

# Mechanisms to Maintain Social Complexity and the Expression of Cosmology in Space of the Tsou People in Tfuya

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## Basis of Social Complexity

Tsou villages used to be characterized by scattered houses of different clans. As competition for resources intensified, the Nia hosa (Liang clan) invited four other major clans (Kao, Wang, Shi, and Tu) to form the Tfuya major village (hosa no Tfuya) to mitigate such tension. Within the major village, social hierarchy was established based on competition with outside world and precedence.

## Clan-Based Hierarchy

The clan-based hierarchical structure defines the rights and relationships within and between clans and sub-clans, which are manifested in the differences of major and minor villages, ownership of kuba (men's hall) and emo no pesia (ritual houses), and the organization of the Homeyaya (annual millet harvest festival) within each clan and the Mayasvi (solidarity ritual) between clans.

## Mechanisms to Maintain Social Complexity

The major annual festivals of Mayasvi and Homeyaya of Tfuya community are mechanisms to maintain social hierarchy and fortify clan relations.

**Mayasvi:** Signifying “solidarity” in Tsou language, the Mayasvi ritual is held at kuba and its plaza in the major village. The hierarchical relations between clans and between major and minor villages are maintained and demonstrated by the order of processions and singing and chanting.

**Homeyaya:** The Homeyaya (millet harvest festival in Tsou language) is to welcome the goddess of millet and pray for abundance in the coming year. The festival is held in the ritual house of each clan. Social hierarchy is exhibited in the order of invitation between clans and sub-clans and the mandatory visits by members from minor villages.

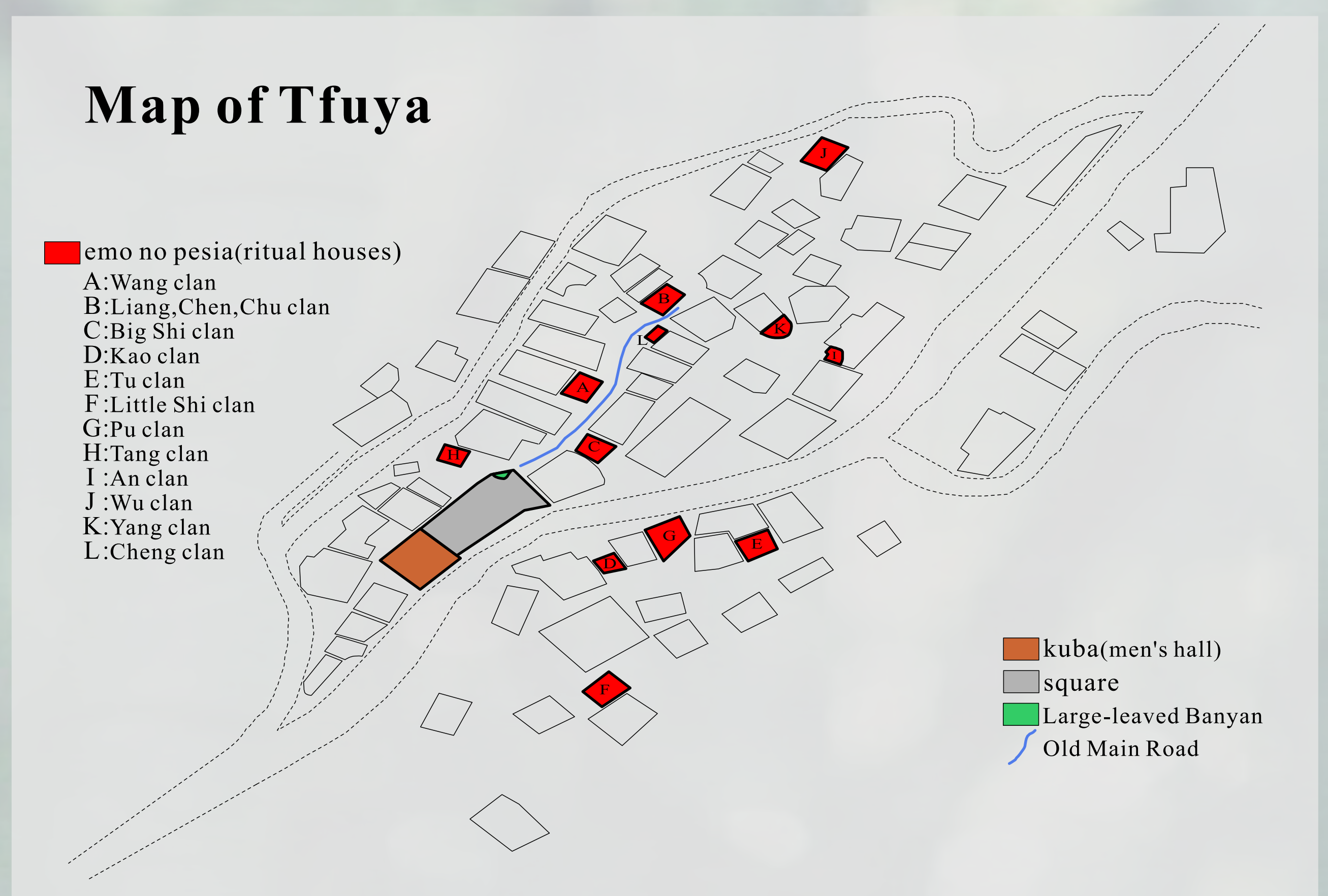
## Expression of Cosmology in Space

**Emo no pesia (ritual houses):** The relations between clans are government by the ownership of emo no pesia (ritual houses) and a series of rituals. The Tsou believe that the existence and continuity of clans are defined by ritual houses. If there is no ritual house, there is no clan.

**Kuba (men's hall):** The kuba, the men's hall, is the political and religious center exclusively for major villages and the arena for hosting the Mayasvi. It is a sacred space and the most symbolic place for maintaining the social hierarchy in the Tsou society.

**Major and Minor Villages:** The major and minor villages are spatial manifestation of social hierarchy unique to the Tsou people. The hierarchy is also displayed through the ownership of religious buildings such as ritual houses and men's halls as well as the rights to host the Mayasvi and the Homeyaya.

## Map of Tfuya



map of tfuya



procession in Mayasvi (shot by Mose 2023/02/10)



preparing the offering for the goddess of millet in Mayasvi