

Socio-Economic Changes in a Malay Padi-Growing Community (Padang Lalang) in Kedah

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Introduction

Padang Lalang is a Malay padi-growing community located about 8 kilometers to the northwest of Alor Setar, the state capital of Kedah, nearly at the center of Kedah plain, the rice bowl of West Malaysia. The area in which the community is located has been developed rapidly in many aspects since the Independence of Malaysia in 1957. Particularly, the introduction of padi double-cropping in the Kedah plain since around 1970 has greatly changed the socio-economic situation of the community.

During the past thirteen years when the community concerned was in process of rapid transformation, the writer visited the community three times to undertake social anthropological fieldwork.¹⁾ In 1964 and 1968-69, he interviewed all households in the community. In 1976, he interviewed 28 households by random sampling in the same community. Beside these fieldwork, he visited the community shortly three times more in 1965, 1968 and 1971 to observe directly changes in the community during the past thirteen years.

The objectives of this paper are based on the data collected during the above fieldwork:

- (1) to consider the characteristics of the organizational life of the community;
- (2) by analyzing the changes in major socio-economic aspects, to see the orientation of change; and
- (3) to consider the implications for rural development in the future.

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1) I did my fieldwork in 1964 as a member of the research team led by the late Dr. Joji Tanase of Kyoto University and in 1968-9 under a project organized by Dr. Keizaburo Kawaguchi of Kyoto University. In 1976 I did my survey under the project, *Ecology, New Technology, Rural Development in Paddy Growing Community*, coordinated by Prof. Shinichi Ichimura, Director of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at Kyoto University. I am grateful to the organizers of the above research projects for giving me opportunities to do fieldwork in Padang Lalang. I am also grateful to Dr. Ungku Aziz, Dr. Mokhzani A. Rahim and Datuk Mohd. Tamin bin Yeop for their unchanging kindness and thoughtfulness. Without their helpful co-operation, my fieldwork could not be carried out successfully. And I wish to thank all my friends in Malaysia and my fellow workers in Japan for their kindness, patience and helpfulness to me, but particularly I am grateful to Paksu Sudin, Pak-ad, Kakiah, Hashim bin Yahya and his family in Padang Lalang and Moy Yen Sim and his family in Alor Janggus. I am indebted to them for their kindness and goodwill.

I Outline of the Village

Administratively, Padang Lalang community comes under the sub-district of Padang Lalang in the district of Kota Setar in the State of Kedah. The state is divided into 10 districts, Kota Setar district comprises 42 sub-districts, and Padang Lalang sub-district is made up of 10 communities. The settlement pattern of the community is rectilinear, with Malay stilted houses, surrounded by tropical trees along a river. Beside the settlement, padi fields extend in checkerboard fashion, and there are no physically clear landmarks demarcating the boundaries with neighboring communities.

The area around the community is low-lying land along the sea, rising only 1–2 meters.²⁾ Since spring tides average 1.38 meters above mean sea level, lock-gates are built on each river as a measure for impeding the inflow of sea water at full tide.

The climate is tropical with two monsoon seasons. The amount of rainfall increases sharply from May because of the southwest monsoon, and the rainy season extends to about October. Rain does not fall uniformly over the area and, consequently, rainfall records show wide variations between stations for daily, monthly and annual totals.³⁾ Total annual rainfall in the area varies between 1778–3048 mm per year. Monthly total rainfall is unpredictable and often occurs in one and two intense storms lasting only a few hours; droughts of several days can occur even in the rainy season.

Daily mean temperatures are uniform throughout the year at around 27°C, but the daily range fluctuates between 17°C at the lowest and 37°C at the highest (1959–69). Relative humidity fluctuates between 54% and 97%; the mean is around 80%.

The soil is of a black-grey color and very cohesive as a result of a high humus content, suitable for rice-growing.

The living conditions of the area have developed rapidly during the last two decades. However, the community with a history of nearly 100 years, does not seem to be an economically stable padi-farming community in the 1950s in view of its ecological environment. In 1951, the canals were still the most important means of communication. It was a day's business to go from the village to Alor Setar at a distance of 8 kilometers by boat through some meandering rivers. In 1955, a bus route was constructed, and the journey was shortened to a 30-minute ride. Because of a new highway constructed in 1964, it now takes only 15 minutes by car.

Before 1960, it was a big problem for the villagers to get good drinking water. Most well water in the village was brackish. The muddiness of the river water, frequent floods during the rainy season and the shortage of water during the dry season did not

2) Dobby, E. H. G., "The North Kedah Plain," *Economic Geography*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 1951, pp. 287–8, p. 295.

3) Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *The Muda Study*. Vol. I, FAO/World Bank Cooperative Programme, Rome, 1975, p. 9.

produce very desirable living conditions. Since 1960, people could get drinking water by water tank lorries provided by the State Government at the request of the head (*penghulu*) of the sub-district. In 1967, a water pipe was laid from Alor Setar to the community and the villagers are now able to get good drinking and bathing water. Electricity was installed by the end of 1976.

Before the drainage and irrigation conditions were improved by means of the implementation of the Muda irrigation scheme, the inter-community roads were in a very poor state. Heavy rains during the rainy season used to create overflow from the rivers into low-lying areas of padi fields, house plots and roads, since the lock-gates were closed at high tide. Such overflow frequently caused seedlings to rot in the low-lying padi fields, making it necessary to transplant new seedlings, and made the roads muddy. There used to be many places in which one could sink in up to one's knees. In the dry season, the soil dried out, becoming so hard that it was impossible to use the land for off-season crops.

Since the living conditions in the community have been improved greatly during the last two decades, the number of households and population in the village has also

Table 1 Households Enumerated by Primary Occupation of Household Heads (P.L.)

Occupation		1964		1968		1976	
		No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
Padi Farmer		111	(67.3)	111	(61.7)	129	(70.8)
Padi Farmer	Teacher	1	(0.6)	2	(1.1)	3	(1.7)
	Carpenter			1	(0.6)	2	(1.0)
	Govt. Employee					1	(0.6)
	Driver					1	(0.6)
	Religious Teacher					1	(0.6)
	Car Repairman					1	(0.6)
	DID Worker	1	(0.6)	1	(0.6)	1	(0.6)
	Fishmonger	1	(0.6)	1	(0.6)		
	Shopkeeper			2	(1.1)		
	Rice Mill Worker			1	(0.6)		
	Padi Farm Worker	23	(13.9)	28	(15.5)	25	(13.7)
Non-Padi Farmer	Carpenter	5	(3.0)	4	(2.2)	3	(1.7)
	Rice Mill Worker	2	(1.2)	7	(3.7)	3	(1.7)
	Hawker			1	(0.6)	2	(1.0)
	Fishmonger	3	(1.8)	3	(1.7)	2	(1.0)
	Teacher			2	(1.1)	1	(0.6)
	Govt. Employee					1	(0.6)
	Casual Laborer	2	(1.2)	4	(2.2)	1	(0.6)
	Shopkeeper	1	(0.6)			1	(0.6)
	Road Construction Laborer			1	(0.6)		
	Unemployed	6	(3.7)	3	(1.7)	2	(1.0)
	Non-farming Landlord	9	(5.5)	8	(4.4)	2	(1.0)
Total		165	(100.0)	180	(100.0)	182	(100.0)

increased especially during the period of the 1960s. In 1964, 165 households and 801 Malays were resident in the village; this increased to 180 households and 897 Malays in 1968. The number of households in the village in 1976 was 182. The increase was mainly due to the return of ex-villagers owning farm land in the area and the immigration of farmers from the hinterland. As Table 1 shows, almost 80%–90% of the total households in the community are engaged in padi-farming, and the number of non-padi farmers is gradually decreasing.

II Organizational Life in the Community

The general feature of Padang Lalang community can be characterized as a loosely organized social system, in the sense used by Embree to characterize the villages in the central plains of Thailand. Following Stiven Piker who described Thai farm villages, we may also use the following characteristics to describe the features of the organizational aspects of Padang Lalang.

- (1) The vagueness of the physical and social boundary of the villages.
- (2) The absence of corporate, extended kin groups.
- (3) The absence of pronounced loyalty to the village on the part of its inhabitants.
- (4) A general paucity of enduring social groups in the villages.⁴⁾

However the term "looseness" does not mean that the community lacks any principles or idea by which it is organized. What we need to clarify is these principles through which it is integrated. In this sense, Padang Lalang community has its own particular principles upon which its integration rests.

An important concept to understand the social characteristics of Malay village is *kampung*. Generally it means a cluster of houses. But villagers use the word in three different sense: (1) a cluster of houses in a compound, (2) a cluster of houses as a community, and, (3) a cluster of houses as an administrative unit, that is, a village. Strictly speaking, Padang Lalang community consists of a row of compounds, generally, with more than two households in their own houses within each compound. The size of this compound's cluster of houses is very flexible, depending upon various socio-economic situations. When it expands, it becomes bigger usually through closely related, bilateral kin ties.

In 1968, only 53 households (29.4%) out of 180 lived in one compound each in Padang Lalang. The remaining 127 households lived in 48 compounds, the smallest one with two households and the biggest one with seven households; on an average there were 2.6 households in a compound.

As Table 2 shows, a typical household in Padang Lalang community consists of

4) Piker, Steven, "Loose Structure and the Analysis of Thai Social Organization," in Hans-Dieter Evers (ed.), *Loosely Structured Social Systems: Thailand in Comparative Perspective*, Southeast Asia Studies, Yale University, New Haven, 1969, pp. 622ff.

