorious and Igon failed in her bid to gain a seat on the representative body.

The conflict over land between Igon and her brothers cannot be regarded as a small household event in Fushih Village. In their discussions on land and land reclamation movements, Truku residents would often refer to the election contest between Igon and Kimi’s wife, using it as an example to explain their ideas and opinions. Both Igon’s and Kimi’s households, kin groups, descendants and sibling’s households were drawn into the contest. In addition, because so many of the village’s residents had lost land to the mining company, their households and kin groups were also drawn into the contest.

**The symbolic meanings of women’s land**

Igon’s beliefs relating to the modern state and the legal system are, for many Truku landowners and residents, antithetical to belief in customs, in gaya. Although the majority of Truku people respect Igon’s work toward the return of their occupied lands, many cannot completely agree with her ideas regarding the modern legal system. Rowty is one of the most influential residents in Fushih Village and the deputy head of the Truku local government. If he had chosen to engage in the land
reclamation movement, many others would have followed him in the fight against the company. However, he decided not to take part in the land reclamation movement despite having a large amount of land in the mining area. He argued that

I have conflicting ideas in respect of the land reclamation movement against the company. Although I am adamant that the company should return our lands, at the same time, I cannot bring myself to agree with the land reclamation movement which Igon has organised.

He added that ‘Igon is particularly a controversial person in the village. Many residents and elders think that Truku’s gaya customs and social structures are at risk of being damaged by Igon’s land reclamation movement.’

In what ways, if at all, might gaya and the social structure of Truku society be damaged by Igon’s work within the land reclamation movement? In opposing Igon’s use of the modern legal system in her struggle to claim land rights, what were Truku men opposing and what were they cleaving to?

In analysing the different perspectives held by male Truku villagers towards Igon’s land reclamation movement work, I found that many Truku men consider her advocacy of women’s right to own land to be in dispute with ‘traditional’ culture. Although some male landowners and residents supported Igon’s work in the land reclamation movement, others who had also lost land to the mining company did not, and they refused to work with Igon for the same reasons as Rowty. Many male residents attribute the rising number of disputes over land ownership and inheritance to the advent of women’s rights to own land and to inherit. Therefore, we can conclude that many Truku men held negative perspectives towards Igon’s work because they feared that their privileges in terms of property relations would be eroded by their participation in the land reclamation movement. Many Truku men also disagreed with women making recourse to the courts and using the modern Taiwanese legal system in order to claim their legal rights over land and inheritance. As a result, they argue that if women are permitted to own land, Truku norms (gaya) and social relations will be eroded in contemporary Truku society.

In speculating why Rowty had not joined the land reclamation movement, Igon reasoned ‘he is a politician in Fushih Village, so he does not want to have bad
relations with the Asia Cement Company’. For Igon, Rowty’s absence from the movement is nothing to do with disagreeing over women’s rights to own land; rather, she attributes it to his desire to secure personal political and financial profit. Indeed, in personal terms, Rowty has three sons and no daughters and so no issues regarding how to divide up his estate in this respect. However, Sayung, one of Rowty’s sisters, complained that ‘after her father died, Rowty did not give any pieces of their father’s landed property to her or her two sisters.’ I pressed her, ‘why didn’t you claim your rights at the time your father’s will was disclosed?’ She replied, ‘I don’t know. I didn’t think that women could own land. My brother said the arrangement of the inheritance was based on my father’s will.’

Rowty remembered dealing with his father’s property in around 1988. At the time, though Sayung’s husband was the head of Sioulin Township, he did not help his wife to claim her legal rights to her father’s estate. Why did he not help his wife to claim her rights? I did not have the chance to ask Sayung’s husband about this during my fieldwork. When I asked Sayung’s son about this issue, he answered, ‘Perhaps my father had enough landed property, so wasn’t concerned about gaining more land. Or perhaps he didn’t want any tension between himself and Rowty, my uncle.’ Sayung’s son is thirty years old and works as a waged labourer for the Asia Cement Company; he too is unconcerned about the issue.

In terms of Taiwanese law, the advent of privatisation and a modern legal system in the 1960s meant that women had legal rights over land and the right to inherit. Nevertheless, for many Truku people, these rights are not assumed or uncontested in contemporary society. I would argue that, with the conflicts over land between Igon and her brothers and the issues surrounding Rowty’s management of his father’s inheritance in mind, it seems likely that prior to the 1990s the notion that women could not claim ownership of land was prevalent in Truku society. However, perceptions in this respect have changed over time, as evidenced by Igon’s legal action against her brothers in the 1990s. During my fieldwork, recourse was often made to the courts in disputes over inheritance between brothers and sisters in a household, inspired in large part by Igon’s own legal struggles. On a number of
occasions, Truku women said to me that,

Igon has helped us realise that the modern legal system guarantees us the legal right to be heirs. In the past, when we were about to get married, our parents would ask us to sign an agreement giving up our rights to the inheritance.

