

Where the Sun lays its Egg

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Abstract

According to legend in the tribe, humans originally only had children that were born from Earth in the universe, which were called Qatitan (the created humans), they lived on Earth for generations. Later on, the Sun god decided that he needed a different idea and power to manage the universe; therefore, he laid an egg and placed it in an ancient ceramic pot, which was guarded by a poisonous snake. After ten months, a baby girl was born; Qatitan named the child of the Sun, Mazazangiljan (guardian of the generation), and raised the child. As a result, Mazazangiljan was called as the father and mother of the created people.

The ancient ceramic pot that was bestowed by the Sun, was called Dredretan by the humans, which meant the Holy infant. The other nickname, Dredreq, meant an infant that has not grown his/her teeth. The use of the name Dredretan to name the pot has significant meanings, it signifies the desire for the birth of new life and pray for prosperity and blessings. Dredretan symbolizes the uterus of the ethnic culture, which is the home for the creators and the Holy ancestors to live in when they visit the human world.

Legend of "Where the sun lays its egg" - the location in Taiwan



Fig. 1. Legend of "Where the sun lays its egg" - the location in Taiwan

Distribution of the Paiwan people in Taiwan



Fig. 2. Distribution of the Paiwan people in Taiwan

Where the sun lays its egg

Ages ago, within a community called Ravar¹ which sat in the northernmost point of the area, there was a tribe by the name of Tjavadrán.² Legend has it the Tjavadrán was the tribe born by the earth. At that time, the sun was very close to the earth. When the tribal people husk the rice, the pestles always touch the sky. Even during day time, when the heat of the sun burnt like the fire, the light was still dim and not suitable for living at all. Then, there was two brothers of the tribe who lived away from each other. The older brother was Satjair³ (the holy sole-bearer) whose hometown was called Ljaqapulu⁴ (the origin of generations); the younger brother was Sapili⁵ (the holy bearer of spiritual powers) whose hometown was called Ljavikivan⁶ (to follow the generations). Hunting was their livelihood.

They found that right across the community, the top of the Tjaivivi⁷ (the Big Mumu Mountain) gave out white smoke at sunrise every day. The two were curious and made a deal to see together what was happening on the mountain top. So they went from their respective homes toward the mountain. The older brother walked under the shade of the trees where it was cool while the younger brother walked directly under sunlight. The younger brother walked faster and arrived at the mountain top first. It was when he realised that the smoke came from a ceramic pot. The pot was roughly the size of a fist, the sunlight casted directly at it and its surroundings were sparkling with light. The pot mouth kept making the sound of "Dre...Dre...Dreq...."⁸ The younger brother was aroused with the idea to hold the pot. He put the pot into his bag and headed back. But on the way back he took a look at his bag and found the pot was gone. He turned back to look for the pot only to find the pot was sitting at where it was originally. He tried taking away the pot again and again but never succeeded. The pot simply wouldn't leave with him. After several attempts, the older brother arrived. The younger brother told him about this magical encounter. The older brother was very astonished at the talking "holy object," and called it by the

¹ Ravar, "the armor in action," the northernmost situated community of the Paiwan (see Fig. 2).

² Tjavadrán, "planting seed" (one of the traditional names of tribes, now situated in Sandimen Township, Pingtung County).

³ Satjair, the holy sole-bearer, the holy spirit who accepted the sun's egg.

⁴ Lja qapulu, "origin of the generations," the first family born by the earth according to the legend.

⁵ Sapili, "the holy bearer of spiritual powers," the holy spirit who gave supports through generations.

⁶ Lja vikiyan, "to follow generation after generation," to grant human the power of assisting for the earth.

⁷ Tjai vuvu, "at the ancestor's or at the offspring's." (The traditional name of the holy mountain, the official name of which is "the Big Mumu Mountain.")

⁸ Dredredredreq... later became the clan of children born by the sun; a lullaby that the grownups sing when putting the baby to sleep. It also contains the meaning of "the longing for the newborns."

sound it was making, hence "Dredreq."⁹ He conveyed his regards to the pot and prayed that the pot left the mountain with them. He Papigacalj¹⁰ (held) the pot in a very discreet manner and that was when the pot agreed to leave with the older brother.

