

# The Circulation of Labour and Money: Symbolic Meanings of Monetary Kinship Practices in Contemporary Truku Society, Taiwan

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper examines the symbolic meanings attributable to the circulation of labour and the earnings of migrant labourers in contemporary Truku society, one of Taiwan's indigenous groups. With the integration of Truku society into capitalist market-based economies from the 1960s onwards, for many the most effective way to extricate themselves from the problems of poverty has been to secure work as a migrant labourer. In this paper, I attempt to discuss the interrelationship between migrant labour and monetary kinship practices in order to give consideration to the external and internal symbolic meanings which are attributed to the earnings from migrant labour. I argue that it is necessary for Truku people to follow a complex set of norms in the regular cycles of kinship practices, because they are based on social and kinship morality and belief in ancestral spirits. As such, any surplus from the earnings of migrant labour goes mainly toward monetary kinship practices, rather than for economic development in local society. However, for those Truku suffering from poverty, the performance of monetary-based kinship practices can become an onerous financial burden. As a consequence, it is through monetary kinship practices that the relationship between the poor and the rich is converted into a long-term relationship between the debtor and the creditor respectively. Hence, monetary kinship practices have become a mechanism for wealthier households to strengthen their social and political influence in society. As such, the circulation of labour combines with monetary kinship practices in the process of forming social and economic hierarchy in contemporary Truku society.

**KEYWORDS:** monetary kinship practices, migrant labour, Taiwanese indigenous people, Truku people

## Introduction: Indigenous People and Circulation of Labour in Taiwan

**D**uring my fieldwork (2005 and 2006) I would often accompany indigenous friends on Sundays, to Shingchen Station in Fushih Village, Taiwan. These friends were migrant labourers who worked in urban areas on weekdays, returning on the weekend to their hometown, Fushih Village in Shioulin Township, in the eastern part of the island. For these indigenous migrant labourers, returning home is usually something to look forward to,

because they can meet their families, relatives, and friends. At the same time, they can meet other migrant labourers who work in different places, and share work related information. When appropriate, these labourers often request time off from work in order to participate in festivals, weddings, funerals, various sorts of ceremonies, or even athletic meets being held in their hometown. Participating in these sorts of events is one of the ways in which indigenous migrant labourers maintain their social and kinship relations.

For many indigenous people in the village, migrant labour is an important part of life. Prior to the advent of migrant labour in the locality, most of the indigenous people in the village conducted cash cropping. However, with the recognition in the 1970s that waged labour was potentially more remunerative than farming, increasing numbers left their households to become migrant labourers. According to the official 2009 census, the village contained 2,158 residents, including 1,153 males and 1,005 females, and 635 households (Council of Indigenous Peoples, Executive Yuan, CIP, 2009). However, during my fieldwork there were approximately 1,100 people in residence, many others having left to pursue employment or education elsewhere, or having moved out of the village after marriage. Demographically, the majority of residents still living in the village were over the age of fifty, many of them in households with their unmarried children or grandchildren. Many younger people live and work outside of the village and have left their children with the grandparents.

Most of the indigenous people in Fushih Village are Truku. According to archaeological and linguistic studies, Taiwanese indigenous people had lived on Taiwan for more than 6 thousand years before Chinese migrants arrived in the 16th century (Bellwood 1991; Blust 1999). They are an Austronesian people, and differ from the Chinese, who belong to the Sino-Tibetan linguistic family, and for centuries Taiwanese indigenous people have experienced economic competition and military conflict with a series of colonizing peoples (Simon 2005). On the basis of the official ethnic classification of 2009, there are 14 indigenous groups in Taiwan. The population of Taiwanese indigenous people is just over five hundred thousand, representing two percent of the population in Taiwan in 2009 (CIP 2009). Taiwanese indigenous people, as the ethnic minority, are not only confronted with the displacement of their culture and languages, but also with the loss of their living areas (Lin 2010b).

Truku people had been officially classified as Atayal, a Taiwanese indigenous group, in order to facilitate colonial administration. However, Japanese ethnographers have classified Truku people as one of the 'sub-groups' of the Sediq group, noting that their

language, customs, and legends were different from the Atayal (Mori 1917). As recently as January 14, 2004, the Truku people were recognized by the state as an indigenous group independent from the Atayal, another Austronesian group. The emergence of the Truku group as an official indigenous group can be regarded as an achievement of the Truku Name Rectification Movement, which began its campaign in 1996 (Siyat 2004). The population figures given for Truku people in 2009 were 25,286; 12,298 male and 12,988 female (CIP 2009). Most Truku live in the eastern mountains and on the east coast of Taiwan.<sup>1</sup>

Although each indigenous group in Taiwan has its own particular culture and social organization, each of them, being an ethnic minority, face similar economic, social, and political difficulties. In order to solve problems relating to poverty, many Taiwanese indigenous people have devised similar strategies, such as the use of tourism (Rudolph 2008) or working as migrant labourers in the urban areas of Taiwan (Fu 1994). However, although working as a waged labourer goes some way to dealing with poverty itself, most indigenous migrant labourers do not earn as much as they would wish to. In Wallerstein's theory of 'world system' (1979), the pool of cheap labour available for core area relies on peripheral areas and pre-capitalist societies. Most indigenous migrant labourers in Taiwan have continued to face cultural, economic, and social disadvantage in urban areas. Most of them are lower-skilled workers in factories, crew members on pelagic fishing boats, miners or construction workers. Typically, their work is low paid, temporary, and dangerous (Tsai 2001).

