

Abstract.

When I converted to Christianity, I joined an aboriginal church, Gulou Church in Pingdong, Taiwan, to learn about this new religion. At the same time, I saw how the Paiwan people there struggle because of the conflicts between their old culture and the new faith. Thus, one of the important questions guiding this thesis is as follows: Can people combine their old culture with their new religion?

Among the Paiwan, the snake symbol carries positive meanings and values in their daily life, especially in their religious rites and worship. For example, the Paiwan believe they are the descendents of snakes. The image of the hundred-paced viper is the most important symbol for the chief family in their tribe. Commoners recognize another snake as their ancestor. But at Gulou Church, most of these Paiwan Christians have learned to call the snake a visible manifestation of Satan, the Devil. This new belief comes into direct conflict with Paiwan traditional culture.

There are two important subjects of my research: One is Sandimen Presbyterian Church in Pingdong. The members of this church refuse to use any snake images to decorate their church. They have the same idea as the members of the Gulou Church. In contrast, there is Tuban Roman Catholic Church in Taidong. The members of this church have a totally different attitude. Following the recommendations set forth at Vatican II, they try to integrate their traditional art with the new religion.

These two churches illustrate one possibility for us: different Christian denominations may have dissimilar teachings on the same topic. By examining the history of the missionary influence on each of the two churches, I hope to understand why they interpret the snake symbol in very different ways. In addition, I will try to enlarge the meanings and values associated with the religious symbol of the snake by following the theories of Mircea Eliade and C.G. Jung. I hope this study can show how it is possible to integrate traditional cultures and Christian faith.

Key terms: crucifix, Paiwan Christians, snake, symbol.

## I. Motivation for Study

When I became a Christian, I was 23 years old. One of my friends, who is also a Christian, took me to a Paiwan church in the village of Gulou<sup>1</sup> (古樓) in Pingdong (屏東) County. The Paiwan are an indigenous people in Taiwan. This church is called the Gulou Christian Church of the Nazarene (Gulou Church).<sup>2</sup> I learned many religious rituals after I converted to Christianity, and everything was new for me during that period.

For example, praying is a basic and important ritual in a Christian's daily life. The first time I went to church to pray, people came to the church and sang touching hymns. Although I did not know how to sing the songs at first, I still felt something different. It was as if there were powers that entered into my heart and stirred my feelings. I burst into tears, crying spontaneously. Folding my hands together, I bowed my head and closed my eyes. Then, I started to pray to Jesus the Christ. I felt that God's power was helping me let go of negative feelings and the pressures of the moment. God gave me energy. Through this ritual, I brought my emotions and thoughts to God, who renewed my strength so that I could face my life again. I felt peaceful, happy, and contented during my prayer time.

Then, the pastor invited everybody to pray together for the Church as a whole and for our individual needs. Later, the pastor, Gao Chun Man (高春滿), who was the first woman to be ordained as pastor of Gulou Church, smiled at me and shook my hand, saying, "You are welcome to join us." This experience

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<sup>1</sup> Hanyu Roma Pin Yin throughout.

<sup>2</sup> Jidujiao nasalerenhui gulou jiaohui 基督教拿撒勒人會古樓教會. This church, located in Laiyi (來義) County, belongs to the Paumaumaq, the central group of the Western Paiwan. See Tian Zhe Yi 田哲益, Taiwan de yuanzhumin paiwanzu 台灣的原住民排灣族 (The Paiwan, An Aboriginal Tribe in Taiwan; Taipei: Taiyuan, 2002), pp. 28-37.

was deeply moving. It was my first impression of Christianity, one I will never forget.

Thus, I started to participate in all of the activities of Gulou Church on a regular basis. I wanted to learn more about Jesus and everything connected with this religion. Although most members of Gulou Church belong to the Paiwan tribe, at first I did not feel they were different from me. Common belief bound us together. I could talk with Paiwan people easily, although I had no knowledge about their traditions or culture.

Then, one day, I went to church dressed in a black T-shirt with a golden dragon depicted on the back. Such clothing was what I usually wore. Before we began to pray, a vu vu<sup>3</sup> (“elder”) came over to talk to me. She asked me, “Why do you wear this T-shirt? This is very bad. Don’t you know that the dragon and the snake embody Satan?” I felt very confused and didn’t understand; but since I knew she was a very good person in this church, I listened respectfully. Then, the pastor came to join us and suggested that I stop wearing this T-shirt. They told me their ideas were based on biblical interpretation, in particular the story of the Fall in the Book of Genesis according to which the first man and first woman are encouraged by a serpent to disobey the Creator.

After that conversation, I did not want to ask anything more about it, because I felt very sorry about my shirt. I went home, cut it up, and threw it away. I chose to trust them, because they were very good Christians.

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<sup>3</sup> Vu vu is a Paiwan term. It means “elder” or “grandparent.” This title refers to a person’s life experience and wisdom. In Paiwan culture, a child will receive the life experience and wisdom of the elders. Because they want the children to take their wisdom and experience, an old Paiwan will call a child vu vu, too. See Sun Da Chuan 孫大川, ed., Paiwanzu: Bali de hong yanjing 排灣族：巴里的紅眼睛 (Bali’s Red Eyes and Other Stories from the Paiwan Tribe; Taipei: Third Nature, 2003), pp. 24, 56.

That same year in October of 2004, there was a very important traditional ceremony in Gulou Village: Maleveq,<sup>4</sup> also known as the Five Year Sacrifice, is the most spectacular ceremony of the Paiwan. It is a special religious observance that the Paiwan people perform at five year intervals.<sup>5</sup>

The purpose of Maleveq is to welcome and please the gods and the ancestral spirits. In the Paiwan traditional worldview, these spirit beings live on the sacred mountain called Ka-vulungan,<sup>6</sup> whence they descend and tour all of the Paiwan villages once every five years. During their visit, the spirit beings decide whether to bless or punish the villagers. In order to gain the blessings of these spirits, the Paiwan people will spend a lot of time preparing Maleveq. The festival fulfills an obligation of the Paiwan people toward the spirit beings.<sup>7</sup>

There are three main parts to Maleveq: first of all, the time of preparation; second, the central ceremony that includes many rites; and third, closing ceremonies.<sup>8</sup>

The most important rite is the Djmulat.<sup>9</sup> It is a ball-impaling game that is one part of the central ceremony. All the other rituals are supportive of this one. For the Djmulat, every villager gathers in an open field (also called tsakar<sup>10</sup>).

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<sup>4</sup> Maleveq is the Paiwan name in general conversation. The holy men and women who lead the religious life of the Paiwan also use a holy name for the festival: Leveleveqan. This is a special religious ceremony of Paiwan. These days it only takes place in Gulou Village in Pingdong County and in Tuban (土阪) Village in Taidong County. See Xu Gong Ming 許功明 and Ke Hui Yi 柯惠譯, Paiwanzu guloucun de jiyi yu wenhua 排灣族古樓村的祭儀與文化 (Paiwan's Ritual and Culture in Gulou Village; Taipei: Daw Shiang, 1994), p. 52. See also Tan Chang Guo 譚昌國, Paiwanzu 排灣族 (The Paiwan Tribe; Taipei: Sanmin, 2007), p. 114.

<sup>5</sup> Tian, Taiwan de yuanzhumin paiwanzu, p. 104. See also Tan, Paiwanzu, p. 114.

<sup>6</sup> Ka-vulungan is a Paiwan term. Its prefix, ka, means "original" or "genuine". Located in southern Taiwan, it is the sacred mountain of the Paiwan. Its Chinese name is Da Wu Shan (大武山). See Tan, Paiwanzu, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 115. See also Tain, Taiwan de yuanzhumin paiwanzu, pp. 104-105.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 116.

<sup>9</sup> Djmulat is a Paiwan term. Its Chinese name is impale the ball.

<sup>10</sup> Tsakar is a Paiwan term. See Tan, Paiwanzu, p. 118.

Each person holds a long bamboo pole (the djulat<sup>11</sup>). Someone tosses a ball made out of rattan and bark (the gapudrun<sup>12</sup>) into the air. All the others compete to impale the ball with their bamboo poles. This religious activity allows the people to learn the will of the spirits.<sup>13</sup>

Before the Paiwan people perform the Djmulat, the whole village must be made ready. The rattan and bark balls as well as the bamboo poles have to be made, an open field with a circle of wooden seats for the competitors must be constructed, and more important, the village must be ritually prepared for the arrival of the spirit beings.<sup>14</sup>

During the ceremonies of preparation, the Paiwan people who live in the Gulou Village arrange fifteen balls for the Djmulat. Each ball is about the size of a human head, with a diameter of more than ten centimeters.<sup>15</sup> As everyone knows, the first ball that the male priest tosses into the air is a bad luck ball. Other balls do not have specific meanings as to good or bad fortune. If you want to gain blessings, you must impale the center of a ball.<sup>16</sup> The villagers discover their fate for the coming five years according to which part of the ball is impaled.<sup>17</sup>

Prior to the ritual game, the villagers participating in the Djmulat collect bamboo poles in the mountains. Poles of the proper length and diameter are carried back to the village. Each length of bamboo is straightened by means of

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<sup>11</sup> Djulat is a Paiwan term. See Tan, Paiwanzu, p. 117.

<sup>12</sup> Qapudrun is a Paiwan term. See Tan, Paiwanzu, p. 117.

<sup>13</sup> Xu and Ke, Paiwanzu guloucun de jiyi yu wenhua, p. 58.

<sup>14</sup> Bien Chiang, "House and Social Hierarchy of Paiwan" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1993), pp. 277-278.

<sup>15</sup> Tan, Paiwanzu, p. 117. See also Tain, Taiwan de yuanzhumin paiwanzu, p. 109.

<sup>16</sup> In Tuban Village, the rite is not quite the same: different balls have different meanings, some lucky, others unlucky. If impaled even the unlucky balls might bring good fortune. See Tan, Paiwanzu, pp. 122-123.

<sup>17</sup> Xu and Ke, Paiwanzu guloucun de jiyi yu wenhua, p. 58.

heat from a fire. Then, two or three bamboos, with appropriately decreasing diameters, are fitted into one another. The diameter of the lower portion is about six inches, while the tip is thin and pointed so it can impale a ball.<sup>18</sup>

Built into the bamboo poles are several special features, which in various combinations establish different types. The length and decoration of a pole reflects the position of its owner in the social hierarchy of the Paiwan.<sup>19</sup> The chief holds the longest one, more than forty-five feet in length. It looks like the hundred-paced viper,<sup>20</sup> since it is decorated with a pattern of alternating black and white. Apart from the chief of the Paiwan, no one is allowed to use the image of the hundred-paced viper in the designs of their poles.<sup>21</sup> This rule is based on the Paiwan oral tradition that the ancestors of the chief are actually descendants of the hundred-paced viper.<sup>22</sup>

Djmulat most often takes place on 25 October, which is the culminating point of Maleveq.<sup>23</sup> It is a ritual interaction between the Paiwan people and the spirit beings. Through the Djmulat, the villagers learn which blessings and/or curses the spirits will send in the next five years. It is the most important ceremony of Maleveq, because the tribe's fate depends on which balls they have impaled and how.<sup>24</sup>

While the Paiwan were celebrating Maleveq, I was worshipping in Gulou Church and I could not feel any cordial atmosphere there. On the contrary,

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<sup>18</sup> Bien Chiang, "House and Social Hierarchy of Paiwan," pp. 309-310. See also Tan, Paiwanzu, p. 117.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Scientific name: *Deinagkistrodon acutus*. In my thesis, I use the word viper for this kind of snake to emphasize that it is a poisonous creature.

<sup>21</sup> Tain, Taiwan de yuanzhumin paiwanzu, pp. 107-109. See also Tan, Paiwanzu, p. 117.

<sup>22</sup> Tian Zhe Yi 田哲益, Paiwanzu de shenhua yu chuanshuo 排灣族的神話與傳說 (Myths and Legends of the Paiwan Tribe; Taizhong: Morning Star Publisher, 2003), pp. 47-49.

<sup>23</sup> Tan, Paiwanzu, pp. 115-116; 121.

<sup>24</sup> Tian, Taiwan de yuanzhumin paiwanzu, pp. 109-110.

something very heavy dominated the worshipers' mood. The pastor even invited us to pray for those who were celebrating Maleveq, because, in her words, this ceremony belongs to the Devil. In her view, the hundred-paced viper is not a symbol of the chief's ancestor. It is a symbol of Satan.

No one asked the reason for this teaching, not even I. I did not feel sad, because I am not a Paiwan, and I do not actually like snakes. But then I started thinking, "Why can't people combine their old culture with their new belief? Why must they abandon their cultural heritage to become Christian? Whether Paiwan or Chinese, our traditional religions are also a part of our life, aren't they?" But I could not get any answers as I was still just learning about Christianity. It was easier to believe what others tell me than to find my own answers.

However, when I began graduate studies of religion, I encountered many new ways of thinking about this problem. Reading widely helped me to enlarge my view. Thus, I discovered that the snake is not always a symbol of evil: indeed, the symbolic meanings of the snake are many and quite varied.

In my thesis, I want to explore the many different meanings and values of the snake as a religious symbol, because a limited view restricts the Paiwan Christians of Gulou Village, who might find a more positive way to relate their ancestral religion to Christianity. I think this is a very good place to start to help them connect their new Christian worldview to their traditional culture. In order to do this, I must begin with a discussion of symbols, particularly religious symbols.

## II. Religious Symbols

Clifford Geertz (1926-2006) was an American cultural anthropologist who studied religion, most particularly Islam. Probably his most famous book is Islam Observed (1968), in which he compares two different forms of Islam: Islam in Morocco, North Africa, and Islam in Java, Indonesia. Geertz found that people can use dissimilar modes of worship in the same religion.

As a cultural anthropologist, Geertz seeks to see religions through the eyes of the believers. He emphasizes the cultural context of religion and notes that it is the symbols that are the concrete manifestations of any culture. Thus, for him the symbolic nature of religion is most important.

Culture is “a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which people communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life.”<sup>25</sup> Geertz sought to interpret the guiding symbols of each culture, following in his work the theories of Talcott Parsons and Edward Shils. He refers to his form of anthropology as exploring the cultural dimension of religion.

When we talk about culture, we cannot ignore religion, because religion affects every social system, especially the ways of finding meaning in life. Indeed, for Geertz, religion is “a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in [people] by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing those conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.”<sup>26</sup> In other words, a religion is a system of symbols

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<sup>25</sup> Clifford Geertz, “Religion as a Cultural System,” in The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 89.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.



that expresses the values and orientation in human life. Through religious symbols, people manifest in a concrete way their ultimate concerns. For this reason, we need to have a better understanding of what a symbol is.

In The Interpretation of Cultures (1973), Geertz defines symbols as “tangible formulations of notions, abstractions from experience fixed in perceptible forms, concrete embodiments of ideas, attitudes, judgments, longings, or beliefs.”<sup>27</sup> In other words, a symbol is something concrete taken from our experience and used to refer to something abstract, such as feelings and ideas. For example, a gigantic tree can be used as a symbol. The tree is a tall plant and has a vast shadow. The branches of the tree serve as a protective umbrella for whatever sits beneath it. Thus, the tree can be a symbol of protection. In addition, some trees can provide food and drink for people. They act as providers who care about human beings’ physiological survival in the world. Therefore, they can be symbols of nurturance.

Another example of a symbol is the lion. It is often known as the “king of jungle.” Probably the lion is the largest of the cat family, and it is feared by most wild animals. Moreover, the lion’s physical appearance, size, strength, its dignified movements, and violence in killing other animals have left a strong imprint on the human mind.<sup>28</sup> The lion that hunts on the prairie of Africa has often been associated with royalty because it is the top creature in the food chain. Under this natural law, no other animals can kill or eat the lion, except maybe human beings. Lions live in hunting group called prides. A pride usually includes five or six females and one or two males. In their group, the male is in charge of terrifying the prey and the females do the actual killing. This special

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>28</sup> Kathryn Hutton, “Lions,” in The Encyclopedia of Religion, ed., Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 8:556.

organizational behavior resembles that of a kingdom in the human world: one king rules other people, who serve and obey the king. Thus, people often use the lion as a symbol for majesty.

Sometimes a symbol is also a sign. The Oxford Dictionary defines a sign as “a mark having a conventional meaning and used to represent a complex notion.” The meaning of the mark is assigned, that is to say, determined by a group of people. Members of other groups will not understand the sign. They have to learn the meaning.

For instance, a skull and crossbones is a symbol consisting of a human skull and two bones crossed together under the skull (☠). In some Western countries, it is generally used as a sign to warn of danger, especially in regard to poisonous substances. The sign might be printed on a bottle of poison to keep people from drinking it.

Another symbol that is also used as a sign is the five intertwined rings that represent the Olympic Games (🏅). It refers to the five inhabited continents in unison. Thus, five colored rings on a white field forms the Olympic flag. The colors were chosen because every nation had at least one of these colors in its national flag. The flag was adopted in 1914, but it was first flown at the 1920 Summer Olympics in Antwerp, Belgium. It is hoisted during each opening ceremony of the Olympic Games and then lowered again at the closure.<sup>29</sup>

Although any symbol can also be a sign, most signs are not also symbols. For example, in many countries a red octagon stands for “STOP” (🛑). This is a traffic sign. Arabic numerals are signs for numbers. Chinese characters are

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<sup>29</sup> International Olympic Committee, The Olympic Symbols (Switzerland: The Olympic Museum, 2007), p. 3.

signs, too, as are each of the elements in all writing systems. In every case, one must learn the “assigned meaning” of the sign. Otherwise, it is meaningless.

Still, some people will argue that the name of an object is symbolic. But this assumption doesn’t work, because a symbol always has more than one meaning and it is found in different cultures. For example, the Lunar New Year is the most important festival for the Chinese. People return home to eat New Year’s Eve Dinner with their families at this time. Most Chinese families will prepare at least one fish dish for this special meal. When other people ask them: “Why do you eat fish on New Year’s Eve Dinner?” Most of them will say: “Because in Mandarin Chinese the word for fish (yu) has the same sound as the word for more than enough (yu). We use the fish to express the hope that in the coming year we will have more enough.” In a similar way, Chinese people will not present an umbrella as a gift, because the word for umbrella (shan) sounds the same as the word for separation (shan). This kind of thinking is not symbolic but association based on assigned meanings. The fish becomes a sign for “surplus.” The umbrella becomes a sign for “separation.” But this has to be learned; the associations are not universal, not symbolic.

As for symbols, some can be used to carry religious meaning. In his essay “Religion as a Cultural System,” Geertz mentions that religious symbols “function to synthesize a people’s ethos—the tone, character, and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood—and their worldview—the picture they have of the way things in sheer actuality are, their most comprehensive ideas of order.”<sup>30</sup> In Geertz’s theory, ethos and worldview are essential factors in every religion.

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<sup>30</sup> Geertz, “Religion as a Cultural System,” p. 89.

The word ethos refers to the set of attitudes and feelings that are typical of a group of people. It includes atmosphere, character, quality of life, feelings, style, mood, way of life, and so on. Ethos has a strong motivating power on people. Worldview, on the other hand, refers to the way people see and understand the world they live in: ideas about reality, cosmology, beliefs, cosmic framework, and so forth. Worldview gives people a sense of meaning and security. According to Geertz, religious rites fuse and promote ethos and worldview in a given society. Further, when we talk about rituals, we must understand symbols first, because symbols guide action.

Although both the symbol and the religious symbol can be anything concrete drawn from our experience, there is a key difference between them. While non-religious symbols also express feelings and ideas, religious symbols are used to refer to the spirit world, or ultimate reality.

For example, in Buddhism, the lion is also a religious symbol. It conveys the power of the Buddha Shakyamuni to enlighten sentient beings. The Buddha is the one who is awakened.<sup>31</sup> Yet, he also “awakens” others. The lion, too, “awakens” people with his mighty roar. In addition, because the male lion has a golden mane, it is often associated with the sun and its rays. The sun is a common symbol for consciousness because it gives light to the world. As a “sun animal,” the lion points to the consciousness that is the goal of Buddhism, total awakening.

