

Chapter 3

The Developmental Cycle

The following chapter describes stages in the life of villagers in Pondok Tinggi. Two caveats should be registered. First, I am not trying to be comprehensive. The intention is to give an account of only those processes of growing older which involve relations with kin. The focus is on what kinsmen do for one another in the developmental cycle. Second, this account is an abstraction of what I take to be the constant features of the social organisation experienced by most, if not all, Pondok Tinggi villagers. It is important to state this because the complexity of the social organisation and the differentiation which now exists mean that there are considerable differences in the life-styles of families. This is particularly noticeable in the difference between farming and non-farming families. I make no attempt to point out the details of these separate life-styles, since I am principally concerned with the underlying similarities which distinguish life in Pondok Tinggi. Nevertheless, where differences exemplify a change in the structural organisation of the community which affects relations between kin, then I shall touch upon them briefly.

Childhood

Newly married couples are encouraged to have children as soon as possible. Both sets of parents are anxious to have grandchildren from the marriage. The wife's parents in particular welcome the new grandchild since they are the ones who are likely to see the most of it. Even if the husband and wife have set up in their own home the new mother will be expected to bring the baby frequently to her mother's house. There is no especial desire that the first baby should be either a boy or a girl. It is hoped that the marriage will eventually produce children of both sexes. If there are only boys this is considered unfortunate since there is no one to carry on the line, furthermore, there will be no sister for the boys to turn to when they grow older and this is considered a great pity. I once heard it said, for example, that Nantan Tengoh was very unlucky since he had no *anak betino untuk mengurusnya* ("no sister to take care of him") and on my enquiring what this meant precisely I was told that he was in a difficult position because he frequently quarrelled with his wife and when that happened life at home was often made

intolerable for him. Other men in those circumstances would resort to their sisters' houses both for advice and assistance, but Nantan Tengoh could not do this. It was for this reason my informant added, that it was important for a man to have sisters.

If she thinks about it at all a woman may prefer her first child to be a daughter, since she may expect more help about the house, in particular when it comes to looking after younger children, from a daughter. A woman whose first two children are girls will be considered fortunate in this respect. People also say that it is good for the first children to be daughters because in that way one can expect to become a grandparent that much sooner. It is customary to joke with a father in relation to his young daughter that he will be having to look out for a son-in-law soon. The idea of the continuity of generations and the pride of the individual in being part of the reproductive process are, then, notions which carry a great resonance in the society.

The birth of a child takes place without very much stir. It is a private affair of the close family. A woman's mother will be called to give assistance and comfort, and neighbours will help whenever necessary. There are now several trained midwives in Sungai Penuh and Pondok Tinggi and one of them is almost always summoned when the initial labour pains begin. In many cases they will have been consulted from the early stages of pregnancy. Some people will also call in the help of traditional midwives (*belian*) but their role is limited, and although they play a more significant part in more remote villages, in Pondok Tinggi they do very little beyond perhaps massaging the woman in labour. Birth is the affair of women in so far as it is they who make the arrangements, get things ready and prepare the room, but a husband may assist and stay near his wife during the delivery if he can bear the sight. Small children are not encouraged to be present, but young girls may assist in one way or another. Ana, for example, told me that when she was a girl of ten or eleven she was given the job of washing the placenta before it was buried.

There are, as one might expect, various taboos in relation to childbirth and pregnancy, most of which need not concern us here. One, however, is of interest since it reveals something about ideal relations between close kin. If a woman has a difficult labour it is thought that this is a consequence of her having offended one of her close kinsmen. The usual belief is that she has been a difficult child and has been disobedient or rebellious towards her mother. In such circumstances she is told to ask her mother's forgiveness and the mother must step over her body in order to bring the woman some relief. This practice is still very common even among educated and orthodox Muslim families.

Ira had a difficult labour when giving birth to her first child. She was known to have been rather a rebellious daughter and had caused her parents a great deal of worry. Her father-in-law was a respected religious leader in the village. It was decided that she should ask the forgiveness of her parents and her husband and that they should step over her.

Midwives say that in their experience this ritual of stepping over the woman in labour often brings much psychological relief to the woman.

Although the news of a birth quickly gets around and neighbours will go to visit the household and see the new baby, the fact of the birth will not necessarily be celebrated with any especial ritual. What may happen is that in the context of a feast (*kenduri*) held to celebrate various intentions and give ritual thanks (*menduu* = to pray over) a recent birth in the family may be mentioned as one of the reasons for the celebration. Sometimes there may be particular reasons why the celebration of the birth itself should be the principal intention of the *kenduri*. Often it is not the parents of the child who hold the *kenduri* but the grandparents or other close relatives. When it is the latter the birth is often a secondary reason for the ceremony. It is not customary to give the child a name immediately after birth but to wait a few days, and sometimes the *kenduri* celebrating the birth is held as a ceremony of name giving. The people invited will be close members of the family and good friends, the size of the gathering being in direct relation to the status and wealth of the family giving the feast.

The mother bears the main burden of bringing up the baby, breast feeding it on demand and lying with it at nights, but all members of the household will spend some time with the baby, looking after it and cleaning up where necessary. Everyone takes a great delight in having a baby in the house and it becomes a constant subject of conversation as people comment on its antics and the development of skills (*kepandaian*) at each stage of growth. There is a strong desire for physical contact with the baby which is hugged, kissed, caressed and affectionately bitten. It is often carried around the house in a sling simply made by twisting a piece of batik cloth around one's neck and back thus making a pouch where the baby can rest against the chest. Carrying in this way is known as *menggendong*, and it is common to see mothers and elder sisters so carrying their children and younger siblings respectively.

Making a fuss over the baby is not confined to the women of the household. Fathers and brothers also get much pleasure from playing with the baby. In the late afternoon when a man has returned from the fields and bathed he will often take his baby in his arms and go out for a short stroll with it while

waiting for *maghrib*. Relatives who are not members of the household will also pay a lot of attention to the new baby when they visit the house. In particular grandfathers and *mamak* are anxious to cuddle the baby and play with it. When the baby cries they will do their best to appease it by holding it firmly and, with its body vertical, will gently thrust it away from the body and pull it back in a rhythmic motion cooing softly in time to the movement.

No attempt is made to discipline a child until it is about three years old. If it cries someone will always try to pacify it. There is no strict toilet training, but when the child is about a year or a year and a half it will regularly be taken outside and held over a stream and be encouraged to urinate. In Pondok Tinggi, as elsewhere, fashions seem to change in relation to weaning children. In the thirties and forties the age for weaning was between a year and a year and a half. Before that it was customary for children still to be partially on the breast as late as three years old. One favourite story, constantly retold, of the senior *mantri* (medical auxiliary) in the village, a man of about sixty, is how he remembers as a boy saying to his friends that they should wait a minute for him as he was just going indoors for a quick suck at the breast. In the fifties this same *mantri* was being advised by health authorities to encourage people to wean their children at the latest by nine months, since to breast feed any longer, it was said, endangered the mother's health. Within the last five years, however, official policy has changed and now mothers are being advised to breast feed until the children are two years of age. Weaning is accomplished in a variety of ways. I heard of mothers smearing their breasts with red betel juice or with quinine which is, of course, exceptionally bitter, so that the child of its own accord refuses the breast. One mother told me that she simply rocked the baby in a hammock strung from a beam whenever it cried for the breast and that this seems to have worked.

Although Western medicine has been welcomed in Kerinci from the very beginning, in fact since the first few days after the entry of the Dutch army when a mass small pox vaccination campaign got under way, the perinatal period is one where traditional beliefs in the malign influence of spirits in causing illness and death are still generally respected. There are a number of things a pregnant woman may not do and certain foods which she is advised not to eat. A baby just after birth is considered especially susceptible to spirit attack, and often when a neo-nate's behaviour gives cause for alarm a *dukun* (traditional healer) will be called in to utter incantations and burn incense to drive away the evil spirit. As the child grows older parents will more frequently resort to Western medical treatments, going either to the nearby polyclinic or consulting a doctor or a *mantri* in their homes. Sometimes if an illness is chronic parents may be advised by relatives to seek a *dukun* for a

possible remedy.

Between the ages of three, when a younger sibling usually displaces the child as the centre of household attention, and seven when she starts school, the child is gradually introduced to household discipline. It is, one should note, a slow and not an abrupt process. I did not get the impression that a younger sibling was looked upon as a rival for the affections of members of the family or that there was any jealousy. By the time a child is three she is constantly in and out of the households of relatives, grandparents and uncles and aunts on both sides of the family, those living closest being the most frequently visited. Thus during the daytime she may well spend most of her time outside the parental home. In these circumstances the attention given to the new baby hardly affects her, since she is still an object of great indulgence whenever she goes visiting. Only at nights when she has to yield her place beside her mother to the baby does she sometimes feel unhappy, but she soon falls into the routine of sleeping with other members of the family.

The first attempts to instruct a child are through fulsome praise, mild censure and much teasing. When a child learns to do something through imitation of an adult, for example when she goes through the motions of Islamic praying or when she picks up a children's song which has been sung to her, this is immediately the occasion of a lot of comment. Visitors to the house are told about it and, in fact, will spontaneously often enquire what new things she has been learning, and the small child will be asked to perform, at that age of one and a half to three, not feeling the slightest bit embarrassed. The first type of gentle reproof the child is likely to encounter is when she is told not to pass things with her left hand. She is not severely reprimanded, and after she has been shown to use her right hand time after time eventually it becomes automatic. The reaction to a child throwing a tantrum depends on the individual circumstances of the occasion and the person who is expected to deal with it. From one or two observations I had the impression that fathers were more inclined to yield to a child's demands than a mother. I several times saw a mother smack a small child who was being particularly exasperating - on one occasion the child was refusing to get washed and was screaming and shouting - but I never saw a father strike a small child.

Teasing is employed not only as a medium for instruction, for example when a five year old child is mocked for wanting to sleep with her parents, but also as a mode of play. To my ethnocentric eyes this teasing which was designed to elicit a response of rage and frustration from the small child was excessive. Adults deliberately engage the child in banter which finishes with the latter becoming angry and abusive to the amusement of the adult. One consequence of this teasing, however, is that the child soon acquires a ready

tongue and learns to retort in kind and defend herself in argument with her elders. This type of behaviour does not, of course, encourage the exaggerated deference to a senior generation which is, for example, found in Javanese society.[1]

Besides spending a lot of their time in the households of relatives, children of pre-school age are encouraged to play with their peers. Although boys and girls of that age will quite happily play together it seems that even from an early age girls prefer to play with other girls. Many of their games are direct imitations of tasks which they see their mothers and elder sisters performing. Cooking is a favourite game and one invariably sees in a walk through the village small groups of three or four girls aged between five and nine assiduously cutting up and dicing flowers and grasses and arranging them in the style of meals on banana leaves. Sometimes small boys will participate too, but usually they are happier pulling along toy trucks or playing hide and seek. I once saw a group of boys and girls playing at weddings. They had dressed up and there was a bride and a groom sitting together as in the *bersanding* ceremony of a wedding at which the newly married couple sit together publicly and receive congratulations. I also heard that small children will occasionally play at making love (*bayeu* = having intercourse) apparently trying to imitate what they themselves have witnessed in the bedroom. People are mildly amused at this but try to dissuade children from the game, and parents whose children play the game are highly embarrassed by it.

