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Migration and homemaking practices among the Amis of Taiwan

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Abstract

The research observes how Amis migrants reconstruct their homelands as the source of feelings of stability and identity under pressure from the wider politico-economic and sociocultural context of Taiwan. Amis homemaking practices in their homelands play important roles in migrants' self-understanding, for practices anchored in the place of origin provide a sense of security to move in the world. The maintenance and reproduction of this place of origin, and ongoing exchanges within extended family and village networks, also express the Amis's consciousness of their increasing links with the wider world. This study begins by considering the 'native' place of migrants, focusing on how the Amis people construct and imagine their home community through translocal processes. These observations provide initial insights into how social networks and cultural practices in the native place mediate changes arising from national development and the capitalist economic system. It discusses how migrants maintain and make visible their ongoing commitment to homelands through material displays of wealth, in houses, cars, pig feasts, etc. By contrast, people who remain in the villages use the collective context of prayer and church to communicate with the migrant members.

Introduction

When compared with the feeling of stability that comes from living in a fixed place, the process of constantly moving is typically imagined as something unstable. People that have left homelands are often seen as both leaving behind the important spaces and networks that define identity and as struggling to adapt to life in a new place (Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Malkki 1992). However, with the development of increasingly effective transportation and information networks, the movement of people, capita, and information is faster and more convenient for many migrants. Travelling back and forth between one's 'native' place, and new place of residence, is a frequent and familiar experience for many people in the 21st century. For those from remote villages in Taiwan, moving away from homelands is an important mechanism both for securing a means of livelihood and for furthering personal educational development. This chapter focuses on the Amis people, an aboriginal people whose traditional territories are located in the eastern part of Taiwan. Migrations by Austronesian-speaking aborigines[1] in Taiwan are often described in terms of drifting aimlessly or becoming displaced (Li 1978; Lin 1981). Such easy descriptions, however, tend to overlook the continuous effort those migrants put into contributing to their hometowns, as well as creating homes in new places. As explored here, adding extensions to houses in remote areas using remittances from migrants, and rebuilding a village church, are just two examples of how, faced with the twin pressures of negotiating changes in wider Taiwanese society and the constraints of state policy, the Amis people[2] have strived for a sense of stability in both their native homelands and the unfamiliar destinations to which they have migrated.

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1   There are 16 officially recognised aboriginal groups on the island, making up less than 2 per cent of the total population. Linguistically, Taiwan aboriginal peoples all belong to the Austronesian language family, widely dispersed throughout Southeast Asia, the islands of the Pacific Ocean, and Madagascar. According to recent linguistic and archaeological research, Taiwan is the possible homeland of the Austronesians (Bellwood 1991, 1997; Blust 1999; Pawley 1999). This hypothesis is the most important support for Taiwan's position of being part of the Pacific World.

2   The Amis are the largest aboriginal Austronesian-speaking group in Taiwan with a population of 200,023. It has also been suggested that the language of the Amis is the closest Taiwanese language historically to Malayo-Polynesian (Reid 1982). Thus information regarding the character of Amis migration should have relevance for anthropological discussions regarding the character of Pacific migration. For centuries, Amis communities have been concentrated in Hualien and Taitung counties along Taiwan's east coast. In the 1960s, the Amis began to migrate to urban areas in search of work or education. Nowadays, more than half of the Amis population are living in urban areas.

Previous research has mostly used push and pull theory to explain the movements of Aboriginal people in Taiwan to urban areas. The foci of this research includes motivations for migration; occupational distribution, types of employment and the socioeconomic status of Aboriginal people in urban areas; living arrangements and socio-psychological adaptation; relationships between different ethnic groups; and social support networks and return flows to home villages (cf. Tsai and Huang 2008; Liu 2009). Although these studies have accumulated important observations on the movement of Aboriginal people, most use macro-level quantitative research methodologies. There is a lack of micro-level qualitative work surveying links between county and city, political and economic systems, social psychology, and cultural traditions. Anthropology as a discipline has already moved beyond push and pull theory and discourses on a single path to modernisation, and now focuses on the complex and diverse phenomena involved in the migration process. When migrants cross geographical boundaries, they establish and maintain multiple dynamic and fluid social relationships. A dense exchange network created and developed by the Amis migrants with their homelands will be explored in this chapter.