The lotus is a well-known religious symbol, in Egypt as well as in Asia. The lotus has roots that descend to the bottom of the pond and into the mud. The stem slowly grows up towards the water’s surface, moving continually toward the light. Once it reaches the surface of the water, the flower begins to

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<sup>31</sup> Buddha comes from Sanskrit budh (“awake”).

blossom. Because the opening and closing of the lotus follows the rising and setting of the sun, it is also a “sun symbol” and refers to awakening in a religious way.<sup>32</sup> At the same time, because the lotus’s roots reach into the earth while its stem grows up into the sky, it also exemplifies the connection between the realms of earth and sky, the natural world and the “heavenly” or spiritual reality.

Like all symbols, sometimes a religious symbol can be used as a sign. For example, the hieroglyph for “life” in ancient Egypt was the ankh, which is formed by a loop elongated downward, to which a Greek tau is attached (⚡). “The ankh appears in relief on temple walls, on tombs, and in inscriptions. It is customarily placed in a god’s or goddess’s hand. In representations expressing life, the divinity holds it under the pharaoh’s nose as if wishing to make him inhale its vital forces.”<sup>33</sup> As a symbol, it combines the cross and the circle, which have multiple associations: the cross connects the opposites while the circle, with no beginning, no end, refers to eternity. As an ideogram in the writing system of ancient Egypt it also acts as a sign with a definite, assigned meaning.

Another scholar who discusses religious symbols in depth is Mircea Eliade (1907-1986). As a leading interpreter of religious experience, he continues to influence the history of religions to this day. Although he was raised in a Greek Orthodox Christian environment, Eliade appreciated all--including tribal--religions, both ancient and contemporary. In addition, he helped people understand the symbolic nature of religion and created neutral

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<sup>32</sup> Joel P. Brereton, “Lotus,” in The Encyclopedia of Religion, ed., Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 9:28.

<sup>33</sup> Julien Ries, “Cross,” in The Encyclopedia of Religion, ed., Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 4:155-156.

language for talking about religions.

The word hierophany is a very good example to explain how neutral language helps people study religions. In fact, this word comes from ancient Greek components. Eliade prefixes hieros (“sacred” or “supernatural”) to phanein (to “manifest”). Thus, we can say that hierophany means something sacred appears to someone: “It is a fitting term, because it does not imply anything further; it expresses no more than is implicit in its etymological content, i.e., that something sacred shows itself to us.”<sup>34</sup>

Hierophany is a more useful word than revelation, because it emphasizes the sense that supernatural realities are felt to be active. Revelation, on the other hand, merely states that something hidden has become visible. What is revealed could be anything, even a human being. So, revelation is too broad to express the specific meaning of the religious experience. Besides, hierophany as a non-theological term avoids any confusion with Christian ideas of revelation.

In his essay “Methodological Remarks on the Study of Religious Symbolism,” Mircea Eliade states that “the symbol is not a mere reflection of objective reality. It reveals something more profound and more basic.”<sup>35</sup> To help people think about religious symbols in a deeper way, Eliade then identifies six aspects of the depths revealed by symbols. (1) “Religious symbols are capable of revealing a modality of the real or a structure of the World that is not evident on the level of immediate experience.”<sup>36</sup> This means that through religious symbols people can discover different sides of the world,

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<sup>34</sup> Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion (New York: Harcourt, 1987), p. 11.

<sup>35</sup> Mircea Eliade, “Methodological Remarks on the Study of Religious Symbolism,” in The History of Religions: Essays in Methodology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 98.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

including the spiritual dimension. For instance, fire has been used in many different cultures and religions for a long time. Fire is a combustible material releasing heat, light, and various products. Because humans learned how to control fire, this greatly differentiated them from other creatures. Making fire to create heat and light made it possible for people to cook food thoroughly. Fire can turn raw flesh into cooked meat. This process symbolizes the power of transformation that people can see everywhere in the world. Furthermore, if a person wants to send some important gifts to the heavenly gods, he or she can use fire to achieve this goal. When people burn a gift, the smoke rising into the sky symbolizes the “spiritualized” gift entering the “spirit zone.” For example, Agni, an important Vedic god, is a god of fire who transforms material things into spiritual realities and conveys them to the gods.<sup>37</sup> Fire is thus a concrete object found in our material environment that is used as a symbol both for transformation and connection with the heavenly realm.

(2) “Symbols are always religious because they point to something real or to a structure of the world.”<sup>38</sup> Eliade is a historian. His goal is to describe different historical religions. He respects all different kinds of religions among the various countries. He encourages people to appreciate tribal religions and cultures, both ancient and contemporary. Regardless of whether they are experienced on an archaic or on a modern level, symbols do not lose their ancient, religious values.

Geertz, on the other hand, mentions the difference between non-religious symbols and religious symbols. People can also express nonreligious feelings or ideas by means of symbols. For example, I draw a

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<sup>37</sup> Ninian Smart, “South Asia,” in The World’s Religions (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2006), pp. 55-56.

<sup>38</sup> Eliade, “Methodological Remarks on the Study of Religious Symbolism,” pp. 98-99.

person who has fire in his eyes and above his head to express his emotions. This could symbolize the feelings of anger or the zeal to do something. The point is this, in this way I present his feelings, but without any religious meaning for this symbol at that moment. Still, Eliade would probably suggest that every symbol can also be used in religion, since it can point to cosmic realities. So the fire that expresses the non-religious feelings of anger and zeal can also be used to symbolize the divine energy that supports cosmic life.

(3) “An essential characteristic of religious symbolism is its multivalence, its capacity to express simultaneously a number of meanings whose continuity is not evident on the plane of immediate experience.”<sup>39</sup> Transformation is one of the important symbolic meanings of fire. The main image is of the smoke from the fire dispersing up into the sky. This is one way people can communicate with the heavenly spiritual reality. At the same time, in Christianity, fire is also a symbol of the Holy Spirit<sup>40</sup> and God.<sup>41</sup> The prophet Moses had a vision of a bush that was burning but was not consumed by the fire, and out of the burning bush he heard the voice of God.<sup>42</sup> Further, fire can be a symbol for purification. As it cleans the forest of too much growth, so, too, it can refine one’s spirit of evil thoughts.<sup>43</sup> In Chinese culture, fire represents the active and masculine (the yang) energies of the universe. Thus, one symbol will have more than one meaning.

(4) As a consequence, “the symbol is thus able to reveal a perspective in which heterogeneous realities are susceptible of articulation into a whole, or

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>40</sup> Acts 2:1-4. The Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost. It is manifested as tongues of flame.

<sup>41</sup> Deuteronomy 4:24. See also, Hebrews 12:29. God is a consuming fire.

<sup>42</sup> Exodus 3:2-4.

<sup>43</sup> Zechariah 13:9.



even of integration into a 'system.'"<sup>44</sup> The concrete nature of a symbol with diverse meanings serves as a unifying tool. Fire can be both a light in the darkness and a destructive tool for punishment. For example, after God called Moses to bring the Israelites out of Egypt, He guided the people as they traveled in the desert. Appearing by day as a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way; and by night as a pillar of fire to give them light, He led them.<sup>45</sup> The pillar of fire has the symbolic meaning of God's guidance. Yet, elsewhere, God uses the same material to destroy the wicked of the cities Sodom and Gomorrah. Fire thus unites in one symbol God's mercy and God's wrath.<sup>46</sup>

(5) In other words, religious symbolism has the "capacity for expressing paradoxical situations, or certain structures of ultimate reality, otherwise quite inexpressible."<sup>47</sup> We can find similar examples in other stories. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God expelled them from the Garden of Eden. Then, the Lord placed on the east side of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.<sup>48</sup> Here, the symbol of fire expresses the meaning of protection, that is, it guards the sacred garden. In contrast, in the story of Elijah, fire symbolizes God's martial aggression when it falls from heaven to consume the armies sent by the king against the prophet.<sup>49</sup> Finally, fire is often used in descriptions of hell,<sup>50</sup> where it has the meaning of death and ruin.

(6) Above all, a symbol "always aims at a reality or a situation in which

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<sup>44</sup> Eliade, "Methodological Remarks on the Study of Religious Symbolism," pp. 99-101.

<sup>45</sup> Exodus 13:20-22.

<sup>46</sup> Genesis 19:24-25.

<sup>47</sup> Eliade, "Methodological Remarks on the Study of Religious Symbolism," pp. 101-102.

<sup>48</sup> Genesis 3.

<sup>49</sup> 2 Kings 1.

<sup>50</sup> Matthew 5:22, Mark 9:44, and Revelation 20:10.

human existence is engaged.<sup>51</sup> Symbols play an important role in everyday life. For example, people burn sacrifices to send gifts to the heavenly gods. They believe that the smoke from the fire can convey their messages or gifts to the supernatural spirits who live in the sky. In Chinese tradition, people burn “spirit money” to send to the ancestors. Fire transforms the paper money or paper houses, conveying them to the other world where ancestral spirits live. In this way, people feel an ongoing relationship with friends and family that have died.

Both Geertz and Eliade impress upon us the importance in religion of symbols. Further, Eliade emphasizes the fact that every “symbol is multivalent,” in other words, it will carry more than one meaning and more than one value. Following this insight, I will explore the many different meanings and values of the snake as a religious symbol. For ideas about how to interpret symbols, I turn to the field of psychology and the discoveries of C.G. Jung.

Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) was an influential thinker and the founder of analytical psychology. He considered that the human psyche is “by nature religious.” The definition of religion for him is symbolic expression of the entire self, including both conscious and unconscious dimensions.

For Jung, “amplification” is a way to enlarge the meanings of symbols so as to understand them better. This process consists of four steps: First of all, one must present a detailed description of the object, including its appearance, its composition, and its function. In other words, what is it and what does it do? Second, the interpreter takes note of associations to the object, both feelings and thoughts. Third, the interpreter takes note of how the symbol appears in different religious contexts. Last but not the least, the interpreter focuses on

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<sup>51</sup> Eliade, “Methodological Remarks on the Study of Religious Symbolism,” pp. 102-103.

the symbol in one specific context, such as a dream, a vision, a religious artifact, or a myth. He or she then draws on the earlier amplification—description, associations, comparative interpretations—to find the appropriate meaning of the symbol in that context.

I plan to follow these scholars' methodologies to interpret the meaning of the snake in Paiwan Christianity. During my research, I discovered that not all Paiwan Christians see the snake as a symbol for evil. Both the negative and the positive view of the snake are found in Paiwan Christianity. One group is forced to condemn its own tradition that the snake is a holy ancestor; the second group is able to integrate this traditional belief into their newly acquired Christian faith. I begin this discussion with a general introduction to Paiwan traditional religion in order to demonstrate how deep is the relationship between the Pawian and the snake!

### III. An Introduction to Paiwan Religion<sup>52</sup>

The Paiwan is the third biggest aboriginal group in Taiwan.<sup>53</sup> Its population was 87,410 as of August of 2009. The main geographical territory of this tribe lies among the southern part of the Central Mountain Range.<sup>54</sup> It runs from the north of Mount Tjavuvu<sup>55</sup> in Pingdong and passes through Mount Ka-vulungan to the south of Hengchun Peninsula. Besides, it also includes the southeastern piedmont of the Central Mount Range and the seafront of the Pacific Ocean near Taidong.<sup>56</sup>

There are two major subgroups of the Paiwan: One is made up of the members of the Raval, who live in Sandimen north of Pingdong. The members of this subgroup have a lot of cultural interactions with the Rukai tribe, which is another aboriginal group in Taiwan. Intermarriages between the Raval and the Rukai have been and still are common. Like the Rukai, the Raval people follow the custom of primogeniture. This means the eldest son inherits the properties of his father. This custom is different from that of most other Paiwan groups. According to Paiwan tradition, the eldest child, no matter whether it is male or female, inherits the property. Furthermore, the Raval does not celebrate the Maleveq, which is a very important festival among the Paiwan. Although the Raval group has some obvious differences with other Paiwan groups, the

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<sup>52</sup> I define religion as belief in and active concern for any kind of spirit, including souls, gods, goddesses, ancestors, ghosts, devils, demons, and so on.

<sup>53</sup> There are fourteen aboriginal cultures in Taiwan now. The biggest group is the Ami tribe, the second biggest group is the Atayal, and the Paiwan is the third largest.

<sup>54</sup> The Central Mountain Range is the principal range of mountains in Taiwan. It runs from the north of the island to the south.

<sup>55</sup> Tjavuvu is a Paiwan term. It means “our grandparents.” The Chinese name is Da Mu Mu (大母母). This mountain is one of the sacred mountains for the Paiwan, especially for the Raval subgroup. See Tan, *Paiwanzu*, p. 8.

<sup>56</sup> Tan, *Paiwanzu*, p. 5. See also Tong Chun Fa 童春發, *Taiwan yuanzhumin shi: paiwanzu shi pian* 臺灣原住民史：排灣族史篇 (A History of Taiwan's Aborigines: The Paiwan Tribe; Nantou: Taiwan Documents Committee, 2001), p. 12.

members of this subgroup use the same language as the Paiwan. Thus, the Raval subgroup still belongs to the Paiwan, and it is a significant part of their culture.<sup>57</sup>

The Butsul is another subgroup of the Paiwan, and it is the major one. There are four divisions of this subgroup, which are divided according to their locations: (1) the Northern Paiwan, where is also found the headquarter of the Butsul; (2) the Central Paiwan is equal to the group called Paumamauq, which is the Paiwan term that means “a person who comes from the homeland;” (3) the Southern Paiwan, or Pavuavua, which means “colony” and includes the groups known as Chaobolbol, Sebdek, Parilarilao, and Skaro; and (4) the Eastern Paiwan at Taidong, also known as the Pakarokaro, most of whom are influenced by two other aboriginal groups who live in the same area—the Amis and the Puyuma.<sup>58</sup>

Many scholars use this geographical classification to identify the various Paiwan tribal groups. In addition, the Paiwan are separated by their sacred mountains. They depend on the mountains, the hills, and the rivers for their existence. They are a mountain-dwelling people. Each group of Paiwan depends on specific mountains and rivers to live. For example, the Raval lives near Mount Tjavuva and the Kouxi River. Each Paiwan group has developed its distinguishing features because it occupies a different place.<sup>59</sup>

Although Mount Tjavuvu is the primary mountain for the Raval, a large number of important references points in Paiwan distribution is based on Mount Ka-vulungan, or Chinese Da Wu Shan (大武山). Ka-vulungan is the

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 6. See also Tian, Taiwan de yuanzhumin Paiwanzu, pp. 29-30.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-8. See also Tian, Taiwan de yuanzhumin Paiwanzu, pp. 31-37. Tong, Taiwan yuanzhumin shi: paiwanzu shi pian, pp. 12-18.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 8. See also Tong, Taiwan yuanzhumin shi, p. 12.

Paiwan name. The prefix, ka, means “original” or “genuine.” This name identifies Mount Ka-vulungan as the chief of all mountains. For the Paiwan, it is the most sacred mountain. Almost all Paiwan people believe that this mountain is the place where the culture heroes who founded their society and their ancestors live.<sup>60</sup>

Every nation has its own story to explain their origins. The Paiwan has its own traditional myths too. Many kinds of creation myths belong to this tradition: they include, for example, (1) the myths of the sun’s egg; (2) the myths about birth out of stones; (3) the myths of the snake ancestors; and (4) the myths of the Clay Pot Woman.<sup>61</sup> Although different groups may have slightly different myths, there are still many points accepted by all the Paiwan.

The first category includes myths of the sun’s egg. One example comes from Qiaqikao Village. In ancient times, the sun descended to lay two eggs on top of Mount Kaojiabaogen.<sup>62</sup> These two eggs were very different from normal eggs: one was white and the other one was red. The sun ordered a hundred-paced viper to hatch the eggs. Later on, a god named Baoabaolang and a goddess named Chaemujaer hatched out. Their descendants became the ancestors of Paiwan nobility. As for the commoners, they are the offspring of a green snake called Lilai.<sup>63</sup> Although the first Paiwan people came from the sun’s egg, the snakes still played important roles in this kind of stories. Somehow, snakes were protectors of human beings.

Another myth say that in ancient times, the sun god laid two eggs in a clay pot in the one white stone house on top of Mount Ka-vulungan. There, a

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid. See also Bien Chiang, “House and Social Hierarchy of Paiwan,” p. 55.

<sup>61</sup> Tong, Taiwan yuanzhumin shi, p. 19.

<sup>62</sup> Sometimes called Chakabaogen.

<sup>63</sup> Tian, Paiwanzu de shenhua yu chuanshuo, pp. 31-32; 33-34. See also Tong, Taiwan yuanzhumin shi, p. 20.

couple emerged from the eggs. These two people got married and gave birth to many children. They are the ancestors of the Paiwan. Thus, the Paiwan people call themselves the children of the sun.<sup>64</sup>

The second category includes myths about birth out of stones. In ancient times, there was a gigantic stone in Kinabakan. One day, a man and a woman emerged out of this stone. They married and tried to have children, but their first baby was a snake, the second baby was blind, and the next child had only one hand, one leg, and no head. Finally, they bore healthy children, one boy and one girl. When these healthy children grew up, like their parents, the man married the woman and gave birth to many children. But the place where they lived was too small, so some children moved to the north of Taiwan and became the ancestors of the Puyuma; others moved to the south of Taiwan and became the ancestors of the Paiwan.<sup>65</sup> Because of this myth, some scholars argue that the Puyuma may be related to the Paiwan.

The third category includes myths about snake ancestors. One important feeling common to all Paiwan is a respect for nature, snakes especially. The snake is the most sacred animal for them. The reason is that the Paiwan people believe that they descend from the snakes. Snakes are the ancestors, and they are the origin of their cultural life. At the same time, persons belonging to different social classes derive also from different types of snakes. The nobles are the offspring of the hundred-paced viper; while commoners descend from the poisonous brown-spotted pit viper. All these beliefs are based on the myths of procreation from snakes.<sup>66</sup> There are many beautiful stories among the different Paiwan groups. In order to help readers to

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., pp. 44-45. See also Tong, *Taiwan yuanzhumin shi*, p. 21.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., pp. 30, 33, 40-41, 47-49. See also Tong, *Taiwan yuanzhumin shi*, p. 20.

understand more about the relationships between the snakes and the Paiwan people, I will retell five examples of this type of creation myth in the following paragraphs.

(1) In the beginning, God created the world and all kinds of animals with the exception of human beings. It was a very peaceful and wonderful era. One day, God wanted to do something original for his world. He gathered together all the snakes for the new creation. God said: "I want to choose one of you to finish a very important plan for the world." Then, God walked around all the snakes. Suddenly, God saw the most beautiful one and chose it to create something new. He breathed his breath into the snake's eggs, and he ordered the snake to care for and hatch the eggs.