Girls who first begin to imitate their elders out of a sense of fun soon find that they are expected to do household tasks in earnest. At the age of six or seven besides having to keep an eye on younger siblings they are also expected to be able to run errands, wash dishes and sweep the house, and they will be kept at these tasks by their mothers. At this age, or perhaps slightly younger, they will cease to have so much close physical contact with their male relatives who will be less inclined to hug and kiss them. They also learn the elements of propriety; that there is a right way to sit, that they must dress properly and behave with decorum. It is then, too, that girls learn to perceive very clearly the different roles assigned to men and women in the society. Boys of the same age are not expected to do household tasks at all, except perhaps to run errands occasionally. They are indulged by the adult men, particularly by their grandfathers and their *mamak* who constantly encourage them to demonstrate their individuality and perform and show-off in a way quite different from their sisters, who are expected to be retiring and self-effacing. A father may not like to see his son made too much of but in this respect often finds himself in conflict with his brother-in-law and his father-in-law, so that he is placed in an embarrassing position, especially if

the marriage is still uxorilocal. Young boys are quick to see the contrast between a stern father attempting to impose discipline and an indulgent *mamak*, and often exploit this to their own advantage. The encouragement of this childhood trait of boasting about their own ability and recounting their exploits makes this ultimately into an ingrained habit which persists into adulthood. It is a noticeable characteristic of Kerinci men - which they share with the Minangkabau - that they are very ready to talk about themselves.[2]

In so far as one can generalize, the games that boys play are competitive, those of girls cooperative. One favourite pastime of boys from an early age, for example, is cock-fighting. They are encouraged to look after chickens and one often sees them standing around in groups setting their cocks and hens at one another. Girls prefer to play at housekeeping.

By the age of seven, children have acquired a good rudimentary knowledge of village ways. Through observation they have become familiar with the facts of birth and death. They have attended funerals and watched the digging of graves when often the bones of previously buried corpses have been dug up. They know about procreation from having seen domestic animals copulating and they are beginning to understand about marriage from having attended numerous wedding celebrations. In addition to this they are also aware of rights and obligations between kin. This they have learned from participating in various *kenduri*, watching the preparations for the feast during the daytime and then observing the celebration when the meal is eaten. By attending on their parents on these occasions they have come slowly to recognise a set of kinsmen. They do not know precisely how they are related to all of them, but they know, for example, that whenever certain families hold a *kenduri* inevitably their parents will be invited. Similarly, they have observed that whenever their own parents give a feast certain people will be given a place of honour as guests whereas others will be considered part of the host group. In this way they soon learn to distinguish who are their *teganai*, a term which is frequently mentioned in their hearing. Knowledge of kin is particularly reinforced on the occasion of the two most important religious festivals of the year: Hari Raya Idul Fitri and Hari Raya Haji. At these times it is customary for people to visit each other and one is obliged to pay one's respects to one's close kin. Small children usually go round visiting in the company of their parents, and from the order in which the houses are visited children gradually begin to appreciate who are the kinsmen to whom the family is most closely tied. Older children go around together in groups but are instructed by their parents which people they should visit first of all.

An understanding of the *lurah* structure is not so easy to grasp as an appreciation of who is close kin. Children of six and seven may know that they are members of a particular Rio and that their friends are of another, but they do not seem to grasp the significance of this. It only becomes apparent on the few occasions on which the *lurah* function corporately. Each *lurah*, for example, has its own troupe of small girls who dress up in colourful costumes and perform traditional dances as part of the entertainment when the annual cleaning of the irrigation channels takes place. Thus small girls learn which of their companions are of the same *lurah* as themselves and they note, too, the adult women who are involved in the preparations for the event. Sometimes small girls will accompany their mothers to occasional meetings of the *lurah* held to discuss the appointment of new officers or the financial situation of the *lurah*. Again the emphasis is on cooperation among the women and the girls. Young boys rarely take an interest in affairs of the *lurah*.

More important for young children than the institution of the *lurah* is the place of religious functions and associations. The mosque is a focal point in the lives of the villagers not only because the actual building dominates the landscape of the village, but also because the public baths are located in its precincts. This is the place where women who live nearby come to wash the clothes early in the morning. It also functions as a village hall where regular meetings take place, and of course it is the centre for religious activities, not only for the daily prayers and communal prayer on Friday, but also for evening homilies and the meetings of Koranic recitation groups. Children are encouraged to observe religious practices from an early age and seem to enjoy the communal rituals. Girls like going off together dressed in their *sarong* to evening prayer at dusk. It gives them a brief respite from the daily chores when they can meet each other and exchange news. Small girls enjoy accompanying their elder sisters and coming home together in the dark giggling and excited.

Sometimes religious instruction groups for children are organised by the *lurah* but recently more seem to be organised on a neighbourhood basis. In addition to the central mosque, the Mesjid Agung, there are several *surau* (small local mosques) in a number of areas in Pondok Tinggi. Some of these originally appear to have been the property of *lurah*, but now all function as neighbourhood institutions. For children, then, participation in communal religious activities tends to reinforce neighbourhood solidarity and cuts across *lurah* divisions. The years between 7 - 13 are those when children probably have the least to do with their kin outside their own household. Their time is taken up with school and its ancillary activities, helping about the house - in the case of girls - and playing with their friends. Children have

by this time acquired a good knowledge of who their kinsmen are and to which of them the family is particularly close, but since kinship ties are of little direct relevance to them, and do not at this stage often impinge on their daily lives, they tend to be indifferent to their relatives and more concerned about their peers. The older generation, too, seems to lose interest in children once they are of school age and the attention of uncles, aunts and grandparents devolves on to the infants in the family.

It is universally accepted now in the village that all children should be encouraged to go to school at least for two or three years until they can learn to read and write. Even among poorer families where the contribution of even a small child would be a welcome addition to domestic labour, it is still felt that she should be given the opportunity of a few years schooling. After a couple of years or so many children do in fact drop out of school, particularly those who live in the areas on the periphery of the village. The long walk to school begins to be burdensome and they have begun to take on more responsible tasks at home. Much of the knowledge they learn at school seems irrelevant to their daily lives, and so giving up school is no great hardship for the child. It is not the parents, usually, who will take the child away from the school but the child herself who simply stops going.

I asked Maria a young mother of twenty who lived in Desa Karya on the border of Pondok Tinggi and Kumun what class she had reached at school. Class three, she said. Why had she left school so early? Well, there were problems. It was a long way. And she had not got on well with the children of the *dusun* (meaning the original village settlement). They had lain in wait for her (*ngintai*) on her way back from school and she became fed up with this and so had simply stopped going to school. Could she read? Yes a little, but she could not write very well.

This account seemed fairly typical of the experience of children from poorer families. Girls appear to stop going to school for passive reasons, not because they dislike school as such but because they want to stay at home and be with their families. Boys on the other hand play truant in a more active fashion. Rather than sit on a school bench a gang of boys might decide to go swimming or loaf around in the town. This type of truancy is much frowned upon by parents but seems to be a problem which besets not only poorer families.

Outside the classroom, children of primary school age are acquiring a proficiency in the basic agricultural skills of the community during these years. We have seen how boys are encouraged to look after poultry. They will also be expected to tend to other animals, principally cows and goats,

which they will either lead to pasture or for which they will procure fodder. They are also learning how to use agricultural tools, in particular the *pacul* (a mattock) and the *parang* (machete). Usually they will learn these skills from their parents or from their elder siblings, but occasionally a grandparent or a *mamak* might take a boy to his garden and put him to work. Girls, besides learning the domestic skills of cooking and housekeeping, will also be expected to know how to handle agricultural tools. Mothers will get them to assist in looking after the kitchen garden or may occasionally take them up to the family *ladang* where they plant vegetables together. Although mothers may prefer to do the daily shopping themselves, often their daughters will accompany them to assist with the baskets, and thus by observation learn how to shop carefully. One major chore which girls execute at this age is taking rice to the mill for grinding. This is a time-consuming business but one which has its compensations, since the mill is a meeting place and children often find their friends there with whom they can play while they are waiting their turn at the mill.

By the time a child is thirteen and just about to leave primary school, she will know how to do most agricultural tasks and will certainly know what is required in looking after a household. Unless there are special circumstances, however, she will not usually have the confidence to do things on her own initiative, and despite her rudimentary competence feels she is still a child and has much to learn. Boys at thirteen are less anxious to emulate adults and it is not until they are slightly older that they will be expected to assist in what are considered men's tasks such as ploughing and harrowing in the rice-fields and clearing the land in upland gardens.

Adolescents learn to work together on cooperative enterprises outside the family and this brings them regularly into contact with the society at large. For girls this working together is a natural extension of the work they have been doing in the household for years and so they find it easy to cooperate with one another. Cooperating is a much more difficult feat for boys. Children who continue on to junior secondary school are encouraged to form study groups which meet regularly at one another's houses in an afternoon or evening. Many of the neighbourhoods have youth associations. Sport is extremely popular: among the boys soccer, and among both sexes volleyball. They learn to participate in organisations, form committees and take on posts of responsibility. Those who leave school and give their time to farming become involved in small work groups known as *bo* or - the larger ones - *andil*. The principle behind these is exchange labour: the group works the land of each of the members in turn. What often happens, however, is that a non-member will need to have some work done on his land, his garden plot may need to be weeded and cleaned up or his rice-field may need to be dug

up, he therefore hires the *bo*, paying a per capita sum to the person whose turn it is to receive the labour of the group. This is known as buying a *bo*. Teenagers often work in such groups. It is a good opportunity to earn some money, but perhaps more important it gives them the chance to meet with members of the opposite sex in informal circumstances where joking and casual behaviour are tolerated.

One might argue that the experience of schooling has postponed the maturation of children, since at a time when in the pre-colonial period children would be wholly involved in the life of the community, now much of their energy is consumed by school affairs and related extra-curricular activities. Thus it is only in their teens that children come to appreciate the responsibilities of adulthood, and, linked closely with this, the practical significance of kinship ties. The girls have, it is true, begun to understand the importance of maintaining good relations with one's relatives from an earlier age. They have accompanied their mothers when, for example, there has been a bereavement in a household, and they have seen how a person is comforted and helped. They have helped in the preparation of *kenduri* and have learned to see the subtleties when one relative calls on another for assistance or for the loan of a utensil. The impression which they have is of mutual aid freely given between relatives and neighbours who form a set of people drawn together not only because of kinship but because they have common interests, or live in the same neighbourhood. Although two families of relatives may be equally close as far as kinship distance is concerned, it will be noticed that one's family tends to combine with one rather than the other for reasons unrelated to kinship.

In their teens, however, children begin to discover that kinship consists of more than simply mutual aid. In particular, the involvement of the family with relatives over matters of property and marriage concern them directly. Although not much weight is given to their opinions, they are brought into discussions of inheritance and the division of property. They learn more about the land the family owns and how it was acquired, and the complexities of sharing arrangements are explained. The background to long-standing family quarrels is related in meticulous detail and they may learn, for example, that the *mamak* whom they have always respected has for years been depriving them of part of their rightful inheritance. All these are issues which it seems are of passionate concern to their parents, and when they hear the vivid accounts of injustices which a parent has suffered their imaginations are fired and so they are initiated into family quarrels. "Why is it that you always speak so disparagingly of Rosnah?" a teenage girl asks while she is preparing the vegetables with her mother, and the latter replies at length going into the history of a dispute. And after her question has been answered

the girl knows far more about not only Rosnah, but about her family and kinsmen in general and the issues which divide and unite them. It tends to be the women of the family who talk together more about relations between kin since in the nature of their work in the house they are more often together than the men. Boys, too, will learn more about their kinsmen, but often in an indirect way, perhaps hearing something from their sisters or overhearing conversations.