However, when I questioned male informants on the issue of inheritance, many of them tended to emphasise ‘traditional’ principles (gaya) of inheritance and were critical of the damage which they felt the modern legal system has inflicted on ‘traditional’ practices and values.

I have described the conflict over land which has arisen between Truku elites and ordinary Truku residents due to the privatisation of land ownership, and between literate and illiterate Truku due to the contested appropriation of lands by literate Truku during the land registration process in the 1960s. As I have shown, although these disputes between different households originated in the privatisation of land ownership, they were not associated with the advent of women’s ownership of land. In other words, the fact that women have gained legal rights over land and inheritance cannot be understood as the sole cause of conflict between households in contemporary Truku society. What symbolic meanings are attributed to women’s land within these conflicts?

The end result of Igon’s lawsuit against her brothers, over her father’s inheritance, is testament to that fact that the legal system in Taiwan does not really challenge ‘traditional’ rules of inheritance. Rather, it reinforces the privileges that Truku men hold in respect of property relations in contemporary society. I have argued that the idea that there is a ‘traditional’ rule by which women are denied the right to own land in Truku society has gradually been shaped over time by Truku people, particularly men, over the 1960s to the 1980s. During this period, privatisation, the introduction of commercial agriculture, land reform and the advent of male migrant labour has contributed to the idea that it was the man who was the economic head of household and the owner of household property. At the same time, the idea of a gender asymmetry in property and economic relations was articulated in terms of Christian notions of gender relations. Finally, many Truku people, including elite males and Christians, intentionally or unintentionally articulated their perspectives on gender
hierarchy in terms of ‘traditional’ Truku culture and gender relations, drawing on cultural reference points which have included the *Hakaw utux* legend.

Indeed, the idea that women were subordinated to men in property relations has significantly influenced many Truku women, both in terms of their understanding of property relations in contemporary society and in terms of their interpretation of land conflicts between their households and those of their husbands’ siblings. Regardless of gender, many Truku felt that the causes of conflict were clear enough, that privatisation of land ownership and the modern legal system in Taiwan had enabled women to own land and thus eroded social and kinship solidarity in contemporary Truku society.

Because some Truku women seem to agree that there is a gender hierarchy in property relations, suggests that we cannot simply attribute the idea that women cannot own land to the desire of Truku men to maintain control of landed property or maximise their own interests. I have argued that the household is the basic social and economic unit in Truku society. In this sense, I suggest that we should take the role of the household into account when we discuss conflicts over land between men and women in contemporary Truku society.

For Truku people, most conflicts over land ownership have arisen due to disputes over inheritance. That is, a high proportion of conflicts over land are between heirs, and between heirs’ households. Prior to any discussion of conflict over land between heirs’ households, it is necessary to briefly describe the size of the average household. According to my fieldwork data from Fushih Village, most Truku elders over the age of seventy-five had in excess of seven children. Villagers over the age of sixty had on average around five children, while their children under the age of fifty usually had fewer than three children. Most of those Truku villagers involved in conflicts over land or inheritance were over fifty years of age. Generally, these villagers had more than five siblings. For instance, Igon has six siblings and Rowty has five. Although the size of the household has decreased from one generation to the next, the overall Truku population has gradually increased. As the reservation area is
limited, partition of the parents’ landed property on death results in a significantly reduced land area for each of the inheriting children. Consequently, land is a scarce and valuable commodity in contemporary Truku society.

During the 1970s and 1980s, when a large proportion of Truku men were engaged in migrant labour, household income derived from various sources, including earnings from the husband’s migrant labour and from the wife’s cultivation of household land. During this period, the main source of household income was not from inheritance and landed property. However, in the 1990s many male migrant labourers lost the jobs they had held in urban areas and were forced to return to their hometowns. For many people, the cultivation of household land has now become the principal source of household subsistence. As a consequence, landed property has become the most valuable of household resources and an essential means of production for many households in contemporary Truku society.

Land has become scarce and more valuable than it was in the 1970s and 1980s. As a result, any issues relating to landed property and inheritance have become extremely important. Most parents now seek to increase their household lands in order to accumulate wealth and bequeath more land to their descendants. However, most of them are too poor to purchase new land. Therefore, inheritance provides Truku villagers with an opportunity to increase their landholdings. Hence, competition over inheritance between sibling households has become intense, in turn generating many conflicts over land and inheritance.