There are many factors involved in the movement of the Amis people between rural and urban areas, including the political and economic structure of the wider society, personal reasons for (and forms of) migration, an individual's stage of life at the time of migration, gender and generational differences, identity politics and inherited and newly created forms of culture during the migration process (cf. Brettell 2007; Lee and Francis 2009). In addition, the concept of social remittances has also focused research attention on the flow of ideas, practices, identities and social capital between the native place and migration destination (Levitt 1998, 2001). The research presented here observes how Amis migrants reconstruct their homelands as the source of feelings of stability and identity under pressure from the wider politico-economic and sociocultural context of Taiwan. Amis homemaking practices in their homelands play important roles in migrants' self-understanding, for practices anchored in the place of origin provide a sense of security to move in the world (Hage 2004; McKay 2010). The maintenance and reproduction of this place of origin, and ongoing exchanges within extended family and village networks, also express the Amis's consciousness of their increasing links with the wider world.

This study begins by considering the 'native' place of migrants, focusing on how the Amis people construct and imagine their home community through translocal processes. These observations provide initial insights into how social networks and cultural practices in the native place mediate changes arising from national development and the capitalist economic system (Fox and Sather 1996; Jolly and Mosko 1994; Mosko 1999, 2001). I observe how resources and support are mobilised, how remittances are distributed and spent, and how migrants are helped to settle down in and adapt within migrant contexts. These observations are then applied to an investigation of how resources and experiences from the contexts of migration influence community development in the native place and the economic and social ecology of places that supply migrants. In addition, I draw upon the accumulated anthropological research on Amis culture and society (Chen 1987, 1989; Hsu 1991; Huang 1991, 2005a, 2005b; Liu et al. 1965; Suenari 1983; Yuan 1969), and in particular analysis of family and kinship networks, cultural practices and values (Yeh 2009a, 2009b, 2012, 2013, 2014) to provide a more nuanced understanding of Amis migration, balancing political and economic variables with personal and cultural variables (Johnson and Werbner 2010).

Overall, this study attempts a preliminary account of how the Amis of Cidatayay[3] have created a community of fate that spans both urban and rural settings. It does so by observing how group members who remain in Cidatayay and those who migrate maintain closely intertwined exchange networks. It points to the synthesis of the translocal cultural order, rather than the antithesis of rural and urban (cf. Appadurai 1996; Huang 2006, 2008; Lubkemann 2007; Rapport and Dawson 1998; Sahlins 1999). In particular, the study uses fieldwork data on social practices in Cidatayay, including around the construction of a church in the village and memorial activities, to investigate how group members who remain in their native village and those who migrate elsewhere for work or study collectively build and maintain a feeling of shared identity and belonging. It discusses how migrants maintain and make visible their ongoing commitment to homelands through material displays of wealth, in houses, cars, pig

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3   I conducted fieldwork at Cidatayay and its nearby Amis villages during September 2000 – January 2001 and July 2005 – September 2006. Cidatayay village is located at the foot of the coastal mountain range, facing the Pacific shoreline. It is a compact settlement composed of 72 matrifocal households integrated into a single community largely as a result of the central male initiation organisation. Nowadays, almost four-fifths of the village members migrate to urban areas for work or study. It takes about seven hours to drive from Taipei to Cidatayay.

feasts, etc. By contrast, people who remain in the villages use the collective context of prayer and church to communicate with the migrant members. In the context of movement and change, the study discusses homemaking practices of the Amis and how the Amis construct and imagine feelings of stability and belonging away from their homeland.

The native place as the source of feelings of stability and identity

According to my observations in Cidatayay, community members who had migrated away from the village for work were not necessarily alienated from friends and family who had remained behind. Absentee community members continued to be involved in complex networks of exchange and maintained frequent contact with their village when away from home. In particular, if any community member was in trouble while working outside the village, the news was always immediately relayed back home. On hearing the news, friends and relatives made a public address announcement requesting members of the church[4] to gather at the house of the person involved. These gatherings enabled community members to understand how the incident occurred and to offer prayers for the victim. In one instance, a young person from the community working in Northern Taiwan suffered a serious accident riding his motorbike while under the influence of alcohol. As he was undergoing emergency treatment, members of the church back in the village received news of the accident and immediately paid a visit to his elderly mother who was living alone (the youth's father had already passed away). The mother was obviously extremely distressed and worried about her son's accident. The gathered church members prayed for around half an hour under the guidance of lay ministry. Following the prayers, most of church members stayed behind with the mother.

