

The Malay Family as a Social Circle

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Introduction¹⁾

When analysts speak of 'family-forms' or 'family-structure', they operationally classify the groups, which either the observers or the observed posit as a 'family', according to such indicators as cohabitation (livelihood, meals), co-residence (buildings, land), or common property, by the number, status, and combination of members or developmental cycles. If such an indicator as co-residence is conceived definitely to be a necessary and sufficient condition to the concept of family, then there will be no problems. However, before this supposition is accepted, I would like to argue that it is important to examine the concept of a family as a social circle, which does not necessarily mean a fixed and definite, boundary-maintaining group. Regardless of co-residence, I shall use the term family circle, if an individual regards all members within the circle as persons with whom the individual has social intercourse as a family, or has a change of such intercourse even if it is not presently actualized.

The term 'household' will be used to designate a group of people who think they share a residence and a livelihood. If more than two households gather together on the same piece of land, they will be called a 'compound cluster'. These two terms are included under the wider category of a 'domestic group'.²⁾ These terms are mainly based on the ecological criteria of residence. It seems those ecological family-groups have been often confused with what I shall call the 'family circle'. The difference between the family circle and family-groups cannot be reduced to one of ideal type and reality. The family circle is actually regulated by, or formulated on the basis of, mutual interests, supports, participation, sociability, influence, and so on. It is a social network which exists in the consciousness of a particular individual and is confirmed by

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1) I would like to express my grateful and warm thanks to all the people who have helped me before, during and after the field work in a small village near Melaka Town, Malaysia and *minta maaf batin lahir*.

2) I am quite aware that the terms 'household' and 'compound cluster' are not inclusive enough to cover every actual situation. For example, in one residence there could be more than two 'households', in one compound several wives can live separately from each other, and so on. If needed, other terms may be coined under the category of 'domestic group'. As far as the Malay materials are concerned, however, I see no necessity to coin more terms.

direct or indirect social transactions.

Among various words used in the Malay Peninsula, there seem to be no indigenous words to designate 'family'. The most frequently used word in Melaka where I did my field work from 1971 to 1972 is *keluarga*, which originates from the Sanskrit compound, *kula* (family) plus *warga* (members). The words *kerabat* and *batih* are from Arabic and Javanese respectively. *Kelamin*, which actually means a pair, may be used for family as symbolized by a couple. More Malay-like compounds such as *anak-bini* (children and wife) or *anak-beranak* (multiple of children) also mean family. Apart from these, which are figuratively used, *keluarga* appears to be a correct usage to designate a family circle recognized as a collectivity.

The family-members included by the words mentioned above do not necessarily live together in the same residence. In terms of residence, the unit is a dwelling-house (*rumah*). The term *isi rumah* (*isi*=contents) means people who live together in a house. However, it does not necessarily mean they share the same livelihood. *Berumah*, a derivative from *rumah*, means 'to have a house' as well as 'to be married' or 'to set up house'. More precisely speaking, it should be '*berumah tangga*' where *tangga* means literally 'a ladder with which one enters a house'. *Rumah tangga* may mean a household, homestead, the wedded state, domestic matters and life in a house. Further, the word *serumah* formed by prefixing *se-*, meaning 'one', to *rumah* means 'living together', 'all who live under one roof', and also 'married already'. In contrast to this, *setangga* (*se-*+*tangga*) is only used in a sense of 'neighborhood' (*jiran*).

A lot where a house is situated is *tapak rumah*. *Tapak* refers to the palm of the hand, the sole of the foot, shoe-prints, foundations. So *tapak rumah* is the land under a house, but it also means a compound, a group of houses including gardens and other facilities. As the English word 'compound' suggests, its Malay original, *kampung*, may mean a fenced area containing one or more dwellings and buildings. It also indicates a cluster of dwellings in an area as well as an administrative unit of a village. To indicate one's old home or native land, Malays use *kampung halaman* which literally is a compound of *kampung* and *halaman*, 'garden'. Here *kampung* symbolizes the buildings and *halaman* the land.