The emergence of migrant labourers in Taiwanese indigenous society from the 1970s onwards is not unique. Many people in rural areas or indigenous

1 According to the ethnic classification made by many Japanese anthropologists, the Sediq is comprised of three sub-groups: Truku, Tausai (=Teuda), and Tkydaya (Mori 1917). However, since the Truku became an indigenous group, there has been a contest between Sediq identity and Truku identity in Truku society. Under the ethnic classificatory system current in 2004, the government used the term Truku to describe the Tausai and the Tkydaya, as well as Truku people. However, many Tausai people, Tkydaya people and the Western Sediq people disagreed with this categorization of their identity as Truku. In this article, I adopt Truku rather than Sediq to refer to the people with whom I worked, because most of the villagers in my fieldsite have registered as Truku, while the Sediq had not yet been classified as an official ethnic group.

societies around the world have become temporary or permanent migrant labourers, as societies have become integrated into the global capitalist economy. While migrant labourers are geographically distanced from their hometown, most of their earnings are sent back home. Despite the distance from their hometown, most will usually find various ways to maintain social and emotional connections with their kin groups, household, and friends from their place of origin. Importantly, even though they are living away from their home communities, migrant labourers' earnings can be regarded as an essential element of the household economy back home. Ballard (1987) describes how Pakistani migrant labourers in Britain and the Middle East tend to use their earnings to build a new house for themselves or for their households, or to purchase land. He suggests that "this partly reflects a concern for honor and status, and the wish to demonstrate how much success they have achieved overseas, but it also reflects a desire to build up security against the day when they finally return home" (1987:22). Similarly, Murray (1981) points out that while circulation of labour divides families in the rural areas of Lesotho, the earnings from migrant labour contribute continually towards the maintenance of the household back home, in addition to enabling households to "seek access to arable land as a provision of some marginal security in old age" (1981:104).

Stark suggests that "the migrant furnishes his family with their remittances, the family furnishes the migrant with more insurance and so forth" (1978:220). In this sense, there are many social and economic functions attributable to the earnings from migrant labour, both for the labourers themselves as well as their families. Importantly, the relationship between migrant labourers and their households is connected through the flow of earnings from the urban to the rural. Moreover, these earnings also offer the hope of future economic well-being, for both labourers and their households.

Indeed, the advent of migrant labour brings about changes of social, economic, and political relations in their society of origin. Firstly, the migration of young men and women may challenge existing structures of authority whereby older men have had

almost exclusive control of the means of production, and access to land and resources (e.g. Stichter 1985). Secondly, the absence of men likely leads to unstable conjugal relations (e.g. Murray 1981) and changes in the operational principles underlying the sexual division of labour (e.g. Lin 2010a; Marx 1987). Additionally, migration provides young women with opportunities to escape from the control and authority of their kinsmen back in their natal communities (e.g. Ong 1987), and their economic contribution to the household may effectively empower them in their home communities (e.g. Gamburd 2004). Finally, the circulation of labour can change economic relations and activities in rural as well as indigenous societies. For instance, Standing (1985) suggests that the circulation of labour can impede agricultural development, alter relations of production and shape or reshape the economic hierarchy.

In different societies, the circulation of labour can influence different social, economic, political, and cultural dimensions. In different contexts, people will have different ideas about migration or have distinctive or even contradictory perspectives on the circulation of labour. At the same time, the circulation of labour, entailing as it does the physical absence of migrant labourers and the presence of money, makes existing social, kinship, and political relations become negotiable and changeable. However, the advent of migrant labour is symbolic of people's response to social and economic changes in the dynamic processes of entering the capital global marketplace. Hence, examination of the symbolic meanings of migrant labourer's earnings in local society can lead us to look at how people react to social and economic changes, how social relationships are involved in two circulations – the circulation of labour and of money, in society – and how social, economic, and political changes can be attributed to the introduction of capitalism.

This article looks at the symbolism of money mainly earned by migrant labourers in the intersection of economic change and social change in contemporary indigenous society. In particular, I examine the ways in which the circulation of labour is involved in the monetization of kinship practices in indigenous society in Taiwan. Stark (1978) suggests

that in many societies, people tend to use surplus household income gained from the earnings of migrant labour, for the purposes of agriculture. In Taiwanese indigenous society, however, most people prefer to spend their surplus household income on monetary kinship practices and marriage exchange rather than economic development. As such, in this article, I analyze what social and cultural inner logic guides indigenous people to manage their money. Finally, I also discuss how this phenomenon influences social and political changes and creates new forms of social interaction and relationships in contemporary indigenous society.

### **The Emergence of Migrant Labourers in Contemporary Truku Society**

Standing suggests that “labour circulation is a reflection of the dynamics of socio-economic change, in itself merely one form of migration or population mobility that should be approached in terms of its relationships to the process of socio-economic transition” (1985:3). It is necessary to analyze macro and micro levels of social and economic changes, if we attempt to understand local meanings of the circulation of labourers in rural or indigenous societies. Following Marxism, many scholars argue that migrant labour would erode the existing social order in society. This argument might presume that there seems to be concrete or unchangeable social orders in each society. Under this presumption, when the principles of capitalism and global markets permeate in society, people usually play a passive role in the adaption of economic changes. In addition, this presumption also implies that the migrant is extraordinary. Examining the history of the Truku, we can see that ‘migration’ is a characteristic of Truku society.

Prior to the Japanese colonial government (1896-1946), Truku people inhabited the central mountain range in the western part of Taiwan. They were hunter-gatherers and also conducted swidden agriculture. In order to maintain subsistence, they frequently moved to new land in order to gain sufficient natural resources in mountain areas (Mori 1917). The Truku people originated in the central mountain range of western Taiwan. Mowna, a Truku anthropologist, estimates that the ancestors

of the Truku people had, since the late 16th century, gradually migrated over the central mountain range and settled in the eastern part of Taiwan (Mowna 1977:63).