Besides using hymn and prayer to call for God's protection and to calm the anxieties of the victim's family, church members also offered comfort by accompanying and talking to family members. However, the Amis people do not normally dwell for long on the solemnity or sadness of the

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4   Since the Catholic Church began sending missionaries to Cidatayay village in the 1950s, more than 90 per cent of its population is now recognised by the Church as Catholic. However, Cidatayay villagers still hold the annual harvest ceremony and many pig sacrifices to continue their exchange relationship with their ancestors, despite nominal conversion to Catholicism.

occasion. After the prayers were over, the mother offered rice wine, drinks and betel nuts to those who had come to pray for her son and to keep her company. Together with other elderly women from the community, the mother smoked tobacco and chatted, gradually relieving her anxiety. In Amis villages, visits like this could often last for days. Furthermore, other community members who were also working in Northern Taiwan visited the accident victim and gave assistance, while frequently reporting back home to friends and relatives on his recovery.

A similar case occurred in the nearby Ta'man village. One day after dinner, church members gathered in a courtyard for prayer following a public-address announcement. An older member of the community, who was working in Taipei and had purchased a property in Northern Taiwan, had had a vehicle accident. However, while recovering at the hospital, he cut his wrists and throat with a fruit knife. As the injury to his throat was especially serious, he was placed in the respiratory care unit of the hospital. The injured man's elder brother, who was still living in the village, gave a detailed account of his younger brother's condition to church members who came to pray, telling them that depression had caused his brother to engage in self-harm. He said he hoped that everyone's prayers would help his brother overcome his predicament. When the prayers finished, church members talked about the younger brother and his life outside the village. The elder brother, who had previously worked as a lay minister, reminded his fellow church members: 'Every person and every family faces difficulties, do not take things too hard. We need to pray more and help each other.'

Prayers for the safety and welfare of the migrant members took place during regular Sunday mass, family worship and other ceremonies marking religious festivals including the harvest festival, the Month of Mary and Christmas Day. News from those working outside the village was often conveyed in such public prayer sessions. Aside from regular prayer and expressions of concern, food produced back in the homeland was one of the best ways to maintain links with family and friends who had moved away. It often happened that a member of the community would return home for a few days. When it was time to leave, a dozen or more women would gather in the family courtyard to see him or her off. At the same time, the women would give the departing community member pickled vegetables and meats they had prepared to deliver to their sons and daughters working in the north. The love of each mother meant that cars heading north from the village were always packed full, and mothers

could continue to produce food and nourish their children living far away. Aside from asking fellow group members who were travelling north to carry food, the President Transnet Corp express delivery service now provided an important conduit for sending goods and expressions of concern to family members living away from home.

For community members who had moved away, the home village remained an important source of identity and security. The feeling of protection that the home village offered could be seen in the ceremony blessing a newly purchased car, which many community members carried out in the village. When compared to rituals involving people or houses, the car-blessing ritual was relatively simple. Normally carried out by lay ministry, who led the congregation in hymn and prayer beside the newly purchased car, the car was then sprinkled with holy water and either a crucifix or holy icon was hung inside the vehicle. When the ritual was complete, the owner would provide food and drink to thank the faithful for their prayers. The home village not only offered solace and assistance when one of its own had an accident or faced an unforeseen event, it also gave community members the impetus to work hard to accumulate material wealth in order to share or to show off their achievements. During the harvest festival in July and Lunar New Year in February, community members gathered at their home village. Those living outside the village chose this time to carry out their car blessing ritual, because more of the faithful would be gathered to strengthen the prayer, and more community members would recognise their hard work and be envious of their success.

The ritual blessing of a new car was one way to show off achievements and to enhance one's reputation in the home village. Another was house improvement. In less than 50 years, houses in Cidatayay had changed rapidly from mainly thatched huts to houses with tiled roofs, to single-storey concrete houses, and finally to two- or three-storey concrete houses. These changes reflected the growing linkages between village residents and wider Taiwanese society, in particular increasing economic ties. When residents talked of the transformation of their houses, there was a strong connection with the history of community members moving away for work. The income from males working at sea in the 1960s enabled most village families to rebuild their homes using more sturdy concrete. Subsequently, work on construction projects using formwork frames in the west and central areas of Taiwan and even as far away as the Arab countries from the 1970s enabled families to add extra floors to or rebuild their houses in the village. The community member who established the

new trend in rebuilding homes was often referred to in the recollections of village residents. Individuals who successfully directed outside resources into the construction of sturdy and comfortable houses in the village were commended on many different occasions, inspiring other members of the community to follow their example.