In the light of the Malay usages briefly discussed above, I have identified *keluarga* as a family circle, *rumah tangga* as a household, and *kampung* in a narrow sense as a compound-cluster or domestic group. As the family circle is not a fixed group, *keluarga* is also used in a range of various meanings — a nuclear family-group, a household, a family circle, near kin (= *sanak saudara*, *saudara mara*), and relatives (= *saudara*, *adek-beradek*). This fluidity of membership in the consciousness of the villagers is essential in characterizing the elasticity in the boundaries of households.

The formation of a family circle is conditioned by marriage, procreation, adoption, fosterage, by place of residence, separation, or death. From such factors arise various

kinds of relationship — conjugal, cognatic, maternal, paternal, sibling, adoptive. The circle may expand or diminish its range in the course of one's life-span. I shall discuss some salient points about the Malay family circle in terms of marriage, family relationships and family career stages, respectively.

I Marriage and the Formation of Family Circle

Marriage Ceremonies

Marriage conventions are largely divided into two parts: one is a marriage covenant (*akad nikah*, Ar. 'akd)³⁾ based on Muslim law which is called *syari'ah* or *syara'*. The other part is that body of customs, more or less recognized as Malay traditions, which are not necessarily founded on Muslim law itself. The distinction is not made on a theological level but on the level of attitudes of peasants toward the ceremonies. In other words, an Islamic scholar may interpret all of the ceremonies in terms of Muslim law, but the ordinary people themselves consider that the marriage consists of two parts, i.e., of *syara'* and of *adat* and that both of them have to be fulfilled for it to be a proper marriage.⁴⁾

The customary ceremonies are further divided into four sequential stages in Melaka: (1) the betrothal (*pinangan*); (2) the sending of the marriage-settlements (*hantaran belanja*); (3) the wedding ceremony at the bride's house (*perkahwinan*); and (4) the wedding at the bridegroom's house (*pertandingan*).

The covenant rite is usually performed in a bride's village and at her parents' house, if possible. The presence of five persons is the minimum requirement for the rite: a religious official who presides over the rite (*juru nikah*, 'man in charge of *nikah*') or the registrar of the prescribed mosqua area; two witnesses (*saksi*); the bridegroom and the bride's guardian (*wali*). In villages, however, such a meager rite, with only the minimum requirements, is inconceivable. Generally, important relatives (*waris*) of both sides gather together; and they invite mosque officials, *adat* heads, and influential persons connected with the families. When the villagers dispatch a bridegroom's party for a rite in another village, the number of the party may be from ten to twenty, de-

3) Mithaq-an *ghaliz-an*, i.e., a firm covenant (Quran 4: 21). "Marriage in its essentials is a civil contract in Muslim law although it is also of religious significance, being an act commended by the Prophet" (Ahmad, 1965: 176).

4) It is, for example, possible to hear from a peasant explaining a marriage ceremony, that a certain part of the ceremony is not Islamic but *adat* as religious men dislike it. This kind of explanation, of course, may not be true in canonical Islam. A good case in point is a marriage feast. In Muslim law, it (Ar. *walimah*) is an institution of the *Sunnah*. However, peasants consider feasts (Malay, *kenduri*) as of a social, customary nature. There are two words for marriage in Malay: one, *kahwin*, is said to be from Persian; the other, *nikah*, is from Arabic. The people cannot distinguish one from the other but there still seems to be a difference between them in terms of their distribution and users. *Nikah* has a more Arabic, i.e., Islamic, flavor and is used more often by those who are religiously oriented in religious contexts. In daily discourse, *kahwin* is more usually used.

pending on the number of relatives and the social standing of the bridegroom's father. The covenant rite may take place along with the sending of the marriage-settlements or at the same time as either of the weddings or separately. However, the rite is mostly performed in conjunction with either the ceremony of the settlement-sending or the wedding at the bride's house. This is due to the current trend toward reducing the scale and frequency of rituals. It is becoming increasingly difficult in the village to engage large numbers of people for numerous occasions.

