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Taiwanese indigenous myths (translated in English)

ABSTRACT

First translation in English of a thematic collection of myths specific to aboriginal tribes in Taiwan (Atayal, Saisiyat, Bunun, Tsou, Paiwan, Rukai, Amis, Yami, Pingpu): deluge myths as well as various etiological myths (the origin of the wind, the rainbow, immortality, and metamorphosis).

KEYWORDS

Aboriginal mythology (Taiwan), deluge myths, metamorphosis.

RÉSUMÉ

Première traduction anglaise d'une collection de mythes spécifiques aux tribus autochtones de l'île de Taïwan (Atayal, Saisiyat, Bunun, Tsou, Paiwan, Rukai, Amis, Yami, Pingpu) : mythe du déluge ainsi que divers mythes étiologiques (origine du vent, de l'arc-en-ciel, de l'immortalité).

MOTS-CLÉS

Mythologie autochtone (Taïwan), mythe du déluge, métamorphoses.

Deluge myths (Pu, 1996)

Atayal (泰雅) *Da-ke-lang* (達克朗社)

When there was a huge flood, people fled in panic to the highest peak, Dabajian Mountain. At the same time, beasts and snakes also rushed up there, and they got along well with human beings. In order to appease the gods, men chose a strong and intelligent dog and threw it into the water, hoping that the flood could therefore recede, but it did not work. Later on, the sea god told men that they must sacrifice human beings so as to hold back the flood. Hence, people found an ugly girl in the village and threw her into the water, yet the flood still did not go down. In the end, they had no other way but to find a pretty girl (sometimes she is said to be the daughter of the headman) and threw her into the water. The deluge then subsided gradually. The Atayal people living around Nan-ao in Yilan county said:

In ancient times, the earth was flat; there were no high mountains and hills, and there were no fish, shrimps, and their kinds. One time there was a huge flood, inundating every area and thus creating a vast ocean. People had no other places to go, so they ran to Ba-ke-ba-ke mountain [yet the earth is flat]. Without knowing how long it had been, people came down from Ba-ke-ba-ke mountain after the flood receded. They were surprised to find that the water had washed out many valleys and there were a great number of fish and shrimps in the rivers, so they happily caught fish and shrimps.

Saisiyat (賽夏) *Ji-ya-ya-he* (吉雅亞荷社)

In remote antiquity, a huge flood occurred, turning level grounds into oceans. At that time, there was a brother and sister with the family name Zhu. The brother was called Pa-you-e-bo-yi, and the sister Ma-ya-ou-bu. They fetched a weaving machine, sailed with it to Li-tou mountain, and saved their lives accordingly. However, very unfortunately, the sister died not long afterwards. The brother could not bear the grief and bawled. He held his sister's body in his arms and walked to a clear pond at the foot of a mountain. He cut the corpse into small pieces and then wrapped each piece well in the leaves of Li-ka-lu trees. He murmured: "Sister! If you want to solace me, this poor, lonely brother, please incarnate in human form!" Then, he put one of the wrappages into the weaving machine and sank it into the water. To his surprise, it transformed into a man. Pa-you-e-bo-yi was very happy. He led him on shore. This man was the ancestor of family Dou. Pa-you-e-bo-yi applied the same method to generate not a few people. They are the ancestors of family Ri, family Feng, and eight other families. Pa-you-e-bo-yi tried to practice again, yet this time nothing happened. Before long, he was walking alone in a forest. Seeing there were taro peels on the ground, he realized that some other people had also survived. He searched all around, and saw a man all by himself. Pa-you-e-bo-yi invited this man to come with him. The man turned out to be the ancestor of family Hu. By this time, the Ji-ya-ya-he tribe had gradually developed its scope.