A few days later, one man and one woman hatched out of two of the snake's eggs. When God saw this, he felt very joyful and satisfied. In order to protect these two creatures, he commanded the snake to stay near them and watch over them. God said: "I will grant you the authorization to use your weapon to protect these two persons. When an enemy is too close to them, you can use your fangs to bite the enemy; and it will drop dead before taking a hundred steps." The snake was ready to shoulder the life-long responsibility to bring up and protect these two persons. After they grew up, the man was to marry the woman. They became the leaders of the first group of Paiwan.<sup>67</sup>

According to this story the relationship between humans and the divine is discontinuous. Still, although humans and God do not share the same nature, a little part of the human being comes from God. One interesting point is that God breathes his breath into the snake's eggs, and this plot is similar to the

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p.47.



story of the creation of Adam in Genesis.<sup>68</sup>

(2) In former days, floodwaters covered the earth and destroyed all life, that is, every creature that had the breath of life in it. All perished at that time. After this cataclysm, one god entered a mountain and saw there an egg laid by a snake. He approached the egg to see it more clearly, and he saw a human figure inside the egg. Then, a person hatched out of it. This man was the ancestor of the Paiwan. This myth comes from the Kaviyagan Village.<sup>69</sup>

(3) Another myth comes from Botan Village: In the past, there were many bamboos on Mount Ka-vulungan. One day, a piece of bamboo split open, and many baby snakes emerged out of it. After these snakes grew up, they all became human beings. They were the ancestors of the Paiwan.<sup>70</sup>

(4) A bamboo grew in Pinabaokatsan near the spot belonging to the Atsudas Village. One day, a snake came out from the bamboo. Later, the snake transformed into a man and a woman. These two persons lived together and gave birth to two children. They were the human beings' forebears.<sup>71</sup>

Among the Paiwan the bamboo symbolizes happiness.<sup>72</sup> Both the third and forth stories include this symbol. According to Paiwan myths, bamboo has two important functions. First, it acts like a spiritual channel bringing supernatural beings into the world, especially in these two stories. It seems that the bamboo connects the worlds of the humans and the spirits. Maybe that

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<sup>68</sup> Genesis 2:7. God formed the man whose name was Adam from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

<sup>69</sup> Tian, Paiwanzu de shenhua yu chuanshuo, p. 48. See Tong, Taiwan yuanzhumin shi, p. 20. See also Yin Jian Zhong 尹建中, ed. Taiwan shanbao gezu chuantong shenhua gushi yu chuanshuo wenxian bianzuan yanjiu 臺灣山胞各族傳統神話故事與傳說文獻編纂研究 (A Study Compiling the Traditional Myths and Legends of all the Taiwanese Aboriginal Tribes; Taipei: National Taiwan University, 1994), p. 183.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., pp. 40, 41, 42, 48. See also Tong, Taiwan yuanzhumin shi, p. 20.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., pp. 41, 48. See Tong, Taiwan yuanzhumin shi, p. 20. See also Yin, Taiwan shanbao gezu chuantong shenhua gushi yu chuanshuo wenxian bianzuan yanjiu, p. 183.

<sup>72</sup> Xu and Ke, Paiwanzu guloucun de jiyi yu wenhua, p. 119.

is the reason why bamboo makes people happy. Second, the bamboo can be a tool to help them discern good fortune. There is one myth about a god whose name is Ulapulalaujan. He planted a bamboo in the earth. After this bamboo grew up, the Paiwan people used it to make the long bamboo pole used in the festival of Maleveq.<sup>73</sup> As we know, the Paiwan divine the coming year's fortune by mean of the ball-impaling game.<sup>74</sup> Here again the pole is a center of the world symbol: it conveys the message from the ancestors.

(5) Long ago, a goddess lived in Amawang. One day, she played on a swing, but because she exerted too much strength, she fell off and into an underground hole. From there, she dropped off the edge of the earth. No one saw her anymore. Later, another goddess came out from the underground hole where the first goddess had disappeared. The second goddess lived in this village and associated with a man whose name was Pulaluyaluyan. One day, Pulaluyaluyan was thirsty for a drink of water, so the goddess went out to look for some. After she had found some water and was returning, she picked up two eggs that she found on the way home. One was the egg of the hundred-paced viper; the other, the egg of the poisonous brown-spotted pit viper. Later, a chief of a group of Paiwan hatched out from the egg of the hundred-paced viper; while out of the second egg hatched a commoner's forefather. At first, these two kinds of people intermarried, but their offspring would have only one nostril and half of a mouth. So, since then, Paiwan tradition prohibits nobles and commoners marrying.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Tian, *Paiwanzu de shenhua yu chuanshuo*, p. 46.

<sup>74</sup> Tan, *Paiwanzu*, pp. 121-124. See also Xu and Ke, *Paiwanzu guloucun de jiyi yu wenhua*, p. 58.

<sup>75</sup> Tian, *Paiwanzu de shenhua yu chuanshuo*, p. 48. See Tong, *Taiwan yuanzhumin shi*, p. 20. See Yin, *Taiwan shanbao gezu chuantong shenhua gushi yu chuanshuo wenxian bianzuan yanjiu*, p. 183. See also Zeng Zong Sheng 曾宗盛, "Jidu fuyin yu yuanzhumin wenhua de huiyu: shengjing she xiangzheng yu paiwanzu she tuteng de duihua" 基督福音與原住民文化的會遇：聖經「蛇象徵」與

Although these five creation myths differ, they all have one point in common: the importance of snakes. In fact, the hundred-paced viper is still respected and held in awe by the Paiwan people today. Whenever people see a snake, no matter when or where, they will talk to it: "I am sorry to disturb you; please go first." They do not feel afraid when they see snakes. According to the Paiwan worldview, snakes play an important role in their life. They show their friendliness to the snakes as if to old friends. Almost all Paiwan people believe that the snake is the ancestor of all human beings.

Not only is the snake the ancestor of the Paiwan, it also protects all Paiwan people from danger. For example, one myth records the following tale: In ancient times, another tribal people attacked the Paiwan at a time when most of the tribe had left home. After they came back, they saw many dead enemy bodies in their villages. Every corpse had been killed by the poison of the hundred-paced viper. Seeing this, the Paiwan people knew that the hundred-paced viper was protecting them. Thus, they revere this snake as their guardian deity.<sup>76</sup>

The Paiwan commonly use the image of the snake to decorate their homes, so as to remember at all times the special relationship between the snakes and the people. Further, members of the chief's family always emphasize that they are both children of the sun and descendants of the hundred-paced viper. Until now, only the chief's family can use the image of the hundred-paced viper, because it also represents their social class.<sup>77</sup>

As seen in these myths, the snake is one of the important symbols for the

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排灣族「蛇圖騰」的對話 (The Encounter between the Christian Gospel and Indigenous Culture: A Dialogue Concerning the Snake as Biblical Symbol and Paiwan Totem), *Yushan shenxueyuan xuebao* 玉山神學院學報 (Yu-Shan Theological Journal) 13 (2006), p. 59.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., pp. 47-49.

Paiwan. However, the Paiwan still have many other interesting symbols as part of their traditional culture. These symbols express the central values of the Paiwan. They include the three treasures: the bronze knife; the glazed beads; and the clay pot.

There is no special myth about the bronze knife, but the Paiwan people highly value it. This special knife can be a gift at a wedding ceremony. However, it only belongs to the chief's and nobles' families because it expresses their authority and bravery. The Paiwan people do not use the bronze knife on regular days, but only during the Maleveq. They only use it during this special festival as they pray for the sun god to attend the Maleveq and bring good fortune to the Paiwan. Except on these days, they will not use it.

The glazed beads, also call mulimulidan in Paiwan language, have been since ancient times beautiful treasures designated only for the chiefs and the nobles. Like the bronze knife, these, too, are family heirlooms, often presented to the family of the bride-to-be at the engagement party. Paiwan people have many myths to express the values and meanings of the mulimulidan.<sup>78</sup>

One myth mentions the origin of the glazed beads. Long ago, the ancestors of the Paiwan caught different kinds of dragonflies. They removed the big, pretty eyeballs of the dragonflies and mixed them with wood ash. Then, the Paiwan people put them into a tub and covered it. The older people forbade children to open the tub. They believed that the gods were creating the most gorgeous gifts in the world to send to the Paiwan. On the next day, when everyone opened the tub together, they saw the sparkling, beautiful, colored beads, just as expected. That's the reason why the glazed beads are also

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<sup>78</sup> Tan, Paiwanzu, pp. 139-142. See also Xu Mei Zhi 許美智, Paiwanzu de liulizhu 排灣族的琉璃珠 (The Paiwan Lazurite Beads; Taibei: Daw Shiang, 1992), pp. 77-79.

known as the dragonflies' beads. The mulimulidan are a gift from the gods. They represent the close and strong relationship between the Paiwan and their gods.<sup>79</sup>

In Paiwan traditional society, the clay pot has supernatural power. It is deeply connected with their ancestors and with their creation myths. Again, it is a sacred property only for the nobility. Until today, the clay pots have remained a mystery. Although today the Paiwan people know how to make them, they have no idea about the origins of clay pots. But every clay pot has the image of the hundred-paced viper on its surface. This symbol expresses its sacred value to the Paiwan.<sup>80</sup>

According to one creation myth from Gulou Village, long ago, there were three pots on a mountain. Each one was made of a different material: gold, silver, and clay. One day, two dogs from Mount Ka-vulungan bumped into the clay pot. A baby girl came out from the broken pot. When she grew up, she married the hundred-paced viper and gave birth to three children. The first child became chief of Gulou Village. The second child became chief of Wutan Village, which is next to Gulou Village. And the third child was the ancestor of the bulingau<sup>81</sup> among the Paiwan. Thus, all the members of Gulou Village and its correlated groups thought they were the offspring of the Clay Pot Woman and the hundred-paced viper.<sup>82</sup>

Due to the influence of these creation myths, the people of Gulou Village cherish their clay pots: (1) The clay pot is the greatest treasure in the world.

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>80</sup> Tian, Paiwanzu de shenhua yu chuanshuo, pp. 29-30. Tan, Paiwanzu, p. 134.

<sup>81</sup> Bulingau is a Paiwan term. This person is always a female religious leader who is simultaneously a seer who has visions, a priestess in charge of ritual, a diviner, and a spirit medium. See Tan, Paiwanzu, p. 69.

<sup>82</sup> Tian, Paiwanzu de shenhua yu chuanshuo, pp. 29-30.

The Paiwan people must protect it and cannot move it at will. (2) The clay pot is the dwelling place of the forebears. (3) The clay pot is the original creation place of the first female ancestor.<sup>83</sup>

As for the hundred-paced viper, (1) The hundred-paced viper is the male ancestor of human beings. (2) The hundred-paced viper is the embodiment of the first male ancestor. (3) The Paiwan people cannot kill the hundred-paced viper without concern.<sup>84</sup>

The Paiwan people are very religious and their religion resembles that of many other small-society religions: they are polytheistic. Because the Paiwan people do not have their own written language, they rely on oral instruction to pass on their traditional religion, indeed to express their whole culture.<sup>85</sup> The members of this tribe are awed by every kind of spirit. In the Paiwan worldview, all earthly materials are created by supernatural beings. Not only is each creation under the care of its own spirit, but also each household has its guardian spirit as well as ancestors, who can protect it.<sup>86</sup>

For the Paiwan, there are both good spirits and evil spirits, but they respect all spirits in the same way, whether good or bad. On the one hand, good spirits give human beings happiness, abundant harvests, and riches. Good spirits are kind, generous, and powerful, and they are willing to shield human beings from bad things. Through worship and prayer, people can get their help. On the other hand, evil spirits will punish people who have offended them by their behavior. They also bring catastrophes into the world, such as

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Demalat-kui 德瑪拉德—貴, *Paiwan – Ravaljezu buluo guizu zhi tanyuan* 排灣—拉瓦爾亞族部落貴族之探源 (The Paiwan: The Origin of the Nobles among the Ravalje Tribe; Taipei: Daw Shiang, 2002), p. VII.

<sup>86</sup> Tian, *Taiwan de yuanzhumin Paiwanzu*, pp. 78-79.

disease, suffering, distress, and so on. Paiwan people love to invite good spirits into their life, and they try to avoid evil spirits as much as possible. Through worship and through many traditional religious rituals, they seek this goal, for example, through the major festive called Maleveq. Staying in good relation with the spirits is their main concern.<sup>87</sup>

The Paiwan word for all the spirits is tsemas; it includes all types of supernatural beings: the gods, the ancestors, the souls of the dead, ghosts, evil spirits, and so forth. Spirits exist in different realities:<sup>88</sup> (1) lpidi<sup>89</sup> is the heavenly place where the creator god, Neqemati, lives. (2) l tjari vavau<sup>90</sup> is the dwelling place of all the divine ancestors, who established the Paiwan groups. (3) l katsauan<sup>91</sup> is the human world and the residence for every individual person whose soul has not yet departed from the body. (4) l tjemakaziang<sup>92</sup> is the temporary reality for souls who have recently left the body. (5) l makarizeng<sup>93</sup> is the permanent residence for good souls and ancestors. And (6) l tjarhi tekun<sup>94</sup> is inhabited by unhappy souls and evil spirits.

Neqemati, the Creator, lives in the heavenly spiritual reality, which is also called Qadaw-Naqemati. The prefix qadaw means “sun.” This god uses the sun to express its supreme dignity and enormous power. Neqemati created all that exists in the cosmos and that includes animals, plants, and human beings. In Paiwan traditional belief, people conceive and have the children that Neqemati bestows upon them. Every Paiwan person depends on Neqemati’s

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<sup>87</sup> Tan, Paiwanzu, p. 64. See also Tain, Taiwan de yuanzhumin Paiwanzu, pp. 78-79.

<sup>88</sup> Xu and Ke, Paiwanzu guloucun de jiyi yu wenhua, p. 119. See also Tan, Paiwanzu, p. 62.

<sup>89</sup> This word is a Paiwan term.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

power to live from the moment of conception. Based on this idea, when a new baby is born, his or her parents need to offer up gifts of thanksgiving to Neqemati. This ritual helps the new baby to get Neqemati's protection so that he or she may grow up healthy. In a word, Neqemati is the god who creates, protects and governs all Paiwan people.<sup>95</sup>

Good spirits and all of the divine ancestors ("culture heroes") live in i tjari vavau. They act as benevolent messengers between Neqemati and human beings. They pray to the Creator on behalf of their descendants. These good spirits are separated into two kinds:<sup>96</sup> (1) Navenegats is a collective noun that means "the founders" of the Paiwan. Each group has its own founder. (2) Sevarivariten is the Paiwan term for all of the baraingan, the bulingau, and the chiefs who were famous before they died. The sevarivariten bear the vital duty of helping divinities and people communicate with each other.

The reality known as i makarizeng is the resting place for the dead. Especially good souls and those ancestors who died a natural death can live there. The social relations in this reality resemble what is found in the human world. Male and female souls work together but do different things, just as before. And all ancestors live in their houses, which have the same structure as Paiwan traditional buildings. The family members will get together after they die. In this realm, they still have the same Paiwan social class and culture.<sup>97</sup>

The lowest reality is the i tjarhi tekü. This place is inhabited by evil spirits and the souls of those who died in accidents or during childbirth as well as suicides. These spirits and souls cannot rest in peace. They are always hungry and thirsty, forever incapable of being satisfied. Although Paiwan people do

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<sup>95</sup> Tan, Paiwanzu, p. 62.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63. See also Xu and Ke, Paiwanzu guloucun de jiyi yu wenhua, p. 119.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.



not like these evil spirits, they still need to offer sacrifices to them. If people do not offer enough sacrifices to them, the evil spirits will disturb them all the time.<sup>98</sup>

The Paiwan people believe that they must pass through many different phases before they arrive in the permanent reality of i makarizeng. At first, the soul of a person just passed away stays in i tjemakaziang. This soul is transformed into a snake in this temporary reality. If he or she belonged to the family of the chief before, the soul is transformed into a hundred-paced viper. Then, all souls become vultures, whether they are the souls of nobles or commoners. After this, the soul (as a vulture) crosses over the bamboo, which is the place where its ancestors originated.<sup>99</sup> Finally, he or she turns into water and rises up into the sky. At this time, the Creator will decide if each soul should go to i makarizeng to live with other good spirits and ancestors or leave for i tjarhi vavau to stay with the founding gods and goddesses. After this process of being transformed into a snake, a vulture, and water, the soul can enter eternal life and no longer needs to be transformed anymore. This is the Paiwan afterlife belief.<sup>100</sup>

For the Paiwan, ancestors are their relatives who live in the other world. Every Paiwan person will undergo this procedure to become an ancestor for their offspring. The souls of the dead can develop into ancestors, who will continue a reciprocal relationship with their descendants through the proper rituals including a well-arranged burial. On the one hand, if the offspring obey the teachings and admonishments of their ancestors and always take care of

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Recall the myths of the snake ancestors, who entered the world through the bamboo. Tian, Paiwanzu de shenhua yu chuanshuo, pp. 40, 41, 42, 48. See also Tong, Taiwan yuanzhumin shi, p. 20.

<sup>100</sup> Xu and Ke, Paiwanzu guloucun de jiyi yu wenhua, p. 119.

the sacrificial altars, they will receive happiness and good fortune. In contrast, people will suffer disasters and bad luck if they do not follow their religious tradition.<sup>101</sup> Thus, the religious goal for the Paiwan is to live eventually in i makarizeng. By means of observing the traditional rituals and following the ancestral guidance, Paiwan people seek to attain this goal.

However, participating in the traditional rituals is not easy work. The Paiwan people need the religious specialists to help them. The chief is a ritual leader, and so, too, is the bulingau, who with her assistants carry out all the rituals of their tribes.

The bulingau is the Paiwan term for a female religious leader. She is responsible for arranging and enforcing the whole ritual process. The bulingau will have a special gift, that is, the ability to contact and communicate spirit beings and ancestors by means of traditional ritual language and other techniques. Spirit mediation and divination are most important. For example, through chanting the sacred song rada,<sup>102</sup> she enters a trance state allowing ancestral spirits to use her body as a medium for communications with the Paiwan. There are many bulingaus in each group, and the leading one is called kadraringan; only she can teach the sacred spiritual skills and to be responsible for passing them on.<sup>103</sup>

On the one hand, through visions the bulingau can communicate directly with the spirit beings and ancestors. In addition, by means of spirit mediation the ancestors are able to make use of the bulingau to express their will to the Paiwan. Therefore, the female bulingau—both visionary and medium—is the main religious leader in the Paiwan traditional ritual system. Through her, the

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<sup>101</sup> Tan, Paiwanzu, pp. 64-65.

<sup>102</sup> Rada is the Paiwan term. It is the special song can communicate with tsemas.

<sup>103</sup> Tan, Paiwanzu, p. 67.

complex rituals are ordered and have power. The bulingau keep alive the traditions of the past and maintain a close relationship with the ancestral spirits.<sup>104</sup>

Among the Paiwan, each religious specialist must stay at his or her post during the rituals. Each has specific responsibilities. There are two additional roles in a Paiwan ceremony: (1) The moluso is a position restricted to men. He needs to take charge of the pig, which is the essential offering among the Paiwan. Killing the pig and the ritual carving of the meat requires following certain traditional rules and procedures. The moluso must handle the whole process according to traditional teaching.<sup>105</sup>

(2) The baraingan it sometimes called the “priest” in English. This is also a male post. Most are assistants to the bulingau during the ceremony. They bring the sacrificial offerings prepared by the bulingau to the village entrance or to the altars set up in hunting areas among the mountains. One baraingan is the head priest, or babagalai. He manages the most important ceremonies, such as the Maleveq Festival.<sup>106</sup>

There are four rituals, or rites of passage, for every Paiwan: (1) a birth ceremony; (2) a puberty rite; (3) a marriage ceremony; and (4) a funeral rite. The Paiwan people call these rituals kakudan, which means the customs from the ancestors. Many Paiwan people believe that when they follow these customs, rituals, and rules, they will gain happiness in their lifetime. These sacred rituals and old teachings also help the Paiwan overcome difficult moments in the various life phases. They are empowered to face the unknown during their life, for example, the suffering from illness or great fear of death.

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

Through the sacred rituals, the Paiwan people seek a peaceful life and plentiful harvests.<sup>107</sup>

To sum up these materials, the Paiwan people respect all different kinds of spirits. When they are born to be a member of the Paiwan, they live with their traditional religion until they die. However, when the new religion came to the Paiwan, things changed for many. So many Paiwan Christians struggle because of the conflicts between their old culture and their new faith. In the next chapter, I want to describe how it is that the members of another Christian church—Sandimen Presbyterian Church in Pingong—just like their counterparts in Gulou Church believe that snakes are connected with sin, death, and the Devil.

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid, pp. 86-87.