The exploitation of the abundant forest resources found in the mountain areas of Truku territory figures significantly among the notable effects that the Japanese colonial regime had on Taiwanese society. In order to take advantage of these natural resources, the regime had to have dealings with the Truku people who lived in the mountain forests. The colonial government set up reservations in the plains in the eastern part of Taiwan, and forced Truku people living in the hills to move into the reservations. As a result, Truku people moved from the highlands to the lowlands under the Japanese colonial regime. This shift of the Truku from the highlands to the lowlands was not simply a change of geographical location: it also altered ways of cultivation. In the lowlands, the Japanese government introduced new technologies for the farming of paddy fields, and the construction of irrigation facilities. Finally, Truku society was transformed from a hunter-gatherer society to an agricultural society.

Under the Japanese colonial government, Truku people were subject to strict state control. Not only were they prohibited from leaving their reservation areas, but they were also subject to exacting regulations when selling surplus agricultural products, and were limited to exchange for money or for specific commodities, conducted within a local official trade center specified in each of the reservation areas (Lin 2010b). During this period, after settling in the reservation areas, the circulation of labour as well as money was static rather than active.

Standing illustrates that circulation of labour can be regarded as a “safety-valve circulation” (1985:8). Circulation of labour is a means of preserving forms and social relations of production in rural areas, and is often able to ease the pressures which arise from poor agricultural yield. In Fushih Village, the emergence of migrant labour, I argue, can also be regarded as the response of villagers to the dramatic economic changes which occurred from the 1960s onwards. During the Kuomintang (KMT) regime (1946-2000), the government produced a series of

policies on indigenous land reservation in order to affect “state-controlled capitalism,” as a means to improve economic conditions in indigenous societies (Hsiao 1984:135). Owing to the policies on paddy field agriculture and cash crops, education, and the development of forestry, the mode of agricultural production in villages has become increasingly capitalized.

However, most Truku residents did not benefit from cash cropping in the processes of capitalization. There were many structural problems related to agricultural production in indigenous societies. Li (1983), a Taiwanese anthropologist, points out that a shortage of finance and mechanized production, incomplete systems of irrigation and infrastructure, and comparatively low levels of agricultural technology and knowledge were widespread in indigenous societies.

In particular, the privatization of land ownership meant most villagers lost much of their land. Taiwanese indigenous peoples did not gain ownership of their lands until the 1960s. Although the government allowed indigenous people to have some degree of ownership of their land, it is important to point out that under the KMT regime the land tenure system in indigenous societies was different to that used in mainstream Taiwanese society. Firstly, the government held the title to all reservation lands, not indigenous landowners. Indigenous people were legally entitled to the usufruct rights of their lands, but were not granted legal land ownership. Secondly, indigenous people did not have the right to rent or sell their land to non-indigenous people. Thirdly, usufruct rights were granted only under the condition that crops were planted for ten years. Furthermore, it had to be either cultivated or ceded to the government as state property.

However, the indigenous land reservation policies have, in part, been seen by many indigenous people as one of the principal barriers to the economic development of indigenous societies. In addition, the legal restrictions placed on the utilization, inheritance and transaction of indigenous land reservations has meant that indigenous lands are worth far less than land outside the indigenous reservations. Besides, owing to privatization, Truku people have had to pay taxes

relating to their land ownership and to the income from their agricultural production.

Truku people, like most indigenous people in Taiwan, are suffering poverty due to the significant loss of their territory (Simon 2005). Fushih Village is highly representative of the problems which have affected indigenous Taiwanese peoples in terms of land. On the one hand, a considerable number of those residing on the hill in Fushih Village have had their land occupied by the Asia Cement Company, a private enterprise which was established in 1973 (see Lin 2010b; Simon 2005). On the other hand, Fushih Village is located in the foothills of the Taroko National Park, which was established in 1986. For most residents, their traditional territory or hunting lands are now the national park. In addition, according to the law, people are legally prohibited from working and living in the national park, thus the national park is a serious threat to their subsistence and living space. Additionally, some residents have had their land occupied by government corporations, such as the Taiwan Power Company and Taiwan Water Corporation.

As Taiwan’s economy became increasingly industrialized and capitalized from the 1950s to the 1960s, the government in the meantime began to improve agricultural production through a series of land policies, thereby capitalizing agricultural production in indigenous societies (Li 1983). Many indigenous peoples, with the encouragement of the government, became involved in long-term agricultural production, such as fruit farming and forestry, and growing special products, such as tea and sugar (Taiwan Province Government 1980:35-38). Long-term agricultural products and special products were more valuable in the market than short term products, such as rice, potato, beans, vegetables and taro. (Taiwan Province Government 1980:35-38). In order to increase the profit from these two sorts of agricultural products, most indigenous people used large areas for planting to enable them to produce for, and distribute to, mainstream society (Li 1983).

Concerning the conditions under which cash cropping developed from the 1970s, Truku people not only faced a lack of financial investment and insufficient amounts of cultivated land, but also lack

of labour. In Truku culture, the household, including a married couple and their unmarried children, is the basic economic unit. Householders usually farmed together. However, the working relationship between married couples and their children has changed with the governmental imposition, in 1968, of 'Nine Year Compulsory Education.' Schooling has superseded the household in the formal education of the young. While children spend more time on schooling than working with their parents, the absence of their labour has become a problem for household farming. At the same time, tuition fees and school expenses have continued to increase the financial burden on most households. Consequently, for many Truku households, the income from cash cropping was too slight to guarantee subsistence. Hence, more and more Truku villagers found that they could earn more working as migrant labourers than they could from farming at home.