Saisiyat (賽夏) *A-la-wan* (阿拉萬社)

In remote antiquity, the human beings created by gods gathered together on the earliest land. For no specific reasons, there was a flood, so men scattered and their outcomes were unknown. A man rode a weaving machine and floated to the top of Ji-lu-bi-ya mountain. On this mountain, there was a god called Ou-zhi-po-ye-he-peng. He captured this man who sheltered from the flood. Because he feared humans would become extinct due to the flood, the god wanted to use him to create more people. He killed this survival and cut his flesh into pieces. While chanting a charm, he threw the chunks of flesh into the sea. In the end, they were all turned into human beings. They are the ancestors of the Saisiyat people, and Saisiyat is the name given to gods. The god then severed the entrails of this man and threw them into the sea. These were turned into human beings as well. They are the ancestors of Han people. Why do a lot of Han people tend to be long-lived? That is because

they were transformed from entrails. At last, the god threw the bones into the sea, and these were turned into the fierce and intrepid Atayal people.

Bunun (布農) *Da-ma-luo-wang* (達馬洛旺)

In antiquity, on Ye-mi-ba-lu mountaintop, there was a huge rock. After it cracked, out came many people. Among them, a man named Da-gei-duo-luo and another named Da-gei-ba-ka are our ancestors. Soon, a great flood took place. Land was turned into ocean. The people all ran to Jade Mountain to avoid the flood; in so doing, they could survive. Later, a giant snake fought with a giant crab. The giant snake was defeated and ran away. Its escape routes all became rivers, so the flood receded. People then descended from the mountain, came to the plains, and went to various places. They built up tribes that became the clans of today. It is commonly believed in all aboriginal clans, including the Atayal, that human beings are generated out of cleft rocks.

Bunun (布農) *Taoyuan Township, Kaohsiung County*

In ancient times, a giant snake blocked the rivers, so the water gradually inundated the land. At that time, people gathered all the animal species. With one male and a female of each species, they came to Ma-bu-ha Mountain (Jade Mountain). They lived on Jade Mountain for a very long time, and they fed on flesh. Only when they saw the beasts grow fat and juicy, did they hunt them for food. Later, people gathered together and talked, hoping to find a way for the flood to recede. Right at that moment, a crab, as big as the snake which blocked the rivers, discovered the hiding place of the snake, and cut it apart with its claws. Then, the flood finally retreated. When people saw the water gone, they sent a raven to see where the land was dry and where there was still standing water. However, the glutton raven did not return, for it was busily foraging on the wetlands. People had no other choice but to send a dove. The dove flew all the way back to clearly inform people where the water had not gone down and where grass and wood had grown. People concluded that doves were certainly a good means of communication. People then sent a Hai-bi-xi bird (Red-billed laughing thrush) to fetch fire. Because the bird made it back to them with fire, its bill was turned red. Thereafter, all the people and animals came to build their homes in habitable places.

Bunun (布農) *Ren-lun* (人倫社)

A long time ago, a big snake blocked the rivers, causing a deluge. The tribes people had to run to Jade Mountain and Binugantun. Those who escaped to Jade Mountain were equipped with tinder, so they were able to warm themselves and cook. On the other hand, those at Binugantun sent a frog to Jade Mountain to fetch fire. Though the frog succeeded in getting the fire, it went out because the frog dived on its way back. Then, they sent a Lin-da-lu bird on the quest, but it failed, too. In the end, a Hai-bi-xi bird made it; after that those who lived at Binugantun had tinder.

Some time later, a crab fought with the snake blocking the rivers. The crab cut the snake apart with its huge claws. The flood thus subsided.

Tsou (鄒族)

In ancient times, a giant eel blocked the river with its long body. The water could not get past, so it inundated the neighboring areas. Land became ocean. Most of the mountains were overwhelmed by water. People hurriedly escaped to Ba-dun-guo-nu Mountain (Jade Mountain), yet the floodwater gradually rose up to the mountaintop. At that moment, people were greatly panicked, and they gathered together to talk about their plight. A crab came to say to them: "I could go down to drive the eel away and thus make the water subside, but only if you give me something." The people agreed with what it demanded, asking it to take that thing itself. The crab went into the crowd that warmed themselves by a fire. It stared at the leg hair of a woman. She understood, so she plucked some and gave it the hair. The crab found the place where the giant eel blocked the river. It first hid itself near the eel. Then, it used its claws to lightly pinch the eel on its fin. The eel twisted a little. Hence, the crab knew this was the right position. It then squeezed that point with all its strength. The sudden, extreme pain made the giant eel turn its body, so the floodwater could drain away.