#### IV. The Historical Influence of Missionaries on the Sandimen Presbyterian Church in Pingdong

The Sandimen Presbyterian Church (Sandimen Church) is located in Sandimen Township in the northern part of Pingdong, which is the southernmost country in Taiwan. Sandimen Township<sup>108</sup> is one of the administrative areas of the Paiwan in Pingdong Country.<sup>109</sup> In Paiwan, it is called Insdimoor, which means the gateway to three places: Wootai (霧台), Sandimen, and Majia (瑪家).

There are ten villages in Sandimen Township. According to the geographical setting from south to north of this township there are Tjavang (“Dalai Village 達來村”), Tjimur (“Sandi Village 三地村”), Tjailjaking (“Saijia Village 賽嘉村”), Tjukuvulj (“Dewen Village 德文村”), Sagaran (“Koushe Village 口社村”), Valjulu (“Maer Village 馬兒村”), Djineljepan (“Anpo Village 安坡村”), Tjavarjan (“Dashe Village 大社村”), Tjuvasavasai (“Qingshan Village 青山村”), and Tjaljamakau (“Qingyeh Village 青葉村”). Except for the last one, Tjaljamakau,<sup>110</sup> the villages all belong to the Paiwan.

Sandimen Church is located on Zhongshan Road (中山路)<sup>111</sup> in Tjimur. This village is situated on a hill north of the Ailiao River, one of the most important rivers for the Paiwan.<sup>112</sup> It is the administrative and economic center

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<sup>108</sup> It is a rural administrative division of the county and bigger than a village. A township always combines several country villages together.

<sup>109</sup> The administrative areas of the Paiwan include eight native places in Pingdong, and five native places in Taidong. There are Sandimen (三地門), Majia (瑪家), Taiwu (泰武), Laiyi (來義), Chunri (春日), Shizi (獅子), Mudan (牡丹), and Manzhou (滿州) in Pingdong. In addition, Taidong has Jinfeng (金峰), Daren (達仁), Dawu (大武), Taimali (太麻里), plus Xinyuanli (新園里), the basic unit of city administration in Taidong City. See Tan, *Paiwanzu*, p. 5. See also Tong, *Taiwan yuanzhumin shi*, p. 12.

<sup>110</sup> Tjaljamakau belongs to the Rukai Tribe, which is another aboriginal group in Taiwan.

<sup>111</sup> This is the main road in Tjimur.

<sup>112</sup> Tan, *Paiwanzu*, pp. 5-9.

for Sandimen Township and belongs to the Raval, one of the groups of the Western Paiwan.<sup>113</sup>

Sandimen Church is a member congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. The Presbyterian Church belongs to a group of denominations sometimes referred to collectively as the Reformed churches, whose origins lie in the Christian Reformation of the sixteenth century. Both the religious ideas and the church systems of the Reformed tradition are based on Calvinism. This teaching was advanced by several theologians, but it bears the name of the French reformer John Calvin (1509-1564), who was a humanist, theologian, and church politician. Although Calvin did not really found any churches, he was the father of the theological system known as Calvinism. Later on, his theology gave rise to one of the major forms of Protestant Christianity.<sup>114</sup>

Protestant churches began to form after the experience of Martin Luther (1483-1546), who was a German reformer in the sixteenth century. Pope Leo X excommunicated Luther from the Roman Catholic Church in 1521, because he rejected the teaching that freedom from God's punishment of sin could be purchased with money. Following Paul's teachings Luther argued that reconciliation ("salvation") comes not from good works but as a free gift from God. It is grace.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Most scholars use a geographical classification to identify the various Paiwan tribal groups. The Paiwan are separated by their sacred mountain, Ka-vulungan. The western side of Ka-vulungan is inhabited by the Raval and the Vutsul. Both belong to the Western Paiwan. The eastern side of Ka-vulungan is inhabited by the Paqaloqalo. This group belongs to the Eastern Paiwan. See Tain, Taiwan de yuanzhumin paiwanzu, pp. 28-37.

<sup>114</sup> Lin Hong Xin 林鴻信, Jixu gaige zhong de jiaohui: renshi zhanglao jiaohui 繼續改革中的教會：認識長老教會 (The Still Reforming Church: Getting to Know the Presbyterian Church; Taipei: Liji Publisher, 1997), pp. 7, 38. See also Xu Hua Ying 許華應, ed., Jidujiao wenhua 基督教文化 (Christian Culture; Changchun: Changchun Publisher, 1992), p. 174.

<sup>115</sup> Xu, Jidujiao wen hua, pp. 250-252. See also Cai Wei Min 蔡維民, Yongheng yu xinling de duihua: yidujiao gailun 永恆與心靈的對話——基督教概論 (A Dialogue between Eternity and the Soul: An Introduction to Christianity; Taipei: Yang-Chih Book Co., 2001), pp. 52-54. See also Lin, Jixu gaige.

Calvin belonged to the second phase of the Protestant Reformation. Originally French, he was forced to live in Geneva where he could practice his theology freely. According to many historical documents, Calvin's ideas were closer to those of the Swiss reformer Huldrych Zwingli (1484-1531)<sup>116</sup> than to those of Luther. The big difference between Zwingli and Luther involved the interpretation of the Eucharist.

The Eucharist is one of the Christian sacraments, also called Holy Communion, Sacrament of the Table, the Blessed Sacrament, the Lord's Supper, and other names. It commemorates the final meal that Jesus Christ shared with his disciples on the night he was betrayed. The consecration of bread and wine within the rite recalls the moment when Jesus used bread to represent his own body and a cup of wine to stand for his own the blood.<sup>117</sup>

Matthew, who was one of Jesus' disciples, recorded this event. He wrote that: Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."<sup>118</sup> What does Jesus mean by these actions and words? Is the bread really his physical body? Is the wine really Jesus' blood? Does the ritual transform ordinary bread and wine into the actual body and blood of Jesus?

In October 1529, there were many German and Swiss theologians, including Luther and Zwingli, at the Marburg Colloquy to establish doctrinal unity among the emerging Protestant states. Luther and Zwingli agreed on

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zhong de jiaohui: renshi zhanglao jiaohui, pp. 52-53.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., Jidujiao wen hua, p. 252.

<sup>117</sup> Matthew 26:26-29 and 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. See also Xu, Jidujiao wen hua, p. 113.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

many Christian ideas but not on the nature of the Eucharist.<sup>119</sup> Luther insisted on the “real presence” of Christ in the bread and the wine. This transformation happens by means of the ritual, which is therefore called a sacrament: it is a “sacramental union.” Luther believed that the ritual transforms ordinary bread and wine into the actual body and blood of Jesus. This is called “transubstantiation.”<sup>120</sup>

Luther appears to accept the early Christian idea that after the Resurrection Christ’s body and blood were “glorified” or “spiritualized”—and so immortal. And it is this “glorified body and blood” that is received in the Eucharist. Early Christians interpreted the Eucharist as assimilating Christ into their own bodies and blood, as a gradual process of becoming glorified themselves, perfected, made whole. It is not unlike the idea of receiving the Holy Spirit; however the importance for Luther and others is that the human body (indeed, all of creation) although flawed because of the Fall, through sacramental union with Christ can be restored to its original state.

In contrast to Luther, Zwingli rejected the idea of “transubstantiation.” In his view, there is no real physical presence of Christ in the bread and in the wine. He believed Christ to be only spiritually or symbolically present. Although Calvin did not attend this meeting, he, too, did not accept the idea of “transubstantiation,” along with Zwingli and others.<sup>121</sup> He says that Christ is

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<sup>119</sup> Cai, Yongheng yu xinling de duihua: yidujiao gailun, p. 53. See also Chen Qin Zhuang 陳欽庄, Yidujiao jianshi 基督教簡史 (A Simple History of Christianity; Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 2004), p. 240.

<sup>120</sup> Paul Althaus, Mading lude shenxue 馬丁路德神學 (The Theology of Martin Luther; Taipei: Taoshang Publisher, 1999), pp. 520-521. See also Cai, Yongheng yu xinling de duihua: yidujiao gailun, p. 53; and also Chen, Yidujiao jianshi, p. 240.

<sup>121</sup> John H. Bratt, Jiaerwen de shengping yu jiaoxun 加爾文的生平與教訓 (The Life and Teachings of John Calvin; Taipei: Reformation Translation Fellowship, 1990), p. 49. See also Althaus, Mading lude shenxue, pp. 521-522; and Cai, Yongheng yu xinling de duihua: yidujiao gailun, p. 53; and also Chen, Yidujiao jianshi, p. 240.



symbolically present in the Eucharist, but “there must be no fiction of transubstantiating the bread into Christ, and afterward worshiping it as Christ.”<sup>122</sup> Because of this difference of opinion about the Eucharist, the Marburg Colloquy (1529) failed to unify the two Protestant leaders.<sup>123</sup>

After Zwingli died, John Calvin took his place as leader. His teachings and writings, for example, Institutes of the Christian Religion (1559), became the foundation of doctrine for the Reformed churches, the Presbyterian Church especially. Calvin argues that the most reliable way to obtain knowledge about God is to study the Bible.<sup>124</sup> In orthodox tradition, the Holy Spirit is the essential guide of the Christian Church. The Holy Spirit is God’s active presence in history. The Bible is inspired by the Holy Spirit, but not only the Bible: the lives of the saints and the historical reality of the Church itself are also inspired.

Calvin states that the Spirit and the Bible are both essential guides for knowing God. But he admits to “seeing how dangerous it would be to boast of the Spirit without the word.”<sup>125</sup> And “the Spirit goes before the church, to enlighten her in understanding the word, while the word itself is like the Lydian stone, by which she tests all doctrines.”<sup>126</sup> For Calvin the symbol of the Holy Spirit is light, which enables people to understand the word—scripture. Scripture is symbolized as the stone, unchanging, like a foundation.

Here Calvin is much closer to Judaism than to Paul, for example. Paul is continually saying that scripture, which for him means the Hebrew Bible, is no

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<sup>122</sup> John Calvin, “Reply to Sadoletto,” in The Protestant Reformation, ed., Hans J. Hillerbrand (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p. 165.

<sup>123</sup> Cai, Yongheng yu xinling de duihua: yidujiao gailun, p. 53. See also Xu, Jidujiao wen hua, pp. 128-129; and also Chen, Yidujiao jianshi, p. 240.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>125</sup> Calvin, “Reply to Sadoletto,” p. 157.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

longer the central revelation.<sup>127</sup> For Christians, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus as the Christ becomes the central revelation of God. But for someone like Calvin, because the New Testament recounts that life, death, and resurrection, it becomes, for him, what the Hebrew Bible was and is for the Jews: the touchstone.

This is because as Calvin rightly notes, the Holy Spirit is often hard to discern, and many disagree on the fruits of the Spirit. “Well, then, does [John] Chrysostom admonish us to reject all who, under the pretense of the Spirit, lead us away from the simple doctrine of the gospel.”<sup>128</sup> Distrusting, not the Spirit, but those who claim to be inspired by the Spirit, he prefers the Rock of the Word for knowledge of the Gospel and God.

As a result, Calvin sees the fifteen hundred years of Christian Church history as a corruption of the original Gospel. He accuses the Roman Catholic Church of heresy, using the classic image of the wolf who is dressed in sheep’s clothing: “we maintain that the Roman pontiff, with his whole herd of pseudo-bishops, who have seized upon the pastor’s office, are ravening wolves, whose only study has hitherto been to scatter and trample upon the kingdom of Christ, filling it with ruin and devastation.”<sup>129</sup>

So when others ask for reform but want to keep the unity of the Western (Roman) Christian Church, he says no. He is against reform—he wants to start over, or says he wants schism!<sup>130</sup> He only trusts what he can read in the New Testament. This very much narrows the focus of Calvin, the Reformed churches, and the Presbyterians to an exclusive reliance on the New

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<sup>127</sup> The Christian New Testament is later than Paul.

<sup>128</sup> Calvin, “Reply to Sadoletto,” pp. 157-158.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 167-168.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

Testament.

John Knox (1513-1572) was a Scotsman who studied with Calvin in Geneva. After he had spent time working with Calvin to translate the New Testament, he returned to his hometown in Scotland and in 1559 established the Church of Scotland, which became the state religion in 1567.<sup>131</sup> It was in Scotland that the reformers accepted a new name, Presbyterians.<sup>132</sup>

Now, let us think about the meaning of the word Presbyterian. This word derives from ancient Greek presbyteros, which means “elder.” Presbyterians emphasize the role of the elders in the church, similar to that of the pastor but with different responsibilities. The pastor is the full-time preacher; he is called the “teaching elder.” His main job is the sermon and administration. Other elders may be part-time preachers. They support the pastor as administrators and educate the members of the church.<sup>133</sup>

Reformed churches place importance on the presbytery, an organization that includes more than fifteen local churches.<sup>134</sup> Through the democratic representative system of the presbytery local churches can combine and develop their professional specialties and do some regional missions. In other words, they focus on teamwork and organization.<sup>135</sup>

There are four central beliefs found in the Presbyterian Church. First of all, the sovereignty of God is the most important. The members of the Presbyterian Church proclaim that God is the Almighty Lord, the ruler of history

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<sup>131</sup> Lin, Jixu gaige zhong de jiaohui, p. 54. See also, Understanding the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan Editors [UPCTE] 認識台灣基督長老教會編輯小組, ed., Renshi taiwan jidu zhanglao jiaohui 認識台灣基督長老教會 (Understanding the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan; Tainan: Renguang Publisher, 1986), p. 50; and Xu, Jidujiao wen hua, pp. 204, 258.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., p. 8. See also Bratt, Jiaerwen de shengping yu jiaoxun, pp. 29-31.

<sup>134</sup> UPCTE, Renshi taiwan jidu zhanglao jiaohui, p. 50.

<sup>135</sup> Lin, Jixu gaige zhong de jiaohui, p. 8.

and the cosmos. God is the creator and the deliverer for all human beings. Based on this belief, Calvin developed his theory of predestination. This refers to the belief that God alone decides who will be saved. He argued that salvation depends completely on God's grace. The entire process of salvation rests solely on God's sovereign authority. From the human point of view, if people have faith in God, that itself is evidence of God's grace. Still, it is not their achievement.<sup>136</sup>

Second, the highest religious authority is the Bible. As members of the Presbyterian Church, they believe that Christian Tradition as inspired by the Holy Spirit is less important. Instead of an ongoing guidance of God's Spirit, there is the special authority of the written word.<sup>137</sup> The canon of scripture as the New Testament was determined in the fourth century. The Presbyterian view doesn't emphasize the fact that the decision to collect together certain Christian writings and form a New Testament canon was an historical decision believed to be inspired by the Holy Spirit. For many Christians, scripture is secondary because it comes later as part of inspired Christian Tradition.

Third, "the priesthood of the believers" refers to the idea that all Christians belong to the priesthood.<sup>138</sup> Presbyterians together with many other Protestant Christians do not have priests but rather pastors or ministers. Priest suggests, for them, a mediator between the human being and God. Many Protestants insist that Christ alone is that mediator; no human priests are needed because according to the Bible there "is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> UPCTE, Renshi taiwan jidu zhanglao jiaohui, pp. 36-37.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> 1 Timothy 2:5.

The last belief involves separation of church and state. The term refers to the secularity of government and freedom of religion. Calvin recognized the dangers of state religion and believed that secular government and religious institutions should be separated. Each has its own role. Every government has its own ruler, but the members of the Presbyterian Church believe that Jesus is the head of all churches.<sup>140</sup>

Although the Presbyterian Church has developed its own rules, it is still based on Calvinism. After Knox died in 1572, the Presbyterian Church continued to be supported by the government of Scotland. The Scottish people have sent out many missionaries to other countries. For example, the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT) was established in the nineteenth century by James Laidlaw Maxwell (1836-1921), formerly of the Presbyterian Church in England. Maxwell had studied medicine in Edinburgh.<sup>141</sup> With him was the Canadian George Leslie Mackay, whose parents were immigrants from Scotland. In addition, many other Presbyterian missionaries who came to Taiwan had some kind of training background in Scotland.<sup>142</sup>

From the middle of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century, there was a golden age for Christian missionaries in China. After the Second Opium War,<sup>143</sup> the imperial Qing government, which had controlled Taiwan since 1683, was forced by the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and the United States to sign the Treaty of Tianjin (天津). The major points of the treaty guaranteed the free circulation of Christian missionaries throughout China. It also opened four ports in Taiwan to Western trade: Tainan,

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<sup>140</sup> UPCTE, Renshi taiwan jidu zhanglao jiaohui, p. 37.

<sup>141</sup> Edinburgh is the capital city of Scotland.

<sup>142</sup> Lin, Jixu gaige zhong de jiaohui, p. 8.

<sup>143</sup> The Second Opium War was a war of the British Empire and the Second French Empire against the Qing Dynasty of China from 1856-1860.

Danshui (淡水), Gaoxiong (高雄), and Jilong (基隆).<sup>144</sup>

Thus, the Treaty of Tientsin resulted in the arrival of many Christian missionaries in Taiwan. Maxwell was the leading missionary of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. After he graduated from the University of Edinburgh, Maxwell went to Berlin and Paris to continue his studies of medicine. After he finished his education, Maxwell returned to England and worked at the Birmingham Hospital. He also was a high ranking elder in the church. At the end of 1863, he decided to become a missionary, and the Presbyterian Church supported his decision. So, Maxwell left his hometown in England and went to China.<sup>145</sup>

In 1864, Maxwell arrived in Xiamen, Fujian, to learn the Taiwanese language. In October of the same year, Carstairs Douglas (1830-1877), a pastor, brought Maxwell and his three assistants, whose names were Chen Zi Lu (陳子路), Wu Wen Shui (吳文水), and Huang Jia Zhi (黃嘉智), to Taiwan for three weeks. This was Maxwell's first visit to Taiwan. The main purpose of the short visit was to investigate the situation of southern Taiwan. In May of 1865, Maxwell, his three assistants, Douglas, and Alexander Wylie (also a pastor) returned to Taiwan. On 16 June they opened a medical mission at Anping. Later, this day would be commemorated as the birthday of the Presbyterian

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<sup>144</sup> UPCTE, Renshi taiwan jidu zhanglao jiaohui, p. 8. See Historical Committee of Taiwan's Presbyterian Church [HCTPC] 台灣基督長老教會總會歷史委員會, ed. Taiwan jidu zhanglao jiaohui bainianshi 台灣基督長老教會百年史 (One Hundred Years of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan; Tainan: Taiwan's Presbyterian Church, 1995), p. 6; and also Olivier Lardinois, ed., Huoli jiaohui: tianzhujiao zai taiwan yuanzhumin shijie de guoqu xianzai weilai 活力教會：天主教在臺灣原住民世界的過去現在未來 (Church Alive: The Roman Catholic Church among the Aboriginal Peoples of Taiwan--Past, Present, and Future; Taipei: Kuangchi Cultural Group, 2005), pp. 23, 65.

<sup>145</sup> UPCTE, Renshi taiwan jidu zhanglao jiaohui, pp. 8-9. See also HCTPC, Taiwan jidu zhanglao jiaohui bainianshi, p. 7; and also Wu Xue Ming 吳學明, ed., Jindai zhanglao jiaohui laitai de xifang chuanjiaoshi 近代長老教會來台的西方傳教士 (Western Missionaries of the Presbyterian Church to Taiwan in Modern Times; Taipei: Richuang, 2007), p. 39.