Although these conflicts over inheritance predated the introduction of the modern legal system, the privatisation of land ownership has led to an increase in the number and complexity of disputes. It might be argued that the privatisation of land should help to truncate such disputes, that recourse to law would add clarity and awareness of the need for speedy resolution of conflicts over land inheritance. Actually, privatisation has instead heightened the tension and stress caused by disputes over inheritance, and privatisation of land has caused as many problems as it has solved in terms of kinship relations and social relations in contemporary Truku society.
Ultimately, though, inheritors would argue both on the basis of legally enshrined rights of ownership, and in terms of ‘traditional’ concepts of *gaya* in respect of their parents’ wishes. Thus, both modern laws and *gaya* are part of a range of strategies by which protagonists in long-term legal disputes lay claim to their rights to inherit, and through which authority is claimed in order to protect interests.

By analysing the implications which inheritance has for relationships between parents and children, and between siblings (and heirs), we can see that inheritance often generates conflict and tension between siblings and their respective households. Although, according to *gaya*, Truku children should not seek to influence their parents’ decisions regarding the disposal of household property and land, nevertheless, this injunction is often ignored. Often informants would say, ‘it is necessary to communicate with our parents about issues of inheritance’, but such discussions would usually end in disputes between parents and children, as well as between siblings. Sometimes, even with long-running disputes, the parents’ decisions would be final and would settle the issue once and for all. On other occasions, though, the disputes would continue, as would the tensions affecting everyday relationships between siblings and between their households and their descendants.

Since the 1960s, the modern legal system has empowered women in terms of land ownership and inheritance rights, and the nature of inheritance disputes in Truku society has changed as a result. I have argued that the advent of landed dowry has, in many causes, created tension in the relationship between brothers and sisters. Furthermore, the modern legal system has enabled Truku women to inherit from their parents. As a result, women have become increasingly drawn into conflict with their brothers and sisters, over land and inheritance, and this conflict has extended to their respective households and descendants. As a consequence, siblings and affines are caught up in conflicts over inheritance. A household might even be in dispute with both the husband’s siblings and the wife’s siblings at the same time.

In these conflicts over inheritance, the social actors involved view both modern laws and ‘traditional’ Truku rules relating to inheritance as potential strategies to be
employed when most effective and opportune. While on the one hand a married couple might use modern laws to contest an inheritance in respect of the wife’s natal family, at the same time they might make recourse to ‘traditional’ rules of inheritance in order to prevent the husband’s sister from inheriting a share of his parents’ lands.

Many of my female informants shared their feelings with me about becoming landowners. Interestingly, many continued to worry that family members, brothers, brothers-in-law, sisters, even husbands, might take over their land before they had received the certificate of land ownership. In recent times an alternative arrangement has emerged for the dispensing of inheritance, by which parents bequeath all their landed property to their son(s), but reserve a piece of land for their daughters for them to cultivate or build a house on. This alternative arrangement is not appreciated by many Truku women, though, as they feel that there is no guarantee that their brother(s), having legal ownership, will not simply take over the land at some future point. The majority of Truku women are frank in stating their preference for ‘real’ ownership of land, to their parents.

I have pointed out that Truku women play an increasingly important role in cultivation and household economics in contemporary society. The modern legal system is not the only way for Truku women to make clear to their siblings, parents-in-law and parents that they wish to inherit land rights. Some told me that they would share their memories of cultivating their parents’ lands and their personal ties to the land, sometimes bringing these sentiments to the attention of their elders in an effort to prove the importance of their economic contribution to the household and to contemporary society. The importance of women’s roles in cultivation and household economics also shows that men cannot be seen as the main providers in household economics and that the social and economic status of men is challenged by women.
Conclusion

In conclusion, by examining the meanings attributed to women’s ownership of land in contemporary Truku society, and their role in land conflicts between households, I argue that the notion that ‘tradition’ prohibits Truku women from owning land is, in fact, an invented tradition, and has been appropriated strategically in order to exclude women from ownership of land. Secondly, the advent of women’s rights to own land cannot be simply understood as the result of the introduction of privatisation and the legal system, but is also a consequence of kinship practices. Thirdly, by studying how Truku women have gained or lost land, we can ascertain the nature of gaya in contemporary society. Gaya is flexible and the rules of gaya are always interpreted or created by the Truku people. Truku people make use of gaya strategically in economic activities, dealing with inheritance, and seeking resolution of conflicts over land in their everyday lives.
Chapter Eight. Conclusion