When people had just come to Jade Mountain, the tinder had been put out, so they sent a Ge-you-yu-xi bird to look for kindling. Though it returned with kindling, the fire burned its beak, for it flew too slowly. It could not stand the pain and thus abandoned the kindling. Then, the people asked a Wu-hu-gu bird (a kind of sparrow) to fetch fire. It flew very fast, and successfully came back with the fire. People thus had fire to use. Afterwards, feeling grateful for what it did, people allowed the bird to peck grains in their fields. On the other hand, Ge-you-yu-xi birds could only forage at the edge of fields. These two kinds of birds have pointed and short bills, which are the traces of fire burns. After the flood receded, those people originally residing at Jade Mountain all descended, looking for good places to live. At that time, Ma-ya people, An-mu people (i.e. red-haired people), Yi-xi-bu-kun people (i.e. Bunun people), and Tsou people went to different places. On their departure, they divided an arrow. The Ma-ya people took the tail of the arrow; the An-mu took the head of the arrow; the Yi-xi-bu-kun and Tsou each took one section of the middle part. They each kept their piece as a token. Thereafter, the people separately came down the mountain in search of places to live.

Paiwan (排灣) *Da-niao-wan* (大鳥萬)

In ancient times, floods overflowed. Everywhere was inundated. Dirt on the mountains was washed away, and rocks also cracked accordingly. At that time, there was a brother and sister who luckily grabbed some La-ge-ge-ri grass in the water, and they thus saved their lives. However, they could not find any single piece of land that was dry; nor was their home to be found. The two could only weep together. All of a sudden, an earthworm appeared. The excrement the earthworm produced turned

into a hill high above the water, and the brother and sister clung on to the top of it. They lived there for some time; without fire, their life was difficult. One day, out of nowhere came flying a beetle. They saw from a distance that the beetle had fiery kindling in its mouth, so they took it from the bug, and it flew away. From then on, the fire burned incessantly, never dying out. When the brother and sister grew up, they farmed in the field made of earthworm excrement. They looked for the seeds of sweet potatoes, yams, and maize. After obtaining seeds, they started sowing, so they would have enough food. Day after day, the brother and sister grew up, but they could find no other people to be their spouses. Later, these brother and sister had no choice but to marry each other. At first, all their children had some types of disability, for example, they were blind or crippled. In the second generation, the children were more or less normal. It was rare to have handicapped infants. In the third generation, all the children were healthy and normal. It was rumored that disabilities among the children were the bad consequence of the marriage between the brother and sister.

Paiwan (排灣) another tribe in the south

On a plain, there was a monster called Da-luo-fan. All the water in the rivers flowed into its mouth. Later, the monster shut its mouth tightly, so the river water could not get in, which accordingly caused disasters. When people saw the flood coming, they fled to Tuo-ba-ma-lai mountain and Wu-tou mountain. Those people who went to Tuo-ba-ma-lai mountain did not carry tinder with them. As a result, they sent a little deer swimming to Wu-tou mountain to get fire for them. In so doing, they could have fire to cook food. Before long, the monster Da-luo-fan opened its mouth again, and the water below eventually subsided. After the water had gone, the chieftain found an earthworm hanging on the branches of a tree. He gave it some food, and the earthworm's excrement turned into land. Thus, the people had fields which they could cultivate.

Rukai (魯凱) Ma-ka (瑪卡社)

In ancient times, there came a deluge. The residents ran to the mountains to elude the flood. They stayed on the mountains for five days. In the end, their ancestor Sha-bu-lai cast a spell to make the seawater recede. The rest of the water on the ground was drunk by two dogs, one male and one female. The earth was finally restored to its original state.