Church in Taiwan.<sup>146</sup>

At first, Maxwell rented a house from William Maxwell for his medical missionary work. Although the doctor spent a lot of time treating many Taiwanese people every day, the mission had problems. On 9 July 1865 some local people got together and attacked the house. After this event, Maxwell and his partners followed the advice of the local government official and moved to Takao (now Gaoxiong), which then became the central mission for southern Taiwan until 1876. There are possibly two factors that contributed to this situation. First, because missionaries could come to Taiwan as a result of the Treaty of Tianjin, Taiwan's door was open but not welcoming. The people felt some political persecution. Second, Western medicine was foreign and new; it was based on principles quite different from those of Chinese medicine. So people feared and rejected it.<sup>147</sup>

Even though confronted with some problems, Maxwell continued his medical work and never gave up. When he moved to Takao, and later Chiho (旗後) in Gaoxiong, he found new opportunities to understand and cooperate with Taiwan's aboriginal peoples.<sup>148</sup> At the end of 1865, together with W. A. Pickering, who was a staff member in Anping's customhouse, Maxwell explored the villages of several aboriginal tribes near Tainan. When they visited the Siraya tribe in Laonong Village, these people treated them very hospitably. In the meantime, the Paiwan and the Bunun had come to this place,

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid., pp. 4, 8-9. See also HCTPC, Taiwan jidu zhanglao jiaohui bainianshi, pp. 7-8; Huang Wu Dong 黃武東 and Xu Qian Xin 徐謙信 Taiwan jidu zhanglao jiaohui lishi nianpu 台灣基督長老教會歷史年譜 (An Historical Chronicle of Taiwan's Presbyterian Church; Tainan: Historical Committee of Taiwan's Presbyterian Church, 1995), pp. 3-4.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p. 9. See also Wu, Jindai zhanglao jiaohui laitai de xifang chuanjiaoshi, pp. 40-41. See further Huang and Xu, Taiwan jidu zhanglao jiaohui lishi nianpu, pp. 4-5; and also HCTPC, Taiwan jidu zhanglao jiaohui bainianshi, pp. 8-10.

<sup>148</sup> Wu, Jindai zhanglao jiaohui laitai de xifang chuanjiaoshi, pp. 41-42. See also Huang and Xu, Taiwan jidu zhanglao jiaohui lishi nianpu, p. 5.

and the Siraya people introduced them to the foreigners. After this trip, although Maxwell did not yet expand his mission work to include the aboriginal peoples, still these experiences helped him to know them more and deepened his interest in evangelizing the indigenous peoples of Taiwan.<sup>149</sup>

The First Sino-Japanese War (1 August 1894-17 April 1895) was a war fought between the Qing Dynasty in China and Japan. After 206 days of fighting, China surrendered. In the same year, China signed the Treaty of Maguan with Japan. There were eleven articles in this treaty. Among other reparations, China ceded to Japan the Penghu islands, Taiwan, and Liaodong Peninsula in northeastern China.<sup>150</sup>

Most of the Taiwanese people tried to resist the Japanese occupation, but they failed. From 1895 to 1931, the Japanese government maintained a good relationship with Christian churches in order to help keep Taiwan stable. But after 1931, the attitude of the Japanese changed from tolerant to hostile. From 1937 to 1945, in particular, because of the Second World War and the conflict between Japan and Christian nations in the West, the hostility deepened. All foreign missionaries had to leave Taiwan. In addition, the Japanese government forbade the members of the Christian churches to have any contact with the tribal peoples living in Taiwan's mountains. At this time, the missions no longer made progress among the indigenous peoples of the island. Hence a time of stagnation began that would last until the defeat of the Japanese in 1945.<sup>151</sup>

In 1945, after fifty years as a Japanese colony, Taiwan was returned to

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., pp. 42-43. See also Huang and Xu, Taiwan jidu zhanglao jiaohui lishi nianpu, p. 5.

<sup>150</sup> UPCTE, Renshi taiwan jidu zhanglao jiaohui, pp. 13-14. See also Tong, Taiwan yuanzhumin shi, p. 163.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., pp. 13-15. See also Lardinois, Huoli jiaohui, pp. 27-29, 73.



China. At once, the government of the Republic of China headed by Chiang Kai Shek, himself a Protestant, reopened central and eastern Taiwan to Christian missionaries. The era from the end of World War II until 1965 thus saw a massive conversion of Taiwan's indigenous peoples to Christianity. This was largely the fruit of missionary work carried out by the Presbyterian and Roman Catholic Christian churches.<sup>152</sup>

The Presbyterian Church was the first Protestant denomination to send missionaries among the Paiwan. This took place in 1945.<sup>153</sup> Gui Shun Yi (歸順義) was the chief of the Sandimen tribe and a key person in the introduction of Christianity to the Paiwan. Many historical documents record this event: One winter day at the end of 1945, an elder in the Taiwanese Presbyterian Church, Wu Ke Mian (吳可免), accompanied Gui to visit Xu You Cai (許有才), who was the Han Chinese serving as pastor of Pingdong Church at the time. Chief Gui asked Xu: "Which God should we worship from now on?" Because of this question, on 1 January 1946 Xu You Cai together with more than forty young men from the Pingdong Church took as a gift several bags of much-needed salt to the Sandimen tribe. This visit proved to be the cornerstone in the establishment of the Presbyterian Church among the Western Paiwan.<sup>154</sup>

Once Xu You Cai saw their needs, he decided to devote himself to converting the Paiwan. He quit his job as pastor of the Pingdong Church and went to Chunri (春日) to be the principal of Shiwen (士文) Elementary School in March 1946. He imparted knowledge and educated people in the mornings and evangelized the villagers in the evenings. But converting the Paiwan

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<sup>152</sup> Lardinois, Huoli jiaohui, pp. 29, 75.

<sup>153</sup> HCTPC, Taiwan jidu zhanglao jiaohui bainianshi, p. 427. See also Tong, Taiwan yuanzhumin shi, p. 161.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 427-428. See also Tong, Taiwan yuanzhumin shi, p. 165.

proved to be a difficult task, with the traditional religion as the main obstacle to his missionary work.<sup>155</sup> Although Xu You Cai did not achieve his goal at that time, he was the most important person to get evangelization moving among the Paiwan. Later, he would recommend that the female missionary Huang Su E (黃素娥) succeed him in Sandimen.<sup>156</sup>

Similar to Xu You Cai, Huang Su E took a job teaching at Sandimen Elementary School. This was in October 1946 via Chen Chao Jing (陳朝景), who was an elder in the Presbyterian Church. For almost one year, she spent her mornings teaching and her evenings evangelizing the teenagers who knew Japanese. These teenagers, however, just liked to watch movies and sing songs; they were not particularly interested in Christianity. The next year, Huang Su E was invited to help out at a kindergarten that was set up by the Pingdong Church, so she left Sandimen. Still, she did not give up her missionary work there. Every weekend, she would go to Sandimen to continue her services. This continued for ten months.<sup>157</sup>

In 1948, Huang Su E again received financial support from the Pingdong Church, so she quit her job at the kindergarten and returned to Sandimen to be a full-time missionary. This time, she focused on women and the elderly. Although she had difficulty understanding the Paiwan language at first, Pukiringan began to help her to learn the language. This man was one of the first in Sandimen to convert to Christianity. As soon as Huang Su E and Pukiringan worked together, the Presbyterian Church began to have success among the Paiwan.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid., pp. 427-430. See also Tong, Taiwan yuanzhumin shi, pp. 165-167.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

There were many obstacles to the conversion of the natives of Taiwan: for example, the missionaries had to learn the way of life and the customs of the aborigines, their languages, and so on. Still, the missionaries were not discouraged.<sup>159</sup> Eventually they received a positive response from most of the Paiwan people. Completed in April of 1948, Sandimen Church<sup>160</sup> became the first Presbyterian Church among the Paiwan in Pingdong.<sup>161</sup> This was an important moment for the Presbyterian Church as it developed its missionary field among the Paiwan.

In 1993, the congregation decided to renovate Sandimen Church. The designer was a Paiwan artist, Sakuliu Pavavalung. At first, Sakuliu wanted to combine traditional Paiwan art forms and Christian symbolism in the church's design. (See Figure 1.<sup>162</sup>) But, when he discussed this with the members of the Church Building Committee, they objected to incorporating the image of the hundred-paced viper, so sacred to Paiwan people.<sup>163</sup>

Sakuliu argued that the hundred-paced viper expresses Paiwan's traditional culture on a very deep level. This symbol decorates their clothes, houses, and everything else. In his sketch of the church's floor, he included a picture of Jesus holding two snakes, one in each hand. Sakuliu suggested that this image symbolizes the authority of Jesus. Moreover, Sakuliu argued that even though God cursed the serpent so that it need crawl on its belly<sup>164</sup> still it was allowed to enter Noah's ark at the time of the flood. God did not abandon

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> This church is located in the northern part of Pingdong County. It belongs to the Raval, one of the groups of the Western Paiwan. See Tain, Taiwan de yuanzhumin paiwanzu, pp. 28-37.

<sup>161</sup> HCTPC, Taiwan jidu zhanglao jiaohui bainianshi, pp. 427-430. See also Tong, Taiwan yuanzhumin shi, p. 167.

<sup>162</sup> Zeng, "Jidu fuyin yu yuanzhumin wenhua de huiyu," p. 75.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., pp. 67-68.

<sup>164</sup> Genesis 3:14.

the serpents.<sup>165</sup> Arguing thus, Sakuliu held on to his own views about the hundred-paced viper. He felt Christians should accept it as part of Paiwan culture, just as God accepted all sinners because of Jesus the Christ.<sup>166</sup>

But the members of the Church Building Committee rejected his interpretation. In their view, the snake is not just a cursed animal, it actually represents Satan. For this reason, they refused to allow the image of a snake in their church. They worried that these designs of the snakes might confuse some people.<sup>167</sup> Although Sakuliu maintained his own personal opinion about the snake symbol, he accepted the committee's final decision and designed the church accordingly, that is, without any snake images.<sup>168</sup> (See Figure 2.<sup>169</sup>) Because of this event, we need to ask two important questions: (1) Why did the members of the Church Building Committee reject the image of a snake? And (2) why did they interpret the snake as representing the Devil?

The answer to the first question is because they interpreted the snake as representing the Devil. And most of them got this idea from the Revelation of John, who wrote that "there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back, he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. So the great dragon was hurled down—that serpent of Old that led the whole world astray, whose name is Satan, or the Devil. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him."<sup>170</sup> And in another place John wrote, "I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized

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<sup>165</sup> Genesis 6:9-21.

<sup>166</sup> Zeng, "Jidu fuyin yu yuanzhumin wenhua de huiyu," p. 68.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., pp. 68-69.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>170</sup> Revelation 12:7-9.

the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.”<sup>171</sup>

In the story of the Fall the serpent encouraged the human beings to eat the fruit that God has prohibited,<sup>172</sup> but the text does not say that the snake is equal to Satan. In fact, the idea of the Devil is not well developed in the Jewish Bible. So, what happened between the period of the Old Testament and the New Testament to cause Christians to have this view: that the snake in Genesis (“that serpent of old”) was, in fact, the Devil?

John’s vision belongs to the apocalyptic tradition that was popular during first century Judaism. In apocalypticism, creation incorporates a conflict between two opposing forces, which at the end of time will wage battle. The forces of evil will be defeated. For Christians, God is the absolute creator but the Devil is seen as at work in the Fall (the snake). The Jews acquired this apocalyptic theme during the Babylonian Exile. This was the period in Jewish history from the deportation and exile of Jews of the ancient Kingdom of Judah to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar<sup>173</sup> until the fall in 538 BCE of Babylon to the Persian ruler, Cyrus the Great, who gave Jews permission to return to Judah. During this time, the apocalyptic ideas of Zoroastrianism—the religion of Persia—influenced Jews. Living then under Persian rule, the Jews continued to have contact with this view.

The teachings of apocalypticism are based on revelations about the end of the world. Apocalypse means “revelation.” The Christians use the word to express visions about the final events in history, or the ultimate destiny of humanity. According to the Oxford Dictionary, an apocalypse is “concerned

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<sup>171</sup> Revelation 20:1-3.

<sup>172</sup> Genesis 3:1-24.

<sup>173</sup> Jeremiah 52.

with the four last things: death, judgment, heaven, and hell.” In the Book of Revelation (Apocalypse of John), God will win the final battle with the Devil Satan. Jesus will come to the earth again and resurrect all the dead. Through the judgment, the saints will get eternal life on earth (a new earth) with God.<sup>174</sup>

Later on, most Jews rejected apocalypticism, but it survived in Christianity. In fact, Christians who see only the Bible as the guide in knowing God are more likely to be apocalyptic in their views. Those Christians who also recognize the value of Christian Tradition, personal experience, and reason as guides to knowing God will see the vision of John in context. After all, Satan does not always appear as the Devil in the Bible;<sup>175</sup> and the snake does not always represent the Devil there.

Having introduced the historical influence of missionaries on Sandimen Presbyterian Church in Pindgong, which is the group that interprets the snake as a symbol for the Devil, my next step is to examine the historical influence of missionaries on the Tuban Romann Catholic Church in Taidong. Here we find another Paiwan Christian group that presents a totally different view of the same symbol. For them, the snake is a symbol for sacred sovereign authority: the king.

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<sup>174</sup> Cai, Yongheng yu xinling de duihua: yidujiao gailun, pp. 167-170.

<sup>175</sup> For example, in the Book of Job Satan is one of God's angels.

## V. The Historical Influence of Missionaries on the Tuban Roman Catholic Church in Taidong

Four townships and one small village belong to the Paiwan tribe in Taidong, which is the southeast county in Taiwan: Jinfeng (金峰), Daren (達仁), Dawu (大武), Taimali (太麻里) townships; and Xinyuanli (新園里), which is the basic unit of city administration in Taidong City.<sup>176</sup> The Tuban Roman Catholic Church (Tuban Church) is in Daren Township in the southern part of Taidong County.

Daren Township covers an area of 30,644.54 square kilometers, and includes six villages. Both Anshuo Village (安朔村) and Nantian Village (南田村) are near the Pacific Ocean. Senyong Village (森永村), Xihua Village (新化村), Tuban Village (土坂村), and Taiban Village (台坂村) are located on the high mountains. Most of the aborigines who live here built their houses near the river banks.

The original name of Tuban Village was Cuwabar. In 1945, after the government of the Republic of China arrived in Taiwan, it changed the name to Tuban. The ancestors of the inhabitants of Tuban Village originated in Puleti,<sup>177</sup> a village of Taiwu Township (泰武鄉) in Pingdong. They crossed over the southern end of Mount Ka-vulungan to arrive at what is now Tuban Village. Around 1940, the Japanese government required all the Paiwan people living at Gulou Village in Laiyi Township (also part of Pingdong) to move to Tuban Village in order to weaken the powers of the Paiwan tribe there. Later on, these people who migrated from Pingdong became the main residents in

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<sup>176</sup> Tan, *Paiwanzu*, p. 5. See also Tong, *Taiwan yuanzhumin shi*, p. 12.

<sup>177</sup> This is the name of the Old Village in Pingdong, also called Jiaying (佳興) in Chinese.

Taidong.<sup>178</sup> Moreover, Tuban Village belongs to the Paqaloqalo, one of the groups of the Eastern Paiwan. This group separated itself from the Western Paiwan around the beginning of the seventeenth century.<sup>179</sup>

When China was forced to open the ports of Taiwan, foreigners began to move to Taiwan. This gave rise to a multitude of changes. The Western missionaries came into contact with both the Taiwanese and the aboriginal peoples. Although the Roman Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Church both belong to the Christian religion, the two churches came into conflict during their early days in Taiwan.

From 1624 to 1662 was the period of colonial Dutch government on Taiwan. This was the first time Christian missionaries were able to enter Taiwan. The very important reason was as follows: When the Dutch came to occupy the southern part of Taiwan, they wanted to foster their soldiers' Christian faith. In addition, they attempted to persuade the local people to convert to Christianity. At the time, Protestant Christianity (the Dutch Reformed Church) was their state religion. So they invited at least thirty-six Protestant missionaries to Taiwan to help them. The Dutch installed the Dutch East India Company<sup>180</sup> in a fort at Anping Bay, which is now located at the edge of Tainan, and gave it the authority to manage all political and missionary matters in Taiwan.<sup>181</sup>

This situation was a direct threat to the economic benefits of the Spanish at the time. Spanish traders needed to pass through Taiwan in order to reach their colony in the Philippines, the coastal towns of Fujian Province in China,

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<sup>178</sup> Tain, Taiwan de yuanzhumin paiwanzu, pp. 100-105.

<sup>179</sup> Tan, Paiwanzu, pp. 6-8. See also Tain, Taiwan de yuanzhumin Paiwanzu, pp. 28-37. Tong, Taiwan yuanzhumin shi, pp. 12-18.

<sup>180</sup> It also called Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie in Dutch.

<sup>181</sup> UPCTE, Renshi taiwan jidu zhanglao jiaohui, pp. 4-5. See also Lardinois, Huoli jiaohui, pp. 18, 58.



and the port of Nagasaki in Japan. It also created an obstacle on the route followed by Roman Catholic missionaries, such as the Dominicans, the Franciscans and the Jesuits, all of whom usually went to China and Japan by way of Manila.<sup>182</sup>

In order to solve this problem, the Spanish governor general of the Philippines decided to send a fleet to occupy the northeast coast of Taiwan and to establish there a commercial port together with a fort to defend it. This fleet arrived in Taiwan on 10 May 1626. There were six Dominicans on board.<sup>183</sup> This action led to an economic competition between the Dutch and the Spanish, as well as a competition between the Protestant and the Roman Catholic missionaries in their works of evangelization.

At the beginning of seventeenth century, the Dutch focused on southern Taiwan, and the Spanish put their priority in the northeast part of the island. Because of this unwritten distribution of the area, the Protestant Church—especially the Presbyterians—came to work in the south while the Roman Catholic missionaries were evangelizing in the north.<sup>184</sup>

The missionaries of the Roman Catholic Church spent a lot of time sharing their faith first with the native peoples. The main problem for these missionaries was that they arrived at the same time as the Spanish colonial power. With this background, it was difficult to show their friendly motives to the natives. Of course, the way of life and customs of the aborigines provided another obstacle. For example, the main activities of men were hunting, fishing, and going to war, so they spent very little time at home in their villages. Thus, it

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<sup>182</sup> Lardinois, *Huoli jiaohui*, pp. 18, 58-59.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 58-59. See also Pablo Fernandez, *Tianzhujiao zai tai kai jiao: daoming huishi de bainian geng yun*, 天主教在台開教：道明會士的百年耕耘 (One Hundred Years of Dominican Apostolate in Formosa; Taipei: Guangqi Cultural Group, 1991), p. 13.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 64. See also Fernandez, *Tianzhujiao zai tai kai jiao*, p. 17.

was not easy to gather them together to share the Christian faith. Furthermore, the men had a very special rite that expressed their courage. This ceremony involved head-hunting and the veneration of the skulls of their enemies. Further, many women buried unwanted children while they were still alive, a common habit among some native tribes at the time. These different values and customs made communication more complicated for the foreigners.<sup>185</sup> Such actions were considered crimes in their own countries.

Although the Spanish missionaries faced many obstacles to the conversion of the natives, they were not discouraged. Around 1632, the Dominican priest Jacinto Esquivel compiled a dictionary and translated the catechism into the Basay<sup>186</sup> language. This was the first step taken by the Roman Catholic Church to break through the language barrier. Later on, Esquivel established dispensaries offering free medical care so as to counter the influence of the local healers. Then he installed a school in each village for the education of young boys. Thus, after few years, some natives began to permit the baptism of their children.<sup>187</sup>

Around 1640, the Roman Catholic mission in Taiwan included the two Spanish parishes of the forts plus four aboriginal parishes with churches built of solid materials. However, these native churches were very weak because the congregations were composed mainly of newly baptized children and young adolescents. On 19 August 1642, the Dutch occupied Jilong expelling all Spanish colonists and Roman Catholic missionaries. In this way, the first Roman Catholic evangelization in the northeast of Taiwan was aborted. After

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<sup>185</sup> Lardinois, Huoli jiaohui, pp. 20, 61-62.

<sup>186</sup> Basay is the biggest subgroup of the Ketagalan tribe, a native group in north-eastern of Taiwan in the seventeenth century.

