

Reconstructing the Man's House "*kuba*" of the Alisan Tsou and its Transformation

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to investigate the Alisan Tsou's traditional *kuba* (man's house), its construction method, space & form, and changing process, as well as its meaning and the reason behind the transformation. During the course of this study and after reviewing relevant theories, the researcher proposes a theoretical framework called "the inner mechanism and outer impacts of a socio-cultural group's dwelling culture configuration."

After literature review and historical images examination, the researcher finds that before Professor Chichiwa's survey and recording, Alisan Tsou's *kuba* actually had had a "traditional form." The traditional *kuba* is a meeting place of main settlement, where males gathered and trained, as well as for night accommodation. Whenever there were fighting among tribes, *kuba* became the place, from where an expeditionary force was sent. It is also the stage holding annual *mayasvi* (ceremony of fighting) and ritual of victory after winning a fight. In the Tsou's cultural symbolic system, *kuba* is not only the symbol of consolidation among main and satellite settlements where groups of clans live. In term of metaphorical meaning, piled *kuba* with sacred *yono* (fig tree) and *fiteu* (wild orchid leaves) imply that in such a sacred realm, the tribe's male and hidden Goddess are welcoming God, (Hamo) from the heaven. In that sense, *kuba* becomes an ultimate symbol of "the fire of tribe's life," in contrast to *emoo* (house) as the "fire of clan's life" which accommodates the male/female realms and millet goddess/hunting god under one roof, but no piled except those wood frame for holding animal skulls. In the traditional period, *kuba* not only coincides with the Tsou's culture and social life, but also symbolizes a physical complex of their socio-cultural symbolic system.

During the period of being forced to be acculturated, probably because the Tsou kept a good relationship with the Japanese, all of the clans still cooperatively maintained *kuba*, and held *mayasvi*, thus maintained their Tsou tradition. After World War II, inspite of Christian influence and Kuomintang's "White Terror," as well

as changes of production mode, Alisan Tsou never the less kept their clans together and constantly maintained *kuba* and the simplified *mayasvi* too. All of these formed “a period of formalism” of *kuba*, since it didn’t contain a collective life of males in the tribe anymore. Due to the island-wide democratic progress and the development of tourism in 1980s, the solidity among Tapan and Tufuya groups expanded to all the Tsou ethnic group. The symbolic meaning of *kuba* and *mayasvi* referring to ethnic group’s identity has been highly promoted. Adding more traditional elements and decorations to its newly remodels, *kuba* soon merges from its “period of display” to “period of revival” during the past ten years.

Keywords: Mount Ali, the Tsou, *kuba*, Transformation, Change, Reconstruct