Rukai (魯凱) Duo-na and Man-dou-lan (多娜、曼斗蘭二社)

At the time of the great flood, people all ran to Tie-ba-da-lan mountain. However, because they did not have tinder, they sent a muntjac to fetch fire. Though the muntjac successfully found fire, which it tied to its horns, the fire was burning too fast and burned its horns. The muntjac could not endure the pain, so it dipped its horns in the water, and the fire eventually died out. Later on, when the people were

contemplating ways to solve the problem, they saw a fly rubbing its feet together. They came up with the idea of making fire by rubbing sticks in the same way. Hence, they could have fire to cook and to warm themselves.

Amis (阿美) *Ma-lan* (馬蘭社)

In remote antiquity, our ancestors lived by ji-la-ka-shan mountain (near today's Hualien port). Later, a huge disaster happened, causing a big change in the landscape. A stream of hot water burst out of the ground, and it formed rivers. The vast amount of water overwhelmed the entire land. All the creatures nearly became extinct. At that time, the only human survivors were a pair of sisters named Da-ba-ta-bu and You-ka-suo-ku and their elder brother Da-la-ka-da-kang. The three of them rode a square-shaped mortar, running away southwards along the coast. When they got to a place called La-la-ao-lang, they went on shore, and they climbed up to the summit of Ka-ba-lu-kang mountain. Looking around, they could not find any fertile land, so they could only descend and return to La-la-ao-lang. In search of a good place, they continued going westwards and southwards, but in vain. They then decided to go up to Ka-ba-lu-kang mountain. However, the sister Da-ba-ta-bu was already exhausted. She could not walk any longer, so she had to stay on the mountainside to take a rest. The brother Da-la-ka-da-kang and the younger sister You-ka-suo-ku went to the mountaintop first. They waited there for a long time, but Da-ba-ta-bu did not show up, so they went down to see what had happened to her. To their surprise, Da-ba-ta-bu had become a stone, standing on the mountainside. They were shocked, and grieved, not knowing why such a thing would happen to them. They returned to La-la-ao-lang, where they had come on shore and left their square-shaped mortar. The mortar was now rotten and could not be ridden. They could only wander around. Afterwards, the Duo-li-duo-li river rose, and the flood inundated the area. The brother and sister went on evading the flood. A few days later, the sister was so tired that they had to stay where they were. Although the flood did not subside, they lived near a hot spring. At this time, there were no other people in the world except for this brother and sister. After a rather long period of time, the two people grew up, but they could find no spouses. In order to maintain the existence of human beings, they wanted to get married, but they could not make up their minds. The next morning, when the sun rose, they asked the sun: "Can we, brother and sister, get married?" The sun replied: "Yes!" The two then felt relieved and got married. After a few months, the sister was pregnant. The two were very happy, and they spun hemp to weave beautiful linen and to make clothes for the baby. At the time of delivery, the thing born was neither a boy nor a girl; instead, they had two incredible monsters. They were very remorseful and depressed. They tore apart the clothes and threw the monsters into a river. One monster walked sideways in the water, and the other flowed away down the river. Rumor had it that they were the ancestors of today's fish and crabs. The next day, the moon said to them:

You were once brother and sister, and brothers and sisters are forbidden to get married. Now that you are married, you should take a straw mat, cut a hole on it, and

place it between you. If you do this, you could sleep together and give birth to normal children.