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

The advent of migrant labour has created a new form of sexual division of labour in Truku society. Many Truku men went to the cities alone, while their wives, older parents, and children remained at home. The earnings of these male Truku migrant labourers constituted the major proportion of the income of the households back in the village. Most of these migrant labourers worked together on urban construction sites with their kinsmen and perhaps a few kinswomen, usually in part-time jobs with low salaries. They would keep some money to meet their

daily expenses while staying away from home, but sent most of their earnings back to their households at home. These earnings from migrant labour enabled them to maintain a connection with their household. Wages from migrant labour have been used to pay household costs, such as bills, taxes, and tuition fees, and to refurbish or construct houses. In addition, these male migrant labourers were expected to save enough money to furnish the costs of their own or their sons' wedding rituals and bridewealth.

Although male migrant labourers were absent from the village, the contribution of their earnings to household income has afforded them a more active and important role than their spouses in terms of the subsistence of their households. As a result, male migrant labourers have been seen as the main economic providers for their households. Nevertheless, in terms of agriculture, with large numbers of men becoming migrant labourers, women began to farm their own or their husband's lands. With male labour absent in the village, the economically sustainable agriculture that was encouraged by the government in the 1960s and 1970s gradually disappeared. Most of the paddy lands which were reclaimed in the 1950s had become dry lands, and the villagers (women and elders) decided to grow short term crops. Subsequently, the way of agriculture shifted from economic agriculture to subsistence agriculture. Most agricultural produce was not sold at market, but was used by female farmers to contribute to the subsistence of their households or to exchange and share with their neighbors and relatives.

From the 1960s and 70s, the conditions of public transportation in Fushih Village significantly improved. As a result, the improvements in public transportation enabled Truku people to leave their hometowns more easily than before. Shingchen Station was originally established in 1975 in order to transport the mining products of the Asian Cement Company. In terms of the economic changes in the village, the establishment of the Asian Cement Company represents the point at which many Truku people lost their lands due to government-led economic development and the privatization of land ownership. As such, since the 1970s Shingchen Station has born witness to a decrease in agricul-

tural production and the growing circulation of waged labour. For many Truku villagers, the station is also the starting point of their experience of being migrant labourers.

In examining Truku history, we can see that migration has been one of the most important ways by which they have adapted to environmental and economic changes. When living in the highlands, Truku people frequently moved and reclaimed new land in order to ensure sufficient land and natural resources for the maintenance of subsistence. At that time, Truku people usually moved with their household or their kin groups and thereby gradually extended their territory. Similarly, the new wave of migration from the 1960s onwards can be regarded as a means adopted by Truku to combat the problems of poverty which have arisen from the effects of capitalization and the reductions to their land. However, in this new wave of migration, most migrants are Truku men and young Truku people, who leave to work as migrant labourers; their households have usually remained within the home communities.

Reflecting on the history of the circulation of labour from the 1960s onwards, I suggest that the emergence of migrant labour can be seen as the result of complex processes of social and economic transformation in contemporary Truku society. In the next section, I will analyze how migrant labourers and their earnings are involved in, or accelerate, the process of monetization of kinship practices in society, and how they are associated with social change in Truku society.

### Monetization of Kinship Practices and Symbolism of Money

The main aim of Truku migrant labourers is not only to earn money in urban areas in order to maintain the subsistence of their household, but also to meet the expense of monetary kinship practices, particularly wedding rituals. For many households, although the earnings from migrant labour enable them to escape from poverty, in most cases this is all that is achieved. In Truku society, there are various kinds of kinship practices which are based on ancestor worship and on a complex set of norms. Most kinship practices can be viewed as rites in Truku society, and contain

kinship and social obligations. With the introduction of capitalist economics into Truku society from the 1960s onwards, most kinship practices have become gradually monetized. Subsequently, the expense of monetary kinship practices has become one of the major economic issues for many Truku households. Because most Truku people are too poor to afford the cost of monetary kinship practices, any surplus in household income is usually used to meet them. The major proportion of household income comes from the earnings of migrant labourers; the urban-to-rural flow of money earned by these labourers is symbolic of kinship and social relations in Truku society.

Migrant labourers earn their money in urban areas. Their earnings can be viewed as the result of the commoditization of their work. For Hart, following Polanyi's theory, money is a social token created by the state and a commodity made by markets (1986:638). Furthermore, he argues that money must be personal in order to connect each individual to the universal of relations to which they belong. In Marxism money is a fundamental instrument rendering various sorts of foods and services comparable by measuring their value on a shared scale. Furthermore, labour in capitalist society is alienation and money is impersonal. Although money is impersonal, Hart (1986) asserts that people make everything personal including their relations with society.

In the Truku language, money is called '*pila*', a term which is not always associated with moral issues (c.f. Bohannan 1959; Taussig 1980). Money has different symbolic meanings across different cultures and societies (Bloch and Parry 1989; Maurer 2006). Bloch is critical of the view that money is an acid attacking the very fabric of kinship-based moral society as:

actors seem to know the impact of money on themselves, secondly, money is a symbol referring to the new relations of production, and thirdly, it oversimplifies the contrast between a pre-monetary state of affairs and a post-monetary state of affairs. [1986:171]

In this sense, the symbolic meanings associated with money should be understood by investigating the interrelationship between monetary practices

and culture. Bloch and Parry assert that we need to understand the ways in which “money is symbolized and in which this symbolism relates to culturally constructed notions of production, consumption, circulation and exchange” (1989:2). In order to examine the symbolic meanings of money in contemporary Truku society, I focus on analyzing the monetization of kinship practices and the influence of this process on social and kinship interaction between Truku people.