Their own household is not the children's only source of information. Differences of opinion and disagreements between the families of their father and their mother will also be raised in conversation with grandparents and uncles and aunts. A mother's mother might speak superciliously about her son-in-law to her granddaughter; a father's sister may hint that she thinks her brother is not being properly respected by her sister-in-law. Inevitably, the children are forced to take sides in disputes, although the only support they are required to give at this early age is in terms of emotional backing. Teenagers learn to guard their tongues and keep their eyes and ears open when they are in the houses of relatives. The days of innocence have passed.

Marriage

Sixty or seventy years ago it was apparently quite common for young girls to get married round about the time of their first menstruation. Often they were still children with little idea of the responsibilities of marriage. Things had simply been arranged for them by their families. In many cases it seems that such marriages were between cross-cousins (*duo piak*) and they were seldom of a long duration, as though the intention was merely to conduct a marriage for the sake of fulfilling a social obligation to kinsmen. One woman I spoke to said that she remembered that when she was first married she was still playing with dolls and had no real conception of what marriage was about. Her mother used to prepare meals for her husband and used to call her in from play with her friends when it was time to eat. Her husband soon grew tired of the arrangement and she was divorced within a few months.

By the twenties and thirties this type of child marriage was no longer practised, although girls were still getting married at the relatively early age of fifteen or sixteen and there was considerable stigma attached to a girl who was not married by the time she was twenty or thereabouts. Sometimes marriages were arranged directly by families of the couple concerned without the girl being aware of what was happening or having any personal acquaintance with her intended husband; sometimes the couple knew each other well and had privately come to an understanding which they asked their families to ratify.

There were still in the colonial period several institutions which allowed boys and girls to meet and get to know each other informally. It was usual, for example, for boys and girls to work together in the fields on the various processes of rice-cultivation. While the men worked digging and ploughing and puddling, their womenfolk would sing songs (*bertale*) in encouragement. This was an opportunity for young men and women to express a liking for one another. Sometimes a boy would make up a party with his friends and early in the morning go down to the field of his sweetheart and plough it. Later the girl and her sisters and her mother would come down to the field bringing food for the party. (There is an amusing account of such an incident in one of the short stories in the volume *Ikan-Ikan Jinak di Sungai Medang* by Dtm. Sahar which describes aspects of village life in Kerinci.)

There was also a recognised form of courting known as *bertandau* which as far as I can gather was practised right up until the mid-thirties. As it was described to me what happened was that a group of young men went to visit the house of a girl who had caught the fancy of one of the men. The men would sit in the front section of the house on the floor and the women would sit together in the rear section separated from the front by a partition. The two groups would then sing *pantun*[3] to each other across the partition until well into the night. These were known as young people's songs (*tale muda-mudi*) and involved a complicated use of allusive simile and metaphor which allowed young people to gauge the affection each felt for the other in an indirect fashion. From the way in which the *pantun* developed extempore in the course of an evening through questions and answers about birds, flowers and natural phenomena, a young man knew which way his suit was faring. On these occasions there was also an opportunity for an exchange of gifts, lovers' tokens, which again was some indication of whether feelings were reciprocated. Several people of the older generation remembered their courting days well and described their experiences to me with a smile of nostalgia. One man gave me the following account when we were sitting on a low parapet together by the side of the main road looking at passers-by and remarking on the style of clothes of the young men.

When I was a boy we didn't dress like that, he said. We deliberately dressed in working clothes as though we were coming back from the fields. This was to impress people. When someone was on the lookout for a son-in-law in those days he wanted someone who he knew worked hard and could pull his weight. Someone who dressed in fine clothes was suspicious, as though he didn't want to work. (I asked about how they used to go courting). We used to give gifts to each other. If a boy liked a girl he would give her a piece of cloth, a shawl (*selendang*) or something like that. And if she wore it then he

knew she liked him, but if after a week or two he noticed that she wasn't wearing it then he would ask for it back saying he needed it. And the girls would give the men gifts too, small pouches for their tobacco or small receptacles which they had woven themselves. There's none of that now.

No reason is ever suggested why these courting customs disappeared. People simply say that the practice died out. There appears to have been some opposition to courting from the orthodox Muslim party (the *kaum muda*) which in the late twenties and thirties was very vocal in its hostility to traditional customs. The objection they had in principle to the practice of *bertandan* was that it condoned flirting and led to undesirable freedom between the sexes, but from accounts one hears today from the people who led the opposition it was not so much active objection as personal indifference which led them to scorn the pursuits of their contemporaries. They had been away in Minangkabau getting religious instruction at an age when their contemporaries were going on courting parties and learning not only how to compose *pantun* but also how to use the rhetoric of formal *adat* speech-making. When they came back they found it difficult to pick up traditional lore, and although one or two of them did attempt to go courting they lacked the necessary skills and were awkward. This noticeable difference in attitude between those who take the Islamic reformist view and those who incline to a more tolerant traditional view of courtship and the getting together of young people, still continues to be a source of earnest debate today, and, *pace* my informant who regretted the passing of the old customs, much of the spirit of traditional custom remains. In order to describe what happens today, however, one has to distinguish between various strata or rather socio-economic groups in the village: those relatively less well off families who live at the edges of the village in the Kampung Lereng area and in the *ladang* upland region; those who live in the centre of the village whose children usually complete their education at some stage of secondary schooling; finally, the village elite whose children go on to further education in Padang or Java.

We have seen that children who live away from the centre of the village tend to drop out of school at an early age and become involved in some sort of farming. In their own neighbourhoods they have their own informal associations of their peers. Not only do they work together in *bo* and *andil* groups but they also meet in the late afternoon to play volleyball or sit together before *maghrib*. In an evening they may come together for a religious homily in the *surau* or to discuss an issue of importance to the neighbourhood. Being rather far from the town they do not have the opportunity to go to the cinema or to wander around the stalls in the town as their friends in

the *dusun* do. Among these young people it seems that the tradition of courting is strong and they frequently visit each other's homes with the approval of their parents. One self-confident young man who lived in Sungai Ampoh, and made a living bringing down long bamboo poles from the jungle which he sold in the village, described the situation as follows. I had asked him if he ever went courting.

Oh yes I go courting (*bertandan*). But you don't sing *pantun*, do you? No we don't do that. The older people used to, but nowadays we don't. It's very difficult making up *pantun*. We just go visiting in the evenings and we talk. That's all. Do you have any special girl? Yes, but I don't know how long it will last. I've had a number of girlfriends but I get tired of them. I usually buy them something in the market, a measure of cloth (*kain*) or something. Have you thought of getting married? Not yet. I'm still young.

In circumstances such as these the young men and women in these peripheral neighbourhoods get to know each other quite well and their families are also well known to one another, so that when a couple do come to an understanding, parents are quick to reach an agreement about the marriage. I was not able to find out much about what was considered sexually permissible between courting couples, but I had the impression that although families who lived some way distant from the *dusun* were more open and permissive about allowing their sons and daughters to mix together, nevertheless the young men and women themselves were shy and restrained in their behaviour to one another.

The situation in the *dusun* is very different. There young people have come very much under the influence of what might be termed international juvenile pop culture and consequently have become absorbed in popular music, fashions, hairstyles and modern gadgetry. This is a phenomenon which has arisen relatively recently, within the last seven years or so since rising prosperity and better inter-island communications have enabled people in Kerinci to be closer in touch with what is happening in Jakarta. Television which arrived in Kerinci in 1978 is hastening the process, and the frequent coming and going of students and others from Padang and elsewhere has cut down the time lag in the communication of new trends. Understandably, boys and girls, particularly the latter, reading magazines about the romances of pop idols or following the serialisation of a contemporary romance in a national newspaper, are quick to be influenced and want to imitate what they hear about. Stories brought back about what goes on even in Padang and the freedoms allowed to young people there encourage youngsters in Sungai Penuh and Pondok Tinggi to seek the same satisfactions. For

boys this often means in the first place experimenting with drink, and it is common to hear of boys from the village getting drunk in the town and embarrassing their families. For girls it is a question of wearing stylish clothes and having their hair curled. For both it often involves flirting and listening to pop music together. Inevitably, incidents occur: a girl gets pregnant, there is great indignation and she and her boyfriend are forced to marry. When this happens the behaviour of young people in general comes under the heavy fire of the religious leaders and influential men of the village.

It is somewhat paradoxical that the religious figures in the community find themselves in opposition, not so much to others, but to the younger members of their own families. The reason is this. These families may, in fact, be taken to represent the elite in so far as they are the best educated and the most prosperous people in the community. Because education seems to them to be the key to success they have encouraged their children to continue with schooling up to the secondary level. But it is precisely these secondary school children who have a much greater access to the national popular culture than their contemporaries who have begun to earn a living. Not only are they able to read fluently and so can skim through books, comics and magazines, but they also have a sophisticated knowledge of the national language which makes it easy for them to follow radio and television programmes. Finally, through personal contact with brothers and sisters who have gone to Padang for further education they have a better knowledge of the outside world. It is they, then, who are the trend setters in the community who listen to pop music and organise clandestine dances. This behaviour is the despair of their parents and often leads to violent arguments within the family.

It is usually the daughters who are the greatest source of disappointment to their parents. Boys in their teens are traditionally expected to sow their wild oats before settling down - this is true, too, of Minangkabau society [4] - and so when they are rebellious, although it causes friction in the family, there is a certain social tolerance of their behaviour. Daughters are expected to be obedient and submissive; consequently, when they, too, begin to answer back, something unheard of in former times, parents find this intolerable. Ultimately, however, if a girl is determined and refuses to pursue her education she gets her way, if necessary forcing the issue by getting herself pregnant. In these circumstances her parents are compelled to marry her off. In the thirties the desire of girls who had the possibility of continuing school to get married was often prompted by a wish to emulate their friends from less well off families who were getting married and setting up households of their own. In the late fifties, however, the reasons changed and they were

often motivated by genuine romantic attachments.

The stationing of an army batallion in Sungai Penuh in 1958 in the aftermath of the PRRI rebellion was the occasion for a number of girls to get to know men outside the narrow range of village society and in a number of cases this led to marriage. Although marriage within the village, or at least within Kerinci is held out to be the ideal, in fact it seems that, from the very first entry of the Dutch, marriage with outsiders has been tolerated. Some of the marriages to soldiers in the fifties have survived so far, particularly in cases where the husband has come to live in the community, others have ended in divorce. It was from that period, however, that the principle seems to have been firmly established by girls that they should be allowed to contract romantic attachments in the modern style - as opposed to the traditional pattern of courtship - and again this was another instance of more privileged girls having the opportunities for meeting people outside the village environment and giving a lead which distressed their parents.

The reasons why parents even today prefer negotiated marriages within the village to allowing their children to wed simply on the basis of ephemeral romantic attraction are very understandable. Families within the village are known to one another, and since a marriage involves not only the married couple but their respective families to a significant degree, it is important that these two families should not only be likely to get on well together but should also be determined to make the marriage a success in every way they can. When two young people get married after only a brief association during which parents and relatives have had little time to work out how they will get on with one another, then the circumstances are far from propitious. One very good example of this occurred during the course of my fieldwork. A boy of about twenty from a leading village family struck up a friendship with a girl in the village whom he had only known slightly before. Within three weeks the couple declared that they were madly in love and the girl threatened to kill herself if her parents refused to allow her to marry the boy. They got married and for the first month or so appeared to be very happy and were often seen walking together in the town. After a few weeks, however, strains began to emerge: the boy did not like residing with his in-laws who lived in much more modest circumstances than his own parents, and the girl did not get on with her mother-in-law. Things went from bad to worse and finally erupted in a rowdy violent altercation carried out in public between the two mothers. The marriage broke up and the boy went back to his parents. From start to finish the whole episode had lasted four months.