The two happily accepted the instructions of the moon. Before long, You-ka-suo-ku gave birth to a white stone. They thought it was a prank played by the moon, so they wanted to throw the stone into the river. When the moon realized this, it told them: "If you keep this white stone in good condition, your wishes shall be granted." Although they felt strange, they accepted the suggestion from the moon and kept the white stone. Later, the brother Da-la-ka-da-kang died, leaving the sister to live all by herself. The only way for her to soothe her loneliness was to hold the white stone in her arms. The moon comforted her and said: "This kind of loneliness is temporary, soon you will get your consolation." Five days later, the white stone all of a sudden became bigger, and from it came four children. Two of them were barefoot, and the other two wore shoes. You-ka-suo-ku followed tradition and kept those two who were barefoot. The brother was called Te-ou-ge, and the sister Te-ye-nai-yi. It was said the two children wearing shoes became the ancestors of Han people. After Te-ou-ge and his sister grew up, they too got married with each other. Thanks to them, human beings have propagated themselves until today.

Amis (阿美) *Da-ba-lang* (大巴壠社)

In ancient times, on A-ya-ba-na-ba-nai mountain, to the south of Ma-lan-she, a god and a goddess lived. The god was called Ma-da-pi-da-pu, and the goddess Gu-shun. They gave birth to 6 children. When the flood came, one of the boys named Ya-ya-kang and a sister named Duo-jie rode a rectangular, wooden mortar, floating from A-ya-ba-na-ba-nai mountain to a mountain called Ji-ya-a-shan, to the north of Qi-mi-she. Because there were no other humans, under such a circumstance, the brother and sister married each other. Because it was a marriage between close relatives, they gave birth to things like snakes, lizards, frogs, and turtles, etc. When the god Ji-da saw someone living on Ji-ya-a-shan mountain, he sent his child Da-ka-ji-rang nuo ji-da to take a look. Ya-ya-kang told him what had happened to them. Ji-da sympathized with them, so he taught them ways to worship and pray. Afterwards, all the children they had were beautiful and healthy. They became the ancestors of every Ami clan.

Amis (阿美) *Dou-lan* (荳蘭社) *an ancient Nansih group tribe near Hualien city*

One day a long time ago, it rained heavily resulting in a great flood. Most people were drowned; only a sister and brother survived. The sister was called A-fa-si, ma-ji-ta, and the brother Ji-li-han. When the flood came, they sat in a wooden mortar, floating on the water. Later, they floated to Ge-gan mountain to the west of Dou-lan. They did not have food to eat for several days, so they could only pick head lice to eat. After the flood receded, they went to Ji-li-ji-li, ma-la-dao following the river. Here they found millet and rice seeds. After the flood had completely subsided, they

moved to Dou-lan again, and they found some seeds of the mountain yam. They then sowed these seeds. After they grew up, since there were no other people to mate with, the sister and brother had to get married to each other. As their children and grandchildren reproduced, they became today's Dou-lan tribe.

Yami (雅美) *Yi-mo-lu-de* (伊摩魯得)

In the past, there was a pregnant woman from Yi-mo-lu-de tribe. She went to the seaside to get some seawater on the ebb. She saw some white stones rolling aside; the tides were coming in fiercely. The seawater rose up; it overwhelmed the villages and the mountaintops. Pigs, sheep, chicken, and rats were all dead. Although some people luckily survived, they were starving to death due to lack of food. One year later, the seawater had not subsided. After two or three years, only two people survived on the mountains: Ji-be-ka-weng and Ji-za-gu-er-men. Four years passed, the waters were still there. Then, after five, six, seven, and eight years, gravel and Green Turban shells started to appear on the mountains. In the ninth year, there were rats thrown into the sea from the mountains, so the tides began to recede, and the beaches emerged. In the tenth year, fields of sweet potatoes appeared; in the eleventh year, there were eddo fields. In the twelfth and thirteenth years, bamboo woods grew on the mountains. In the fourteenth year, rocks appeared, and on the mountains grew many trees. At this time, when the god looked at the earth, he could not help but exclaim: "What a beautiful Yami island!" Then, he threw a huge rock on the land Ji-ba-pu-duo-ke. The rock cracked, and from it came a man. This man picked up some Ba-pu-duo-ke grass from the ground and ate it. At the seaside, there grew some bamboos. They swayed and swung in the wind. All of a sudden, a bamboo split, and from the middle came a man. This man went up the mountain. Because he could find no food, the bamboo man cried sadly. Crying, he went to a reedy plain and met the man from the stone. These two men were really surprised to see each other. After a while, the man from the bamboo asked this stranger: "What are you and me? What are our names?" The man from the stone answered: "Tao! We are called Tao. That means man." Then, the two men walked together. The man from the stone went to Yi-la-tai, and the man from the bamboo went to Yi-fa-li-nu. The bamboo man found silver at Ka-sha-wei-du-gang, and the stone man found iron at Ji-ma-sha-bao. Unexpectedly, the two men returned to the ancestors' hometown at the same time. They happily knocked at hard iron and soft silver. The loud and beautiful sound of the iron and silver made them laugh. Later, from their right knees were born men, and from their left knees women. These brothers and sisters married each other when they grew up. They then gave birth to some blind children. Only when the children from the bamboo man and stone man mated with each other did they have healthy offspring. The population started to increase. These descendants later learned the skills of making ships and hunting. They learned the knowledge about flying fish and taming fowls and livestock.