Table 2 Number of Household Enumerated by the Number of Household Members (P.L.)

No. of Household Members Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Total	Average
1964	10	14	28	23	29	24	13	13	8	2	1	165	4.85
%	6.1	8.5	16.9	13.9	17.5	14.6	7.9	7.9	4.9	1.2	0.6	100.0	
1968	6	14	24	35	28	29	28	7	5	4	—	180	4.98
%	3.3	7.8	13.3	19.4	15.6	16.1	15.6	3.9	2.8	2.2	—	100.0	
1976	—	3	1	7	4	5	3	1	2	2	—	28	5.50
%	—	10.7	3.6	25.0	14.3	17.9	10.7	3.6	7.1	7.1	—	100.0	

4–5 members. Its family structure is nuclear in form and neolocal in principle, but very flexible in the way it organizes and re-organizes the family members through marriage, divorce, re-marriage and adoption. The form of families in the community is varied in their relation to the constituent members, although nuclear family pattern appears dominant on the surface.

A similar flexibility can be observed in the compound's cluster of households. When a compound is owned by a household of parents and when its constituent households are related by parent and child relations, their relations are fairly clearly integrated by a kind of patron-client relationship. But when the compound is owned by more than two siblings or cousins living together, the membership in it becomes very vague and uncertain, normally resting on the *ad hoc* dyadic ties of the bilateral kindred of the core members.

The same principle works through the organizational life in the Padang Lalang community. Just like the families and compound's cluster of houses, the membership of the community is not certain. No clear organization like a self-government exists in the community. A head called *ketua kampung* exists in the community, but there are no rules to elect him and to provide for his term of office. The way he became the head is vague. He looks like an informal leader among leaders of the community. No community co-operative project in which all households were involved has been carried out during the past thirteen years.

All co-operative activities are organized by an initiator and his followers with whom he has relations through his *ad hoc* dyadic ties, such as his relatives, neighbors and friends. Co-operative labor during padi transplanting and harvesting for mutual aid (*derau*), hired work-parties called "share" groups, and various communal feasts (*kenduri*) are organized in this way.

In Padang Lalang, the biggest and the most endurable co-operative groupings are *syarikat pinggan mangkuk* and *syarikat mati*. The former purchases co-operatively eating vessels and other utensils used during weddings, funerals and other ceremonies, and the

latter is for the co-operative performance of funeral rites by providing the funeral costs on a mutual-aid basis out of accumulated funds contributed by the members. Both of them are organized by two factions in the community. Faction X is led by the head of the community and faction Y is led by two influential persons called G and J. The leaders of both factions are innovative and of task-oriented type as Afifuddin bin Haji Omar pointed out in his interesting study of leadership patterns in the communities of Kedah.⁵⁾ General speaking, however, the members of the former and the latter factions look different in their style of life, political orientation and world view. Faction X shows a preference for rather secular and urbanized aspects of life, supports UMNO, the ruling party in the present Federal Government, and emphasizes the non-Islamic customary tradition in their religion. Faction Y sticks to the Islam-oriented style of life, supports the Islamic party and emphasizes the purified form of Islam.

However, in 1964, when the writer asked 48 farmers to rank five important leaders in the community, leaders of both factions were not scored as the top leaders, as Table 3 indicates. The top four leaders of the community were all the religious leaders and officials of the mosque in the area. They, themselves, stood in a neutral position by becoming members of all *syarikats* organized by both factions. They were not necessarily rich but very careful in keeping harmonious relations with villagers. According to them, *sabar*, which is usually translated as patience, is the most important concept in life. The word indicates an absence of eagerness, impatience, or of headstrong passion,⁶⁾ and the possession of a peaceful mind. A *sabar* man advances carefully through

Table 3 Ranking of the Village Leaders according to the Scoring by Samples (1964 P.L.)

Leaders' Status	Scores	%	Area of Land Owned (relong)
A (Imam)	42	19.0	4
B (Katib)	31	14.0	12
C (Masjid penghulu)	20	9.1	2
D (Bilal)	15	6.8	8
E	13	5.9	17
F	12	5.4	6
G (Leader of <i>syarikats</i> Y)	7	3.2	48.5
H (Head of the community)	7	3.2	20
I (Ex-siak)	7	3.2	12
J (Leader of <i>syarikats</i> Y)	6	2.7	10
.....	—	—	—
Total	221	100.0	

5) Afifuddin bin Haji Omar, *A Study on Leadership Pattern, Activities and Behavior among Leaders of Farmers' Association within the Muda Scheme*. General Manager's Office, MADA, Alor Seter, Kedah, 1972.