Whereas all families in the village are concerned about questions of compatibility, when it comes to the marriage of their sons and daughters the

educated elite whose vision and ambition for their children's success extends beyond the horizons of Kerinci, are anxious to secure marriages which will further their children's careers and enhance their own prestige. For their daughters they look for a husband who has completed tertiary education and has an academic title (Doctorandur, Dokter or Insinyur) which is, or at least used to be until very recently, a certain passport to success measured in terms of wealth and status. Often approaches will be made to a boy's parents or his *mamak* even before his education is complete, when, say, he has only two or three more years to go. (The acquisition of a terminal degree in Indonesia takes, generally speaking, at least six years of tertiary education). Provided the boy is willing to get married prospective parents-in-law may, for example, offer to finance the last few years of his education, a tempting proposition for parents for whom the support of their son is a considerable drain on their economic resources. For their sons in whom they have invested a great deal of their wealth parents will take a number of points into consideration regarding prospective daughters-in-law: her educational attainment, her compatibility with their son, her social *savoir faire*. Principally, however, whatever the blandishments offered by her family in the way of financial support, what will be of most concern is the nature of the alliance which they will *ipso facto* contract by the marriage with the family of the girl: will the two sets of parents get on together; will the wife try to monopolise her husband and draw him away from his natal family; will she expect him to support her younger siblings; is she likely to get on with her in-laws. But although at this level it is ambitious parents and *mamak* who are actively contemplating the various possibilities and alliances between families which are entailed, nevertheless it is universally recognised that the ultimate decision resides with the couple themselves. Paradoxically in Western eyes, however, it seems that it is precisely the more educated youth which is prepared to leave marriage arrangements to their families and accede to their parents' wishes. In particular, the young men studying in Padang or in Java all feel very strongly the urge to return home and marry someone from Kerinci. There are, it is true, some who sever the umbilical cord altogether - according to the traditional belief those whose placentas were not buried but cast into running water so that there would be no magical ties linking them with their village homes - and these do marry women from other regions than Kerinci, usually to the disappointment of their parents. Most, however, even though their work carries them far from Kerinci, marry women who have been chosen for them largely by their families.

Negotiations and the Marriage Ceremony

Marriage negotiations are a very delicate business.[5] The correct procedures have to be followed very carefully, and parties must be alert and sensitive to all the nuances and subtleties of attitudes and feelings expressed in deliberations where matters are raised in an oblique and indirect manner. It is most important that the occasion never arises where a person may take offence at something said or done, since this is likely to bring negotiations to an abrupt, unsuccessful end. An interested party must not approach a girl directly, for example; they must contact her family first. I recall one instance where this was not done, and consequently the girl's father who might otherwise have been prepared to accept the proposal would have nothing to do with it because he felt slighted.

I do not want to describe these negotiations in any detail, fascinating as they are as an example of the conventions of Malay politesse, and I shall only give a brief sketch of them here. It is customary for the initial overtures to come from the boy's family,[6] a fact which distinguishes practice in Kerinci from that in Minangkabau as people will find out. (*Bukan laki-laki yang dipinang di sini* - It's not the men who receive the proposals here.) Some close relative of the girl's mother, perhaps a *mamak* or a *duo piak*, will be asked to approach the mother and to make enquiries about whether a proposal might be acceptable. Then, if the signs are favourable, a representative of the boy's family may approach the mother or the *mamak* directly but still in an informal way without any commitment on either side. After these initial soundings, if things have gone well, the parents of the girl may approach their daughter and see how she feels about the proposal. Once her agreement has been given, or, to put it in more negative terms which are probably more appropriate in these circumstances, once she has shown that she is not hostile to the proposal, then more formal negotiations can take place.

It is expected that all the close relatives of the two families will know that an engagement is in the offing, although there is an attempt to limit the number of people who know about the matter directly so that in the event of anything going wrong there will be the minimum of embarrassment. The representatives of the two families who will arrange the contract will be the respective *teganai*, and the parents will not be directly involved at all, even though they will have played the major role in deciding whether to accept the proposals in the first instance. Various issues have to be discussed not only concerning matters such as the length of the engagement and when the wedding will take place, but also in relation to what each party may expect from the marriage: where will the couple live, where will the husband's income derive from, what responsibilities will the two spouses have for their

natal families, e.g. will they have to support younger siblings. The answers to all these questions will depend on the individual circumstances in each case. One finds, however, that where both the man and the woman are residing permanently in the village things are quickly arranged and a wedding takes place a week or two after negotiations are complete. When one or other party is away from Kerinci, studying, for example, then it may be necessary to have a long engagement or to arrange a wedding by proxy or to perform what is known as a *nikah gantung* ceremony. The latter is executed when it is agreed that although the couple will be legally married, according to Islamic law, nevertheless they postpone cohabiting until a later date because they are going to be separated for some time. Such an arrangement is more binding than a simple engagement and is, for example, favoured by a girl's parents who wish to secure a son-in-law who is a promising student and who they fear may soon be approached by other families.

Traditionally, when a betrothal was arranged there was an exchange of gifts known as *tando* (tokens). When the marriage was concluded each returned the *tando* to the other. This giving of tokens seems to have been especially significant in former times and is mentioned in one or two of the old ethnographic accounts. These days, although engagement gifts are sometimes exchanged they do not have the same significance. So important was the betrothal in former times that one of the clauses found in lists of laws recorded in the Tambo stipulates the penalties if either party breaks a formal engagement. If the man is responsible for breaking his promise he forfeits his token. If the woman breaks the engagement, however, not only does she forfeit her token but she must pay double to the aggrieved party. This prescription is no longer in force today, and as far as I know there is no penalty for breaking an engagement.

Since there has been much interest recently in anthropological circles about bridewealth and dowry and the direction in which gifts flow on marriage it may be worthwhile mentioning here what the position is in Kerinci, or at least in Pondok Tinggi. The traditional arrangement which people still refer to when describing the nature of Kerinci marriage agreements is that the husband will live in his wife's home after marriage, and for the first one or two years the expenses of the household will be borne by the wife's family. The husband will be expected to work a rice-field allotted to his wife, and after the first harvest the couple, it is hoped, will be able to stand on their own two feet, although they may continue to reside in the wife's home for several more years until they are in a position to build their own house. Thus, in effect, the bride's family promise considerable material support to the couple. The husband for his part brings little into the marriage besides his labour although his family may give the bride one or two gifts of linen to help to set

up the household. As far as cooking utensils are concerned however, the bride will avail herself of what there already is in the house. The expenses of the wedding feast held in the bride's house are borne by her family, but usually the groom's family will make some contribution, offering to provide, for example, the meat for the meals.

As life-styles have become more elaborate over the last fifty years, there has been much variation on the above arrangements. Now it seems that the husband and his family are expected to make a somewhat bigger contribution. This usually means that it is expected that they will provide many of those household items which have become essential in the last half century: beds, mattresses, bed linen, crockery and glassware and other sundry items. On the other hand, as we have seen, when the husband is a student and the couple are living away from Kerinci, the wife's family may well be expected to contribute regularly to the monthly income of the couple. Sometimes they will offer to do this when arranging the marriage as an inducement to the husband's family to agree to the match, sometimes matters will be arranged subsequently after the couple are settled. I once heard a man say in the presence of his son's father-in-law, ostensibly while he was explaining things to me, that it was customary in the old days for the wife's-family to support a newly married couple in the first two years of marriage. This seemed to me a very clear reference to the fact that he thought that the other man should be contributing, as he in fact was, to the household expenses of their married children who were living in Jakarta after the marriage while the husband completed his education.[7]

After a few years of marriage a couple is expected to set up in their own house. Ideally, the land for building will be provided by the wife's family, but the actual house will be built out of funds from the joint estate. The fact that it is the wife's family's land gives her some security, since in the event of a divorce it will be she who retains the house and the husband who has to move out.

So far we have been talking about gifts and contributions that go in the main towards household expenses and are the joint property of husband and wife. There has been no question of a transaction requiring the passing of money or goods from one set of senior relatives to the other - as there seems to be in certain Minangkabau areas where, for example, in Priaman the *mamak* of the husband may well receive something. Mention should be made here, however, of one important Islamic institution, the *mas kawin* or *mahar*, the marriage money, which involves a payment directly from the husband to the wife and becomes her personal property. From the information I could gather it seems that in former times this *mas kawin* could represent a

considerable sum. In a marriage which took place c.1924, for example, the *mas kawin*, which can be whatever the bride asks for, was a rice-field. It appears that at that time the higher the *mas kawin* value the bride and her family could demand and receive, the greater the prestige. In addition it also meant additional security in the event of a divorce. By the thirties, however, it seems that this custom of demanding a high *mas kawin* was no longer being practised. I am not altogether sure what the reason is for this change. Perhaps it is related to the Islamic reformism of the time which frowned on what were considered abuses of the Islamic law, of which the vying over *mas kawin* might have been considered one.

Today the custom is for the bride to ask for a token gift which usually has some direct bearing on the practice of religious duties: a copy of the Koran with a commentary, for example, or a prayer mat. It is possible, however, to interpret the change which has occurred in this respect not as a consequence of religious reform but of social circumstances. For well-to-do families in the past the high demands could be taken to represent a bride's family's desire to obtain some financial security for their daughter. Today one might consider the equivalent to be a husband's professional qualifications. A man with a title has more status on the marriage market not simply because he has a title, but because he is assured of a good income which will provide more than adequately for his wife. It is true that this is no assurance if the couple divorce, but in fact the divorce rate for couples whose marriages have been arranged in this way is low and does not give rise to the same anxiety as the matter did fifty years ago.

The Ceremony

I am here interested in the marriage ceremony only in so far as it brings together a large number of kin who are expected to give their material services to assist the preparations and to give social approval to the wedding by their presence there.

In the several ceremonies held to celebrate a marriage it is useful to distinguish three distinct elements, Islamic, *adat* and modern. The formal ceremony at which the couple are declared man and wife is the Islamic *akad nikah*. This is the rite recognised by the national law and the head of the village and the *kadhi*, who is the official responsible for marrying the couple, must be notified of the intention to perform the *akad nikah*. A fee is paid to the office of the head of the village and distributed among officials, and the marriage is then properly registered under the law. It is the *nikah* ceremony which is essential and it may be performed in conjunction with a traditional *kenduri adat* or it may precede the latter. Sometimes the *kenduri* may be

omitted altogether. The *nikah* ceremony is performed in the house of the bride in the evening. The bride dressed in traditional Kerinci costume waits in an inner room of the house with several female attendants while the guests arrive. The men sit at the front of the house in the reception rooms. These rooms are cleared of furniture and they sit on mats with their backs against the wall. The only women who are guests are those who are especially close to the family and they go to the kitchen at the back of the house and help to prepare the refreshments. The *kadhi* sits in a prominent position on the floor among the other guests flanked by the senior male relatives of the bride and groom who are known as the *marapelai*. The groom dressed in a jacket and tie and wearing a *sarong* sits close by, accompanied by a best man (*kembo*). When everything is ready the groom sits before the *kadhi* and awaits the bride who comes from inside the house accompanied by one or two senior women. As far as I could gather, neither the bride's, nor the groom's *kembo* had to stand in any particular close family relationship to the couple. When the bride comes forward to the centre of the floor she brings with her a *cerana* (a large bronze dish) with prepared *sirih* which she offers to the *kadhi*. The latter then performs the ceremony which, despite the presence of the bride, concerns the groom and the bride's legal representatives under Islamic law (her *wali*, usually her father) more than it concerns her. The Islamic formula is one which has been standardised by the state and contains in the contract of marriage the *tabliq* provisions allowing the wife to initiate a divorce under certain circumstances.