This thesis has examined the transformation of the relationship between women and land which has occurred in Truku society since the introduction of privatisation and commercial agriculture in the 1960s. In addition, I have explored the meanings attributed to women’s ownership of land in contemporary Truku society. I argue that it is not reasonable to suppose that the introduction of privatisation and the legal right to own land has necessarily led to women being able to obtain land. On the other hand, we cannot simply assume that privatisation in relation to capitalisation will make women subordinate to men in society. Rather, the relationship between women and land in property relations interacts with the external politico-economic forces, transforming Truku society, and is continually redefined in terms of the changes to gender relations, economically and socially, in Truku society.

For Truku women, land ownership is the result of their work in cultivating land and of household economics, rather than as a consequence of the introduction of privatisation of land ownership. Furthermore, there are various kinds of kinship practices, such as inheritance and marriage, involved in the process by which women obtain ownership of land in contemporary Truku society. Hence, in seeking to understand women’s ownership of land it is necessary not only to discuss the role of women in kinship, economic and social relations, but also to investigate the concepts which inform gender relations in Truku society. Through investigation of the relationship between women and land in property relations and economic activities, I have described the processes by which Truku women have come to play an increasingly important role in household economics, kinship practices and local politics, particularly as since the 1990s it is often Truku women rather than men who have become the main providers of household income.

Through exploration of the meanings attributed to women’s land, I have reflected on a prevalent narrative in Truku concepts of land in contemporary Truku society. In this narrative the authority of ‘tradition’ is invoked, in which women are denied the
right to own land and are seen as a cause of conflict over land between different households. I argue that this idea of gender hierarchy has arisen largely through privatisation, capitalisation and various official policies which have been brought about in Truku society over the course of the 1960s to 1980s.

Furthermore, this idea has also been reinforced through narratives created by male Truku activists in a variety of land movements from the 1990s up to the present day, which emphasise masculine or ‘male’ culture in Truku society. Reflecting on Truku concepts of gender relations in relation to kinship relations and property relations, I suggest that this idea is problematic and should be regarded as a strategy by which Truku people seek to exclude women from property relations.

In Chapter 2, I focussed on the transformation of land reform policies in Taiwan, from the advent of the Japanese colonial government through to the KMT regime and including the privatisation of land ownership in Truku society in the 1960s. I argued that the process of privatisation has included both the introduction of commercial agriculture as well as capitalisation in contemporary Truku society. Furthermore, I argued that owing to these programmes of land reform, privatisation of land ownership and agricultural development, Truku people have gradually lost territory from the Japanese colonial period up until the present day. Prior to Japanese colonialism, Truku people lived in the highlands in the eastern part of Taiwan. Under Japanese colonialism (1895-1945), in order to exploit natural resources and land in indigenous territory, the Japanese colonial government forced Truku people to leave their living areas in the highlands and move to reservation areas in the lowlands in the eastern part of the island. When Truku people lived in the highlands, the society was a hunter-gather society and they engaged in shifting agriculture. During the Japanese colonial period, agriculture in Truku society was transformed into subsistence agriculture.

Truku people did not own land privately until the KMT government introduced the privatisation of land in Truku society in the 1960s. In requesting Truku people to register their land ownership in the 1960s, the Taiwanese government also
introduced various programmes of land reform and commercial agriculture. Because of this, Truku society has been gradually absorbed into Taiwan’s economic system and beyond that, into the world system. Simultaneously, the imposition of the privatisation of land ownership also meant that the modern Taiwanese legal system was also introduced into Truku society.

Although privatisation resulted in Truku people owning their land, this has generated various kinds of conflicts. During the registration of land ownership in the 1960s, privatisation benefited well-educated Truku people more than the common people and illiterates. Owing to the processes of privatisation and capitalisation which have taken place, an economic and political hierarchy of elites and common people has emerged since the 1960s. At the same time, since the 1960s Truku people have also suffered loss of land, due to various governmental policies on economic development and the establishment of the Taroko National Park. Subsequently, there have been many conflicts over land between the state and Truku people as well as between private companies and the Truku. As a result, in the last two decades a number of land movements have arisen, organised by Truku people in order to claim their land rights.