<sup>187</sup> Lardinois, Huoli jiaohui, pp. 20-21, 62-63.

the Spanish missionaries left, no one was allowed to continue their work among the natives.<sup>188</sup>

After the Spanish left, the Protestant Church had the opportunity to enlarge its missionary territory in the northern Taiwan, including Jilong, Danshui, and Yilan (宜蘭). They faced a similar situation to that encountered by the Spanish in 1662. The Dutch colonial period was brought to an end by the invasion of the army of Xheng Cheng Gong (鄭成功), known in English as Koxinga, who was the governor representing the Ming Dynasty. With the arrival of the Ming, all missionaries had to leave Taiwan.<sup>189</sup> For more than two centuries after the departure of the Dutch, China closed every route and blocked the efforts of other countries to enter the territory. This policy put an end to Christian mission in Taiwan for a long time, because the missionaries could not enter Taiwan for almost two hundred and four years. When China was forced to reopen its doors in 1859, things began to change again.<sup>190</sup>

Pablo Fernandez compiled and edited some of the most interesting letters written by Dominican missionaries, working in Taiwan from 1859 to 1958, and he published them as the book One Hundred Years of Dominican Apostolate in Formosa.<sup>191</sup> The book focuses on three periods: (1) from 1859, when after the Second Opium War the Qing Dynasty was forced to re-open Taiwan, until 1895, when Taiwan became a Japanese colony; (2) from 1895 to 1945 and the departure of the Japanese; and (3) since 1949, when Taiwan

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid., pp. 22, 64. See also Fernandez, Tianzhujiao zai tai kai jiao, p. 17.

<sup>189</sup> UPCTE, Renshi taiwan jidu zhanglao jiaohui, pp. 5-7. See also Fernandez, Tianzhujiao zai tai kai jiao, p. 18.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., p. 7. See also Fernandez, Tianzhujiao zai tai kai jiao, p. 18.

<sup>191</sup> Pablo Fernandez, Tianzhujiao zai tai kai jiao: daoming huishi de bainian geng yun 天主教在台開教：道明會士的百年耕耘 (One Hundred Years of Dominican Apostolate in Formosa), trans., Huang De Kuan 黃德寬 (Taipei: Guangqi Cultural Group, 1991).

came under the control of the Republic of China.<sup>192</sup>

During the first period (1859-1895), the Dominican fathers of the Holy Rosary Province decided to send two friars to establish a mission on the island. Fernando Sainz and Angel Bofurull landed at Takao (now Gaoxiong) on 18 May 1859.<sup>193</sup> The environment of Taiwan was different from that in the sixteenth century because it was the policy of the Qing Dynasty to encourage indigenous peoples to accept the culture of the Han Chinese.<sup>194</sup> Some parts of this policy may have helped the missionaries: for example, the people were more educated than before. Still, the missionaries confronted a very difficult situation. Most of the Taiwanese people had hostile feelings towards these foreigners, because their arrival was the direct result of China's defeat in the Second Opium War.<sup>195</sup> The foreigners were thus constantly exposed to insults, violence, and even imprisonment. Bofurull suffered a nervous breakdown and had to be sent back to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Amoy,<sup>196</sup> which was the place of his first assignment in Asia.<sup>197</sup>

Although the mission was not very successful in the beginning, Sainz was not discouraged. After Bofurull left Taiwan, Sainz looked for a new place to build a mission. In 1861, he was appointed to be the superior for the new Taiwanese mission.<sup>198</sup> The next year, two more missionaries arrived in Taiwan: Andres Chinchon and Miguel Limargues.<sup>199</sup> They joined Sainz, and eventually decided to enlarge their mission to include the Pingpu of Wanjin (萬金) in

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid., pp. 33, 139, 207.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., pp. 18-19. See also Lardinois, *Huoli jiaohui*, pp. 23, 65-66.

<sup>194</sup> Lardinois, *Huoli jiaohui*, pp. 23, 66-67.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 24, 67.

<sup>196</sup> Amoy was an important transport port at the time, and it was also the headquarter of the Roman Catholic Church in Asia.

<sup>197</sup> Fernandez, *Tianzhujiao zai tai kai jiao*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>198</sup> Lardinois, *Huoli jiaohui*, pp. 24, 67-68.

<sup>199</sup> Fernandez, *Tianzhujiao zai tai kai jiao*, p. 21.

Pingdong.<sup>200</sup>

The natives who lived in Wanjin treated these Christian priests better than the Han Chinese had. Furthermore, they were interested in Christian doctrine and religious life. In 1863, more than fifty adults and many children were baptized. From the 1860s to the 1950s, the indigenous Roman Catholic mission in Wanjin was the most developed on the island. Still today, it is a very active Roman Catholic village.<sup>201</sup>

During the second period of mission (1895-1945), while the Japanese ruled Taiwan, both Roman Catholic and Protestant missions made little progress among the indigenous peoples of the island.<sup>202</sup> On the one hand, the Japanese government prohibited Western missionaries from having any contact with Taiwanese people, including natives. They instituted this policy because they wanted to reeducate the Taiwanese people along Japanese lines. This was called japanization, which means to make or become Japanese in form, idiom, style, or character. After the end of 1930, the Japanese government began to “japanize” Taiwan. For example, Japanese became the national language, Japanese names were substituted for Chinese ones, and they forbade the wearing of traditional customs or the practice of traditional rites, and so on. They wanted to make Taiwanese people subjects of the Japanese emperor. Thus, the Japanese did not allow Western missionaries to share their religions with the Taiwanese, unless these missionaries first accepted “japanization” and helped the government in this process. If they rejected this goal, the government would force them to leave Taiwan.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid. See also Lardinois, Huoli jiaohui, pp. 24, 67-68.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid. See also Lardinois, Huoli jiaohui, pp. 24-25, 68-69.

<sup>202</sup> Lardinois, Huoli jiaohui, pp. 27-28, 73.

<sup>203</sup> Tong, Taiwan yuanzhumin shi, p. 149-152.

At the same time, some Taiwanese transferred their negative emotions towards the Japanese, such as shame, anger, sadness, and so on, on to the missionaries and attacked them. They even killed some of their own people who had converted to Christianity. There were two reasons for this: First, they believed the rumor that Christians were cooperating with the Japanese to bully the Taiwanese. Thus, they thought that if someone converted to Christianity, it meant he/she no longer supported Taiwan. In other words, they were traitors. Second, in this period, Taiwanese people were affected by the Second Opium War after which the Qing Dynasty was forced to open Taiwan, so they still could not accept Western missionaries generally.<sup>204</sup> This inhospitable situation did not last forever, however. After Taiwan was returned to China in 1945, the missionary environment changed once again.<sup>205</sup>

The Paiwan tribe was not the only native group evangelized by the Roman Catholic missionaries, whose mission included other aboriginal peoples at the same time.<sup>206</sup> But in this study, the focus is on the history of the missionaries among the Paiwan.

Although originally the priests of the Roman Catholic Church had spent much time sharing their faith with the natives in Taiwan before the arrival of Presbyterian missionaries, they did not expand their mission among the indigenous peoples of the island very quickly. The reason was that from 1945 to 1949, after the Japanese left the island, the Roman Catholic Christians had only twelve priests in Taiwan, so they were too few to undertake new missionary works.<sup>207</sup> Thus, initiated in 1950, the Roman Catholic Christian

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<sup>204</sup> Fernandez, Tianzhujiao zai tai kai jiao, pp. 23-27. See also Lardinois, Huoli jiaohui, pp. 24, 67.

<sup>205</sup> Lardinois, Huoli jiaohui, pp. 27-29, 73-75.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 32-38, 78-89.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22-30.

missionary work among Taiwan's indigenous peoples of the central mountain area was much later than that carried out by the Presbyterian Church.<sup>208</sup>

It was in 1950 that the Dominicans began to convert the Paiwan of Jiaping (佳平) in Pingdong. According to Olivier Lardinois, two years previously (1948), the parish priest of Wanjin, Faustino Saez, was welcomed by Mallevellef, the female leader of the village of Jiaping. Together with her husband, Puraruya, Mallevellef participated in a ceremony to honor the Virgin Mary. Belonging to one of the oldest lineages of the Paiwan nobles, they were greatly struck by the beauty of the liturgy and showed a visible interest in the Roman Catholic tradition. Saez invited them to come regularly to Wanjin<sup>209</sup> for classes in Christian doctrine. In 1950 he sent a catechist from Wanjin, a woman name Pan, to teach Christian doctrine in Jiaping and the surrounding villages.<sup>210</sup> On 8 December 1953, the Paiwan couple and their people were baptized in the newly built church of Jiaping according to the Christian rites. Because of their position among the Paiwan tribe, this was a great help for the missionary work of the Roman Catholic Church assigned to the indigenous mission in Pingdong. From 1953 to 1962 the number of Paiwan Catholic members continued to show a great increase.<sup>211</sup>

Not only in the Pingdong area but also in Taidong, another important county for the Paiwan tribe, there was a great number of converts. Jakob Hilber arrived in Taidong in October of 1953 and was soon joined by several other priests, all former missionaries in China, who set to work at once.<sup>212</sup> Hilber was the first person to open the southern mission to the Paiwan in

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<sup>208</sup> Tong, *Taiwan yuanzhumin shi*, p. 161.

<sup>209</sup> A well-known Roman Catholic parish in Pingdong County.

<sup>210</sup> Lardinois, *Huoli jiaohui*, pp. 31-32; 79-80.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35, 84.

Taidong. After he left, this work was continued by Otto Hurni and Josef Guntern.<sup>213</sup> Then, Hurni chose the Tuban village, which was one part of Daren Township in Taidong, to continue his missionary works among the Paiwan.<sup>214</sup>

When Hurni arrived in Tuban village, he brought with him numerous gifts, such as foods and clothes, to the members of the village to church. Moreover, he taught people to sing the Latin hymns and educated them in knowledge about Christianity. Similar to Jiaping, many people who lived in Tuban village were interested in Christianity; they underwent baptism in May of 1957.<sup>215</sup>

Once the Roman Catholic membership had increased in Tuban village, Hurni planned to build a church there. When the Paiwan people discovered his plan, they donated for the church the place where a mother and baby had died and which was therefore taboo.<sup>216</sup> According to Paiwan custom, bad fortune will haunt any place where an expectant mother dies in a difficult delivery. Thus, whenever the Paiwan people experience in their family a difficult childbirth resulting in death, they must bury the mother and baby very quickly and abandon the site, including all properties belonging to it. The Paiwan people believe that any woman who was died in labor is cursed; this bad luck would bring calamity to the place and the family. After they have left the site, it becomes taboo for all the Paiwan.<sup>217</sup>

Otto Hurni did not worry about this Paiwan traditional custom. He accepted the land and called all the Roman Catholic Christians to join together and build the church. Soon, the first Roman Catholic Church of Tuban village

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid., pp. 34-35, 84-85.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid. See also Tan, Paiwanzu, pp. 21-22.



was built, and it has been called Tuban Church even until today.<sup>218</sup>

In Taiwan between 1950 and 1968, over one hundred thousand indigenous persons converted to Christianity through the Roman Catholic Church. Of these, a quarter had already been baptized in the Presbyterian Church, but they changed their affiliation. These numbers are estimates based on information gathered by the various missionary organizations and the congregations that worked in the evangelization of the indigenous people of Taiwan.<sup>219</sup>

According to Jian Hong Mo (簡鴻模), five important factors influenced aboriginal people to become Roman Catholic Christians: (1) the felt need for spiritual meditation; (2) the prevalence of local catechists teaching Roman Catholic doctrine; (3) the dedication of the missionaries; (4) the influence of elders on the family; and (5) the social and educative works of the Roman Catholic missionaries among the tribes. Furthermore, there were three additional reasons why natives wished to associate with the Roman Catholic Church: (1) the beauty of the Roman Catholic liturgy; (2) the Roman Catholic respect for local culture; and (3) the emphasis of this church on helping the poorest families.<sup>220</sup>

The biggest difference separating the Roman Catholics and the Presbyterians was evident in their opposing attitudes when faced with traditional local cultures and native religions. Protestant missionaries of the time demanded a complete break with past ritual life when natives converted

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<sup>218</sup> Lardinois, Huoli jiaohui, p. 205.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 89.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39, 67. See also Jian Hong Mo 簡鴻模, Zuling yu tianzhu—Meixi tianzhu tang chuanjiao shichu tan 祖靈與天主：眉溪天主堂傳教史初探 (Ancestral Spirits and God: Exploring the early History of the Missionaries to Meixi Roman Catholic Church) Taipei: Furen Catholic University Press, 2002.

to Christianity. For example, the Protestants forbade any association with the traditional religious leaders as well as offerings to the ancestors and participation in various religious festivals. But these traditional rites were the cultural root for most of the peoples—at that time especially. The ritual life and religion they had always known was not easy to give up.

In contrast, the Roman Catholic Church tried to integrate traditional rites into Christian faith, although they too rejected traditional religious leaders. For example, the German priest Rudolph Frisch, who came to Mount A-li (阿里山) in Jiayi (嘉義) in 1959, encouraged the local native people to retain their traditional culture and rites as symbols of their identity. He explained that these traditions were an active way by means of which one could praise God the Father as revealed in Jesus Christ. They could use their own way to worship the one true God. This open religious perspective helped Frisch to attract many new converts in a very short time.<sup>221</sup>

Rudolph Frisch was not the only priest with this attitude active in the mission. At that time, most of the Roman Catholic missionaries had more respect for the local culture than did the Presbyterians. According to Olivier Lardinois, “[The Roman Catholic missionaries] were taught to present the Christian message as complementary to native customs and practices. Thus God the Father revealed in Jesus Christ would be identified with the invisible creative force, superior to the spirits of the dead and ancestors, which was already venerated albeit in an imprecise way in the different traditional religious rites.”<sup>222</sup> The Presbyterians, in contrast, did not accept this way of thinking at all. For them, the traditional religions of the natives, whatever tribe,

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid., pp. 38, 89.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., p. 92.

consisted of nothing but superstition. In their view, these rites only prevented the aborigines from making progress in acquiring the new faith.<sup>223</sup>

From the seventeenth to the twentieth century, Christian missionaries experienced at least three different periods in respect to working among the natives in Taiwan. Although these two Christian groups did not have much success in the seventeenth century, both experienced a breakthrough in the twentieth. But the question remains: Why did these two Christian groups obeying the same God express opposing views when they encountered the traditional cultures of Taiwan's natives? In order to figure this out, we must examine the Council of Trent (1545-1563), which was the important meeting that clarified for the first time Protestant and Roman Catholic views as they existed in the sixteenth century.

The day of 31 October 1517 was an important one for European Christianity. Martin Luther posted his Ninety-five Theses in Wittenberg.<sup>224</sup> Luther questions the validity of indulgences offering remissions of temporal punishment for sins already forgiven. He argues that the sale of indulgences was a violation of the original intention of confession and penance, and that Christians were being falsely told that they could find absolution through the purchase of indulgences.<sup>225</sup> A few years later, in 1520, Pope Leo X charged Luther with forty-one errors of heresy. He asked Luther to change his religious arguments within sixty days. Luther not only rejected the Pope's request, he

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<sup>223</sup> HCTPC, Taiwan jidu zhanglao jiaohui bainianshi, pp. 395,426, 445, 451, 454.

<sup>224</sup> Martin Luther, Jiushiwe tiao: gaijiao chuqi wenxian liupian 九十五條: 改教初期文獻六篇 (The Ninety-Five Theses: Six Works from the Beginning of the Reformation; Taipei: Taosheng Publishing House, 1973), pp. 14-26.

<sup>225</sup> H. H. Holmquist, Mading lude zhuan 馬丁路德傳 (The Life of Martin Luther; Taipei: Taosheng Publishing House, 1983), pp. 38-45.

published at least three additional articles to support his theology.<sup>226</sup> This conflict marks the beginning of the growing tension between reformers and Roman Catholics.

At the time, many Christians considered that a council might be the best way to reconcile existing differences. Therefore, in 1545, the Council of Trent was held to clarify matters of Roman Catholic teaching.<sup>227</sup> The members of the council noted obviously different ideas in the areas of (1) teachings about reconciliation; (2) the relation between scripture and Christian Tradition; (3) the sacraments; (4) concerns about translations of the Bible; and (5) the authority of biblical interpretation.<sup>228</sup>

First of all, reconciliation (also called salvation or atonement) refers to the goal of Christianity as relationship with God. The Protestants emphasized the idea that justification is by faith alone, and works will follow faith. This means that it is faith in Jesus as the Christ that reconciles a person with God. This reconciled relationship is evident in the gift of the Holy Spirit (God's presence in the life of the Christian). But the Roman Catholic Church argued that faith alone was not sufficient for justification; there must be evidence demonstrated by good works.<sup>229</sup>

The second area of difference concerned the spiritual authority assigned to scripture and inspired tradition. Protestant churches will interpret Tradition differently. Some groups accept most of the same traditions as found in the Roman Catholic Church. Some reject all traditions not also found in the New

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<sup>226</sup> Xu, *Jidujiao wen hua*, p. 53. See also Cai, *Yongheng yu xinling de duihua: yidujiao gailun*, pp. 52-53. See also Walker Williston, ed., *A History of the Christian Church* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), p. 305.

<sup>227</sup> Owen Chadwick, *The Reformation* (England: Penguin Books, 1990), pp. 273-274.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 274-275.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*

Testament: Christmas, for example. Still other groups accept traditions not in direct opposition to scripture. But they all tend to emphasize the spiritual authority of the Bible. In contrast, the Roman Catholic Church emphasizes Tradition and scripture equally.<sup>230</sup>

The third area of conflict concerned the sacraments. The Roman Catholic Church affirmed that the sacraments were seven at least, but some of the Protestants accepted only baptism and Eucharist—because mentioned in the New Testament. They reject: confirmation, confession, the anointing of the sick, holy orders, and matrimony as sacraments.<sup>231</sup>

The authoritative languages of the Bible and the question of biblical interpretation were the last two points considered by the council. Protestants tended to agree that the original Hebrew and Greek texts were authoritative, while the Roman Catholics wish to continue using the Latin translation primarily. Finally, many Protestants believed that anyone could interpret the Bible, this idea derived from the rejection of a specific priesthood and asserting “the priesthood of all believers.” According to this view, Christ alone is the priest—or Mediator—between humans and God.<sup>232</sup> During the European Middle Ages, most people didn’t learn to read; primarily monks, priests, and nuns could read. Literary tradition was thus in the hands of the Church. So it became natural that ordinary people didn’t read the Bible and that they therefore listened to the priest’s interpretation. The issue here is really whether or not priesthood is needed: there is no priesthood among the early Christians. They had apostles, prophets, teachers and later bishops, deacons, presbyters (elders). So the tradition of the priesthood begins later. Most but not all

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid. See also Xu, *Jidujiao wen hua*, pp. 90-111.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

Protestants reject the tradition of the priesthood. They argue that Christ alone is the High Priest and Christians are a priesthood of believers. All can interpret the Bible.

The Council of Trent was an important meeting because it clarified the diverging view of Protestants and Roman Catholic Christians. Later, another council, Vatican II, would further define the attitude of Roman Catholics towards the relationship of religion and culture. The Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, or Vatican II, opened under Pope John XXIII on 11 October 1962 and closed under Pope Paul VI on 21 November 1965. This council resulted in four fundamental points: First of all, all members of the Roman Catholic Church need to share church responsibility together, no matter what position he or she has in the congregation. The reform asked for by Vatican II regarding the sharing of responsibility with the laity was promoted in the indigenous parishes thanks to a new institution: the parish council. For example, Cai Wen Xing who was the bishop of Taichung published a practical handbook for the preparation of these councils in the parishes of his diocese. He defined the council as “a team of members representing the variety of the parishioners, who are under the leadership of the parish priest and other pastoral workers in the parish (Sisters, catechists), inspired by a life of prayer center on the Eucharist. This team determines and leads the pastoral work of the parish in communion with the local bishop and with the whole universal Church.” For example, in the past, foreign missionaries would pass on their religious knowledge to the local people. Thus, these natives who were trained could help missionaries to improve the mission works in their homeland.<sup>233</sup>

The second point argued for more open and effective efforts on the level

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<sup>233</sup> Lardinois, Huoli jiaohui, pp. 44-45, 99.

of social justice. In other words, the council encouraged various kinds of social services, such as, social works, education, health care, and so on. For instance, the present Chinese Association of Credit Cooperatives was launched in Taiwan at the end of the 1960 by missionaries, such as Richard Devoe, Maurice Poinot, and Jakob Hilber. They took an active part in its promotion in spreading in among the indigenous areas of Taiwan. For over twenty years, credit cooperatives helped many indigenous people to better their conditions of life thanks to an education in how to save money and access to cheap credit.<sup>234</sup>

Third, the council asked for better collaboration with non-Catholic Christians and with the people of other religions in order to build a more just world, one in which the dignity of each human being is equally respected. For example, the Roman Catholics and Protestants of Taiwan began to work together to translate the Bible into Chinese.<sup>235</sup>

Last but not the least, the members participating in Vatican II placed emphasis on the acculturation of both liturgy and faith in local cultures.<sup>236</sup> In Nostra Aetate, the members of Vatican II wrote: “The Roman Catholic Church doesn’t reject anything of all that is true and holy in other religions. With sincerity she considers those ways of acting and living, those laws and doctrines that sometimes differ from what she holds and teaches but that quite often let us recognize a ray of the truth what enlightens all human beings.”<sup>237</sup>

Respecting other religions, Vatican II discouraged the imposition of Christian

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid., pp. 45, 100-101.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., pp. 48, 104-105.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., pp. 47-48, 101-104.