After the rite has been performed the bride and groom retire and the assembled company of men are invited to eat a meal. This is either simple refreshments consisting of sweet rice cakes or it may be something more elaborate. When the meal is over there is the speech-making which is customary whenever a formal meal is held. A representative of the guests thanks the hosts for the meal, asks pardon for any unintentional slight which the guests may have been guilty of and requests permission to leave. A representative of the hosts, who are now considered to be not the father or his family but the *mamak* and his brothers reply thanking the guests for their attendance, repeating the reason for which the celebration was offered, asking pardon in their turn and granting permission for those who so desire to return to their homes. A prayer is said by a leading religious figure among the guests and the men then begin to leave. The bride and groom may re-emerge and guests congratulate the married couple on their way out. The whole occasion from the arrival of the guests to their departure takes about two and a half hours. Unless the marriage is *nikah gantung* (suspended marriage) where the couple have decided ad interim not to cohabit because for some reason they are not yet in a position to set up a joint household, then the groom will be allowed

to take up residence in the bride's house from that night.

Although the *akad nikah* is essentially Islamic, then, the execution of the ceremony shows a curious combination of Islamic and *adat* elements. The traditional strength of the social position of the woman under *adat*, for example, is shown by the fact that the ceremony is in the bride's house and it is her matrilineal kin who are responsible for seeing that the proper rituals are observed. On the other hand, when it comes to the actual *nikah* contract as pronounced by the *kadhi*, then the bride and her family are temporarily forced to withdraw from the stage leaving things to her father and the groom. Curiously, too, although everyone acknowledges that it is the Islamic rite which legalises the marriage contract and bestows social recognition on it, nevertheless, the brevity of the ceremony is an indication that it is not this, but the *adat* ceremony of accompanying the groom (*antar balik*), around which most of the village excitement and interest turns. A description of one such ceremony I witnessed is given in an appendix.

Married Life

Adjustment to married life is easier for women than it is for men. The only real difference which the wife feels in comparison with her routine before marriage is that she must now be more retiring in her own home and she spends more time alone with her husband. For most of the day, however, she is in familiar surroundings under the same roof as her parents and siblings and meeting the same neighbours and friends as she goes about her daily tasks. Perhaps the most difficult aspect of married life for her in the first few weeks is the strangeness of sexual intercourse. Having been taught since she was a girl to be modest in her dress and her behaviour when in the company of men the sudden shift of behaviour which is expected of her in relation to her husband may cause some initial problems, and certainly the new wife feels embarrassed about confronting members of her family in her new role. The strangeness of this novel situation soon appears to wear off, and within a week or two she and the family have adjusted to her new position.

For husbands the first few months of marriage are akin to a painful weaning process. In the first place he must be weaned away from his natal family where for a long time he may have been the spoilt child of his mother and sisters. Where they live is still very much his home he feels, where he is free to wander around the house as he wishes and where he may help himself to anything he fancies. In the house of his in-laws he feels alien, no matter how welcoming and friendly the latter are towards him. It is not only a question of the surroundings being different and not being free to do as he pleases, it is also a matter of feeling awkward in relation to the people of the house.

True, a brash man can appear to make himself at ease talking freely to members of the household, but the dividing line between brashness and being disrespectful to one's in-laws is a thin one, and if he is not careful he may find himself the object of criticism. Consequently, when he is at his wife's home he will retire to his room for most of the time and avoid the company of members of the household. His meals, too, will be taken in the bedroom where his wife will bring them. It is understandable that this is a particularly testing time for the marriage, and indeed, some men find that they are unable to adapt to the new situation and simply leave their wives. Others break themselves in to the changed circumstances by paying frequent visits to their natal home, but they soon realise that unless they are prepared to receive criticism both from their sisters and from their wife, who feels that these visits reflect on her inability to please her husband, then visits to the natal home must decrease.

Equally difficult, perhaps, is the process of breaking with the rhythms of his bachelor life, not only loosening the ties with his old friends but learning a new pace and style of life. It is especially important for him to show his parents-in-law that he is a responsible mature husband, something that frequently does need proving since his bachelor existence may not have given the impression that he was capable of it. First and foremost, he must work regularly and spend time with his wife. Then he must show evidence of thinking about the future: having a family, setting up a house for the family, investing for the future by opening a coffee garden etc. Of course it is not expected that a husband's habits will change overnight after his wedding, and there is a honeymoon period during which he is given a chance to find his legs, and people refrain from making any remarks which may be taken as a criticism, but after a month or so a husband is expected to show at least some sign of good intentions. If he loafs in his room all day or spends his time idling with his bachelor friends, coming home only for meals, then he is likely to find that his in-laws will make his life intolerable for him one way or another with pointed hints.

If the marriage is to be successful the man must get through this weaning stage by turning more and more to his wife for companionship and reorienting his life to his marital home. This means that he must take her more and more into his confidence so that they can plan things together. It is at this point, too, that the wife must perceive that there is often a clash of loyalties between the interests of her husband and her natal family, and again the success of her marriage will depend on how successful she is in negotiating this clash. In fact, this holding the balance between one's husband and one's natal family is the crux of kinship organisation for adults.[8] In Pondok Tinggi this seemed to be a constant problem in marital relations and

although conflicts did not erupt that frequently in public, one was generally aware of how women were often placed in the invidious position of having to choose between husband and close matrilineal relatives. This might, for example, involve defending a husband over a decision to postpone building a house or attacking parents for making unreasonable financial demands on the husband. On the other hand, it might mean taking the parents' side against the husband when the latter appeared unwilling to work the family land or when he spoke disrespectfully of the wife's brothers. The occasions for such conflicts multiply with the progress of the marriage, but, fortunately, the skill and patience of the wife in handling the awkwardness also increases in direct proportion.

The responsibilities of married life make a young husband much more acutely aware of the annual religious and agricultural cycles in the community. Growing up in the village he will have been aware of the seasons of planting and harvesting and the significance of the fasting month followed by Hari Raya, but, before he has had responsibilities, these will never have been events around which he has had to organise his own life. Most young bachelors in Pondok Tinggi are not employed in agriculture but earn day wages in casual employment in the town and although such employment depends to a certain extent on seasonal prosperity and scarcity in the community these factors do not greatly affect their livelihood. Now, however, that a man is married, he has the responsibility of planning how he and his wife will manage at the different times of the year. In the first year while the couple is much helped by the wife's family this is not so critical, but in the following years a man and his wife must learn to manage their resources very carefully according to the seasons of the year. The easiest time in Pondok Tinggi is after the harvest of the rice-crop (May-June) and the coffee harvest (May-July). The months between July and September are ones of unparalleled inactivity. Farmers await the new planting season, traders and entrepreneurs live off the profits they have made in the previous months and it is hard to find casual labourers to assist in the construction work which people find they can afford. The month or two after the harvests is when most marriages take place.

The times of difficulty are the two or three months before the rice harvest when families' stocks of rice have dwindled. This is known as *musim paceklik*, a term borrowed in recent years from the Javanese expression meaning the tight season. When husband and wife have to depend on their own resources and are not able to turn to their families in these circumstances, it can, be a trying time for the new couple, especially in their first year, and, as people will remark sardonically, this is when most divorces occur.

As important as learning to appreciate how to accommodate to the various stages in the agricultural cycle the young couple must also prepare adequately for Hari Raya at the end of Ramadhan. This is a time of considerable expense for a young couple. Not only is this when one is expected to purchase new clothes, but one is also supposed to give gifts to parents and parents-in-law. And in addition one must join in the festivities to celebrate the end of fasting by holding open house and providing light refreshments for guests who call. Among the poorer families this is one of the two or three times a year when they will buy meat. A young husband faced with expenditure such as this for the first time is liable to get into financial difficulties, unless he has a wife who he can rely on to manage the household economy. It has been fortunate for the past few years that in fact Hari Raya Idul Fitri has fallen not too long after the harvest, so that families have been able to enjoy themselves without incurring too many debts.

Economic pressures and the desire to live independently, apart from their parents, bring husband and wife closer together and if the marriage can survive the first two years then it stands a good chance of lasting. For the relatively prosperous couples it is not so much economic pressure as tension within the domestic household which puts the strain on a couple. With the birth of the first child the relationship of a man with his in-laws becomes easier, as though the alliance between the two families had not only found symbolic expression in the marriage but had been realised concretely in the person of the child. The change in the status of the son-in-law not only within the confines of the family but in the society at large is given immediate recognition by the use of the teknonym to address him. For the parents-in-law he is now the father of their grandchild, and although the change of perception does not take place immediately they now look upon him with new respect. In the eyes of society, too, he has reached maturity. Young newly married men are still considered boys, but once a man has become a father then he joins the ranks of the men.

Inability of a couple to have children causes great sorrow. A great deal of effort and much expense will be spent on trying to find a remedy. Besides taking the advice of local doctors couples are prepared to pay the considerable cost of specialist advice in Padang and elsewhere. And if modern medicine fails, they will resort to all kinds of traditional medical practitioners in the hope of a miraculous cure. In fact, childless couples, along with sufferers from chronic incurable complaints, make up the main clientele of those *dukun* who get ephemeral reputations for thaumaturgic results. If she resides in the village a woman who is barren may informally adopt the children of relatives. They are never considered her children but they live in her house and she brings them up paying for their daily expenses and schooling. There

seems to be no legal mechanism for adoption in the *adat* of Pondok Tinggi, but there have been cases where women have adopted children in semi-legal fashion. In one instance a woman bought a girl from her Chinese parents - this occurred not in Kerinci but in a large town in Sumatra - and after a few years living in the *rantau* returned with her to Pondok Tinggi.

Although a man and his family will be welcome to continue to live with his in-laws, especially after the birth of a child, when indeed the grandparents may even reverse the gentle pressure on a son-in-law to set up house separately so that the grandchild remains with them as long as possible, a couple will usually try to move out of the wife's family house after a year or two. By this time the couple will have learned how to depend on each other and will be mature enough to manage on their own. Often the occasion of the marriage of a wife's younger sister will prompt the move, provided the couple have enough capital to set up house. The break with the wife's family and the establishment of an independent nuclear family in this way marks an important stage in the life-cycle which appears to have been a constant feature over time of the social organisation of the community.

Polygamy and Divorce

In Islamic law, under certain conditions, a man is allowed to be married to as many as four wives at any one time. In practice, at least in Indonesia, very few men avail themselves of this opportunity. In Pondok Tinggi I only knew two or three men who had two wives and none who had more than this. It seems that polygamy was more common forty years ago when having more than one wife was considered a sign of status. Polygamy was not a target of the Islamic reforms of the twenties and thirties and in fact both *kaum muda* and *kaum tua* elements supported the principle of polygamy against reforms proposed by the colonial government (see Prins 1960:96). In the fifties and sixties progressive opinion throughout Indonesia began to be critical of polygamy, and although it may still have been common in the more remote villages in Kerinci, people in Pondok Tinggi tended to look upon it with disapproval. The feeling was that if a man wanted to take a second wife then he would do best to divorce his first. In 1974 the state brought out some controversial marriage legislation which after some revisions was eventually made law and is known as the *Undang-Undang Perkawinan*. The result of this legislation was to strengthen the position of women in marriage by making divorce more difficult for a man to obtain, and making polygamy dependent on the approval of the first wife. As far as I could tell, although the law applied in Kerinci, it had not made much difference to the incidence or the manner of divorce, since for some time prior to the new laws public opinion had already given support to the position of women.