Most of these land movements are organised by Truku men. In their statements on the land movement and the work to reclaim land rights, male Truku activists have tended to emphasise the relationship between male culture and ‘traditional’ concepts of territory and property in order to strengthen the authority of these movements, even though headhunting culture has disappeared and hunting is legally prohibited by the government. However, these Truku men have, intentionally or unintentionally, downplayed the role of women both in terms of narratives related to land and ‘traditional culture’ and in terms of the organisation and work of land movements in Truku society. Consequently, Truku women are largely absent from these land movements.

Moreover, narratives articulating ‘traditional’ concepts of territory in the land movements have reinforced a gender hierarchy in contemporary Truku society. In
this gender hierarchy, women are denied the right to own land and are subordinated to men in Truku society. However, although privatisation of land ownership in relation to the legal system in Taiwan has enabled Truku women to have legal rights over land, the operational gender asymmetry in property relations has meant that many Truku women have been effectively unable to gain land in contemporary Truku society.

In Chapter 3, I concentrated on the transformation of the relationship between gender relations and land in Truku society. I argued that it is necessary to examine the relationship between household and land and take the transformation of economic context into account, when discussing the relationship between gender relations and land in Truku society. I suggested that the household, based on a couple and their offspring, is the basic social, economic and political unit. The relationship between households underpins kinship and social relations. Through examination of Japanese and Taiwanese studies of Truku society (i.e. Mori 1917; Mowna 1998; Sayam 1917), the household was not only the basic unit of cultivation but also the foundation on which property relations were based, in pre-colonial life in the highlands. That is, property was held by the household but not by an individual.

According to many Truku elders’ memories of farming with their parents in the highlands, there was no strict sexual division of labour in cultivation and a couple and their children would cooperate with each other to farm and harvest. In the conduct of commercial agriculture in the 1960s and 1970s, husband and wife would also work together with their children in the field. Since the 1970s, however, increasing numbers of Truku men have become migrant labourers, and because of this a sexual division of labour has arisen in which men work as waged labourers in urban areas in Taiwan, while women work in the cultivation of household lands.

The idea of a gender hierarchy has emerged through privatisation, capitalisation and various official policies in Truku society, over the 1960s, ‘70s and ‘80s. Through these policies, Truku men became the economic head of household and the owner of household property. In addition, with increasing numbers of Truku men engaging in
migrant labour in the 1970s, they became the main providers of household income. Furthermore, the views of the Christian churches and the Taiwanese education, mass media and legal system, based as they are on patriarchal ideologies, have underpinned such ideas.

However, this gender hierarchy has been challenged by Truku women since the 1990s. If we examine the role which women have played in cultivation and in general economic life, including the economic transformations which have occurred from the 1960s onwards, we find that they have played an active role in cultivation and household economics throughout this period. In terms of the relationship between women and land, when large numbers of Truku men became migrant labourers between 1970s and 1990s, it was Truku women who remained to cultivate household lands. At the same time, Truku women also had control of income which came from the husband’s earnings from migrant labour.

With the introduction of foreign migrant labourers from Southeast Asia in the 1990s, increasing numbers of Truku male migrant labourers have lost their jobs and subsequently returned to their hometowns. In this situation, Truku men have largely ceased to be the main providers of household income. While men are suffering from unemployment, many Truku women continue to cultivate in order to maintain their households. In many households, it is women’s economic activities, rather than men’s, which have become the more stable source of income and subsistence. As such, in many households, women have a closer relationship than men to the land and play a more active role in household economics.

Truku women not only play an active role in cultivation in contemporary society, they also operate various small businesses. In Chapter 6, I explored the characteristics of these small businesses, including grocery stores, street vendors and karaoke shops, etc. in contemporary Truku society. Truku women rather than men control most of these businesses. These small businesses are crucially important to Truku women, both in terms of domestic affairs, and as a means to improve their individual and household income.
Furthermore, these shops should be regarded as women’s centres in Truku communities. These shops are places where Truku women exchange agricultural products, barter craft produce and organise the rotating saving and credit society (hui). Some of these shops are also craft studios and therefore can provide full-time or part-time jobs for female residents. As a result, the shop represents a multi-functional centre based on the economic activities of Truku women, and many shopkeepers have gradually improved their social and economic status in Truku society because their shops are central to the financial institutions of credit, saving and investment, both in terms of household economics and in the economic life of the community. Consequently, many Truku female shopkeepers have become influential and active in local politics.

Though women have played a more active role than men in household economics and public politics since the 1990s, the idea of gender asymmetry in property relations still remains. Some Truku women also argue that the denial of land-ownership rights to women is a ‘traditional’ principle which they must obey. The compliance of some women to the idea of gender hierarchy has prompted me to ask how and why such an idea has become influential and prevalent in Truku society. From examination of this idea of gender asymmetry in property relations, I find that the notion of gender asymmetry is articulated in terms of Truku concepts of norm (gaya) and marriage. As a result, gender asymmetry in property relations is associated with practices of gaya and kinship practices in Truku society.