6) Geertz, Clifford, *The Religion of Java*. The Free Press, Glencoe, p. 241.

experience and must be patient in keeping harmonious relations. In this sense, politeness and sometimes even dissembling, as a way of concealing one's own wishes in deference to others, are considered good and important.

The organizational life of Padang Lalang community looks "loose" and flexible, but it has its own particular principle and idea reflected in the choice of the top leaders by the villagers, the way of thinking of these leaders, and the manner of village co-operation.

III Changes in Economic Aspects

In the Kedah plain, padi double-cropping has been practiced in the project area since 1973 under the Muda Scheme. It is an irrigation project, implemented between 1966 and 1974, designed to provide irrigation water for the double-cropping of padi on approximately 242,000 acres, farmed by about 51,000 farm families. The project has also sought to increase the supply of farm inputs, expand the credit system, and improve the network of farm roads. While the project was originally conceived as a means of substantially reducing Malaysia's dependence on imported rice, it has also come to be regarded as the principal means of stimulating general economic growth in the two States of Kedah and Perlis.

The primary objective of the Scheme is to improve the standard of living of the farm population within the project area by increasing their incomes through an increase in agricultural production based on;

- (a) the provision of adequate irrigation facilities so that sufficient water is made available for the growing of two crops per year; and
- (b) the provision of increased amounts of better quality inputs through improved research, extension, institutions and organizations.

The project was planned by consultants employed by the Malaysian Government from 1961 to 1964, and submitted to and appraised by the World Bank in 1965. A loan of US\$45 million was approved in late 1965; this became effective in 1966.

The civil engineering works consist of the Muda and Pedu dams and their reservoirs, with storage capacity of about 800,000 acre-feet, a 5-mile long tunnel connecting the two reservoirs, river improvements, diversion works, two main canals and distribution systems, drains, salt-water barriers and tidal gates. It also includes equipment and facilities for the operation and maintenance of these structures.⁷⁾

The rate of uptake of double-cropping and the improvement in farming techniques and yields have been better than anticipated. In general, the response of the farming community to radically changed production possibilities has been very rapid. The varieties of padi suitable for double-cropping was fairly quickly adopted by almost all

7) FAO, *op. cit.*, pp. 1, 13-14.

farmers. Although there are still some farmers who use traditional types of organic fertilizer together with chemical fertilizer, all farmers now use the chemical fertilizers recommended by the authorities.

This successful effect of agricultural extension is attributable to the method employed by the organization responsible for promoting the project. Originally, it was conceived that the Drainage and Irrigation Department of the Ministry of Agriculture would execute the project, but in 1968 the Government considered it necessary to appoint a project coordinator. Since 1969, this post was filled by the same officer who can currently held the post of State Agricultural Officer for Kedah. In this joint role, he has largely obviated inter-departmental conflicts.

From its inception, the project has received strong political backing and its chief executive has had direct access to the higher reaches of Government. This facility, combined with the numerically adequate and technically competent staff, allowed careful preparatory work to be done prior to the introduction of double-cropping in 1970. The Muda Agricultural Development Authority (MADA) was established in early 1970 and the former Project Coordinator became the General Manager of the new Authority. Since 1970, MADA has grown in size and diversified its operations to include sociological and economic studies, industrial development and regional planning.⁸⁾

The most important method of the preparatory works for the introduction of double-cropping employed by MADA was the development of a series of pilot demonstration schemes designed to publicize forthcoming changes and educate farmers to a new and more demanding agricultural calendar and improved levels of farm management. This kind of pilot project is adequate for the area, where, because of the absence of a tightly organized community system, the community organization cannot be effectively mobilized for agricultural extension and where agricultural improvements depend mainly on a farmer's initiative. A large organization such as MADA with a large number of staff, organized by the Government, is necessary where the organizational co-operation among farmers is not expected.

As far as Padang Lalang is concerned, economic changes in the community since the implementation of padi double-cropping have been tremendous. Concerning the occupation of the villagers, the number of full-time padi and part-time padi farmers has increased and that of the non-padi farmers has decreased (for details see Table 1). This is mainly due to the return of ex-villagers who own padi fields in the village because of the improvements in the living environment.

As a result of the change, the average field area owned by the farmers in Padang Lalang has increased from 7.3 *relong*⁹⁾ in 1964 to 8.49 *relong* in 1975, as Tables 4 and 5 show. On the other hand, the average area of field operated has decreased from 6

8) FAO, *op cit.*, p. 65.

9) 1 *relong*=0.285 ha.

relong in 1964 to 5.72 *relong* in 1975, as Tables 6 and 7 show. The rental per year per *relong* in 1964 was M\$77 on an average, but it increased to M\$175 in 1975.