In any discussion on polygamy one soon gets a sense of the general social disapproval of it, not only on the part of the women but of the men too. The latter appreciate the domestic difficulties to which the situation gives rise and regard the man who has two wives as being rather absurd if he is a young man, and rather to be pitied if he is of the older generation. Sometimes there are circumstances which excuse a particular case, as in one example I encountered of a man who had taken a second wife when it was found that his first wife was barren. Indeed in this case the man deserved praise, since rather than divorce his first wife which would have been the usual thing in such a situation, he had sought her approval to take a second wife and she had agreed, with the result that the two co-wives got along reasonably well together. This was an exceptional case, however, and in most of the polygamous marriages which I heard of, first wives never reconciled themselves to the situation. I was told one vivid story by a woman about her great-grandmother which illustrated this very well. The great-grandmother had missed her husband from the house for a day or two, and at first had thought nothing of it since he was often away from home on business in other villages. It eventually reached her ears, however, that he had taken a second wife and she was incensed. She decided to lie in wait for the new wife by the roadside and when the latter was passing she pounced on her smearing her with freshly ground chili paste - which has a strong stinging effect - and upbraiding her for stealing her husband. Although this incident happened some years ago women today still recall it with amusement and implicit approval of the feeling which motivated it.

Divorce rates are always a problem to calculate and this is certainly true in Pondok Tinggi. The difficulty arises because it is not always easy to distinguish between divorce and separation, and it seems that a divorce is only officially registered when one party wishes to remarry. Consequently, there seems to be considerable under-reporting. This means that one must be careful interpreting official figures. The records held in the office of the *kepala dusun* gave the following figures:

Table 7 : Divorces in Pondok Tinggi

Year	Number of Marriages	Number of Divorces	
1974	95	4	
1975	119		
1976	115		
1977	138		
1978	147	28	(four year total 1975-78)
1979 (ten months)	123	17	

These figures included the numbers for all the registered population of the twenty two neighbourhoods of Pondok Tinggi and thus included the immigrant population (c.1000 heads of households) as well as the indigenous Pondok Tinggi villagers. There is every reason to believe that the register of marriages is accurate since the law requires that the *kepala dusun* must be informed about all marriages taking place in the village and no one would dare to solemnise a marriage without going through the proper procedure. The number of divorces, however, do not seem to be an accurate reflection of the real facts. The number registered seems too low. One indication of this is that better recording in 1979 reveals a much higher percentage of divorces over marriages than in previous years which cannot be accounted for by any unusual circumstances.

Some comparative figures are available from the annual report of the local Department of Religious Affairs, but again it should be noted that these deal only with those divorces which have been registered. The Department's figures are, however, particularly interesting because they provide some supplementary information about the parties to the divorce, or at least about the husbands. The value of this table is that it offers some confirmation, admittedly slight in view of the doubts about the procedure for recording divorces, that marriages among the less educated tend to be more unstable than among those who have received a secondary education - the reason for this, I have suggested, is that parents take more trouble to arrange the marriages of their educated children and arranged marriages have a greater tendency to endure. Secondly, it is very clear from the table that marriages are most at risk in the first year.

Table 8: Record of the Marriages and Divorces in the Kecamatan of Sungai Penuh in 1978

No. Marriages	No. Divorces	Duration of Marriage (years)				Education				Profession	
		1	1-5	5-10	10+	I.	P.	J.S.	S.S.	Far.	M.
724	41	14	11	6	7	11	22	8	0	23	1

Notes: I. = Illiterate; P. = Primary school; J.S. = Junior Secondary; S.S. = Senior Secondary; Far. = Farmers; M. = Merchants. (Two other categories, civil servants and armed forces were given, but there was no one in either of these.) Figures under the headings of Duration of Marriage and Education do not tally as they should with the number of divorces. This is an error in the original table in the report.

As mentioned above, the main reason for the collapse of marriages in the first year is the inability of the husband to adjust to living with his in-laws. This is particularly the case when a young couple have married out of "love" (*cinta*) without realising the responsibilities of married life or appreciating the change it would mean for them. As far as ephemeral marriages such as these are concerned, it seems that the families of both sides do not take the break up of the marriage too much to heart, since they may not have had high expectations of it. The wife's family may in some cases be aggrieved when they feel that either the husband was trifling with their daughter or has deserted her, leaving her to bear the expenses of bringing up a child.

With regard to those marriages which have been carefully arranged and which have endured for a number of years there is consternation when a separation occurs and a divorce is threatened. From the cases which I got to hear about it appeared that whenever a crisis in a marriage occurred it was rarely the consequence of a single incident but represented the culmination of long-standing difficulties. Sometimes the latter arose simply from incompatibility between husband and wife, but more often the problems sprung from the inability of one of the spouses to adjust to the in-laws. A man can be made to feel humiliated living in the house of his in-laws who, for one reason or other, may take against him. One man I knew well, for example, was constantly aggrieved by the snide remarks of his wife's sister who often complained that the man was a parasite and lived off his mother-in-law. Another common situation arises when a man's family may have been against the marriage right from the start and had someone else in mind as their brother/son's wife, and in order still to have their way, they try to put pressure on the man to seek a divorce. They are constantly fault-finding as

far as the wife and her family are concerned. Any visit to the wife's house is with the intention of seeing how the husband is treated and the slightest evidence that all is not well, or that his in-laws are not behaving towards him with proper consideration, is exploited to the full. The wife for her part, realising the intentions of her husband's family, becomes hostile towards them with the consequence that the situation is exacerbated and the husband is left in an invidious position in the middle. Whenever matters do come to a head, for whatever reason, and a husband decides that there must be a separation or a divorce, the first step he takes is to return to his parental home.

This return of the husband is the first public acknowledgement that there has been a rift in the marriage and it is the signal for the *teganai* of the two families to investigate the matter and to try to bring about a reconciliation. It is in these circumstances, in fact, that the *teganai* comes into his own in his traditional role of representative and mediator. In other types of dispute, families can often come to some compromise without the need to go through the mediation of the *teganai*, and when it comes to major disputes over property these will usually concern matters internal to the family with, for example, brother arguing against sister making it difficult for the *teganai* to intervene satisfactorily. In the case of a separation and the possible break up of a marriage, however, then two different families are concerned which both need to call upon the services of *teganai* as mediators. Once they have been summoned to assist, then the affair takes on a new character. Previously, the animosity between the families will have been largely the outcome of hostility between the women of those two families. As far as domestic issues are concerned men seem very reluctant to become embroiled in petty squabbles and altercations. This reluctance stems both from their generic position in the society as being at once *anak betino* and *anak jantan* and therefore simultaneously the member of two groups, and from what I take to be the psychological insecurity of their general character. Less able to combine and work cooperatively with women they see their safety as lying in non-involvement, since they know they have no male allies to whom they can turn.[9]

The *teganai*, then, are of a much more placid, easy-going disposition than the women they represent, and indeed one of their tasks is often to calm down the emotional outbursts of the latter and to stop them interfering in the actual negotiations which take place. What happens is that men from both families will get together and try to resolve the difficulties as amicably as possible. Agreement will not be reached after one meeting and *teganai* will have to go backwards and forwards consulting with their families about conditions for a reconciliation. If, finally, all parties agree to what the *teganai* propose, then the couple will be reconciled and the husband will be invited

back (*dijemput*) to his wife's house.[10] If the situation has been particularly grave, in order to give tangible expression to the significance of the reconciliation a special *kenduri* will be held at which it will be publicly announced that the couple have had a disagreement, but that the matter is now resolved, and the feast is to give thanks for the happy outcome. At the end of the meal, the couple will go round to each of the invited guests in turn asking their pardon.

If, despite negotiations by the *teganai*, the couple still refuse to be reconciled then a divorce follows. In the days before the new marriage laws it was in principle more difficult for a woman to obtain a divorce, since the initiative had to come from the husband, but, in fact, in practice no man would refuse his wife a divorce if she asked for one. These days it seems that a letter is sent by the husband to his wife saying that he divorces her, and the matter is taken to the Islamic court and officially arranged. If the wife has simply been deserted and not formally divorced, then she may apply to the court directly for a divorce. It is difficult to give a statistical picture of the incidence of divorce and remarriage because of the unavailability of records, but one had the impression from talking to people of the older generation (50 and above) that most men and women had been married several times. The first one or two marriages had been short-lived affairs not lasting more than a year and the third or fourth had been the marriage which endured, ending only in the death of the spouse. I once asked what the record was for the number of marriages anyone in the village had gone through and I was told that there were two well known women in the village one of whom had been married thirteen times, the other fourteen.

One final observation is worth making in relation to the frequency of divorce and remarriage in the twenties and thirties. From what I could gather from conversations it appears that the physical attractiveness of certain women gave them a cachet as far as offers of marriage were concerned. Thus the notion of marriage based on sexual attraction seems not to be a particularly modern idea but to have been current before Western influences reached the society. I rarely heard the features of young girls discussed in the context of their eligibility as wives in contemporary society. People talked more of their personalities or their education or general character. On the other hand, I often heard people saying about old women that they had been very pretty when they had been young and that they had had a number of suitors on that account. The criterion most often used to assess beauty was the complexion of the skin, the fairer the girl, the prettier she was considered to be. Consequently, when a man had married a girl who was particularly dark skinned in preference to a fair girl this was considered strange.

One amusing anecdote described the response which a man once made when he was asked quite bluntly why he had preferred a dark skinned girl. He replied with a *pantun*:

*Biualah kaminta
Asalnya buloak
Biualah ita
Asalnya padoak*

(Indonesian)
*Biarlah kaminta
Asalnya bulat
Asalnya padat (bagus)*

Let it be a *kaminta* (a dark brown nut)
Provided it's round
Let her be dark,
Provided she's nice

Middle Age

Once a man and his wife have set up house on their own and their children have begun to go to school, then middle age, and with it an increased responsibility to participate in village affairs, comes to the couple. This is the prime of a man's life and this is when he will be expected to contribute most to the welfare of the village, both by giving his time and labour to village projects and by setting an example to younger men. The services of both man and wife will be called upon in the running of institutions at all levels: within the *lurah*, informally in the neighbourhood and at the overall level of village organisation.

Within his natal *lurah* a middle-aged man will be eligible for the post of Rio Pemerintah or *nenek-mamak* as it is commonly referred to. Since this post is really the pivot of the whole *lurah* organisation because it is the Rio who is responsible for seeing to the smooth running of the *lurah* in its day to day functioning, various qualifications are required of a candidate for the position. He must be a fairly junior man since he is considered an administrator rather than as an authority in the *lurah*, and indeed one of his duties is to mediate between the elders of the *lurah*, the Depati, and the people in general. Furthermore, he must be conversant with the structure of the *lurah*, which means not only that he has to be familiar with the segmentary divisions within it, but that he has to be personally acquainted with all the families of the *lurah*. By force of circumstances, then, it is in their middle-age

that men become most familiar with the whole descent group organisation and learn in more precise detail what they may have only half-known before about the complex interconnections of families both within the Rio and within the village at large.