To a certain extent, community members used the upgrading of the houses to show off their economic success gained in working outside the village. However, it is also clear from the recollections of residents that the construction of homes with two or more storeys was closely related to dense local exchange networks. Although houses were no longer built with the help of the paternal-fraternal organisation[5] or friends and relatives as in the past, the process by which each family in the village rebuilt their home showed how community members linked the process of physically altering the family house with the sharing of food among group members. Community members stated that in the past, the stages of demolishing the old property, pouring the concrete and completing the new house would each be celebrated by slaughtering a pig, which would be shared with everyone in the community. Homeowners stated that if they did not slaughter a pig and organise a feast,[6] they would not feel at ease. Many of the two or more storey buildings in the village reflected the capability and desire of community members living away from home to help develop their native village. In addition, the successful operation of the Daoming Credit Union,[7] which was established in the village in 1968, was an important mechanism for directing cash accumulated from work outside the village back to the village. On the one hand, credit union staff constantly advised people on the importance of saving. At the same time, they encouraged the

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5   The paternal-fraternal organisation is a male initiation organisation of each Amis village. This unique organisation of the Amis village not only structures the relations of its members on the idiom of family relationships, but plays an indispensable role in the production and reproduction of the entire Amis village community. It is through the overarching paternal-fraternal system that the numerous matrifocal houses in any given Amis village are integrated into an encompassing kinship-based society. See Yeh (2012) for more information on the overall structure of the Amis paternal-fraternal organisation and how the classificatory father-son and elder-younger-brother relations between and within the initiation sets are explicitly represented by the concepts and practices of the Amis.

6   See Yeh (2013) for more information about the meaning of pig sacrifice in the era of mobility.

7   In 1967, Father Seeiner Meinao Dominik selected two outstanding members of the congregation to attend mutual-aid society training in Taichung. Subsequently, these two individuals led the development of the Catholic Mutual Aid Society, encouraging church members to develop the habit of saving to prepare for unexpected contingencies. The society also offers emergency loans, allowing members to avoid exploitation by high interest loans. The Daoming Credit Union Mutual Aid Society was formally established in March 1968 in the Ta'man Village and currently has more than 1,300 members covering aboriginal communities at Carapongay, Ta'man, Cidatayay and Pasongan.

habit of saving money by organising competitions between families and villages to see who could save the most money.[8] On the other hand, in order to grow their business, the staff also encouraged members to borrow money to build houses, resulting in the construction of a large number of houses with two or more storeys in the area.

Although the successful construction of a house, made possible by the hard work of community members away from the village, was marked by the ritual slaughter of pigs and a lively inauguration, for most days of the year the house felt deserted. With many family members away from home for work, only the elderly grandparents and young grandchildren were left in the large house. The majority of those living away from the village return home for the harvest festival and Lunar New Year, as well as for events such as weddings and funerals and ceremonies to mark the completion of a house. When those living away from the village returned home, village residents were particularly active in attending activities and banquets organised by the paternal-fraternal organisation and the local community development association, attending wedding ceremonies hosted by other families, or having parties with the initiation set brothers or relatives from the same kin group. It was very rare for such gatherings to be limited to only members of a single household. It could be said the local people made as much as possible of returnees' visits to eat, sing and dance together either in the village public square or in the domestic household courtyard. The lively household at these times contrasted sharply with the more sombre atmosphere on normal working days. In the past, when working on formwork, carpenters, friends and relatives from the same village would contract work as a group, living together at the work site. After work, they would eat and drink together. By sticking with and looking after each other, the workers could adapt to life away from home. People from the village remained nostalgic about those days. However, after a rule was introduced preventing workers from living on the work site, people spread out into rented accommodation in many different places. If they gathered together in someone's home, they worried about disturbing the neighbours. The loneliness of urban life made them treasure the happy times when they could return to the village and see family and friends again.

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8   In order to achieve target savings rates, leaders divide into zones of responsibility, encouraging society members to save a certain amount every month—for example, saving NT$1,500 a month wins a prize while saving NT$50,000 in a year wins a high-savings prize. At each meeting of the credit union, successful savers are publicly commended for their efforts, teaching community members the value of the credit union and encouraging saving.