The most impressive change is found in the villagers' income. The average income of the villagers' households was M\$1,387, including non-farm income, in 1968 as shown

Table 4 Number of Households Enumerated by the Size of Farm Owned (1964 P.L.)

Size (<i>relong</i>)	Owner- Tenant	Owner	Owner- Lessor	Owner- Lessor- Tenant	Lessor	Total	%
0- 5	10	9	1	6	11	37	49.9
5-10	4	4	5	2	4	19	25.7
10-15	1	2	3	2		8	10.8
15-20			4			4	5.4
20-25		1	1			2	2.7
25-30				2		2	2.7
30-40				1		1	1.4
40-50				1		1	1.4
Total	15	16	14	14	15	74	100.0
%	20.3	21.6	18.9	18.9	20.3		100.0
Total Area of Farm Owned	57.5	87.25	162	178	57	541.8	
Average Area of Farm Owned	3.8	5.5	11.6	12.7	3.8	7.3	

Table 5 Number of Households Enumerated by the Size of Farm Owned (1976 P.L.)

Size (<i>relong</i>)	Owner- Tenant	Owner	Owner- Lessor	Owner- Lessor- Tenant	Total	%
0- 5		8			8	47.0
5-10	1	2		1	4	23.5
10-15	1	1			2	11.8
15-20			2		2	11.8
40-50				1	1	5.9
Total	2	11	2	2	17	100.0
%	11.8	64.6	11.8	11.8		100.0
Total Area of Farm Owned	19.5	42.0	36.75	46.0	144.25	
Average Area of Farm Owned	9.75	3.82	18.38	23.0	8.49	

Table 6 Number of Households Enumerated by the Size of Farm Operated (1964 P.L.)

Size (<i>relong</i>)	Tenant	Owner- Tenant	Owner	Owner- Lessor	Owner- Lessor- Tenant	Total	%
0- 5	36	1	9	8	3	57	50.0
5-10	14	9	4	4	4	35	30.7
10-15	3	4	2	2	4	15	13.1
15-20	1	1		1	3	6	5.3
20-25			1			1	0.9
Total	54	15	16	15	14	114	100.0
%	47.4	13.2	14.0	13.2	12.2		100.0
Total Area Operated	231.75	137.5	87.25	86.5	138.0	681.0	
Average Area Operated	4.3	9.2	5.5	5.8	9.9	5.9	

Table 7 Number of Households Enumerated by the Size of Farm Operated (1976 P.L.)

Size (<i>relong</i>)	Tenant	Owner- Tenant	Owner	Owner- Lessor	Owner- Lessor- Tenant	Total	%
0- 5	4		8			12	52.2
5-10	1	1	2		2	6	26.1
10-15	1	1	1	1		4	17.4
15-20				1		1	4.3
Total	6	2	11	2	2	23	100.0
%	26.1	8.7	47.8	8.7	8.7		100.0
Total Area Operated	27.0	19.5	42.0	30.0	13.0	131.5	
Average Area Operated	4.5	9.75	3.82	15.0	6.5	5.72	

in Table 8. After the implementation of double-cropping of padi, the average income increased to M\$5,095 in 1975, as shown in Table 9.¹⁰⁾ Generally speaking, the increase in incomes of the small-scale farmers is greater than that of large-scale farmers. However, in this regard, we have to take into consideration the degree of mechanization in padi-farming. Once the mechanization of padi-farming for transplanting and harvesting is employed by large-scale farmers, although it is not widely used now because of the soft soil conditions, it is clear that the opportunities for hired labor available to

10) Tables 8 and 9 show the gross income which was calculated on the basis of the data collected from farmers. From the income, the amount of *zakat* (religious tithe) and the amount of rice kept for home consumption are not deducted, because the amount of them is varied widely by households.

Table 8 Number of Households Enumerated

Occupations Income (M\$)	Farmers				
	Size of Farm Operated (<i>relong</i>)				
	0-3	3-5	5-10	10-15	15-20
0- 300	1 (13)				
300- 500	10 (18)	(5)	(1)		
500-1,000	16 (6)	5 (16)	4 (8)	(1)	
1,000-1,500	6	12 (5)	10 (10)	1	
1,500-2,000	3	4	9 (14)	(1)	
2,000-2,500	1	2	7 (3)	5 (6)	(1)
2,500-3,000		1	2	6 (5)	(2)
3,000-3,500		1	2	(2)	2
3,500-4,000		1	2		
4,000-4,500					
4,500-5,000				2	(1)
5,000-5,500				1	1
5,500-6,000				1	1
Total	37	26	36	16	4
Average Income (M\$)	827	1,519	1,850	3,102	4,319

() = Agricultural income only

Table 9 Number of Households Enumerated by Levels of Income and Occupations (1975-76 P.L.)