The covenant rite is publicly performed on a veranda, i.e., that part of the house used for reception. On the veranda sit religious officials, the bridegroom, the witnesses, the bride's guardian, and the relatives on both sides, all of whom should be men only. The procedures of marriage-ceremonies in general vary from district to district and it is customary to follow those formalities which the villagers of the bride's party subscribe to. The details of the covenant may also differ in different places and with different religious officials. The core of the rite consists of the bridegroom's covenant with the religious official who represents the bride's guardian and the signature of the bride and the bridegroom on the registration card. As I understand it, this covenant is a transaction between the groom and the bride's guardian. On this occasion, the bride's guardian transfers his right and duty to protect her to the bridegroom.⁵⁾

This unilateral contract is compensated for practically by the marriage-settlement and symbolically by the obligatory marriage-payment (*mas kahwin*). The marriage-settlement is fixed through negotiations between the bridegroom's party and the bride's party before the wedding. By the standards of a village BP, the marriage-settlement is from three to four hundred Malaysian dollars⁶⁾ along with certain articles. The money is to be spent for wedding expenses on the bride's side.⁷⁾ Table 1 (*q.v.*) contains figures going back to around 1921 and shows the number of marriages involving the different ranges of marriage-settlements.

The marriage-payment, which is fixed at twenty dollars around BP, is not paid promptly but deferred as a debt (*hutang*) to the bride. In case a husband wants a divorce through no fault of the wife, it is said that he has to pay her back the debt. This debt, again, symbolizes that the transfer of guardianship has not been completed yet and that

5) This transfer of a guardianship is significant in terms of the women's enjoyment of freedom after her divorce or separation from her husband. It symbolizes that she does not have a guardian any more.

6) During the time of the study from 1971 through 1972, US\$1 = M\$2.70.

7) It is interesting to note that the money for the practical marriage-settlement is decorated on a paper tree as its leaves. Although the accompanying articles and the marriage-payments are definitely the bride's property, who the real recipient of the marriage-settlement is, is rather ambiguous because it is supposed to be spent on wedding costs, as the term *hantaran belanja* (lit., 'sending the expenses') suggests. Apart from the real sender and recipient of the money, I see more import in the process of sending itself: the female relatives of the bridegroom prepare the money-tree; male delegates bring it to the bride's guardian; he, in turn, hands it to female relatives on his side; and they unfold the money. Ultimately, however, the money will be kept by the guardian.

Table 1 Amounts of Marriage-Settlement by Year of Marriage

M\$ Year of Marriage	$\alpha \leq 100$	$100 < \alpha \leq 200$	$200 < \alpha \leq 300$	$300 < \alpha \leq 400$	$400 < \alpha \leq 500$	$500 < \alpha$	DK	Total	Average Amount
-1921	1	1	2		1		3	8	260
1922-1931	3	10	2				1	16	168
1932-1941	8	10			1		1	20	145
1942-1945	2 (3)	3	2	1			1	9 (3)	225
1946-1955	3 (5)	12	2		2	1	2 (1)	22 (6)	242
1956-1965	1 (2)	1	5 (1)	6	2		2	17 (3)	331
1966-1970	(1)	1	5	6	2	2	1	17 (1)	419
DK							3 (1)	3 (1)	
Total	18 (11)	38	18 (1)	13	8	3	14 (2)	112 (14)	M\$ 254

Note: Figures in parentheses are the number of cases of re-marriage. All other cases are first marriage.

the husband implicitly acknowledges that the bride's party still retains some guardianship over the bride. Accordingly, the wife seems to have a right to go back to her own natal family circle whenever she wants, although she does not have such a right under Muslim law. Both the amounts of the marriage-settlement and the marriage-payment are written on the registration card of the marriage with a note that the latter is left as a debt incumbent on the bridegroom.