For the local people, the family home was not only a space where family members live. The family house was also a place where ancestral spirits would come back to visit (cf. Fox 1993).[9] Therefore, many community members living outside the village mentioned the need to return for the harvest festival in order to open the door of the family house and worship the ancestors. Ensuring that the ancestral spirits summoned back by the paternal-fraternal organisation through song and dance had a house to return to was the responsibility of their descendants. Even though the locals had accepted the Catholic faith for many years, their belief in the power of ancestors to influence people's fate remained unchanged. For instance, in the case of attempted suicide mentioned above, many community members explained his difficulties by the fact that he had made fewer visits back to the village to worship his ancestors over recent years. Therefore, as his life was still in danger, his family and relatives from the village called on church members to gather at his family house for group prayer. It was hoped that this gathering could enliven the house and help this suffering relative escape danger. At present, due to the demands of work, community members were less likely to return home to observe the Stations of the Cross before Easter, the Month of Mary and other Catholic religious festivals. However, they normally asked friends and family in the village to help them open the door of their family house and even decorate a manger for Christmas, allowing for church members praying door-to-door to enter the house and perform a ceremony.

Before Easter, church members who had stayed behind in the village carried a large cross from house to house to observe the Stations of the Cross. During the Month of Mary, the faithful carried a statue of Mary from the church to each home in the village reciting the Hail Mary prayer, and on Christmas Eve they went carolling from house to house. The crowd departed from the church located in the centre of the village, visiting the homes of each of the faithful in order. Finally, they returned to the centre of the village for a banquet and celebrations. This kind of process invoked the close relationship between family and the village community and the nature of the family itself. Local residents attached great importance to this collective power centred on the community, as each family would require its assistance at some point or another to pray for the peace and wellbeing of home and family. The group worked together to pool the

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9   Houses are given great prominence throughout the Austronesian-speaking world. As a physical entity, as a cultural category and as a repository of ancestral objects, the house has the capacity to provide social continuity. See Fox (1993) for more information about Austronesian houses.

community's resources, which were then spread among each family and member of the community. This type of community action was not the result of the arrival of Catholicism in the community. Ethnographic records from the past and the continued practice of traditional harvest ceremonies showed that the community pooled its resources, which were then distributed to families and individuals (Liu et al. 1965). For example, after summoning the spirits and the ancestors to participate in the harvest festival, the paternal-fraternal organisation visited the house and accepted the hospitality of each member of the organisation. Locals regarded these visits as a way to share strength and good fortune, blessing family members and the family home with good health for the coming year.

This central pooling of resources valued the collective strength of the community, and was regarded as a vital method and practice for the strengthening of individuals and families. Both those who remained behind in the village and those who had moved away for work actively contributed to the construction of their community. This could be further understood by describing the rebuilding of the village parish church and events to celebrate its 10th anniversary. Furthermore, these processes revealed the structure of social life in the contemporary Cidatayay community. As Sahlins (1999: xix) suggests, the to-and-fro of goods, ideas and people on the move in the folk–urban continuum illustrates:

> the structural complementarity of the indigenous homeland and the metropolitan 'homes abroad,' their interdependence as sources of cultural value and means of social reproduction. Symbolically focused on the homeland, whence its members derive their identity and their destiny, the translocal community is strategically dependent on its urban outliers for material wherewithal.

The rebuilding of the church and the 10th anniversary celebrations

According to locals, Catholicism arrived in Cidatayay around 1956. In the early years, Catholic mass and missionary activities were held in a simple thatched hut built on the edge of the village. Within a few years, the missionary work had met with some success, and the space was no longer adequate for the growing congregation. In 1962, a Swiss priest from the Yiwan parish, Father Seeiner Meinao Dominik raised the funds to purchase cement and other building materials, while members of the

church in Cidatayay moved gravel from the beach to the old site of the men's house in the centre of the village. A modern single-storey church was constructed on the site, reflecting the church's ambition to replace the men's house as the central gathering place in the village. However, after construction of the church was completed, the paternal-fraternal organisation immediately began building a new men's house on empty land next to the church, which they then rebuilt with concrete in 1983. These developments indicated that the growth of the church in the village faced limits, particularly given the difficulties organising male church members. After the large migration of men away from the village for work after the 1960s, this issue became even more apparent. The problems organising male church members were reflected in the fact that the development of church groups had been almost entirely dominated by women. Around 1974 the Church began issuing the Romanised Amis Bible which was studied by mostly female students in the church or homes of lay missionaries. Women absorbed the romanisation of their language and studied the Church's methods of prayer and communication. As a result, they subsequently took on important roles on many religious occasions, for instance prayer meetings for the sick or deceased.