Occupations Income (M\$)	Farmers					Casual Laborer & Carpenter	Padi Farm Worker	Total	%
	Size of Farm Operated (<i>relong</i>)								
	0-3	3-5	5-10	10-15	15-20				
0- 499	(4)						1	1	3.6
500- 999	1 (3)							1	3.6
1,000- 1,999	2 (1)		(1)			1	1	4	14.3
2,000- 2,999	2	3 (3)	1 (1)			1		7	25.0
3,000- 3,999		(1)	1			1		2	7.1
4,000- 4,999	2		1 (2)					3	10.7
5,000- 5,999	1		1					2	7.1
6,000- 6,999		1	(1)					1	3.6
7,000- 7,999				(1)				—	—
8,000- 8,999				2 (2)				2	7.1
9,000- 9,999								—	—
10,000-10,999								—	—
11,000-11,999				(1)	1 (1)			1	3.6
12,000-12,999			1	2				3	10.7
13,000-13,999								—	—
14,000-14,999								—	—
15,000-15,999								—	—
16,000-16,999			1					1	3.6
Total	8	4	6	4	1	3	2	28	100.0
Average Income (M\$)	2,915	3,296	7,478	10,086	11,753	2,493	993	5,095	

() = Agricultural income only

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by Levels of Income and Occupations

(1968 P.L.)

Teacher	Casual Laborer, Carpenter & Others	The Aged Lived on Rental Income	Padi Farm Worker	Total	%
		5	13	19	10.5
	4	1	4	19	10.5
	5	4	9	43	23.9
	3	1	2	35	19.5
	5			21	11.7
1	3			19	10.5
				9	5.0
				5	2.8
				3	1.7
				—	—
				2	1.1
				2	1.1
1				3	1.7
2	20	11	28	180	100.0
4,044	1,227	482	435	1,387	

small-scale farmers would decrease. So far, mechanization is found mainly for tillage, although there are a few farmers attempting to use machines for harvesting padi in dry season, because of the lower costs involved. In 1968, only three farm households had tillers, but in 1976 the number has increased to 25.

The second impressive economic change is the decrease in indebtedness. In 1968, it was slowly decreasing due to effective social education by the government directed to discouraging people to borrow money at high interest rates. In 1968, the number of farmers borrowing money from the pawnshop was 45 out of 111. In 1975, only 2 out of 23 farm households did so. The number of credit purchases using *padi kuncha* has also decreased tremendously. In 1968, 62% of the total farmers in the village did *padi kuncha*, but the percentage decreased to 13%. 21 out of the 28 households interviewed in the community in 1976 responded to our question that their income has increased during the past five years and only one sample responded negatively as shown in Table 10. The latter is an old non-farm worker.

Generally speaking, we may say that the villagers' income has increased since the double-cropping of padi. Quite a few houses were being re-built at an expense of between M\$2,000-3,000. One rich farmer was building a new concrete house at an expense of M\$36,000 in 1976.

IV Changes in Social Aspects

The farmers are encouraged to be the members of farmers' association, which was

Table 10 Has Your Household Income Increased during the Past 5 Years? (1975-76 P.L.)

Occupations	Farmers					Casual Laborer & Carpenter	Padi Farm Worker	Total	%
	Area of Farm Operated (<i>relong</i>)								
	0-3	3-5	5-10	10-15	15-20				
Much increased	1				1			2	7.4
Increased	5	4	3	4		2	1	19	70.4
Same	2		3					5	18.5
Decreased						1		1	3.7
Total	8	4	6	4	1	3	1	27	100.0

(no answer 1 case)

established by MADA in 1970 to facilitate extension and marketing services and the supply of credit and physical production factors in Padang Lalang. Notwithstanding the efforts of MADA in this respect, the members of the farmers' association within the community are very small in number. Only 30% of the sample interviewed were members in 1976. All of these were farmers who operated more than 5 *relong* of padi field.¹¹⁾ This low rate of affiliation in the farmers' association seems to be, sociologically speaking, partly due to the absence of solidly institutionalized community organizations, which may be utilized to encourage and direct farmers to be affiliated with the association.

In order to facilitate autonomous co-operative activities, MADA is encouraging farmers to form "work group" of around 4-5 persons. In 1976 in Padang Lalang, two work groups were formed. Both of them were composed of three members. The members of each group are closely related; one consists of two brothers and a son-in-law of one of them, and the other is made up of two brothers and the husband of the wife of one of them.