In Chapter 4, I discussed Truku concepts of gaya, the complex of norms, and the practices of gaya in everyday life. Gaya is based on beliefs relating to ancestor worship. The authority of gaya is dependant on people’s fear of punishment meted out by the ancestral spirits, or a desire to receive their blessings. Truku people believe that ancestral spirits are omnipresent and that everything can be associated with gaya. Moreover, these norms as they relate to concepts of ancestor worship and the rules relating to sexuality and gender, broadly apply to practices of kinship. In particular, gaya not only defines good conjugal relationships, sibling relationships
and affiliation within a household, but also regulates the interaction between a household and its kin groups and affines. Therefore, if gender asymmetry in property relations is articulated in terms of the concepts of *gaya*, the presumption of many Truku people is that breaking principles of gender asymmetry in property relations is in effect an offence against *gaya*, and in turn significantly impacts kinship relations and the relationships between households which underpin social solidarity. Hence, the idea of gender asymmetry has become a principle of *gaya* which is seemingly unchallengeable.

However, if we examine the practice of *gaya* in everyday life, we find that the concept of *gaya* is flexible and not concrete. The Truku elders of each household are the conduits through which the words of parents (ancestors) are passed down to the next generation; they define *gaya*, judge whether or not their descendants have offended against *gaya*, and organise *powda gaya* rituals in which Truku people sacrifices pigs to ancestral spirits. The ideas and principles of *gaya* are interpreted or perhaps created by Truku elders. In the process of defining *gaya*, Truku elders may not only follow their ancestors’ words, but also be influenced by the views of Christian churches and their understanding of the national laws in contemporary society. Furthermore, they might take their personal or household interests into account, when they are interpreting *gaya*. Hence, the definition of *gaya* is always changing, created and reshaped by Truku elders in different contexts. Although many Truku people would say that they should strictly obey *gaya*, the definition of *gaya* is flexible and changeable. Because of the flexibility of *gaya* in Truku society, the relationship between gender hierarchy and *gaya* is not given *a priori*. This relationship should be regarded as the result of the interpretations of *gaya* made by Truku people in contemporary society.

Many Truku people, especially men, claim that the denial of land ownership rights to women is based not only on *gaya* but also on the practice of marriage in Truku society. In terms of marriage, many Truku people assert that they practise virilocal residence. Secondly, the subordination of women can be seen as result of the exchange of women in marriage. In the process of the marital exchange, the groom’s
household would be expected to give bridewealth and brideservice to the bride’s household, and prepare the wedding feast. The bridewealth and brideservice transfer certain rights from the wife’s household to that of her husband, such as the right to the wife’s labour and rights over her children. Finally, the inheritance system that excludes women is connected with the marital exchange system. Hence, if we want to explore the nature of women’s subordination to men in Truku society, it is necessary to look at Truku concepts of marriage.

In Chapter 5, I focussed on Truku concepts and practices of marriage in contemporary Truku society. By examining the process of marital exchange and the relationship between the bride and her natal family after marriage, I argued that the connection between gender hierarchy and marriage is problematic. In the process of marital exchange, women in both the bride’s and groom’s households play an active role in the practices of marital exchange and the organising of wedding rituals. After marriage, the wife still maintains close relationships with her natal family and kin groups, rather than being strictly prohibited from visiting her natal family. For Truku people, maintaining a good relationship with the affines is regarded as an important rule of gaya, and people are expected to respect their affines, especially their wives’ parents and siblings. In addition, I showed that the divorce rate is high in contemporary Truku society and that Truku women are not completely bound to their households. After divorce, Truku women are allowed to return to their natal families, sometimes with their children, returning to live and work within their parents and siblings’ households.

Furthermore, with the introduction of privatisation into Truku society, the practice of providing landed dowry has enabled many Truku women to become more economically independent from their husbands, and given them the ability to provide for their households. The introduction of landed dowry can be regarded as a result of the changes to Truku marriage practices since the 1960s. For many parents, providing landed dowry is a way to afford their daughters sufficient economic ability to support themselves and their children, in the event that they divorce from their husbands. In addition, many Truku parents are of the opinion that privatisation
ensures that their daughters have the right to control and own their landed dowry, a right thus denied to their husbands or parents-in-law. Prior to the privatisation of land ownership, the bride’s dowry in marital exchange included clothes, jewellery, weaving instruments, furniture and agricultural tools, but excluded their parents’ land. If the bride’s household provided land as dowry, it meant that the residence arrangement was uxorilocal. Since the 1960s, with the privatization of land ownership giving women legal rights over land, land is now an item of dowry, even when the residential arrangement is virilocal.