The church constructed in 1962 was made possible by the funds provided by the local parish priest and the labour of church members. According to church members, after 30 years exposure to the elements, the concrete had begun to peel, exposing the steel frame of the building. Church members were concerned about the safety of holding mass in the building and expressed their desire to rebuild the church to the local priest. However, the Hualien diocese and Yiwan parish, to which the church belonged, did not have the funds available to rebuild the church. As a result, the congregation at Cidatayay decided to rebuild the church by themselves. Recounting the building of today's two-storey church, all church members agreed that this could not have been achieved without the mobilisation of the paternal-fraternal organisation and everyone's concerted efforts. In July 1994, as the migrant workers returned to the village to celebrate the harvest festival, church members held a meeting on the rebuilding project. At the meeting, it was agreed that every church member would donate NT$12,000[10] to the reconstruction fund. The meeting also elected the members of the *lasingpin* initiation set for the preparatory committee, based on their oratory and other skills, to oversee planning and fundraising

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10   At the time of my research AU$1 = NT$25.

for the challenging project. The committee worked through the paternal-fraternal organisation, recruiting the fathers of the youth (*mama no kapah*) and '*laklin*' members (known collectively as youth leaders) of that organisation to join them in visiting Cidatayay church members at their workplaces across the island to raise money for the reconstruction of the church.

Figure 1: The Cidatayay Catholic Church
Source: Photograph by author.

Members of the *lasingpin* initiation set stated that although they were in theory engaged in fundraising, their work was more like collecting a levy, or as they joked, collecting protection money. This process was similar to the July harvest festival or the carnival on the second day of the Lunar New Year when youth leaders also went from house to house levying activity funds (Yeh 2009b: 19). Many local public activities were not funded by free donation; all members of the group had to contribute to the effort. In fact, this method established the relationship between the whole and the part; each member was an indispensable part of the group, and the force of the group was essential for the wellbeing of each of its members. The levying of fees acted as a frequent reminder to members of their responsibilities to the group. The successful completion of the new church involved the work of many people. A total of 40 or 50 people, including members of the preparatory committee and youth leaders, sometimes joined by their wives and children, visited workplaces and the

homes of church members. Collectively, the group persuaded community members of the need to reconstruct the church. Such gatherings outside the village reminded migrant workers of their duties to the community and significance of community relations. Everyone's hard work helped raise more than NT$5 million within six months. In February 1995, with ample cash in the reconstruction fund, work on the new church began. The church was completed a year later.

The two-storey church was a proud symbol of the spirit of togetherness of Cidatayay believers, and source of identity funded jointly by village residents and those who moved away for work. In particular, many of those working away from the village not only gave the NT$12,000 sum agreed at the meeting, but also provided a tabernacle, statue of the Virgin Mary, lighting equipment, keyboard, electric fans and other objects for the church. Cidatayay residents frequently recounted to me that after construction and fitting out the church, more than NT$1 million in surplus funds was deposited at the Daoming Credit Union Mutual Aid Society. Subsequently, some of these funds were used for related maintenance costs and for the construction of a Mother Mary altar and two public hearths at the north side of the church. The church and Mother Mary altar were not just the pride of the village, they also revealed the power of their social relationships, acting as a space to develop collective ties and affinities through group prayer and eating. In particular, they offered a stable sense of belonging for those working away from the village. Many important ceremonies marking major life changes, including weddings and funerals, were conducted in this space. In addition, these buildings were a source of envy for congregations from other churches, who often held up the paternal-fraternal organisation in Cidatayay as an example of how to successfully raise money. Just as the new car blessing ceremonies, rebuilding of family houses, and money saved in the Mutual Aid Society promoted mutual competition in the village, the reconstruction of the village church promoted competition between churches in the parish. The competition was more pronounced because each church was almost completely based around traditional village units.

In 2006, the paternal-fraternal organisation and church representatives held a meeting where it was decided that the 10th anniversary of the completion of the church would be held with the carnival on the second day of the Lunar New Year. The members of the *lasingpin* initiation set and youth leaders were entrusted with making preparations for the celebrations. At the Lunar New Year, most residents working or studying

away from the village had a vacation period which allowed them to return to the village to rest and reunite with friends and family. Cidatayay's convention on local self-government clearly stipulated that a carnival was to be held on this day and forbade individual families from holding weddings and other family celebrations. Anyone found in violation of this regulation could be fined NT$20,000. This demonstrated the authority of the paternal-fraternal organisation as well as its responsibility for bringing residents together. The organisation worked hard to bring together the labour and material resources of the village to put on a carnival for residents of the village, and for those scattered across the island, to renew their ties and identities through the sharing of food and laughter.