The most notable change in the social aspects in Padang Lalang is found in the leadership pattern. As already described, in 1964 those leaders considered most important in the community by the villagers were all religious leaders. They were neutral in their attitude toward political and factional activities within the community. They were highly respected by and very influential among the villagers, but very careful in using their influence over them. However, in 1976, those who got the highest scores by the samples interviewed as important leaders in Padang Lalang were two primary school teachers, a religious leader and the head of the community as shown in Table 11. The villagers expect these leaders to settle disputes among them and to convey villagers' needs to the local government. As important qualities to become leaders of the com-

11) Horii, Kenzo, *et al.*, "Kampong Bogor Kudong," in *Padi-Growing Villages in West Malaysia* (in Japanese), Tokyo Daigaku Shuppan, 1977. Horii points out that in the case of Bogor Kudong, the wealthier farmers are not affiliated to farmers' associations.

Table 11 Ranking of the Village Leaders according to the Scoring by Samples (1976 P.L.)

Leaders' Status	Scores	%	Area of Land Owned (<i>relong</i>)
A (School teacher)	17	18.9	0
B (<i>Imam</i>)	16	17.8	4
C (Head of the community)	16	17.8	20
D (School teacher)	12	13.3	0
E	3	3.3	17
F (Civil servant)	2	2.2	2.5
G (<i>Siak</i>)	2	2.2	0
H (<i>Penghulu</i>)	2	2.2	?
I (<i>Bilal</i>)	2	2.2	3
J (Leader of faction Y)	2	2.2	10
.....	1	1.2	0
.....	—	—	—
Total	90	100.0	

munity, they think that having good friends among the government officers and religious piety are important. These results seem to reflect the changing socio-economic situations in Padang Lalang. The villagers appear to require leaders who are able to convey the villagers' needs to the local government.

However, the fact that the religious leaders who were highly evaluated in 1964 were not ranked highly again in 1976 does not mean the villagers' religious consciousness has weakened. Religious education is still considered by them as one of the most important subjects to be taught to children at school.

Another notable social change is villagers' attitudes toward school education. Compared to the 1964 survey, there was found in 1968 an overall tendency among the villagers that their interest in higher education for their children was slowly becoming stronger. In 1976, however, all samples interviewed responded that they wanted to send their children to receive the highest level of education, if possible. Even the poor farmers responded in the same way. In 1968, there were only three middle school (college) students in Form 6, but in 1976 there were two students attending university at Kuala Lumpur and two university graduates, one working as a middle school teacher at a nearby town and another as a government officer at Kuala Lumpur.

Such a change in the villagers' attitudes toward school education may be partly attributable to the rise of their standard of living, but it seems to be mainly due to the particular educational system in Malaysia and to the particular multiracial social structure of Malaysia. Because it is not easy for ordinary rural young people to get jobs in commerce in towns, the best way to obtain jobs is to further their educations and obtain qualifications to be civil servants or school teachers. Eleven out of fourteen parents interviewed want their sons to be civil servants, teachers or clerks, and 9 out of

11 parents want their daughters to be civil servants, teachers or nurses.

V Implications for Rural Development

As we have seen, Padang Lalang does not have any solidly institutionalized base within the community, the concept of which is very vague. An individual-oriented tendency with the emphasis on particularistic and dyadic relations is considered important as an organizational principle.

This fact, on the one hand, makes it easier to implement a large-scale development project initiated by the government such as the Muda project. For instance, MADA could establish various units for water control, extension and credit, and co-operative activities, ignoring the administrative districts and community boundaries. Such units are established in a way cross-cutting community boundaries. Padang Lalang is divided into two different units for water control and co-operative services. Such a division is easily carried out without strong protest from the local community, because of relatively weak farmer allegiance in terms of local attachment.

On the other hand, the fact makes it more difficult to efficiently create any farmers' organizations for extension and co-operative activities. Because of the absence of local self-governing community organizations, the community cannot be mobilized to promote such organizational activities. Any problems which need active co-operation on the part of local farmers are not effectively settled.

As has been analyzed, the leadership pattern of the Padang Lalang community has shown a tendency to change. During the period when single-cropping of padi was practiced, the community was, even if loosely, integrated based on the native values, particularistic and dyadic harmony, which is observed in the ranking of community leaders by the villagers. The top leaders scored highly by the villagers in 1964 were consummatory in that they were considered as carriers of the values of community, while the task-oriented and innovative leaders were scored lowly. They are instrumental in that they serve as means to realize certain purposes. The lower ranking of the latter in 1964 seems to reflect the apprehensions of the villagers that the instrumental leaders might strengthen the tendency to dissolve the we-villagers-against-the-world pattern of social solidarity into local factions. To this extent, the community seems to have been integrated as a whole.

The survey results pertaining to the leadership pattern in the community in 1976 in Padang Lalang shows quite different nuances. The instrumental type of leaders seem to have been evaluated highly by the villagers. The innovative and good organizers are highly evaluated. At this stage, it is very difficult to judge the implication of this change as to whether it reflects the tendency to form a new type of local community organization or that of the growth of many interest groups.