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

#### *Truku concepts relating to kinship practices*

In Truku society, social relations are based on various sorts of interrelationship between different households. In respect of the relationship between different households in agricultural production, many Truku residents over the age of forty recalled that when most residents were farmers before the 1980s, during the height of the farming season, most members in a community would help each other. Truku people call this cooperation of production ‘*smbarux*.’ Under *smbarux* Truku would organize cooperative labour not only in agricultural production, but also in the

building of new houses (or huts) and in dealing with other complicated social and economic tasks.

However, the role of the *smbarux* system in agricultural production has gradually disappeared due to the increasing number of Truku people who have turned to migrant labour from the 1960s onwards. On the one hand, the physical absence of the migrant labourer means that fewer people are able to participate in the *smbarux* system. On the other hand, the need for using the *smbarux* system in farming has declined due to the gradual decrease in agricultural production and development. Although the *smbarux* system is no longer significant in terms of farming practices, it still exists in terms of kinship practices.

In Truku society, the *smbarux* system is not only involved in the exchange of labour in farming, but also guides kinship practices based on concepts of *gaya* in their everyday life. *Gaya* means a complex system of social and religious norms related to supernatural beliefs and ancestor worship. Many anthropological studies of *gaya* (e.g., Kim 1980; Lin 2010b) show that in Truku ancestor worship, an ancestor’s spirit is believed to wield great authority, having special powers to bless or curse, and to determine the well-being of their living relatives. Kim (1980), who defines *gaya* as the ‘natural order’ indicates that when Truku people consider something to be out of the ordinary, such as sickness, accidents, and death, it is considered that someone has broken *gaya*, and consequently the relationship between living householders and ancestral spirits is transformed from one of harmony to one of tension. This tension is considered to be a source of many adversities in society, and is believed to cause people to suffer nightmares, accidents, sickness, lethal injuries or death.

Truku people will hold a ritual to beg for forgiveness from the ancestral spirits, but also as thanks for their blessings. In terms of *gaya*, ritual is a dynamic process of worship where the living communicate with the ancestral spirits by making offerings, such as livestock, food, and drinks. Truku people call this kind of ritual ‘*powda gaya*.’ On the basis of my fieldwork, I classify *powda gaya* rituals into two categories: one is for celebration of the blessings from ancestral spirits, and the other is to relieve the tension between

the ancestral spirits and the living which arise from offences against *gaya*.<sup>2</sup> For Truku residents, the *powda gaya* ritual deals with infringements of *gaya*, and the dangerous contamination which results. As such, it is only the offender's household, the offender's sibling's and parents' households, which have a duty to conduct this ritual. Moreover, only one pig is slaughtered for the *powda gaya* ritual. In the *powda gaya* for the celebration of the ancestral spirits' blessings, such as to share the blessings which come from the ritual and from the host's good fortune, the social groups involved include the host's household and their kin groups, including households of the host's siblings, parents, first (or perhaps second) cousins, and the host's spouse's kin groups. In these ceremonies, the host's household provides at least two pigs. In terms of *powda gaya* for celebration, for Truku people the wedding is the largest scale event. The household of both the bride and the groom, and their kin groups, neighbors and friends will be involved in the wedding.

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

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2 I did not have the opportunity to participate in the *powda gaya* ritual to deal with offences against *gaya*. Firstly, most informants did not announce this ritual event to outsiders. Secondly, even if I knew someone would hold a *powda gaya* ritual relating to the infringement of *gaya* and asked his or her permission to engage in it, I would not ever have been allowed to do so. The main reason is that my informants worried that I would be placed within a dangerous environment in the ritual. However, sometimes, I suspected that they might not want me to know what kind of infringement of *gaya* had occurred in their households. Finally, these *powda gaya* rituals, involving slaughtering a sacrifice (a pig) and conducting ancestral worship, were usually held secretly in the garden or backyard of the house of the person who had offended against *gaya*. Hence, it is difficult for outsiders to participate. As such, it is necessary to note that all the *powda gaya* rituals in which I participated were for celebration, to thank the ancestral spirits for their blessings.

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

In particular, Truku people form the *gxal* group through weddings. In reflecting on the meanings of the *gxal* group in Truku people's everyday lives, I assert that the *gxal* group can be regarded as one of the most important social and kinship groups. A *gxal* group includes the Ego's household, and the households of its *mnswayi* (siblings), *lutut* (such as the Ego's siblings, cousins, and parents' kin groups), affines, and also non-kin such as neighbors, colleagues, Church congregation, and friends. I suggest that the concept of the *gxal* group is similar to Mabuchi's study of the 'feast group' in Truku/Sediq society. In Mabuchi's description (1960), Truku/Sediq used 'feast groups'

as a term to describe ritual groups. The “feast groups assemble for marriage festivities and for ceremonial pig sacrifices, as well as more informally to distribute the meat of wild game and to drink millet beer and feast on pork in slack periods of the agricultural cycle” (Mabuchi 1960:130). In this sense, I suggest that the ‘*gxal* group’ resembles the ‘*kaban*’ in Buid society as described by Gibson (1986), and in both cases the “idiom of companionship implies that social actors come together as autonomous agents to pursue a common goal” (Gibson 1986:72-3).