<sup>237</sup> Paraphrased from Nostra Aetate, that is, the Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions of Vatican II, as translated in Jian Hong Mo 簡鴻模, ed., Dang dawu yushang jidu 當達悟遇上基督 (When Dawu Encounters Christ; Taipei: Furen Catholic University Press, 2004), p. 26.

cultures from Europe, America, and elsewhere in the areas of the new Christian churches. Instead, the incorporation of indigenous symbols into Christianity was encouraged. Thus, some of the indigenous Roman Catholic Christians in Taiwan tried to integrate their traditional arts in the building of their churches.

By 1980, the original Tuban Church was in need of renovation. Thus, Hans Egli, the Swiss priest who led the congregation of Tuban Church, decided to replace the European-style decorations with traditional Paiwan imagery. This idea inspired catechist Tjinuai Kaleradan, a Paiwan woman who had many duties assisting Father Egli, to design a cross with Paiwan distinguishing features.<sup>238</sup>

Tjinuai went to Gulou Village in Pingdong and invited an old Paiwan artist to carve the crucifix. At first, Tjinuai drew a picture with Jesus standing on the anchor with two hooks. The anchor cross is a common Christian symbol. (See Figure 3.) It expresses the feelings of safety and stability that Christian faith gives the believer during the storms of life. The old Paiwan artist, however, did not understand what the anchors were, since the Paiwan are mountain dwellers and have no ships. By the time he had finished carving the crucifix, the two hooks had become a two-headed hundred-paced viper—an important and familiar symbol for the artist.<sup>239</sup> (See Figure 4.<sup>240</sup>) Because of this misunderstanding, Tjinuai spent a lot of time investigating the meaning of the two-headed hundred-paced viper in Paiwan tradition. Eventually, she learned the meaning from the members of the chief's family. They told her that the their power; their authority; and their ability to protect the people. For example,

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<sup>238</sup> Tan, *Paiwanzu*, pp. 131-132.

<sup>239</sup> Zeng, "Jidu fuyin yu yuanzhumin wenhua de huiyu," p. 70.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.



when a snake has two heads, it can defend itself from enemies approaching both in front and from behind. Tjinuai liked this interpretation very much. After she discussed it with Hans Egli, he accepted it, too.<sup>241</sup> Instead of disturbing the members of Tuban Church, this originally “erroneous” image had a strangely calming effect, even encouraging other believers to design additional Paiwan-style carvings for the church and their village.<sup>242</sup>

The Tuban Church was not the only church to undergo this kind of the symbolically integrative process. For centuries, Roman Catholic missionaries had promoted the acculturation of Christianity wherever they did their missionary work. For example, already in the seventeenth century Francesco Ingoli (1578-1649), who was secretary of Propaganda Fide, advised missionaries in China, “Don’t try and look for reasons to cause those people to change their rites, customs, and traditions, if they aren’t obviously opposed to our faith and morality. What could be more meaningless than to bring France, Spain, Italy, or any other European nation to China? Don’t bring them our homelands, but rather, bring them our faith, which doesn’t reject the rites and traditions of any country... but which, on the contrary, wants them to be preserved and protected.”<sup>243</sup>

According to Ulrich Scherer,<sup>244</sup> the faith articulated by the Roman Catholic Church is that God has one and the same goal for all human beings: people can with all their differences and uniqueness become one united family and live in peace, joy, and justice. They can express diversity within unity,

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<sup>241</sup> Telephone interview with Tjinuai Kaleradan on 5 December 2008.

<sup>242</sup> Tan, *Paiwanzu*, pp. 132-134.

<sup>243</sup> Paraphrased from Jacques Dournes, *God Loves the Pagans: A Chinese Mission on the Plateau of Vietnam* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), as translated in Jian, *Dang dawu yushang jidu*, p. 26.

<sup>244</sup> Ulrich Scherer is a priest in the Bethlehem Mission Immensee (also called Societas Missionaria de Bethlehem, SMB). He came to Taiwan in 1963. Now, he is one of the leaders of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Gaoxiang.

keeping their own cultures, traditions, and languages. The greatest goal is one family made up of all peoples, and this is called the kingdom of God.<sup>245</sup>

After reviewing the history of these two churches, I realize that although both groups belong to the Christian religion, they have been strongly influenced by the missionaries who interpreted for them the Gospel. Thus, they have come to opposing views about snakes. Instead of judging which interpretation is “correct,” it is better perhaps to understand that both are possible, given the multivalent character of symbols. Applying this theory to the symbol of the snake, I will now discuss the many different meanings and values that the snake has as a religious symbol, the central purpose of my study. In this way, I hope to enable Paiwan Christians to broaden their vision as they relate their new worldview to their traditional culture.

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<sup>245</sup> Jian, Dang dawu yushang jidu, pp. 26-27.

## VI. The Snake as a Religious Symbol

According to The Oxford Dictionary, a snake is “a long thin animal with no legs and a smooth skin. Some snakes have a poisonous bite that can kill.” There are more than three thousand species of snakes in the world.<sup>246</sup> Like all reptiles, snakes have a heart, lungs, a liver, kidneys, and other organs to help them live. But in order to have room within their long, narrow bodies, their paired organs appear one in front of the other instead of side by side, and most have only one functional lung.<sup>247</sup> They range in size from the tiny thread snake of just ten centimeters to the python, which can reach more than ten meters in length. Most of them, however, are less than 150 centimeters long.<sup>248</sup>

Most scientists believe that all snakes have a common ancestor. According to scientific classification, the snake belongs to the Serpentes suborder; Squamata order; Reptilia class; Vertebrata subphylum; Chordata phylum; and Animalia kingdom.<sup>249</sup> Squamata, or the scaled reptiles, is the largest recent order of reptiles, and it includes earthworms, lizards, and snakes.<sup>250</sup> The suborder of snakes can be divided further into two infraorders of snakes: the Scolecophidia and the Alethinophidia.<sup>251</sup>

The Scolecophidia include thread snakes and blind snakes. This infraorder of snakes is distributed mainly over the tropics and the subtropics.

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<sup>246</sup> Du Ming Zhang 杜銘章, Shelei da jingqi—55 ge jingqi zhuti and 55 zhong taiwan shelei tujian 蛇類大驚奇—55 個驚奇主題和 55 種台灣蛇類圖鑑 (Big Surprises Concerning Snakes: Fifty-five surprising themes and fifty-five kinds of snakes in Taiwan; Taipei: Yuanliu, 2004), p. 20. See also Chris Mattison, Shelei tujian 蛇類圖鑑 (An Illustrated Handbook of Snakes; Taipei: Owl Publisher, 2000), p. 8.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., pp. 56-58. See also Mattison, Shelei tujian, p. 16.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., pp. 24-25. See also Mattison, Shelei tujian, pp. 12-13.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., p. 20. See also Mattison, Shelei tujian, p. 34.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., p. 14. See also Mattison, Shelei tujian, p. 34.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., p. 20. See also Mattison, Shelei tujian, p. 34.

They live under the ground much of the time, so they have poor eyesight. Their eyes sit behind the scales of the head, and some of them are even blind.

Because they need to move under the earth, these snakes have tough bones on their heads and their rostral scales are well developed. Scolecophidia eat small invertebrates, for example, ants and termites. Their mouths are very different from that of other snakes. They cannot open their mouths very wide, because the left and right mandibles are almost grown together.<sup>252</sup> All other snakes belong to Alethinophidia, or “true snakes.”<sup>253</sup> There are more than two thousand and four hundred types of Alethinophidia around the world, and this infraorder includes at least fifteen families.

All snakes are carnivorous. While venomous snakes comprise a minority and are typically small innocuous creatures, some do possess a potent venom capable of causing painful injury or death to humans. For the most part, venomous snakes belong to these four families: Elapidae, Loxocemidae, Viperidae, and Colubridae. Venom in snakes is primarily for killing and subduing prey rather than for self-defense.<sup>254</sup>

Scolecophidia and Alethinophidia have dissimilar feeding behaviors for their different living environments. Alethinophidia can live under the ground,<sup>255</sup> in water,<sup>256</sup> in deserts,<sup>257</sup> and in trees.<sup>258</sup> Apart from those that live underground and resemble the Scolecophidia, which cannot open their mouths very wide, other types of Alethinophidia have a very flexible lower jaw and many other flexible joints in their skulls. This allows them to open their mouths

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<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid., pp. 66-69. See also Mattison, *Shelei tujian*, p. 24.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid., pp. 154-156.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid., pp. 148-151.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid., pp. 152-153.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid., pp. 157-159.

wide enough to swallow prey much larger than their heads.<sup>259</sup>

A snake's vision varies greatly, it depending on where it lives. Vision is best in arboreal snakes and weakest in burrowing snakes. Different from Scolecophidia or other snakes that live under the earth, most Alethinophidia have limpid scales above the eyes to protect them. Snakes cannot wink their eyes, because they do not have eyelids. Therefore, their eyes are always open.<sup>260</sup>

When people touch snakeskin, it feels smooth and dry. There is also a slightly cool feeling because snakes are cold-blooded. The shape and number of scales on the head, back, and belly are often characteristic and used for diverse purposes. Scales are named according to their positions on the body. Most snakes use belly scales to travel, gripping surfaces.<sup>261</sup> Alethinophidia always has bigger belly scales than Scolecophidia.<sup>262</sup> The basic function of the scales is to protect the snakes' internal organs. Moreover, strong scales can help the snake avoid being hurt by other animals.<sup>263</sup>

Snakeskin is similar to an outer clothing of a snake. It needs to be changed into a new one when the snake grows too big or when the skin suffers wear and tear. This process is called molting. The old and worn skin is replaced. This also helps get rid of parasites, such as mites and ticks, at the same time. Molting occurs periodically throughout a snake's life. Before a molt, the snake often hides or moves to a safe place. The snake's skin becomes dull and dry looking, while the eyes become milky colored. During this time, some gentle snakes become more sensitive than usual. Whenever another creature

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<sup>259</sup> Ibid., pp. 86-87.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., pp. 48-49. See also Mattison, Shelei tujian, p. 20.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., pp. 32-35. See also Mattison, Shelei tujian, pp.14-15.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid., pp. 32-35. See also Mattison, Shelei tujian, pp.14-15.

appears in front of them, they will attack because they want to protect themselves. After a few days, their eyes clear and the snake casts off the old skin. The old skin breaks near the mouth and the snake wriggles out, aided by rubbing against stony surfaces. In many cases, the healthy skin peels backward over the body from head to tail in one piece, in unhealthy snakes, the skin will more often be broken.<sup>264</sup>

Some people fear snakes because they do not understand them; others know how to use snakes in different ways. The first value of snakes that comes to mind is that they can be and are food for humans. Many people in Asia and elsewhere include snake meat in their cuisine.<sup>265</sup>

In addition, some people use snakes for entertainment. The snake charmer carries a basket that contains a snake, which he seemingly charms by playing his flute. In fact, snakes have poor hearing, so they cannot hear the sound of the flute. But some of them have good eyesight, and they respond to the movement of the flute or the performer.<sup>266</sup>

More important historically is the third value of snakes: medicine. For example, the venom in small doses has been used to cure high blood pressure and hemophilia, to relieve pain, to improve the function of the immune system, and so forth.<sup>267</sup> Many medical organizations in the world use the snake entwined around a staff as a sign for the healing arts. It is called the Rod of Asklepios, and originated in ancient Greek, where the god of healing, Asklepios, had a snake form as well as a human form.<sup>268</sup>

Moreover, people can use the snake as a source of poison. The bite of

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<sup>264</sup> Ibid., pp. 38-39. See also Mattison, *Shelei tujian*, pp.13-14.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid., pp. 177-178.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid., pp. 177-180.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid., pp. 181-183.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., p.183.

non-venomous snakes is usually harmless because their teeth are designed for grabbing and holding, but some venomous snakes are able to kill humans or other creatures with one bite. Thus, some people take the poison of the snake from its teeth to hunt or use in hunting or killing.

There are at least four different human feelings and reactions evoked in people by snakes. When one touches a snake, it feels eerie, strange, or alien. In short, it is not a comfortable feeling for most. Second, people may experience fear when they encounter snakes, because some snakes can kill the humans by their bite. Third, although snakes may kill people, medicine made from their venom can save life. Thus, people experience the miraculous power of healing and deep gratitude. Furthermore, most snakes can live under the ground, so they are associated symbolically with connection between the earth and the underworld, often a place of spirits. Every symbol affects us primarily on an emotional level. People are often in awe of snakes, because of their mysterious powers.

Snakes play an important role in various religions. For example, in Manfred Lurker's essay on "Snakes,"<sup>269</sup> he states that "their enigmatic and ambivalent nature has led human beings to contradictory assessments of them: on the one hand, they are thought of as evil and as a cause of death; on the other, they are believed to embody beneficial and even divine powers."<sup>270</sup> Snakes do not have eyelids, so they never blink their eyes. Although snakes do not have feet, they can move themselves very quickly and well. Moreover, they become bigger and stronger through molting. Maybe these and other unusual features plus the emotions they evoke caused early people to

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<sup>269</sup> Manfred Lurker, "Snakes," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed., Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 13:370-374.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 370.

associate snakes with supernatural powers.<sup>271</sup>

Based on Lurker's essay, eight symbolic functions can be attributed to snakes. (1) Snakes are often the primordial being or the primordial material linked to the origin of the world and to creation.<sup>272</sup> In other words, the snake might be the first one to create the world, or it might play an important role at the beginning of time. In Chinese mythology, Nuwa (女媧), a goddess with a human head and snake's body, creates human beings. It is said that Nuwa existed in the beginning of the world. She felt lonely, as there were no other living things, so she began to create animals and humans. After she made all the animals, she tried to make humans. At first, molding clay she made each human being one at a time, but this took too much time and too much of her strength. For that reason, she splashed a thick string in muddy water to create humans.<sup>273</sup>

The Mesopotamian Enuma elish ("When on high"), which is one of the oldest written creation myths in the world, describes a war between the gods and the emergence of a king god, Marduk. In the beginning of the world, there was a god whose name was Apsu (god of the sweet waters) and one goddess, whose name was Tiamat (goddess of the salt waters). Apsu and Tiamat created more and more gods, but Apsu soon felt regretful. He wanted to kill them, because they were too noisy. The god Ea, an offspring of Apsu, killed him for self-protection. Later on, Tiamat, who had a dragonlike form, became the big problem. Marduk, son of Ea and Damkina, killed Tiamat, and created

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<sup>271</sup> Du, Shelei da jingqi, p. 166.

<sup>272</sup> Lurker, "Snakes," p. 370.

<sup>273</sup> Huang Chen Chun 黃晨淳, ed., Zhongguo shenhua gushi 中國神話故事 (Chinese myths; Taizhong: Howdo Publishing, 1998), pp. 17-18.



the material world from her body.<sup>274</sup>

(2) Ancestors and the souls of the deceased often take on the form of a snake. For example, various Slavic peoples believe that the souls of deceased ancestors dwell in snakes, which guard the homes of their human descendants.<sup>275</sup> Another myth about Nuwa from the Han Dynasty relates that in the beginning the world was flooded with water. Nuwa and her brother Fuxi (伏羲) took refuge inside a big calabash. Fuxi, like his sister, was half human and half snake. The two had a child, the first human being.<sup>276</sup> According to this myth, Fuxi and Nuwa are the ancestors of all the Chinese people.

Lurker gives one interesting example of the ancestor taking on snake form: “a belief in the Mediterranean world is that a snake that lives in the house embodies the soul of the family’s first ancestor; among the Romans, the serpent embodied the paterfamilias. Thus the Roman poet Vergil (Aeneid 5.83ff.) tells how Aeneas visits the tomb of his father, Anchises, and how the sacrificial foods offered to Anchises are accepted by a speckled serpent.”<sup>277</sup>

(3) Snakes can be protectors of the home and bestowers of happiness. According to Lurker it is a common belief that “snakes should not be killed, because they protect the house and bring food fortune; if they are supplied with milk, they bring health and prosperity.”<sup>278</sup> Further, certain Native American peoples believed that snakes have the supernatural power to control the weather and bring their wishes to the gods and goddesses. Thus, they would raise snakes.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> David Adams Leeming, The World of Myth (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 18-24.

<sup>275</sup> Lurker, “Snakes,” pp. 370-371.

<sup>276</sup> Du, Shelei da jingqi, p. 168. See also Huang, Zhongguo shenhua gushi, pp. 21-23.

<sup>277</sup> Lurker, “Snakes,” p. 370.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 371.

<sup>279</sup> Du, Shelei da jingqi, pp. 166-167.

In The Oresteia, a trilogy of plays by the ancient Greek poet Aeschylus, there is a conflict between the god Apollo and ancient goddesses, the Furies, who protect the family and its relationships. Apollo has instigated Orestes to kill his mother, Clytemnestra, because she killed her husband, who was both a king and the father of Orestes. Apollo is defender of the patriarchy and wants to punish the one who has killed the king. Orestes obeys Apollo's words. He kills his mother. But then the Furies chase him down because he has committed the worst sin of all, killing his parent. The Furies are described as having snakelike hair. When Orestes sees the Furies, he screams in terror: "No, no! Women—look—like Gorgons, shrouded in black, their heads wreathed, swarming serpents!"<sup>280</sup>

(4) Snakes may offer wisdom and power. In terms of the teachings of Christianity, Jesus said: "Be as shrewd as snakes."<sup>281</sup> In some traditions, if a person eats the flesh of a snake, many things are revealed to him or her,<sup>282</sup> as in the example of the Germanic hero Sigurd (Siegfried) in the Volsunga-saga.<sup>283</sup> Sigurd agrees to kill Fafnir, who has turned himself into a dragon in order to be better able to guard the treasure of gold. Regin makes a good sword so that Sigurd can kill Fafnir, the dragon. To kill the dragon, he must dig a pit, wait for Fafnir to walk over it, and then stab the dragon from below. After Sigurd kills the dragon, he drinks some of Fafnir's blood and gains the ability to understand the language of birds. Sigurd then roasts Fafnir's heart and consumes part of it. This gives him the gift of "wisdom" (prophecy).

Snake worship is common in Hindu festivals. For example, close to the

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<sup>280</sup> Aeschylus, The Libation Bearers, II, 1046-1049.

<sup>281</sup> Matthew 10:16.