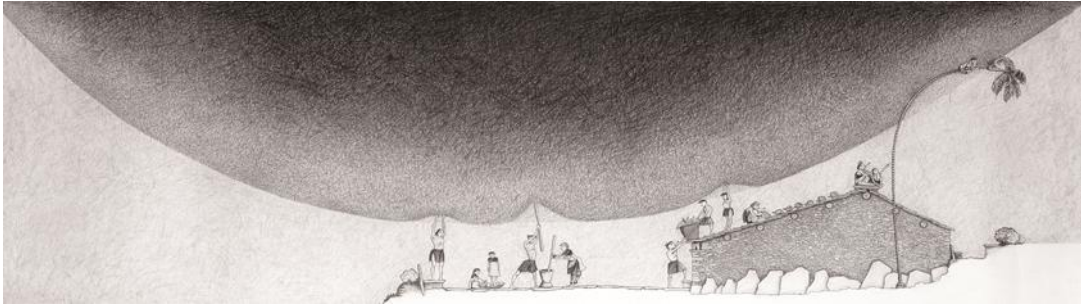


Fig. 3. Sakuliu Pavavalung, When the sun was low and close to the ground, illustration

On their way home, the pot would not trek across the river. The two brothers tried their best to have the pot go across the river. It was when they Tjemikeza¹¹ (built a bridge) that the pot yielded and moved forward. When they were about to enter the tribe, the pot was again unwilling to go forward. The two brothers troubled for a solution. After a series of ceremony including Kicevulj¹² (the smoke of cooking) and Ceberuk¹³ (opening a side door), the pot consented and enter the tribe. The pot was finally brought back to the home of the older brother.

⁹ Dredreq, "the holy child," the ancient name of the ancient ceramic pot.

¹⁰ Papigacalj, "to hold up," means to show the respect as if you were treating the elderly; also means to rejuvenate, to give life a brand new energy.

¹¹ Tjemikeza, the bridge that connects the betrothed; it acts as a consolation for the hard work for the journey.

¹² Kicevulj, "the smoke of cooking," a traditional cleansing ceremony, to clear away the dirt and foulness from the journey.

¹³ Ceberuk, "opening up a side door for the tribe," symbolises the venerated connection among the pot, the tribe and the humans.



Fig. 4. Sakuliu Pavavalung, The two brothers put much effort in building a bridge so that the pot could go across the river safely, illustration

The family of the older brother worried that the egg of the sun inside the pot would be eaten by the tribe of the snake. Therefore they invited Vulung¹⁴ (Deinagkistrodon), the elderly from the tribe of the snake to be the guardian. The egg of the sun inside the pot grew bigger, the sky became higher, and the light on earth turned brighter as days passed. Until one day after ten months, when the sun rose and the light penetrated the skylight of the slate house and casted onto the pot; a sudden "Bang" was heard as the pot exploded. The family member who were combing hair and getting ready for work ran into the house in shock and found the pot cracked into halves. And on the ground was a baby girl rolling and crying the sound of "Ljeve...Ljeve...Ljeve...."¹⁵ The family held the baby and named her Ljeveljev, as the sound she made when she cried. The tribe told the story that the baby was born from the egg of the sun settled inside the pot, nurtured by sunlight, guarded by the Deinagkistrodon and born after ten months. Therefore the baby was the child of the sun and the pot.

¹⁴ Vulung, "the holy old man," means the Deinagkistrodon. It has deep bonding and affections with the Paiwan people, to whom it is deemed as the guardian of the land.

¹⁵ Ljeveljev, "to reproduce generations after generations."



Fig. 5. Sakuliu Pavavalung, The sun laid an egg, settled it in an ancient pot which was protected by the Deinagkistrodon, illustration