Preparations and activities for the 2006 carnival and the church's 10th anniversary were primarily arranged by the paternal-fraternal organisation, with church representatives taking a supporting role. The entire process again demonstrated the leadership capabilities of *lasingpin* members and their ability to bring people together. To demonstrate the unity and vitality of the Cidatayay community to those inside and outside the village, they first used funds in the Mutual Aid Society to order jackets printed with a message to mark the anniversary of the Cidatayay Catholic Church. All church members were asked to wear these jackets for mass and the subsequent lunchtime banquet and celebrations. Wearing the same outfit was a way of showing off group identity and ties, and was a well-known practice among the Amis people. Aside from the common outfit worn by all members of the community, small groups within the community, including the initiation sets, church groups and officials from the community development association, wore uniforms representative of their different groups in certain situations to show their collective power and unity. In the song and dance competitions organised by the paternal-fraternal organisation and community development association, one of the standards for judging was often whether the team outfits matched. Teams were thus encouraged to buy a uniform and individuals working away from the village often helped group members back in the village purchase more fashionable clothes.

Activities to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Cidatayay Church began with a morning mass. Mass was celebrated by Father Rev. Valerian Chen DHL from the Taitung area, and members of the congregation also invited Father Christopher Kelbert from the Da'nan Catholic Church in Taoyuan to jointly celebrate the mass. Many community members working outside the village had received regular assistance from Father

Kelbert, and his prayers ensured that their work was carried out safely and smoothly. Mass on that day was mostly attended by the middle-aged and elderly, and the male youth were busy setting up activities under the direction of the youth leaders. The community elders took responsibility for less mobile religious activities such as prayer, while the youth threw their efforts into helping organise activities. This division of labour based on age was reflected in many group activities in Amis communities. However, on this important day, some of the young females hoped for a more lively mass. They asked to play the guitar and lead the singing of hymns, which never occurred at mass at other times in the year, but was allowed because of the special nature of the occasion. The head of the group emphasised that they had first actively sought the support of the elders. This was important in Amis society because respect for seniority and the division of labour between young and old meant it was very rare for a group of young women to lead the singing of hymns. The experience and learning of youth outside the village presented an alternative to existing age- and gender-based divisions of labour.

Figure 2: Cidatayay believers dressed in the same jackets attending the Mass for the 10th anniversary of their local church

Source: Photograph by author.

After the completion of mass, residents gathered in the village square to participate in festivities organised by the youth leaders, including a ball-kicking game. Prizes were awarded and residents took part in order, which showed that in contemporary Cidatayay, the paternal-fraternal organisation acted as the main centre for community life, the complex network of social relations, and the passing on of social and cultural values. As they were taking part in the activity in turn, the atmosphere was one of joy and laughter. The women prepared plastic bags to gather together the soy sauce, dishwashing liquid, rice wine and other prizes won by family members. To raise funds for the carnival, youth leaders collected NT$300 from each household in the community and NT$500 from each male working outside the village. The funds were spent on prizes for group party games and food and drink for the banquet. This regular pattern of gathering together and sharing revealed the effectiveness of the paternal-fraternal organisation in mobilising and bringing together residents. In addition, using everyday items as prizes showed the awareness of youth leaders toward basic household needs. Every year, the youth leaders recorded the payment of fees by each male working away from the village on a large red poster. As the group made their way to the village square to join in the activities, the poster was placed in a highly visible location. Village residents stopped and looked as they passed the poster to discuss the lives of those working outside the village and at the same time showed concern for those individuals who had not paid their fees or lost contact with home. The tightly written names and amounts in black ink on red paper summarised the close relationships of exchange between those working away and their home village, evoking feelings of mutual expectation and concern, and reinforcing their responsibility to the village and the importance of remittances for the development of Cidatayay.

In past years, feasting in the village square at the carnival had centred on a pig feast organised by the paternal-fraternal organisation, which also distributed work at the feast, as well as the sharing of the pork and seating arrangements for the meal. In 2006, because the diocese bishop, priests and representatives of neighbouring churches were invited to the celebration, the lunchtime banquet was held in Han Chinese style. Although a Han Chinese head chef was invited to prepare the banquet, the youth of Cidatayay under the direction of the youth leaders still laid out the chairs and tables, distributed the rice wine and drinks to each table, and worked together to complete preparations for the feast, allowing outside guests and the local congregation to quickly find their seats and

start enjoying their meal. I previously mentioned that large and small Amis villages in the area often compared themselves and competed with each other. To ensure the reputation of Cidatayay, community leaders and elders regularly reminded the youth of the spirit of hard work and service, and the importance of showing the order and unity of the community in front of guests.