<sup>282</sup> Lurker, "Snakes," pp. 371-372.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 371.

rainy season in July or August, villagers may offer gifts of milk, flowers, red colors, and incense to living cobras as they ask them for help in gaining knowledge, wealth, and fame.<sup>284</sup> Because ancient Egyptians believed that snakes have supernatural power, they respected these animals as gods or goddesses. Perhaps that is the reason the pharaoh wore the uraeus, the crown that resembled a hooded cobra. This headdress represents the meaning that the ruler had incomparable power and could protect his kingdom.<sup>285</sup>

(5) Snakes may symbolize cosmic powers. For instance, “in classical antiquity the serpent Uroboros, which swallows its own tail, is able to embrace the entire universe.”<sup>286</sup> Ananta (Sanskrit, “without end”) is one of the names of the god Vishnu in Hinduism. It also refers to his incarnation as a serpent that floated on the cosmic ocean before the creation. It could express the meaning of the infinite, the powers of the whole universe.<sup>287</sup>

The association of serpent and water is an important theme. The myth of the White Snake is a famous Chinese story. A young man, Xuxian (許仙), falls in love with a beautiful woman, Bai Su Zhen (白素貞). However, he does not know that Bai is really a white snake who has taken on human form. The monk Fahai (法海) interrupts their relationship to save Xuxian’s soul. At first, Bai tries to do a lot of good things because she wants to be a goddess one day. However, she is persecuted by Fahai too much. In order to win her husband back, Bai and her soul sister Xiao Qing fight with Fahai, and they even cause a great flood to inundate the Gold Mountain Temple, which belonged to Fahai.

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<sup>284</sup> Du, *Shelei da jingqi*, pp. 168; 171.

<sup>285</sup> Karen Randolph Joines, *Serpent Symbolism in the Old Testament: A Linguistic, Archaeological, and Literary Study* (Haddonfield, N.J.: Haddonfield House, 1974), pp. 145-49.

<sup>286</sup> Lurker, “Snakes,” p. 372.

<sup>287</sup> Du, *Shelei da jingqi*, p. 168.

These two snake women had the power to control water. For this reason, Bai lost her chance to become a goddess. She killed too many people. Although this is a sad love story, we still see the special relationship between the snake and water.<sup>288</sup>

(6) Snakes may act as agents of death and the underworld because they live in cracks and holes in the ground.<sup>289</sup> This interpretation of the snake symbol is found in those cultures where the belief is that the deceased go to live somewhere under the surface to the earth. Because snakes can move easily from above the earth to below, they become messengers of the underworld and associated with its powers.

The Ruki, one of the aboriginal tribes in Taiwan, have a myth about snakes that rule in the underworld. The Ruki called them the underground people, or the snake people. The place where they live is Yikeden. In the early days, the Ruki people could go down to the underworld to exchange food with the underground people, who had tails on their bodies. The entry way was a cave on a mountain. One day, a pregnant woman was carrying her older baby on her back and went to Yikeden to trade with the snake people. Turning to go home, she began to feel very uncomfortable. Gradually, she turned into a big stone on the only path into the underworld. After that, the Ruki people could no longer communicate with the snake people.<sup>290</sup>

There is a Native American (Tewa) story about the Water Jar Boy, born to a young woman who was a virgin: “the girl tried to mix the clay on a flat stone by stepping on it. Somehow some of it entered her. This made her pregnant,

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<sup>288</sup> Jiang Tao 姜濤, ed., Zhongguo chuanqi (qi): bai she zhuan 中國傳奇 (七): 白蛇傳 (Chinese legends (7): The legend of the white snake). Taipei: Zhuangyan, 1985.

<sup>289</sup> Lurker, “Snakes,” p. 372.

<sup>290</sup> Cheng Qian Wu 陳千武, Taiwan yuanzhumin de muyu chuanshuo, 台灣原住民的母語傳說 (Primal Legends of the Native Peoples in Taiwan; Taipei: Taiyuan, 1992), pp. 56-58.

and after a time she gave birth.”<sup>291</sup> When the boy grew up, he wanted to find his father, and he did it. But after their brief meeting, his mother died. So he returned to the spring where his father lived to find his father, and he saw his mother there, too. Thus, he realized that his father was Red Water Snake, who lived under the earth in the place where a spring of water emerges. He lived there with the ancestors, and it was he who caused Water Jar Boy’s mother to die so that she could come live together with him.<sup>292</sup>

(7) The snake is often a symbol of healing and immortal life.<sup>293</sup> Lurker mentions The Epic of Gilgamesh,<sup>294</sup> a famous, Ancient Near Eastern text about a hero who seeks the plant that gives immortality to those who eat it. However, a snake steals it from him while he is asleep. As a result, the snake gains immortality, the ability to renew itself, and humankind loses out.

Asklepios was the god of medicine and healing in Greek religion. He was the son of the god Apollo and Coronis, a beautiful human woman. His mother was killed for being unfaithful to Apollo, but the unborn child, Askelepios, was rescued from her womb. Apollo asked the centaur Chiron to raise the child. Chiron treated him like a son, teaching Asklepios all the healing arts.<sup>295</sup> Snakes were sacred to Asklepios; they were often used in healing rituals.<sup>296</sup> Asklepios’s daughter Hygieia sometimes helped him. She used snakes to cure illness and to save patients. This way is called “fighting poison with poison.” Today, the Rod of Asclepios (or Hygieia) is a snake-entwined staff, and it

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<sup>291</sup> Leeming, The World of Myth, p. 222.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., pp. 223-224.

<sup>293</sup> Lurker, “Snakes,” p. 373.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid.

<sup>295</sup> He Gong Shang 何恭上, Zila luoma shenhua 希臘羅馬神話 (The Myths of Greek and Rome). Taibai: Art Publishing, 1998), pp. 240-241.

<sup>296</sup> Du, Shelei da jingqi, p. 183.

remains a symbol of medicine.<sup>297</sup>

In Judaism, the snake can be a symbol of life, as in the story of the bronze snake of Moses, which brought healing.<sup>298</sup> Moreover, there is the well-known saying of Jesus, “Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”<sup>299</sup> Here Jesus identifies the Son of Man with the snake of healing. The Son of Man, an angel sent by God to rule all nations,<sup>300</sup> is one of the images associated with Jesus himself.<sup>301</sup> From these words, we can see that for Jesus, snakes can have a positive meaning.<sup>302</sup>

(8) Snakes, as mentioned above, can be both demonic and divine. In other words, snakes may be associated either with devils or with gods.<sup>303</sup> For example, Danbala is depicted as a serpent and is closely associated with snakes. He is also connected with the rainbow. Originally an African deity, he becomes a saint in the Vodou of Haiti, an African-American form of Christianity. “He has become the oldest and the most respected of all the Vodou [saints].... Some say that Danbala has one foot—that is, one end of the rainbow—on the ocean where he draws up moisture, which he then deposits in the form of life-giving water through the other foot planted firmly in the mountains of Haiti. Danbala thus moves between the opposites of land and water, as snakes do, uniting them in his coiling, uroboric movements, generating life. Danbala also tunnels through the earth, as snakes do, connecting the land above with the

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<sup>297</sup> Ibid., see also He, *Zila luoma shenhua*, pp. 240-241.

<sup>298</sup> Numbers 21: 6-9.

<sup>299</sup> John 3:14-15.

<sup>300</sup> Daniel 7:14 ff.

<sup>301</sup> Mark 14:62.

<sup>302</sup> Lurker, “Snakes,” p. 373. See also Zeng, “Jidu fuyin yu yuanzhumin wenhua de huiyu,” pp. 64-65.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid.

waters below.”<sup>304</sup> In Vodou temples at the center stands a pole. It is the pathway on which the spirits travel to enter the human world, a symbolic center of the world (or axis mundi). Sometimes Haitians refer to the pole as “poto-Danbala,” which means the doorway of Danbala.<sup>305</sup>

A good example of a snake-serpent associated with evil is found in the earliest Indian scripture, the Rig Veda: Vritra. He blocks the path of the waters of heaven causing drought. The ancient god of protection, Indra (king and warrior) slays Vritra with his thunderbolt and frees the waters, saving the world.

In this part, I have mentioned different interpretations of the snake in various religions. Through this process we see the usefulness of Eliade’s idea that every “symbol is multivalent.” One symbol can have more than one meaning and value. Even in the Bible, there is more than one meaning for the snake. The snake can be interpreted as a symbol of life, but it can also be a symbol of death.

Reading Manfred Lurker’s essay entitled the “Snake” was for me a great step in the direction of understanding the many varied symbolic meanings of this symbol. Through Lurker’s comparative study of snake symbolism, people can get a new impression on this symbol. To deeper our understanding of the religious symbolism of the snake among the Paiwan Christianity, I will examine a good example of the crucifix in Tuban Church.

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<sup>304</sup> Karen McCarthy Brown, Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 274.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid.

The members of Tuban Church present a positive view of the snake as a religious symbol. They include the snake image in their church, a good example of how Paiwan people incorporate their traditional religion into their new Christian faith.

The facade of the Tuban Church and the altar are decorated with images of the hundred-paced viper together with many other traditional symbols. (See Figure 5.<sup>306</sup>) For instance, the crucifix depicts Jesus as a brave Paiwan warrior chief. Strong in body, he is dressed in traditional clothing, with colored ribbons tied around his arm. His headdress is made out of sunflowers, the teeth of a wild boar, and seven eagle feathers. In the Hebrew Bible, the number seven means complete. For example, the Jewish (and hence Christian) week has seven days. Thus, the seven eagle feathers on Jesus' head indicate that he is "complete," the greatest Paiwan chief.<sup>307</sup>

Also, there is a two-headed hundred-paced viper under Jesus' feet. The two-headed hundred-paced viper represents the ancestral spirit of the chief.<sup>308</sup> So the members of this church explain that this two-headed snake suggests that Jesus, like it, has the supreme position and spiritual power. Moreover, carved on the altar are the faces of twelve men, each bearing a two-headed snake as his headdress. These are images of the twelve disciples.<sup>309</sup> For the Paiwan, the disciples share in Christ's spiritual power. Overall, the design of the Tuban Roman Catholic Church exemplifies a reconciliation of Christian faith and Paiwan traditional religious culture.

A crucifix is a cross with a representation of Jesus' body. It is an

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<sup>306</sup> Zeng, "Jidu fuyin yu yuanzhumin wenhua de huiyu," p. 75.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid.



important symbol in Christian religion, especially for the Roman Catholic Church. Pierson Parker says that crucifixion is “the act of putting to death by nailing or binding the victim to a CROSS or, sometimes, to a tree.”<sup>310</sup> For many people the cross itself expresses reconciliation, or atonement. Connection is symbolically present in the very structure of the cross. The top reaches to heaven and God; the base touches the earth, the creation; the crossbar connects whatever is on the left with whatever is on the right: all opposites. All things meet at the center, where the horizontal and vertical poles touch.

Crucifixion, in general, has two meanings. On the one hand, the public shame of this punishment warns other people who may potential offenders. On the other, it is torture. The victim must carry the cross to the execution ground, and the executioners set this person astride a peg in the upright beam. The victim is “fastened to the cross by nails through the hand or wrists, and through the feet above the heels.”<sup>311</sup> This was the most terrible punishment during the Roman Empire era.

Christians interpret the crucifixion as Jesus’ sacrifice, by means of which the redemption<sup>312</sup> of mankind takes place. Redemption refers to a reconciled relationship between God and human beings. Some use the word atonement to explain it. Atonement means the state of being “at one.”<sup>313</sup>

According to C.L. Mitton, atonement is interpreted in three basic ways. (1) The death of Jesus is a sacrifice. Jesus obeyed God’s will to sacrifice himself,

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<sup>310</sup> Pierson Parker, “Crucifixion,” in The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopedia, ed., George Arthur Buttrick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 1:746.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid., p. 747.

<sup>312</sup> Some people use the word salvation.

<sup>313</sup> C.L. Mitton, “Atonement,” in The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopedia, ed., George Arthur Buttrick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 1:309.

and even died on the cross to save all human beings from Satan. Jesus acts as the priest who offers for all time a payment for sins.<sup>314</sup> He gave himself up for mankind as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God because of his love.<sup>315</sup> Thus, “Christ’s death is best understood as itself a sacrifice to God” or “what the Jews sought to achieve by [ritual] sacrifice has, in fact, been fully accomplished by Christ.”<sup>316</sup>

(2) Jesus is the Lamb of God.<sup>317</sup> Because the first human beings disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden, their relationship with God was disrupted. This separation is called original sin and was passed on to all their descendents. But because Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for all mankind, people can get the chance to reconcile with God again. When John the Baptist saw Jesus, he said: “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”<sup>318</sup> God still gives people opportunity to repair the broken relationship. Thus we can say that the crucifixion was “the most intense demonstration of Christ’s love and power, and the symbol of the Christians’ own union with his Lord.”<sup>319</sup>

(3) The death of Jesus is a ransom. This idea is based on verses recorded in scripture that say that “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”<sup>320</sup> Jesus has died as a ransom paid to the Devil to set people free from the sins committed under the first covenant. Christ is the mediator of a new covenant.<sup>321</sup> At this point, Jesus

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<sup>314</sup> Hebrews 10:12.

<sup>315</sup> Ephesians 5:2.

<sup>316</sup> Mitton, “Atonement,” p. 312.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> John 1:29.

<sup>319</sup> Parker, “Crucifixion,” p. 747.

<sup>320</sup> Mark 10:45.

<sup>321</sup> Hebrews 9:15.

delivers mankind from slavery to Satan and thus death by giving his life as a ransom.<sup>322</sup>

The empty cross is a sign of Christ's victory over death and the Devil. The crucifix, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of Jesus' sacrifice.

Among the Paiwan, the two-headed snake is the special, sacred symbol that is designated only for the chief's family. The snake connects with their creation myths very deeply. At least two main symbolic roles can be attributed to snakes in Paiwan myths: (1) Snakes are protectors of the Paiwan.<sup>323</sup> (2) Snakes are the ancestors of the Paiwan since the beginning of the world. The Paiwan people were born from the eggs of snakes, or it said they had the snake's form at first, and then became human later.<sup>324</sup> Paiwan people use oral traditions to pass on their culture, and they grow up with their creation myths. Maybe this is the major reason why Zeng Zong Sheng says, "The snake is a very important symbol in Paiwan traditional culture. For the Paiwan people, the snake represents the origin of life, the transmission of their culture, and Paiwan self identity."<sup>325</sup>

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<sup>322</sup> Parker, "Crucifixion," p. 747.

<sup>323</sup> Tian, *Paiwanzu de shenhua yu chuanshuo*, p.47.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 40, 41, 42, 48.

<sup>325</sup> Zeng, "Jidu fuyin yu yuanzhumin wenhua de huiyu," p. 57. (蛇圖騰在排灣族傳統文化中是個重要的象徵，它代表這民族的生命起源、文化傳承、與身份認同。)

## VII. Conclusion

The main goal of my thesis is to discover the multiple meanings and values of the snake as a religious symbol. This study began with my personal experience learning about the Paiwan Christian teachings concerning the snake at Gulou Church in Pingdong, Taiwan. Clifford Geertz and Mircea Eliade provide me with more clues on how to distinguish signs and symbols (including non-religious symbols and religious symbols), as they emphasize how important symbols are for human experience. Finally C.G. Jung's approach to the interpretation of symbols provides me with a way to discover all of the dimensions of the snake as a symbol.

There are two very different interpretations of the snake among Paiwan Christians: one is that of the Sandimen Presbyterian Church in Pingdong; the other is that of the Tuban Roman Catholic Church in Taidong. The different interpretations are derived from the different missionaries who presented their Christian ideas to the Paiwan people.

Influenced by Christian apocalyptic teachings as found in the Apocalypse of John, the members of Sandimen Church believe that the snake embodies the Devil, or Satan. Therefore, they reject this image in their general life and worship. But because of pronouncements promoting acculturation that emerged from Vatican II, the Tuban Church has made an effort in retain and integrate the most important Paiwan symbol into the Christian context. The inclusion of a two-headed snake on the crucifix in Tuban Church is a good example of this.

That members of Tuban Church use the image of the two-headed snake to decorate their church is a work of great originality among the Paiwan

Christians in Taiwan. The reporter Ke Hui Yi (柯惠譯) spent a lot of time investigating the meaning of the two-headed hundred-paced viper in Paiwan tradition. Eventually, she interviewed members of the chief's family. They told Ke that the two-headed snake represents three important qualities of Paiwan nobility: their power, authority, and ability to protect the people. Like a snake that has two heads, the nobles can fend off enemies approaching both in front and from behind.

The two-headed snake is the most sacred symbol among the Paiwan, and they use this image to express the values of the chief, or leader. When the Paiwan people combine the two-headed snake with the crucifix, that is the Paiwan way to show that Jesus is the Christ ("king"). Here the snake carries Paiwan values of leadership to express Christ's kingship. The king is the one who connects God and the kingdom. A king is a center of the world symbol connecting all realities. The crucifix at Tuban Church exemplifies the merging of Paiwan past, present, and future life by using traditional symbolism to express their new religious belief that Christ is the ruling center that guides them in their lives.

## Appendix

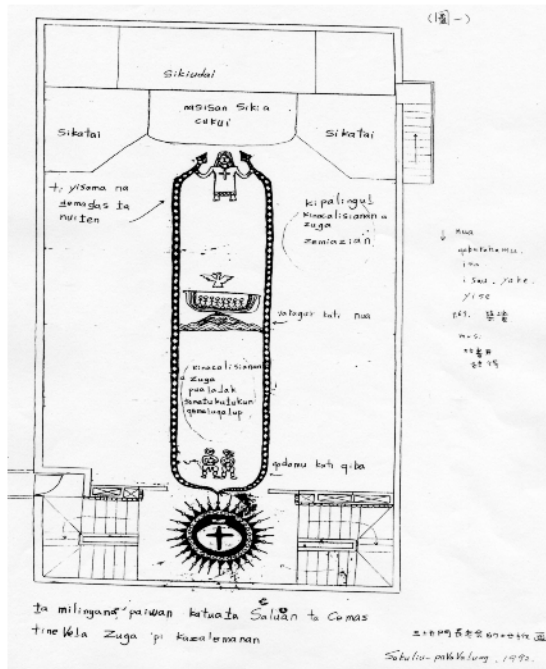


Figure 1: This is Sakuliu's first sketch of the church floor.

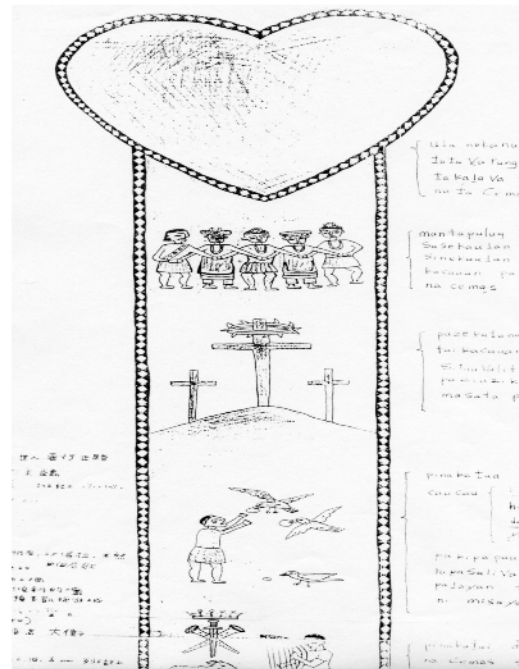


Figure 2: The second sketch of Sakuliu, which is without any snake images.



Figure 3: This image is similar to Tjinuai's original idea—the anchor cross.



Figure 4: The old Paiwan artist misunderstood Tjinuai's meaning. When he finished carving the crucifix, the two hooks had become a two-headed hundred-paced viper. Photo by Zeng.



Figure 5: The facade of the Tuban Church and the altar are decorated with images of the hundred-paced viper together with many other traditional symbols. Photo by Zeng.

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Du Ming Zhang 杜銘章. Shelei da jingqi—55 ge jingqi zhuti and 55 zhong taiwan shelei tujian 蛇類大驚奇—55 個驚奇主題和 55 種台灣蛇類圖鑑 (Big Surprises Concerning the Snakes: Fifty-five surprising themes and fifty-five kinds of snakes in Taiwan). Taipei: Yuanliu, 2004.

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