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

#### *The monetization of the wedding*

For most Truku people, the wedding ritual is the most important kinship practice of all. The principal aim of many of those who became migrant labourers in the 1970s was to earn enough money to invest in their own wedding or that of their siblings. In analyzing the recent history of marriage in Truku society, I find that the practice of using money in bridewealth originated in the economic developments of the 1960s. None of the 27 marriage stories of informants who married before the 1960s included the giving of money as payment of bridewealth. Moreover, the fulfillment of brideservice was an element in all of the 27 marriages. However, most of those informants who married in the 1960s and the 1970s indicated that money had become part of the bridewealth. Despite this, the groom’s household still had to rear pigs in order to afford the bridewealth, and still worked to meet the requirements of brideservice prior to the wedding ceremony. However, among 43 cases of marriage conducted after the 1970s, in 39 instances the payment of bridewealth and brideservice was made entirely by money.

In Truku society, marriage can be understood as a long-term process in which bridewealth and bride-

service are exchanged for the bride. Truku people call bridewealth ‘*gnbiyi*.’ ‘*Hiyi*’ means body, and *gnbiyi* is the exchange of one’s body. Therefore *gnbiyi* is the exchange of bridewealth, provided by the groom’s household, in return for the bride’s person. Similarly, the brideservice is called as ‘*gnjiyax*.’ *Jiyax* means ‘time’ and *gnjiyax* refers to the exchange of time.

The main element of the bridewealth is the pig. Before the monetization of bridewealth in the 1960s, the parents would rear at least 3 pigs to coincide with their sons’ attainment of marriageable age. Normally, the groom’s household would provide one pig at the stage of betrothal, and two or three for the wedding ceremony stage. On average, it would take three years or more to rear a pig for bridewealth for the wedding. Indeed, if parents wanted to indicate that their son was not old enough for marriage, or did not yet possess the requisite abilities to establish and maintain his own household, they would say “our pigs are not big enough for the wedding.”

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

Many of those over the age of sixty associated the number of pigs that a household might possess with the extent of its wealth, when they discussed with me the importance that pigs used to have in Truku society, that is, before the 1960s. Prior to the 1960s, pigs symbolized the household’s economic strength. In rearing pigs, people would need land to cultivate crops for pig feed, to provide living space for the pigs, and would spend a great deal of time in rearing and caring for them. Consequently, the pig should be regarded as the surplus of economic production, and as the principal indicator of wealth. So if a household had many pigs, it meant that it was wealthy enough to afford the necessary land and labour.

Concerning the brideservice, the groom’s house-

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

In terms of the monetization of brideservice, the value of one *jiyax* is based on the worker's average daily salary, and on average ranges between US\$34 and US\$68. It was said that, customarily, the groom's household would provide from fifty to eighty *jiyax*. In other words, they would have to give monetary brideservice of between US\$1.7 thousand to US\$5.5 thousand. Although pigs are the most important element of the bridewealth, Truku people increasingly buy pigs from pig farms rather than rearing them themselves. Before the 1970s the groom's household and *gxal* group would prepare the wedding feast by themselves; now, however, they pay money to a catering company to do it.

Similarly, the preparation of the bridewealth is also based on the assistance of the groom's *gxal* group. The groom's household also cooperates with their *gxal* group to organize the wedding feast. Before the monetization of the wedding feast, each household of the groom's *gxal* group would be expected to provide one chicken, vegetables, rice, some wild game meat and alcohol. At the end, the groom's household and their *gxal* group would enjoy the wedding feast with the bride's household and *gxal* group in the groom's parents' compound. Now that the wedding feast has effectively been monetized, each household within the groom's *gxal* group will give a red envelope containing money to the groom's household to help them to pay for the feast.

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

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

For many Truku people, not only is the cost of the monetary wedding exchange and ritual too expensive to afford, but also the expense of building a new house for a newly married couple has significantly increased. Given this situation, most Truku people are too poor to afford the expense of building and

equipping a new house. Although owning a house is an important priority for most people, earnings are in most cases insufficient to meet the building or purchase costs. As a result, excluding a few wealthier households, for most Truku people it takes a long time to secure the financial resources to build a new house, time and resources which cannot be generated within the marriage process. In this situation, many newly married couples live in the husband's parents' house. Living in the parental house after marriage would normally be regarded as a temporary solution for newly married couples because they are usually expected to move out from the husband's parental house as soon as possible. In many cases, the newly married couple will rent a flat and try to find work in an urban area in Taiwan. In such situations, most couples prefer to ask their parents to take care of their children.

In order to examine the symbolic meanings which money has in different cultures, Bloch and Parry (1989) suggest that monetary exchange contains an interrelationship between long-term exchange and short-term exchange. They illustrate this in respect of the relationship between a cycle of short-term exchange, which is the legitimate domain of individual – often acquisitive – activity, and a cycle of long-term exchanges concerned with the reproduction of the social and cosmic order (1989:2).

I argue that, in Truku society, monetary kinship practices also contain an interrelationship between long-term exchange and short-term exchange. Concerning short-term exchange, in kinship practices prior to the 1960s, people would exchange pigs, goods, and labour with each other. However, due to the capitalization of society, Truku people have had to use money in order to purchase pigs and services in the maintenance of kinship practices. For Truku people, this short-term exchange articulates a long-term relationship of exchange, which is based on their ideas of ancestor worship and on a complex system of norms (*gaya*). Although the pig is still the main offering made both in ancestor worship and for weddings, people are able to organize these ritual and kinship practices using money in order to do so. In this sense, money is not always impersonal, but is involved symbolically in long-term and short-term

exchange. Money is an essential aspect of the reproduction of social order in Truku society.