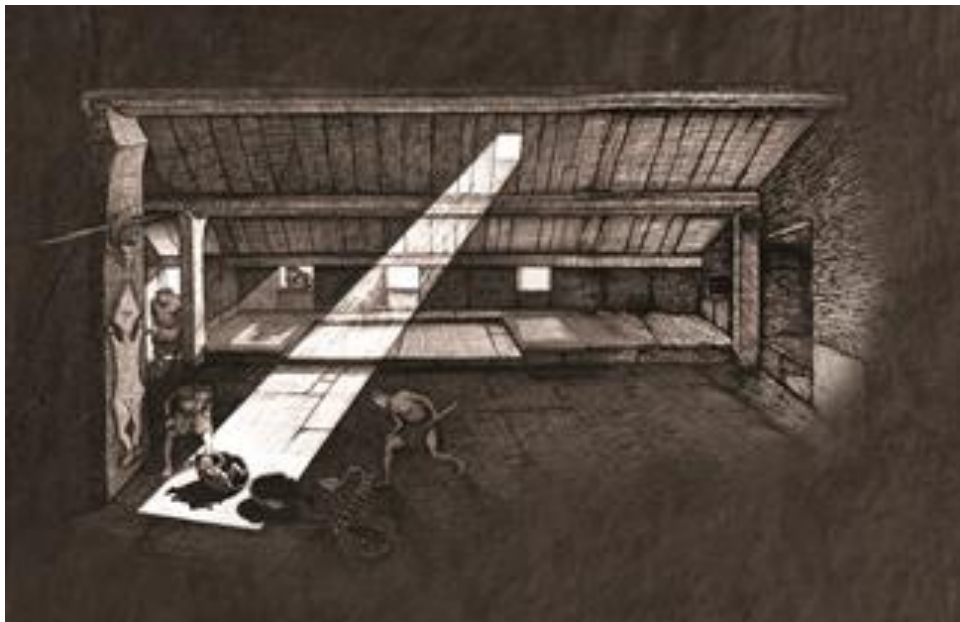


Fig. 6. Sakuliu Pavavalung, The ancient pot gave birth to a baby, illustration

The legend that tells how the ancient pot was escorted down from the Big Mumu Mountain later became the reference of the old Pawian tribe's marital ritual of the Mazazangiljan (the child of the sun). Even until now, some tribes still adopt the same ritual, "Paukuz" (meaning "to escort") when the bride was escorted to her betrothed.

Paukuz, the ritual sets forth as follows:



Fig. 7. Sakuliu Pavavalung, Marriage ritual, illustration

1. Papigacalj, the carrying ritual

Papigacalj means to carry. It suggests that the groom carries the bride on his back on the wedding day. During the Japanese colonial period, brides were carried in bridal sedan chairs instead. Throughout the night before the wedding day, the bride's relatives and friends gather at her house, singing an ancient good-bye song that shows love to the bride, "...oh girl...your clothes are like the colorful wings of butterflies, your lightness and airy elegance resemble the lily dancing with the wind, your charm is like a ripening mango facing the rising sun, your fragrance smells as fresh as a meadow in the morning."

The groom cannot Papigacalj, or to carry, the bride away from her family before he shows his consideration by presenting gifts to the bride's family and tribe, warming her bed and her chair, visiting the garden she visits the most, and spending time with her beloved family members. These gestures keep the bride's family members from feeling lonely and disserved.

2. Tjemikeza, the bridge to connect the betrothed

Tjemikeza, the bridge that connects the betrothed. It represents the presents from the groom to the bride, acting as a consolation for the tiresome journey to her new home, allowing the carriers of bride to carry the bride to the groom's home safe and sound. In the past, marriages among different tribes were frequent. The tracks in the mountains were not easy to trek, and the groom needed to carry the bride, her sisters, mother, or grandmother on the back to his own tribe. It was a trial of strength and endurance. If the groom was well connected with people in the tribe, many friends, Qali (the supporting power) would come and help, if not, it could be a very exhausting task for the groom.

3. Kicevulj, the smoke of cooking

Kicevulj, the smoke of cooking. Light the fire with silvergrass, let the smoke of the good spirits cleanse the dirt and foulness of the carriers.

4. Ceberuk, opening the gate of the tribe

Ceberuk means opening the gate of the tribe. When the carriers of the bride step into the tribe of the groom or when the groom carries presents to the bride's tribe, at the Cacavalj (the entrance of the tribe) representatives from both sides exchange Sini tjakaljava (the presents of waiting) and Sini pangetjez (the presents brought along) to console the hard work of both sides and officially invite the bride or the groom to enter the tribe. In the past, the entrance of a tribe was well defended and had strict security as the city states. Therefore when entering another tribe it must be very formal and ceremonious.

5. Penaljang semingilj, opening the gate of the tribe

Penaljang semingilj, lighting the stem of millet on fire to pray for luck and check the presents brought by the bride or the groom while explaining the purpose of the presents.

6. Tjemiyuma, getting on the swing

Tjemiyuma, getting on the swing (some tribes did not have swings).

7. Ljemakai , the swing

The swinging ceremony in the wedding involves various items. For instance, the swing has betel leaves, millets, bird's-nest ferns, and bells tied on it; branches of the tree have clothing, swords, spoons and feathers hung on them. Each item has its respective profound meaning, and all symbolize the closely connected hearts of the groom and the bride.

Vertically, the swing represents the heavenly ladder for the spirits of the ancestors. The taller the heavenly ladder is, the closer it is to the heaven. The ancestors' spirits climb down the heavenly ladder to the top of the tree, and with the bell and the robe, ancestors give blessings to the bride on the swing.

Horizontally, the swing is secured by four tree trunks above the ground, which resemble north, east, south, and west respectively. The swinging ritual bears important messages. First, married couples, representing children of the Sun, are valuable seeds of the tribe. Second, both families of the groom and the bride are glorified through the ritual.