The rice wine and drinks at the feast were purchased by the *lasingpin* initiation set from the three general stores in the village. They informed me that they were careful to distribute purchases evenly between the three stores and not favour one over another. This policy was helpful for the internal leadership and management of the paternal-fraternal organisation. Although community members who lived outside the village could buy goods cheaper outside the village stores, they also believed in the need to support these stores to allow them to continue in business. These stores were not only convenient for village residents, but also provided a meeting place for information exchange. Whenever a migrant worker returned home, as soon as he stepped off the bus he would be given a warm welcome by village residents sitting and chatting outside the general store, asked for change from the bus to buy drinks and snacks, and invited to share the latest news with friends and relatives. This practice, known by locals as *ocoli*, allowed for more frequent and diverse exchange of information between town and country, between those who had stayed and those that had moved away.

During the celebrations village residents, regardless of whether they remained in the village or had moved away, split into groups based on age or gender for song and dance performances, both traditional and modern. Those living outside the village, and especially the youth, performed the most current popular song and dance routines to demonstrate their vitality to the elders. The uninhibited performances of the young people filled the village square with joyous festivity that made the elders laugh. Aside from financial remittances back home, this was one of the most important ways of giving and showing respect to the older generation, and expressing gratitude for their prayers and protection.

The coordination of the outfits and song and dance routines in front of friends and family in the village demonstrated the strength of their relationship and understanding between members of the individual initiation sets, and was therefore extensively discussed and rehearsed before the event. Migrant members gathered near where they lived to plan

and practice the performance, revealing the extension of village networks way beyond the boundaries of the village itself. These networks centred on the exchange of information, mutual companionship and care, and even competition allow community members to work together outside the village. By trying to work together or live near each other, relationships from homeland could be maintained in the new place. The celebrations marking the 10th anniversary of the Cidatayay Church, from the initial preparations to the mass, games, banquet and performances held on the day, showed the pride of the people of Cidatayay at the successful efforts of the entire community to rebuild its church and maintain the togetherness and vitality of the community. The celebrations on that day continued until around three to four o'clock in the afternoon. As the residents finished the celebrations by dancing together hand-in-hand in a circle, they also formed the wish to hold a 20th anniversary celebration for the church in another 10 years.

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated how community members who remained behind in the village and those that migrated away constructed and imagined their home village as they interacted directly within wider Taiwanese society. It has also examined how a sense of stability and a centre for identity was created during the process of movement and change. In particular, the paper has illustrated by way of specific ethnographic examples the dynamic exchanges within and across the translocal community, by moving beyond the static binary divisions between home village/city, traditional/modern, and periphery/core that had characterised much previous research. Many exchanges and homemaking practices between the Amis residents in and outside the village, and their joint efforts to develop their community, meant that the migration of the Amis could no longer simply be described in terms of dependency theory or labour movements from the global periphery to global core, but instead reflect how a space for existence was created through relationship networks, cultural customs and the exchange of information and resources. In particular, for many community members who had moved away from the village, the care and blessings of family and friends who remained at home was an important source of feelings

of stability and security. In addition, the relationships of exchange and competition centred on the development of the home village were an important motivation to work hard outside the village.

Of course, the relationship between the migration of the Amis and their construction and imagination of homeland exists on a number of complex levels. My initial observations of the home village do not compare in detail the migration conditions and experiences across different periods in time, the differences in the sense of stability and creation of space for existence between males and females as well as different generations, or different strategies for expanding space for existence in urban areas and maintaining links with the home village. In the future, it will be necessary to reveal more about the personal migration experiences of the Amis, as well as how they produce a sense of stability and space for existence during the process of migration. This will help us understand how, with the passage of time and the complex interaction of the world inside and outside the community, migrants use relationship networks and cultural wisdom to creatively bring together the traditional and modern and actively deal with ever-changing contemporary life. In this way, a people that are frequently regarded as having 'no history' by mainstream society can recount their own life patterns and history of movement. This will also provide quantitative surveys and political and economic analyses on migrations by Taiwanese aboriginals with a valuable reference on culture, relationship networks and actors.

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