As an *anak betino* in his wife's *lurah* the husband also has a role to play. In the first place, whenever some communal activity of the *lurah* is organised, it is expected that he will assist; for example, helping to erect a communal building of the *lurah* or giving some time to working the Rio Pemerintah's fields. In addition, if the man has some special skills or knowledge, in the agricultural or medical fields, for example, then it is expected that he will give the benefit of his advice to the *lurah* both in a formal manner by addressing meetings of the *lurah*, or informally through personal communication to *lurah* members who may come to him asking for information. A man such as this who does have some specialist knowledge often finds himself caught between allegiances to the two *lurah* to which he belongs. This sometimes causes difficulty and one may hear it said, for instance, that a man has become so attached to his wife's *lurah* and her relatives, that he neglects his duties to his natal *lurah*. Again this is something which particularly concerns the middle-aged men who are relatively junior in the *lurah* hierarchy, since once a man is made a *Depati* in his natal *lurah* then he immediately takes on full responsibilities for the welfare of the women of that *lurah* and their families, and although he remains an *anak betino* in the other, it is not expected that he will be so committed to it.

It is, however, involvement in the everyday affairs of the community, rather than the sporadic calls upon their services which the *lurah* makes, which becomes the focus of the middle-aged couple's lives. To a certain extent, even before they moved out of the parental home, the husband and wife would have participated in the organisations of the community, but it is especially after they have set up house on their own, often in a new neighbourhood, that the life of the community offers them scope for their own individual development as a family. The new independence which they have achieved does not mean that they cut themselves off from their families but it does mean that the kin of the husband and wife do not provide the only major contextual situation in which the couple and their children have the opportunity to create and deepen personal relationships. In the new surroundings the couple get to know people with whom they may well have been acquainted earlier, but with whom they were never intimate. They begin to know the owners of the small *lepau* (small shop) in the neighbourhood; they use the local *surau* and they have dealings with the *ketua RT*. In this way they build up a new range of acquaintances and acquire different routines and habits of living, so that gradually the association with close kin

loses some of the central significance it had for them when they were still living with their parents. The more committed the couple become to the new community as they settle in, and the more they accept official posts of responsibility, then the more the family breaks out of what can be the confining restrictions of inward looking kinship relationships and takes on a more independent character.

For a woman the new circumstances mean the opportunity to learn different domestic skills. Having followed the examples of the senior women in her family since childhood she has exhausted what they can teach her and thus she is ready to take up something new. Women seem to be passionately interested, for example, in expanding their culinary skills and they learn from each other trying out new recipes, borrowing difficult to obtain kitchen utensils and recording ideas for cooking in closely guarded notebooks. The height of culinary activity is of course at Hari Raya when in addition to cooking the various curries and *rendang* and preparing the *lemang* (sticky rice cooked in bamboo pipes in a fire) every family is busy preparing cakes and biscuits and helping each other. Occasional cookery courses given in Sungai Penuh by Chinese residents or women with domestic science qualifications are popular and well attended by women from the village. Sometimes the knowledge newly learned is put to financial advantage when a woman makes a variety of small cakes and sweetmeats. These she then gets a *lepau* to purvey for her on a cash or return basis, or she obtains the help of some small boy to take a tray around the village crying the wares. In fact, as the children grow up and learn to take care of themselves many women do turn to some activity to earn a modest daily income. Those who live in the remote neighbourhoods have their gardens to attend to, and they take down the produce to the market regularly to sell. Some village women are engaged in daily petty trading in the market. They buy directly from the growers who come down into town early in the morning and then they set up a small stall or display their wares on a plastic sheet making a small profit on what they sell. The women in more prosperous families in the village starting with more capital open small shops in which they sell various sundry items. Some villagers manage to make a success of this trading, others find it less easy to combine business practice with the ethics of kinship amity [11] and so find that they soon run into financial difficulties. One very popular activity of the prosperous which arose in 1979 as a consequence of the availability of twenty four hour electricity was the manufacture of ice-lollies which again were distributed to small boys to peddle in large vacuum flasks. Those women who are engaged in professional employment in the civil service as teachers or secretaries or officials of one kind or another have their own organisations which consume much of their time. They are expected to

attend fortnightly meetings and many of them hold positions of office in one or other of these organisations. There are also *arisan* for civil servants and teachers which function as a cooperative savings institution: members pay in a certain sum each month and then they draw lots to decide who takes the money on each occasion. Thus with the expansion of their activities in middle-age, women acquire new interests and friends and become less dependent on their immediate kin for material and psychological support in their daily lives.

Men, too, find it easier to branch off on their own once they are settled into their own house and they feel freer to indulge those hobbies and interests which they had to check when they were living with their in-laws. They now renew acquaintance with former friends or make new male friends of married men who are in a similar position to themselves and they go off together to the pictures in the town, or those who like to gamble will go and play billiards or dominoes. On Mondays there is a meeting of the wild-pig hunting club and the men and their dogs go up into the hills to kill the wild pigs which ravage the gardens in the area. Those men who are in the civil service or in the armed forces spend more time with their colleagues out of office hours, meeting for tennis or visiting each other to clear up official business. Although men at this age tend to see more of each other and are more relaxed in each other's company, nonetheless one still notices that there is a certain awkwardness in the way they behave to each other, a certain formality which one does not see among the women. It is only when two men who are *duo piak* meet that one does see the formality break down, but even in these cases it sometimes seems as if the joking masks feelings of a more ambivalent kind which are latent. There is, for example, considerable pressure on the men at this time in their life to give their family a life-style that will enable them to compete for status with the families of siblings and close relatives, and this implicit rivalry puts a strain on husbands.

Although the couple come into contact less frequently with their relatives and are now preoccupied with their relationships with people who are not usually immediately related to them by kinship, the family does still retain close links with parents and with siblings. There are, as well, occasional *kenduri* held by various kinsmen throughout the year to celebrate particular events and they will be expected to attend. In this way they keep in close touch with their respective natal families and are very much aware of important events which take place within the households of their close kin. The older a person gets the more obligation which he feels towards his parents, and this sense of duty makes both husband and wife constantly mindful of the welfare of their natal households.

One way of assisting parents and relieving them of some of the burden of bringing up the family is to support younger brothers and sisters. The latter are encouraged to visit their elder siblings frequently, and in some cases even to reside with them. Often, all or part of a younger sibling's educational expenses will be borne by the elder siblings, and, when this is a case of supporting someone at a tertiary level who is living away from home, this can represent a considerable sum. Furthermore, whenever a family is able, it will give direct financial assistance to parents in the form of gifts, although the couple will have to take care that the gift giving is equal on both sides of the family in order to avoid recriminations and criticisms. In some cases, however, the gifts may still be flowing from the parents to the children, although this may often be a question of making available land for the family's use rather than any direct financial contribution.

Middle-age is also the time when children begin to assume increasing importance with a couple. While they were still living with in-laws much of the arduousness of child-rearing had been taken from them by the services of other members of the household, and consequently a young couple had been able to spend time doing other things. On the other hand, this had also meant that they spent less time observing their small children grow up and so missed some of the joy and anxiety of attending over the early years of childhood. Now that the family is on its own, more of the parents' attention is given to the children, not only because perforce they have now to do those chores which were formerly done by others, but because questions of schooling and clothing require their decisions. And as the couple's affection and regard for their own children grow, they also find more time for the children of siblings. For a woman this is simply the intensification of emotions and attitudes which she has long held. Even as a young girl she will have had the opportunity to look after the children of elder relatives and she will have felt especially close to the children of her sisters. In the kinship terminology these, too, are her *anak* (as her own children are), and her attentions to them show that in this case it is not simply a question of them falling in to a class of people for whom the term is used. Here the designation seems to imply more. Occasionally a woman might say as a term of reference that is my *anak* when it is, in fact, her sister's child. For no other children in this class would she make such a reference. Now the children of the two sisters are encouraged to play as siblings feeling free and at ease in each other's houses. Towards her brother's children a woman will also feel particularly affectionate, but in a different manner. Her attitude is one of indulgence and when the latter visit her, then she will give them special treats. They are her *kemenakan* not her *anak*, guests rather than members of the household, her brother's wife's children rather than her sister's.

For a man, who will have had less to do with the bringing up of children in his boyhood - although he too will have enjoyed playing with small children and teasing them - accommodating to the needs and desires of the children who now require his attention means learning a role which is new to him, and with which he does not feel all that comfortable. The pleasure which he takes in small infants who not only represent his continuation but also, by their birth, especially that of his eldest child, give him status in society, leads him naturally to delight in them and to want to fondle and play with them. As they grow older, however, he finds himself less equipped to deal with their developing personalities. As we have seen this often leads to strain between fathers and sons in a family. With a brother's children although they, too, are *anak* a man is not especially affectionate, perhaps because with them, too, he feels that he must maintain a certain authority as a parent. He is much happier playing a more indulgent role with his sisters' children, his *kemenakan*. The bond between these two is particularly close and in his visits to his sisters' homes it will be the company of his *kemenakan* more than anything else which draws him there.

In sum, then, we see that middle-age, besides being the time of life when a man and his wife develop their own life-styles and become more integrated into the community at large and less tied to the spheres of interest of their respective families, is also when they take on more responsibility for their kin. Though they may see their parents less, they are more involved directly and indirectly with their welfare. Furthermore, we have noted that although at this stage the association with senior kin is weak, the networks of relationships with kinsmen now spread downwards, as people concern themselves directly with their younger siblings and become more seriously committed to watching over their own and their siblings' children.

The Sixth and Seventh Ages

The birth of grandchildren conveniently marks the beginning of a new stage in the developmental cycle. This is a time when a man's links with his natal family become tenuous once more. There is not much visiting between brothers and they tend to meet only on formal occasions or when family problems arise which require their joint consultation. The men become less frequent visitors at their sisters' homes too. Their *kemenakan* have passed through childhood and the ties of affection and sentiment between *mamak* and *kemenakan* are no longer felt with the same intensity as before. This is not to say that there is any deliberate breaking of association, only that as the *kemenakan* reach adulthood their relationship with their *mamak* changes when the latter begins to assume more responsibility, if not for their daily needs, at least for their general welfare and standing in the community. Thus

he stands in relation to them more often as *teganai* than as *mamak*, and since this role demands that he become involved in constant negotiations and consultations which are both time consuming and troublesome, the contact which a man has with his sisters and their families begins to be more a burden rather than the pleasant habit of daily routine it used to be.

One further reason why a man's relations with his sisters tend to have less warmth about them than previously, is that it is also at this stage in their lives that they come into dispute over matters of property. The death of parents occurs round about the time of the birth of grandchildren and although the occasion of the death may not necessarily precipitate disputes over de facto standing arrangements in relation to the division of property, in fact there may often be tacit resentment about the arrangements which begins to emerge at this time. Whenever this occurs it undermines the relations among siblings and leads to rivalry and dispute which can ultimately only be settled by a formal division of property. When this point has been reached, however, the relations among siblings, or between certain pairs of siblings, may have so soured that there is no prospect of return to the old intimacy.

It seems to be their grandchildren to whom a couple are closest at this time. For a man they take the place which the young *kemenakan* once had in his affections. He can indulge the children without the responsibility of bringing them up. The strength of feeling which a grandfather has for the small child is remarkable and is conspicuous for the observer as perhaps the most intense of all the relations to which a man gives public expression. He carries the child, caresses it, fondles it and plays for hours with it to a degree greater than he may ever have done with his own children. I remember one man saying to me that he had for a long time wanted to hold his own grandchild and when the day came when he finally did so it gave him an intense joy. He said openly that having his grandchild on his knee was more significant for him and gave him greater pleasure than he had had holding any of his own children.

As the grandchildren grow up the bond between them and their grandfather becomes stronger even though they may live apart. It is usually the grandfather who becomes most emotionally close to the child, perhaps just because all the other relationships which he has built up during his life, except that with his wife, are all beginning to disintegrate round about that time and the child becomes the sole repository of his affections. His parents are dead, his children and his *kemenakan* have grown up and moved away and he is less close to his siblings than ever he was, and so the grandchildren fill an important vacuum in his life at this stage.