Although Bloch and Parry's theory of monetary exchange can help us to examine the symbolic meanings attributed to money in different societies, it overlooks the fact that each individual or household has different economic conditions in the practice of "ceremonial exchange" (Crump 1981). For example, Carsten (1989) describes how women cooperate within social networks in Langkawi society in order to manage money that their husbands have earned by fishing, to ensure their household subsistence. She does not show, however, how Langkawi women manage should there be a shortfall in household income. How do they manage when their resources are insufficient to meet the needs which arise from kinship morality and obligations? In the next section, I will describe how poverty impacts on monetary-based kinship practices, and analyze its influence on social and economic relations in contemporary Truku society.

### Monetary Kinship Practices as the Mechanism of Social Stratification

During my fieldwork, I participated in seven weddings. At each wedding, in excess of ten pigs and twenty tables (ten people per table) were required for the wedding feast banquet. On average, the price of a pig was US\$275, and the cost of a table in the wedding feast was about US\$120. Hence, each of these weddings cost in excess of US\$5000. However, if we also take the monetized brideservice and the cost of gifts given by the groom's households into account, in addition to the donations made to the Church (if required), the cost of each wedding was in excess of US\$8600. In fact, the costs of marriage are far too high for most Truku people to afford. According to a government report in 2006 (CIP 2007) over 70 percent of Truku households earned less than the average Taiwanese disposable income of US\$14 thousand per year.

Masan is 27 years old. He and his wife, Iwar, have a 7-year-old daughter and live with his parents. Although their marriage has been legally registered, they did not hold a formal wedding ritual. Hence, his parents and parents-in-law did not consider the

marriage to be fully 'established.' Masan and Iwar had actually infringed *gaya*, by having sex before marriage. Because of the infringement, eight years ago Masan's parents were obliged to pay two pigs in compensation to Iwar's parents' household. However, at the time, Masan and his household were too poor to afford bridewealth or organize the wedding rituals. Masan's parents were farmers and he and Iwar were part-time workers. In 2005, the government bought two pieces of his father's land, and thus Masan's parents had enough money to organize the wedding. Although Masan's parents-in-law asked for six pigs rather than a monetary sum for bridewealth, the sum of money given by the government was insufficient to meet the costs of a full wedding ritual. Because of this, Masan's father asked a number of his relatives to help him to pay for his son's marriage. Generally speaking, the average cost of a new house is in excess of US\$ 32 thousand. In terms of individual monthly income in Truku society, 37.4 percent of Truku people over the age of fifteen do not have a regular income, and 35 percent regularly earn less than US\$800 per month (CIP 2005:96).

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

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

From Masan and Iwar's marriage story, we can see that monetization of bridewealth and marriage has made it difficult for many poor Truku families to hold wedding rituals.

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

The *gxal* group and other kin groups and social networks, such as friends, colleagues, and neighbours, also play an important role in collecting money for the bridewealth and wedding feast. In addition, Truku people use the 'red envelope' system to sponsor the wedding feast. I suggest that red envelopes are normally associated with Taiwanese and Chinese weddings in Taiwan. Normally, if a guest is invited to join a wedding feast, he or she will bring his or her householders, and give a red envelope containing over US\$35 to the host. The basic principle of delayed reciprocity operates: if you give US\$35 to the host, he or she will give you more than US\$35 in return, when you or your children hold a wedding ritual.

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

economic problems. Hence, the practice of giving red envelopes seems to have become embedded in Truku concepts and practices relating to the *gxal* group. In this way, I argue, the circulation of wedding funds, based on red envelope 'culture,' ensures that most people have enough money to meet the cost of the wedding feast and perhaps also the monetary bridewealth.

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

According to Japanese ethnographies of Truku society (Mabuchi 1960), there was no strict social hierarchy in Truku society. Although each Truku tribe had a head of the tribe, who was regarded as a spokesman for the tribe, he did not have the authority to dominate the others. Most political and economic decisions relied on a common consensus among most elders in the same community. Since the government's privatization of land ownership and introduction of commercial agriculture in Truku society in the 1960s, social and economic stratification has gradually developed. Chen (1986), a Taiwanese anthropologist, investigates how the imposition of privatization and cash crops influenced the western Sediq people in the 1970s. He (Chen 1986) describes that in Sediq society, a few Sediq elites, who had better education and the ability to get more information than the others, benefited from privatization and land reform. These elites had more economic capital to purchase expensive agricultural machines and fertilizer to improve the quantity and quality of their agricultural products, while most common people still lacked the money to invest in commercial agriculture. Consequently, a significant poverty gap

developed in Sediq society, and this economic gap was associated with political and social hierarchy at the same time (Chen 1986).

In Truku society, I classify Truku elites in three categories: (1) the 'political elites,' who are loyal to the KMT, and they might be local politicians, governmental servants, teachers, and policemen; (2) the 'intellectual elites' who are well educated, but who are not loyal to the KMT; they might be ministers or Christians in the Presbyterian Church in Truku society; (3) the younger Truku elites who are descendants of both 'political elites' and 'intellectual elites.' They might be under- or post-graduate students or have graduated from universities or colleges in Taiwan. Most of the younger Truku elites do not live in their hometown, while the political elites and intellectual elites are usually involved in various public affairs and local politics.

With the privatization of land ownership and the monetization of bridewealth, the cost of weddings now exceeds the economic capacity of most Truku households. In order to gather sufficient money to invest in a wedding, most people need to ask their richer relatives for help, or borrow money from them. However, for most poor people, the amount of money borrowed from richer relatives is too much to pay back quickly, and turns into a long-term debt. Consequently, after the expense of a wedding, the relationship between households is often transformed in that the poorer family and its richer relatives become debtors and creditors respectively.