In Chapter 5, I also focussed on how the imposition of privatisation and cash economics has influenced the practice and idea of marriage in contemporary Truku society. With the capitalisation of Truku society, including land ownership, the cost of building new houses has risen considerably. Many households cannot afford to provide a new house for the newly married couple before the wedding. In such conditions, the newly married couple live with the husband’s parents, siblings, or perhaps a married brother. Secondly, with the capitalisation of Truku society in the 1960s, the payment of bridewealth and preparation of the wedding feast have become monetised. Finally, I describe the Ding Hun ritual as a new form of wedding ritual. The Ding Hun ritual is an engagement organised by the bride’s household. The bride’s parents use the Ding Hun ritual to celebrate their daughter’s wedding. Recently, most parents expect that their daughter will gain increased social status from a larger scale Ding Hun ritual and will thus be treated more respectfully by the husband, parents-in-law and affines.

As discussed, with the capitalisation of Truku society in the 1960s, a social and economic hierarchy composed of elites, including local politicians, government servants, well-educated people, some full-time waged labourers, and the common people, has taken shape. Analysing the implications of the monetisation of weddings and bridewealth in contemporary Truku society, I argue that marriage is not necessarily associated with gender hierarchy, but reinforces the social and economic hierarchy between wealthier households and poorer households in contemporary Truku society.
I have argued that the privatisation of the legal system in Taiwan has empowered women by enabling them to have legal rights over land. Due to the feminisation of agriculture and small businesses, women have come to play an increasingly important role both in economics and politics in contemporary Truku society. However, these economic and political elements do not guarantee that women gain land ownership. Women’s ownership of land usually relies on various sorts of kinship practices, such as landed dowry and inheritance.

In Chapter 7, I focussed on the relationship between the advent of women’s rights to own land and the right to inherit, and analysed the ways in which Truku people in contemporary society strategically use the legal system in Taiwan, along with their understanding of gaya, in conflicts between households over the inheritance of landed property. Furthermore, I examined the role that women play in the long-term process of inheritance disputation.

The relationship between the testators and their heirs is central to inheritance. Truku elders are not only spokesmen for gaya, but also agents who make decisions regarding the arrangement of their inheritance. Many Truku elders hold to the belief that women traditionally do not (or should not) have rights over land, and usually bequeath landed property to their sons rather than their daughters. With the introduction of privatisation to Truku society in the 1960s, Truku elders now have to try to strike a balance between working within the Taiwanese legal system, and their understandings of gaya as it relates to property relations, when making decisions on how to apportion the inheritance which they will leave. I argue that Truku people’s decisions on inheritance are as flexible as their interpretations of gaya, in contemporary Truku society. In considering inheritance, elders tend to take a range of new factors into account. Elders with sons in economic difficulty often fear that the son will sell the land they inherit at some future point, and they therefore prefer to leave it to the most economically stable of their offspring, regardless of gender. In addition, parents often prefer to give land to those daughters or daughters-in-law who respect and take care of them, as a reward.
Furthermore, the distribution of inheritance often creates conflicts over inheritance between heirs (siblings). Such conflicts may generate various tensions between different households, amongst younger generations, and influence the interrelationship between the various kinship relations connecting households. Hence, conflicts over land between siblings cannot be regarded as minor household events. Tensions over inheritance have arisen between different households, challenging social and kinship solidarity and these tensions may in turn weaken the land movements in Truku society.

Finally, in Chapter 7, I examined how Truku people strategically use the idea that women are denied rights over land as well as the legal system in Taiwan in dealing with conflicts over inheritance in contemporary society. While one married couple might claim the wife’s rights over the partition of her parents’ inheritance by means of modern law, they might also try to keep the husband’s sisters from sharing his parents’ property by emphasising ‘traditional’ rules of inheritance. Many Truku regard privatisation and the modern legal system as being antithetical to gaya, in that the former empowers women while the latter does not. However, if we examine these conflicts in detail, we find that both laws and gaya are part of a range of strategies by which protagonists in long-term disputes lay claim to their right to inherit, and through which authority is claimed in order to protect specific interests.