For women who have never had to experience the same absolute ruptures with their kinsmen, or at least their female kinsmen, the significance of the relationship with their grandchildren is not so central. As their children leave home and they find they have the house more to themselves and have less to do for others they give themselves more to the life of the community outside the household. They meet more frequently with their neighbours; they visit relatives and friends; and they devote more time to assisting one another in the preparation of *kenduri*. Thus the older women in the community tend to congregate in small groups talking and gossiping together while inducting the younger girls into the learning of domestic skills.

This is the time, too, when the thoughts of men and women turn more seriously to the rituals of their religion. Having had little time up till then to do much more than perform their obligations to pray and to fast they now give time to attending the mosque for the *maghrib* prayer in the evening and hearing a sermon, or they rise early in the morning and again attend the communal prayer in the mosque rather than pray in their own homes. They regularly attend Koranic recitations in the evening and save up to offer a sacrifice (*korban*) at the second most important religious feast of their calendar Hari Raya Haji (Id Had). The possibility of going on the haj becomes a major topic of conversation. Even those who cannot afford it talk with great animation about the pilgrimage, and those members of the village who are already Haji find eager listeners for the stories they tell of their adventures and mishaps. The pilgrimage was an important event in the life of the community long before the Islamic reformism of the twenties and thirties and there are records of Kerinci people going to Malaya on the first stage of the journey from the middle of the nineteenth century. In fact, the significance it assumed at a time when ideas about Islam were far from orthodox suggests that it was not only for the sake of religious grace that people desired to go on the pilgrimage but because it represented the achievement of a personal quest for knowledge which became in the eyes of the community a symbol of prestige and status.

The communal preparations when members of the village are about to go on the pilgrimage in any one year are designed to make a great imaginative impact on the people of the village, and for the older generation this is a highlight of the religious calendar. Families hold special *kenduri* in which the intention of one of their member to go on a pilgrimage is announced. Sometimes the elders of the whole *lurah* decide that this is an occasion on which they must act corporately and a special *kenduri* of the *lurah* is organised in which it is proudly announced that this year so many members of the *lurah* are to be pilgrims. For the last three or four years the number of people who have gone from Pondok Tinggi has been between four and ten.[12]

By the time they are approaching the end of their lives old people are increasingly isolated, not physically since their children will see to their general welfare, having them to live together or at least visiting them daily, but emotionally, since their capacity for forming new relationships has gone and those to whom they were once close are either dead or have grown up and developed apart from them. The favourite grandchildren are now adults and no longer have the time and enthusiasm for their grandparents. The great-grandchildren find it difficult to communicate with this generation and make fun of their infirmities, the growing deafness and loss of eyesight which make them even more inaccessible to people.

Within the larger community their voice no longer carries the weight it once did. Men no longer bother to attend village meetings or the gatherings of the *lurah* and the old women are too feeble to venture outside their houses and assist in celebrations. Nevertheless, they continue to work as long as they are at all able. The women, for example, may watch over the rice laid out to dry, occasionally shooing away the chickens, and the men continue to go to the fields to weed or to scratch away at the soil. I once saw an aged man, his back almost bent double, slowly turning the soil of a small plot of *sawah* and when I talked to him and asked him about the events in his life which he recalled, it transpired that his age must have been about 94. Although I heard from members of their families that people in extreme old age grew tetchy and were importunate and difficult to manage, all those whom I met - and admittedly they were those who were not yet bed-ridden - were quiet sober people who appeared well content with their lives.

At death the family gather together and neighbours come to the house to assist. The nature of the funeral celebrations will depend on the standing which the dead person had in the community and the religious views of the close family. The burial takes place quickly within a few hours of death and the *teganai* of the family and the *Rio* of the *lurah* have to act swiftly to make the necessary arrangements for the ceremony. The body will be washed and dressed and laid out and friends and neighbours will stream in and out of the house to pay their last respects and say a prayer. The women come in their best clothes with a shawl draped over their heads and carrying a plate of rice wrapped in a cloth which they present to the widow as a contribution to the funeral meal. They stay in the house comforting the female relatives of the dead person while the men congregate outside. After a while when everyone has had a chance to gather there will be some short speeches: one from a close male relative asking the assembled people to forgive the dead her faults and announcing that anyone who has a debt outstanding should come forward and claim it from the relatives bringing some evidence of the debt; one from an acquaintance of the dead person summarising her life; finally,

one from a religious official, usually the *imam pegawai* of the *lurah* who recites a short prayer. Then the procession moves off, first to the mosque where there is a short prayer over the body and then to the graveyard where a final prayer is offered.

After the burial members of the close family will go back to the dead person's house and again there will be an attempt to comfort the bereaved relatives. As described above, there is also on this occasion some institutionalised joking between *duo piak*. The *kemenakan* of a dead man, for example, will exchange banter with the *anak* and demand some keepsake as a souvenir of the dead. Traditionally - and this custom is still occasionally kept up - all the *kemenakan* would also receive as a gift a brick of salt, an item of great value in pre-colonial times. As for the celebrations which follow that evening and subsequent evenings there still exists within the community some dispute, which seems also to have its origins in the different attitudes of the *kaum muda* and *kaum tua* parties, about whether there should be a number of special *kenduri* held on different days (e.g. the seventh, fortieth and hundredth after the death) to commemorate the dead, the *kaum muda* party taking the view that such celebrations are not Islamic in character and involve the families in unnecessary expense. In almost all cases, however, at least one funeral meal is held and there will be an evening of Koranic recitation. There is, however, no conscious or formal attempt through ritual to keep the memory of the dead alive, and although their names will continue to occur in conversation they are soon forgotten, as those who have personal memories of them die in their turn. Rarely does a person know the name of a direct ancestor who died before he was born or when he was only a child. All become confused under the general class of *nenek-moyang* (the ancestors), a vague category of remote people who live on in the imagination of some as the magical guardians of the village.

Conclusion

The characteristic rhythm of the life of individuals in Pondok Tinggi might be described as an oscillatory movement of attraction to and repulsion from a close set of kin, as a person moves through the various stages of ageing. This is particularly marked in the lives of men who experience a number of violent and disorienting breaks from those to whom they are close. As young children they first break with their fathers and become correspondingly close to their *mamak*. In adolescence they move away from their families almost entirely, seeking companionship among their peers, although they still retain a strong emotional attachment to their mothers. The most unsettling break occurs, however, at marriage when willy-nilly they are isolated from their natal families and, to a large extent, from their companions, and have

suddenly to establish a new set of links and associations with affines. The birth of a man's children and of his *kemenakan*, however, brings him once more into the orbit of his family, but whereas formerly his strongest attachments were to his mother and his *mamak*, now his orientation is to his sisters and their families. This is especially pronounced in middle age when after having established his wife and children in a new home he is compelled by his position as a *teganai* to concern himself increasingly with his sister's affairs. With the coming of old age after his *kemenakan* have grown to adulthood and he has ceded his position as *teganai* to them, the association with the family again grows lax and he turns his attention once more to his children and grandchildren. When the latter, too, become adolescents then he retreats for the last time to the periphery of the circle of close intimate kin.

For the women there is the same pattern of oscillation although in their case the depth of the movement to and fro is slight, and there is none of the traumatic breaks with the natal family which the man undergoes, nor the consequent necessity of forever forging new relationships with different sets of kin. It is always with her the question of a gradual intensification of relationships established at an early age. Even those new relationships with people of younger generations do not constitute a profoundly novel experience, since, again, from childhood a woman has been accustomed to looking after younger siblings and fussing over the children of elder brothers and sisters. What this difference between the experience of men and women means in the overall organisation of society is that since women have never, unlike the men, lost their psychological moorings, they are less defensive and hesitant in their relationships within the wider community. They are more open and spontaneous in their display of emotion and at the same time, just as they are liable to find it easier to establish friendships within the community and so work together cooperatively, they are also more prone to get involved in arguments and disputes. Men who rarely have intimate friends with whom they can converse without reserve tend to shy away from domestic disputes, and when called upon by their womenfolk to resolve those which have broken out in the family or the community look for an amicable compromise, trying their best to avoid violent displays of emotion in this sphere.

So far we have been concerned mainly with the structure of affections between kin, their feelings towards one another and the way they interact in the context of domestic issues which arise from day to day. We have touched briefly on the *mamak's* role as mediator and negotiator, but we have not examined in any detail how the dynamics of kinship find expression in matters involving the distribution of property within the community. It is precisely here, however, that we might expect along with other anthropologists (Leach 1964:305) that we might be able to give the most tangible

illustrations of the idea of kinship. It is to this subject, then, that we now turn, but before we can do so we have to spend some time looking at the organisation and distribution of landed property in some sort of historical framework, so that we can view contemporary arrangements in the village in perspective.

Notes

- 1 Some time after I wrote this I came across a comment by a scholar of Javanese society which leads me to think that perhaps this aspect of socialisation is more common throughout Indonesia than I suspected. The writer spoke of his experience of being "startled by the sophistication with which quite small Javanese children held their own in family banter" (Anderson 1978:18).
- 2 One might perhaps argue that although this habit of self-praise is learned from childhood socialisation, the impetus behind the compulsive need to speak out in this way is explicable in terms of social psychology: as a consequence of the precariousness which men feel in a society where traditionally women own the means of production.
- 3 *Pantun* is a Malay verse form consisting of four lines rhyming ab ab. The first couplet carries no significant meaning and is intended simply to establish the rhymes and create an atmosphere appropriate to the pithy expression of the second couplet.
- 4 The Minangkabau term *parewa* referring to those men in the society who are seen as trouble makers and ne'er-do-wells is often used specifically to apply to rebellious young men before they have settled down. The well-known Minangkabau religious figure Hamka was a *parewa* when young by his own confession.
- 5 There is a common simile often used to describe the difficulty of these negotiations: "*seperti tarik sehelai rambut dari tepung*" - "like drawing a strand of hair out of some flour".
- 6 The circumstance mentioned on the previous page in which the families of boys pursuing higher education will often be approached by prospective parents-in-law is an exception to the general practice and seems to have arisen only recently.
- 7 This support of married children living in *rantau* areas is in fact a great drain on the resources of even the more well-to-do families in Pondok Tinggi.
- 8 One knows from examples in the Minangkabau literature (see, for example, the well known novel *Sitti Nurbaya* by Marah Rusli) how a

man can be pulled in different directions by demands from his wife and the needs of his own children. There is also evidence of the kind of conflict which I am describing here which arises when a woman is set against her husband by her parents (see the novel by Nur St. Iskandar: *Karena Mentua* ('Because of Mother-In-Law')).

- 9 In circumstances where they are, however, simply in confrontation with another man then they are more ready to take a stand, although even here as "ethnic" jokes illustrate, their attitudes are curiously ambivalent.
- 10 Since residence after marriage is usually uxorilocal it is the husband who goes back to his mother's house when the situation in the household becomes intolerable. I did, however, know of a case where an elderly man living in his own house had married for the fifth time and his new wife had come to live with him. They were always having disagreements and on several occasions his wife left him. When this happened the man would go and see one of his nieces and ask her to go to the wife's house and persuade the latter to return to her husband.
- 11 They run into the same problem which Swift (1964) describes for Malays in Malaysian villages: the difficulty of refusing credit to kinsmen and friends who default on debts.
- 12 I learned recently that in 1980 23 people went on the pilgrimage. This is a reflection of the prosperity in the region in recent years which has arisen as a consequence of the high price coffee and cloves has been fetching.