8. Ziyan nua uqaljaqaljai, the Man's Dance

In a traditional wedding, men and women dance separately. Men dance in the outer circle whereas women sing in the inner circle. Men use the "man dance" to demonstrate their energy and show off their achievements in front of friends and relatives from different places.

The man's dance is a difficult task. Dancers not only dance, but also sing their achievements out loud. The lyrics must be about true events that are publicly recognized by the tribe. When lyrics are true to the reality, tribal men nod to show their agreement; when lyrics appear to be boastful, the audience criticizes and makes fun of the dancers. Therefore, this is not a dance for men with few achievements. Because the man's dance is lengthy and demanding, men that do not have enough energy to jump high and far enough in the dance or to complete the dance will fall behind the rest of the dance crew and be made fun of eventually.



Fig. 8. Sakuliu Pavavalung, The Man's Dance, illustration

Five betrothal gifts presented by Paiwan Man

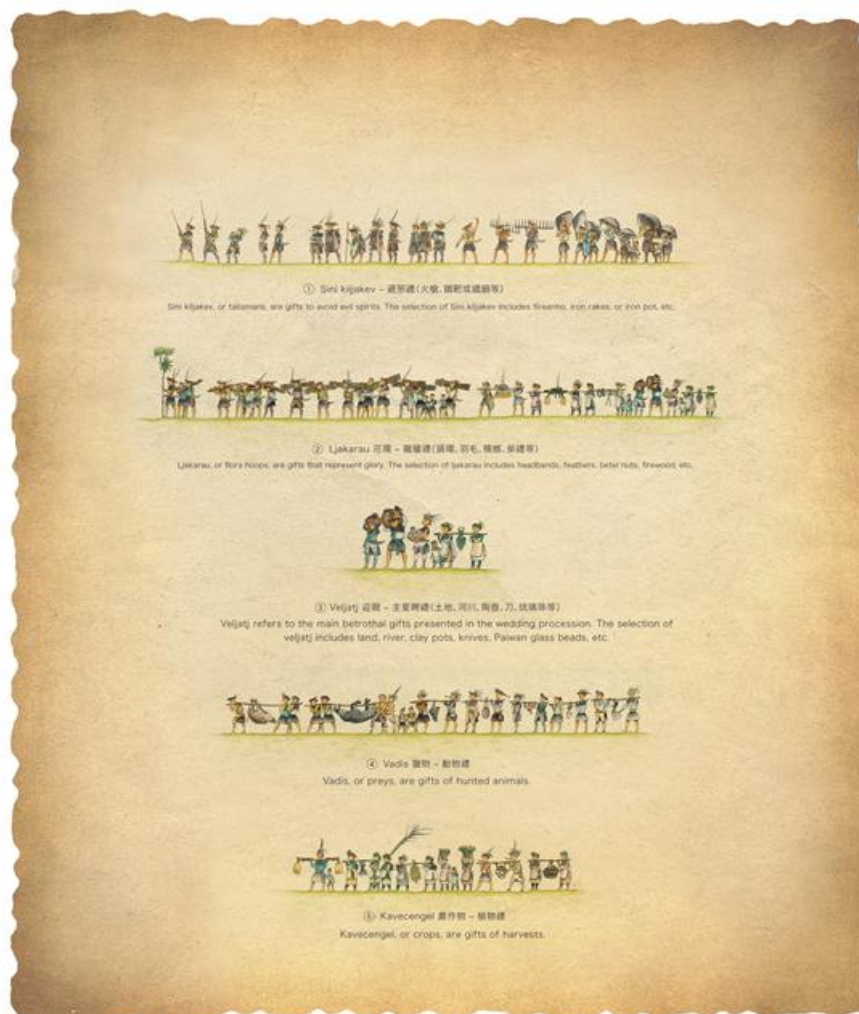


Fig. 9. Sakuliu Pavavalung, Five betrothal gifts presented by Paiwan Man, illustration

1. Sini kiljakev: Sini kiljakev, or talismans, are gifts to avoid evil spirits. The selection of Sini kiljakev includes firearms, iron rakes, or iron pot, etc.
2. Ljakarau: Ljakarau, or flora hoops, are gifts that represent glory. The selection of Ljakarau includes headbands, feathers, betel nuts, firewood, etc.
3. Veljatj: Veljatj refers to the main betrothal gifts presented in the wedding procession. The selection of veljatj includes land, river, clay pots, knives, Paiwan glass beads, etc.
4. Vadis: Vadis, or preys are gifts of hunted animals.
5. Kavecengel: Kavecengel, or crops, are gifts of harvests.

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