Pingpu (平埔) *Ba-ze-hai* (巴則海族)

Long time ago, our ancestor called Ma-ji-a-wa-si descended from the sky. He lived on the plain in the middle of Taiwan and generated many offspring. Later, a great flood came. Mountains and rivers, flowers, grass, and trees were all overwhelmed by the water. People and beasts were all drowned. Only two people survived, a sister and brother who were the direct descendants of Ma-ji-a-wa-si. The sister was called Sha-peng-ka-ka-qi and the brother Wa-si-na-kai-ji. They floated to the mountaintop of Zi-bo-ou-cha-lai-you-zi. After about six days, the flood subsided. The two people went down the mountain and lived on the slope at its foot, at a place called Ba-a-la-dan. Some time later, they went to the plain and built up a tribe called Fa-fa-ou, wa, lu-zi-lu (meaning “the tribe above”). Afterwards, the sister and brother got married and bore two children. They cut the children into pieces and blew on each piece. The pieces were transformed into outstanding young men, and they were called Fa-fa-ou-suo (meaning “the villagers above”). These people were scattered everywhere and became the ancestors of Ba-ze-hai. The initial tribes included La-he-duo-bo-wu-you, Di-ya-ou-bo-wu-you, La-sai, and Ao-long. These were all called Long-lu-fu-a-la-ha (meaning “the villages below”). Thereafter, there were more and more descendants and sixteen tribes were built around the area of the Taichung plain.

Metamorphosis and other related motifs*The Origin of the Wind*

According to myth, people believed the wind is caused by the deer in the mountains. When deer take a bath in the river, they keep shaking their bodies and that makes the wind blow. When the deer try to drain the water out of ears, they will shake their bodies heavily, causing windstorms. The reason why the wind turns from weak to strong is because the deer shake their bodies so hard to drain the water out of their ears. At first, they shake only slightly, and drain out only a few drops of water. Later, they gradually shake more heavily, and drain more out. Hence, because of these movements of the deer the wind increases in strength. They only have to put their strength into shaking to turn a light wind into a gale.

The Rainbow

Once upon a time, one of the Atayal's great ancestors, whose name was Budanaia, led his village and kept his reputation between graciousness and intimidation. The people in the village all respected him as though he was a god. When he was getting older and about to die, he said to his people: “After I die, I will become a naked soul and fly into the sky. I will guard you from heaven.” Soon afterwards, Budanaia died, and a beautiful rainbow which was like the large bridge appeared on the horizon. Today, the Atayal are delighted by rainbows and treat them as a kind of mascot. Whenever a rainbow appears, they would hear one sound, which is the call from their ancestor—the great Budanaia.

The Firefly

Once upon a time, there lived a beauty, her skin was radiantly pretty, but she cried day in and day out, and nobody knew the reason. Her parents were so disturbed by her crying that they couldn't sleep. Even though they gave her sweet potato to console her, it was useless: she still cried all day.