But, from our observation, we may say that when the local community lacks any

solidly institutionalized community organization such as in Padang Lalang, the emphasis on innovation in rural development may dissolve the local solidarity into local factions, such as traditionalists against modernists. Such factionalism may become not only an impediment to rural development, but also prevent the villagers from developing locally-based moral or political institutions of any real strength.

Comments

by MOHD. NOR Ghani*

Let me start off my comments by saying that I probably have been too long in the bureaucracy, my thoughts are probably too bureaucratized and I may be too quick to grasp things pertaining to administration and not the aesthetic points of research in anthropology and the social sciences. I apologize for this.

In the first instance, Prof. Kuchiba's paper focuses on three things, i.e., (a) the characteristics of the community in Kedah that is the topic of the paper; (b) changes in the social economic aspects of village life; and (c) the implications of the above to rural development in Malaysia.

The approach of the paper is based on the participant-observer approach rather than the historico-analytical approach. This is of great significance as it raises in my mind the question of remaining objective in such socio-anthropological enquiry; whether one can remain uninvolved in the process of coldly analyzing society. The question that is further interesting to me is whether or not a social scientist himself should not be part of the process of change when he undertakes research of this type. I am aware, of course, that the Japanese scholars cannot get involved but at the conceptual and intellectual levels, such involvement is legitimate, particularly in devising solutions based, perhaps, on the Japanese experience of rural industrialization.

Prof. Kuchiba's analysis of the concept of the *kampung* involves three aspects: the *kampung* as a cluster of houses in a compound; *kampung* as a cluster of houses in a community — this is a social definition; and *kampung* as an administrative unit. These three aspects are very important and I wish that elaborations can be made by having joint research of scholars and administrators. This is of significance as when government talks about rural development what it means is *kampung* development. The question that arises is what is it they want to develop — the space, community or *kampung* as an administrative unit. Also, how many *kampungs* do we have in Malaysia? — different counts can be made because there is lack of a clear definition of a *kampung*. Further, what is the role of the *ketua kampung*? — he is a man whose territory is unknown. This must be cleared because a lot of things depend on the *ketua kampung* in rural development.

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This and related questions have been looked at by Prof. Kuchiba but I really wish that he had developed his themes in more detail so as to derive some action-oriented measures.

Although I am chairman of a committee attempting to classify *kampungs* into three or four levels of development, I am unsure what a *kampung* is, as a *kampung* does not have any boundaries. There are many types of *kampungs*: *kampungs* with a *ketua kampung* who is not chairman of the *Jawantan Kuasa Kemajuan Kampung* (Village Development Committee); *kampungs* where he is chairman of this committee; *kampungs* with no *ketua kampung*; and *kampungs* without village development committees. If we are to do anything at all in this area, it will have to be well researched and investigated.

Regarding the second aspect, i.e., the changing socio-economic aspects of development, Prof. Kuchiba has mentioned increases in income, reduction of *padi kuncha*, mechanization and so on. How about changes in the value systems underlying all the outward changes mentioned? I think Afifuddin Hj. Omar has done some studies in this area. Prof. Kuchiba has, of course, made mention of some underlying changes such as changes from religious to instrumental leadership which is a relevant point. Also Prof. Kuchiba mentions the three conditions for leadership — wide friendship circle, religious piety and the ability to convey information to and from the government. Mention has also been made of changing attitudes to the education of children. However, an underlying value still seems to be persisting, i.e., farmers want their children to be civil servants. This means that there have been no fundamental change in attitudes to education of their children. We should bear in mind that certain values are instrumental in character, others are conservatory in approach. This means that certain values are crucial in that they can undermine or nullify all other values as in the case of the persistent longing for farmers' children to be white-collar, government servants.

The third point relates more to the absence of local community organizations resulting in the initiatives taken by the government to promote village development. Does this not mean that we are not creating innovative and dynamic communities? The communities created or affected by such government bodies as FELDA and Muda are meant to be independent and dynamic communities, not conformist groups. Another implication is that with a weak community base, one runs counter to anti-poverty measures that are supposed to solidify the community in order to make them self-reliant. Prof. Kuchiba has also mentioned the possibility of factionalism due to changes in religious values that have de-emphasized the role of religious leaders. In such a conflict situation, are the village people capable of resolving their conflicts?

My basic point is that with the role of government in rural development, we are preventing villagers from developing their capabilities in resolving conflicts and overcoming obstacles and problems.

What appears to be the situation in our rural areas is the changing needs and the

changing problems of rural communities. What is required is that there should be changes in values and approaches on the part of those who assist in and facilitate rural development and those whose life-styles are changed. Research is required to show how best the problems brought about by change and development can best be overcome, using both development administrators and the resources of villagers themselves.