Furthermore, many people decide to sell their land to their rich kin in order to secure enough money to organize a wedding. As a result, wealthier households increase their share of landed property, while land shortage has become a serious issue for many poor households. Therefore, the monetization of weddings has effectively worked in the favour of richer Truku households, in terms of land distribution, with rich families becoming increasingly influential in society.

If we consider the number of people involved in slaughtering pigs, in making wedding gifts, and involved in the wedding feast, we can see that the wedding ritual is not only a social space for the richer households to display their wealth, but also

an opportunity for them to show their social and political strength. In Masan's story, I mentioned that his household was too poor to afford the expense of the wedding, and had to ask for help and economic support from Rowty, his father's cousin. Rowty and his wife are retired elementary school teachers. After retiring from school teaching, he became the deputy head of the local government. They have three sons; two of them are also teachers and the other is a doctor. In contrast to most of those residing in the village, he and his wife and children have stable full-time jobs with high salaries.

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

When I asked Rowty why he had provided so many pigs for his eldest son's wedding, he replied "I must do that. This is a social expectation. Honestly, most residents of the village expected me to show my '*mhowayi*' (generosity). On the other hand, the household of my daughter-in-law is as wealthy as my household." In saying this, Rowty indicates the importance of this extravagant wedding for two different kin groups: his own kin group and neighbours, and that of his affines. When Truku people lived in the highlands, people would show their *mhowayi* by

sharing their wild game with others. Recently, however, people tend to show their *mhowayi* through the distribution of wedding gifts and provision of extravagant wedding feasts. While wealthier households use the wedding ritual to show their wealth and *mhowayi*, the ritual process is also a social space in which the guests can share in the host's good fortune through the consumption of the wedding gift and the wedding feast. Holding an extravagant wedding thus seems to have become a social obligation for the wealthier households in contemporary Truku society.

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

## Conclusion

This article examines the symbolic meanings attributable to the circulation of labour and the earnings of migrant labourers in contemporary Truku society. For Truku people, migration is one effective way of dealing with economic problems and seeking a better standard of living. Historically, Truku people moved in mountain areas to locate 'good land,' in order to find the natural resources essential to the subsistence of their households. With the integration of Truku society into capitalist market-based economies from the 1960s onwards, for many the most effective way to extricate themselves from the problems of poverty has been to secure work as a migrant labourer. For most Truku households, the earnings from migrant

labouring are essential not only to pay for household expenses, but also to ensure that they meet their obligations in terms of a variety of kinship practices in everyday life, including wedding rituals.

In Truku society, it is through offering pigs as sacrifices to the ancestral spirits, and the subsequent exchange of pork meat with one another in ancestral worship and kinship practices, that people maintain their social and kin relationships, as well as maintaining a harmonious relationship with their ancestral spirits. In particular, the wedding is the most important of kinship practices because of all ceremonies it is the largest in scale, involving as it does the creation of a household, itself an essential social and economic unit in Truku society. Furthermore, it is through weddings, through the distribution of pork-based wedding gifts, that Truku people shape and reshape their social and kinship relations. Additionally, these kinship practices and rituals are based on native concepts of norms and morality. Hence, even though such practices are monetized and there may be many who are too poor to afford the expense, most Truku people still do their very best to meet their obligations in the conduct of monetary exchange within their kin group and social network.

Most Truku believe strongly in the obligations related to *gaya* regulations, or norms, which inform the kinship practices underpinning their relationships with their kin groups. Despite the fact that Truku migrant labourers are living and working away from their home communities, their earnings enable them to engage in monetary kinship practices and rituals. At the same time, the circulation of labour accelerates the monetization of kinship practices. In Marxist terms, money from migrant labour is the result of the alienation of labour under capitalist economics, and it is by definition impersonal. However, earnings from migrant labour constitute the largest part of household income for most Truku households. When Truku migrant labourers send or take money back to their home communities, it is through monetary-based kinship practices that they become

personalized and socialized. Hence, it is the earnings from migrant labour which have become the basic mechanism by which Truku people maintain their kin relations as well as social relations in their 'home' society.

In this situation, the circulation of labour and of earnings is associated with the interrelationship between short-term exchange and long-term exchange in contemporary Truku society. Although Bloch and Parry's theory of symbolic money (1989) brings us to explore the cultural and social meanings in monetary exchanges, I argue that their research overlooks the interrelationship between monetary exchange and external economic factors. That is, monetary exchange would not happen in an isolated society, but its form is always influenced by the process of capitalization. In the process of capitalization, human beings create or reinforce social and economic hierarchy. In particular, capital markets usually create a significant gap between the poor and the rich.

Prior to capitalization, Truku society was characterized by essentially egalitarian social relationships between different households. Kinship and social relationships were based on equal exchange and reciprocity between different households. However, in the process of capitalization, a hierarchy between the poor and the rich emerged in contemporary Truku society. Because most people are too poor to afford all of the expenses of kinship practice, this situation engenders a long-term relationship between the debtors (the poor) and the creditors (the rich). Moreover, this long-term debt-credit relationship is not only economic, but also social and political. On the other hand, monetary kinship practices create a social space for wealthier households to 'perform' their wealth and display their generosity. Consequently, monetary kinship practices have become a mechanism for wealthier households to strengthen their social and political influence in society. As such, the circulation of labour combines with monetary kinship practices in the process of forming social and economic hierarchy in contemporary Truku society.

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