One day, this beauty stopped crying for no reason; however, her body then shattered into many pieces, becoming silvery spots which flit away with the light.

According to the legend, the firefly is this beauty transformed. Because she loved to cry while she was alive, now she carries the glow of light, flying around, and weeping no more.

The evil comportment of laziness

There was once a man who was very lazy. He found excuses not to work or just dawdled about. One day, this lazy man wanted to work on the farm, but the handle of his hoe kept breaking again and again. Irritated, he banged the broken handle against his hip. Accidentally, the handle stabbed into his hip and transformed into a tail. Then he turned into a monkey (Lin, 2001, p. 24).

Variations of this type of narrative present the common motif of laziness resulting in metamorphosis into a monkey: the lazy man was too lazy to work correctly and thus broke his hoe all the time. One day, after he again broke his hoe, he played with the broken handle; it stabbed into his hip, and he transformed into a monkey (Lin, 2001, p. 29).

This lazy person is not limited to men, and the metamorphosis can take other animal forms. Here is a plot configured with a lazy woman who, by just feeding on pigeon peas, turned into a turtledove in order not to work (Lin, 2002b, p. 20).

In an Ami tale, the metamorphosis was caused by a mother punishing her lazy son, who refused to work and stayed at home. She spanked her son with a rice scoop, which was broken and stabbed into the son's anus. The son was thus transformed into a monkey (Lin, 2002b, p. 141).

Greed or Gluttony

Bunnun tale: a woman, ignorant of the blessing of merely one grain from gods, put more than one grain in the pot to cook one day and caused the entire kitchen to be overwhelmed by an overabundance of rice. She was thus buried in the heap of grains and metamorphosed into a mouse. A variation of such a tale is told in the Rukai tribe, the difference lies in the metamorphosed animal, in this version, the woman transforms into a bird, which will continue to peck grains (Fan, 1966, pp. 25–7).

Maltreating children (the stepmother abusing her step children)

In a Saisiyat tale, a girl called Zihe Bakaogu made a pair of wings out of broken bamboos, stuck them under her armpits, and then flew away from her home after the unbearable abuse of her stepmother (Lin, 2002a, p. 38). In an Atayal version,

this daughter changed into a pigeon because her mother asked her to labor incessantly and she felt disappointed at her mother's treating her badly. Here the story mentions "mother" instead of "stepmother". Either way, it is curious that father is not the one that maltreats the children (Lin, 2002a, p. 30). A Paiwan tale concerns metamorphosis into a mountain caused by the abuse of the stepmother (Lin, 2002a, p. 81). Paiwan people also relate a story about metamorphosis into a bird. This one is about a mother who only cared for her work and thus ignored the needs of her sons. The elder son was taking care of the younger who cried incessantly. The elder son pleaded with his mother to take care of his brother but she kept working. Eventually, both sons turned into birds with wings made by the elder brother out of tree leaves (Lin, 2002a, p. 113). In another version, the ignored children are daughters who transform into birds (Lin, 2002b, p. 89). Similar stories are told among the Amis. The motif corresponds with the first prototype: a daughter abused by her stepmother changed into a bird after tearing her sleeves and making them her wings (Lin, 2002a, p. 170). Similar stories can be found in the Bunun tribe which tells of an orphan raised by his aunt. He transformed into a bird to protest against the incessant labor she assigned to him (Lin, 2002a, p. 51). The Bunun people also tell a similar story. The stepmother of a boy named Kabos maltreated him and assigned him to do a lot of work without giving him even the burned rice (at the bottom of the pot, normally to be discarded). The boy turned into a bird after he made wings out of a bamboo fishing net (Lin, 2004, pp. 69–70). In similar fashion, a Rukai tale tells of two brothers who transform into birds because their mother maltreated them (Lin, 2004, pp. 115–6).