During my fieldwork, many Truku activists within the land movements were very worried that their land movements would ultimately fail, due primarily to a lack of support from social and kinship relations. In exploring the meanings attributed to women’s ownership of land in contemporary Truku society, I suggest that it is necessary to reflect on those narratives which are based particularly on masculine or ‘male’ culture, such as headhunting and hunting culture, as found in land movements. These narratives not only downplay the role of women in terms of property, economic and kinship relations in Truku society, but also reinforce the idea of gender hierarchy in contemporary Truku society. As a result, women are absent from these land movements. However, since the 1990s, Truku women have come to play an
increasingly active role in household economics, kinship practices and local politics, often superseding men. Without women’s engagement, land movements will not be able to secure the requisite social and economic support. Therefore, I argue that, if Truku activists would abandon current narratives on ‘traditional’ concepts of territory, and instead pay attention to local understandings of the relationship between women and land, they may in fact find a new approach that can attract Truku women to participate in the land movements. Only when Truku women are fully involved in the process of claiming land rights in contemporary Truku society can these land movements become truly established and thereby ultimately strengthened.
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## Appendix I. Shops in Fushih Village (2005-2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Type of shop</th>
<th>Main manager by sex</th>
<th>Main manager by age</th>
<th>Marital status of main manager</th>
<th>Start year</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>K1</td>
<td>Grocery</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60+</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1990’s</td>
<td>Kele Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>K2</td>
<td>Karaoke Bar</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>60+</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Kele Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>K3</td>
<td>B&amp;B</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50-60</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Kele Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>K4</td>
<td>B&amp;B</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50-60</td>
<td>Divorce</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Kele Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>K5</td>
<td>B&amp;B</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50-60</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Kele Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>K6</td>
<td>Internet café</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Kele Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>K7</td>
<td>Grocery</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>70+</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1980’s</td>
<td>Kele Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>K8</td>
<td>Grocery</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1990’s</td>
<td>Kele Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>K9</td>
<td>Stall vendor</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Kele Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>K10</td>
<td>Karaoke bar</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Kele Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>K11</td>
<td>Breakfast snack-bar</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50-60</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1990’s</td>
<td>Kele Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>K12</td>
<td>Grocery and Internet café</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60+</td>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>1990’s</td>
<td>Kele Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>K13</td>
<td>Grocery</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1990’s</td>
<td>Kele Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>K14</td>
<td>Grocery and Breakfast bar</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60+</td>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>1980’s</td>
<td>Kele Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>K15</td>
<td>Grocery</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>70+</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1980’s</td>
<td>Kele Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>K17</td>
<td>Snack-bar</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60+</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Kele Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>K18</td>
<td>Grocery</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Kele Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>K19</td>
<td>Snack-bar</td>
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<td>40-50</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Kele Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>K20</td>
<td>Greengrocer</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>70+</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Kele Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>K22</td>
<td>Barber</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1990’s</td>
<td>Kele Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>K23</td>
<td>Salon</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>Divorce</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Kele Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Community</td>
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<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
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<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Barber</td>
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<td>40-50</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Bsangan community</td>
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<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>A3</td>
<td>Grocery</td>
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<td>60+</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1990’s</td>
<td>Bsangan community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>A4</td>
<td>Snack bar</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50-60</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Bsangan community</td>
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<tr>
<td>28.</td>
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<td>Karaoke bar</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50-60</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Bsangan community</td>
</tr>
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<td>29.</td>
<td>A6</td>
<td>Snack bar</td>
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<td>Widower</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Bsangan community</td>
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<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>A7</td>
<td>Betel nut shop</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>Divorce</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Bsangan community</td>
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<td>Divorce</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Bsangan community</td>
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<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Snack bar</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50-60</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1990’s</td>
<td>Bsangan community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>B3</td>
<td>Grocery</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60+</td>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>1990’s</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>B4</td>
<td>Karaoke bar</td>
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<td>60+</td>
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<td>2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>B5</td>
<td>Breakfast and snack bar</td>
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<td>40-50</td>
<td>Married</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>B6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>B7</td>
<td>Breakfast and snack bar</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1990’s</td>
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<tr>
<td>39.</td>
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<td>60+</td>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>2002</td>
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<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>B9</td>
<td>Internet café</td>
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<td>40-50</td>
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<td>2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>B10</td>
<td>B&amp;B</td>
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<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>B11</td>
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<td>50-60</td>
<td>Married</td>
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<tr>
<td>43.</td>
<td>B12</td>
<td>Fertilizer shop</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>1998</td>
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<td>44.</td>
<td>S1</td>
<td>Grocery</td>
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<td>45.</td>
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<td>40-50</td>
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