Immortality

Amis:

In ancient times, humans were immortal. When they aged, they shed a layer of skin and returned to youth; therefore, shed skins were everywhere. However, children were frightened by the sight of these shed skins; adults thus collected all the skins and buried them in the earth. Henceforth, humans started to die. (Dasiwulawan, 2003a, p. 178)

A variation of the story adds detailed descriptions of the scary scene of the shed skin: "the shed skin has the eyes, mouth, nose, ears, etc. on it, which presents horrible shapes" (Dasiwulawan, 2003a, p. 178).

Paiwan:

In ancient times, humans never died however aged they became. They could live for hundreds of years. There was an old man called Gigulailai who gradually shrank to the size of a bird and lost all his power. He could only sigh "aye aye!" Therefore, his offspring let him sit in a low chair and took care of him. However, during the day, the family had to go farming, and the children were afraid of staying with the very old Gigulailai alone at home. So the family considered taking care of Gigulailai very troublesome and finally decided to bury him. Ever since, humans have become

mortal. After dying, they turn into spirits. Because they feel lonely without company, the spirits of the dead give the living diseases to cause their death and thus go to the beyond to accompany them. (Dasiwulawan, 2003b, p. 182)

A variation of the tale shows that death is blessed:

In ancient times, humans were immortal. Later there was once an old woman who told her family that she would go for a tour underground. But she never returned. Henceforth, people knew that there was a paradise underground and became willing to die. (Dasiwulawan, 2003b, p. 183)

Although diseases are normally depicted as being spread by evil spirits, the Paiwan people's optimism urges them to explain the existence of diseases in a delightful tone, similar to how they treat the loss of immortality: people felt bored and thus tried to get something to occupy themselves. They decided to buy fleas, pustules, and rheumatism. Since they cause itches, wounds and pain, people had to tackle them and thus became occupied. The family that bought fleas is the Kakokangs; the family that bought pustules is the Chuorurus; the family that bought rheumatism is the Daobilis. This narrative also explains why people from these families are vulnerable to those diseases (Dasiwulawan, 2003b, p. 185).

Saisiyat:

Ancient people shed their skin when they became old, and recovered their youth. One day, a foreigner came and saw an old man moulting painfully and asked: "Is it better to painfully moult or is it better to die?" People of the tribe had suffered from moulting and replied right away that it is better to die. Ever since, the Saisiyat people have become mortal (Lin, 2001, pp. 36–7). Later versions of such stories add the cause of the deprivation of immortality: the wrath of God. This is clearly a Christian influence as most aborigines were converted to Christianity: "Humans lived a very long life like trees. However, they turned lazy and disobedient to orders. God was angry and reduced their longevity." (Fan, 1966, p. 130)

The causality between headhunting and paradise

After death, Atayal people go to the house of souls or zuling. As they pass the bridge of souls (Haono na utux), a crab comes to check their hands. If the male soul succeeded in headhunting when he was alive, and if the female soul was good at weaving and accomplished the necessary complicated red pattern, the rainbow image appearing on their hand cannot be rubbed off by the crab, which will let them reach the house of souls. Inversely, the crab can rub off the rainbow image on the hand of the souls that did not accomplish the aforementioned great deeds; it will require these souls to take the detour. The detour presents a difficult journey where they will shed hair and damage their bodies. Only after suffering on this journey can they reach the house of souls (Pu, 1999, p. 162).

In other versions, the crab is replaced by the spirit of ancestors, Utux, who verifies whether the dead men and women are genuinely brave and skilful. If Utux cannot tell, it spreads Ici (a kind of wild weed) on the spirit of the dead and then

rinses him or her with water. If Ici cannot be washed away, it indicates the spirit is a real man or woman. Utux will allow it to cross the bridge towards the beyond of ancestors (Atuxan). The opposite means the spirit is evil and is not allowed to pass the bridge. It has to take the detour, which necessitates a trek full of dangers such as thorns and leeches. If it tries to force its way over the bridge, it will be pushed and fall off the bridge to be eaten by large snakes and fish (Lin, 2002b, p. 29).

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