According to Muslim law, the covenant in front of legitimate persons makes the marriage valid, and the registration of marriage legitimizes its legality in accordance with national jurisprudence. However, a marriage, especially a first marriage, without a wedding feast is never recognized socially. If a covenant-rite is performed without a wedding feast, the marriage is called *nikah gantong*, i.e., a marriage in suspension. In such circumstances, the bride and bridegroom can neither cohabit nor consummate their marriage until they have a proper wedding ceremony.⁸⁾

Throughout the marriage ceremonies, there are repetitions of gift exchanges between the bride's and the bridegroom's parties, involving both the *wali* and the *waris*.⁹⁾ The gifts are a pledge of solidarity between the relatives. The covenant is publicly solemnized, but it does not necessarily involve all of the family circles. Only through the exchange (*berbalas-balas*) of gifts do family circles identify themselves within themselves and with each other. On the bridegroom's part, he himself provides the marriage-expenses for marriage; he may leave their administration to his father who,

8) There was a young man who was in a condition of suspension. Apparently he had sexual intercourses with his 'wife' on the basis of Muslim law, he claimed. However, he kept the consummation secret in the village. In towns, such couples may cohabit, but they separate when they go back to their villages.

9) The marriage gift, other than cash, made by the bridegroom to the bride at the time of marriage is called *pemberian*. *Beri* is 'to give' and *pemberian* is a gift.

with the aid of relatives, makes good any deficiency.¹⁰⁾ On the bride's side, the sole responsibility to marry a girl is her father's or guardian's. In an extreme case,¹¹⁾ a man can be married without any relatives around him, but a woman never does this.

Among the marriage ceremonies, the wedding is the most important and the most indispensable and the biggest in scale. The wedding is usually held twice, once in the bride's house and another time in the bridegroom's house. The first one is so that the bridegroom may be introduced into the bride's community. The bridegroom, followed by his friends and relatives with a tambourine (*rebana*) party of ten to fifteen men, follow a procession into the bride's 'territory'. After a ritual in the compound, the bride's party lets the bridegroom in through not the front gate where a veranda is situated, but a side entrance between the main building and the living quarters of the house. Then he is seated on a specially prepared dais (*pelamin*) which is said to simulate a royal dais. The bride is led to a seat next to him. Both have attendants like a king and a queen. They are supposed to remain unperturbed while the rituals are going on. Within the house, only women and children attend the ceremony, while the men remain outside of the house. This ritual of sitting on a dais (which is called *bersanding*, literally, sitting side by side) is the core of marriage-ceremonies for peasants as well as urban dwellers. Everybody is permitted and has a right to examine both of them to their satisfaction. There is a feast outside the house for the men and usually inside for the women guests who are invited to the wedding. The wedding at the bridegroom's house also has a more or less similar procedure as the one at the bride's house. The ceremonies are not considered as initiation rituals into a fixed group but into the social circle, i.e., a family circle, a community, etc., of both sides. Thus, invitations to wedding feasts and their acceptance are carefully guarded against errors.

In summary, the marriage ceremonies contribute to the formation of the family circle in terms of the following elements: (1) the transfer of guardianship through the covenant and the marriage-settlement with a leftover right of the wife's retaining membership in her natal family circle; (2) the confirmation of relationships of new relatives through gift exchange; (3) the public announcement and recognition that the bride and bridegroom have entered into each other's family circle, and (4) the reconfirmation of the range of associations with other family circles by feasts.

Mate Selection

In BP, and also in West Malaysia in general, there are no prescribed rules for selecting mates. In Muslim law, marriage is generally considered *sunat* (meritorious),

10) Of course, this depends on the bridegroom's age at marriage and on the economic position of his father. The pattern described above should be understood in terms of occupation in modern times. Formerly, it might be a father's duty to prepare for his son's marriage.

11) A youth from BP married, in 1971, a local girl in Sarawak. His parents passed away several years ago, but his sisters and *waris* are still in BP. Nobody went to Sarawak to attend the marriage from BP.

but in certain cases it becomes *wajib* (obligatory) or *haram* (forbidden) or *makruh* (reprehensible). One example of forbidden marriage is marriage within the prohibited degrees of relationship. The prohibition extends bilaterally to ascending and descending near kin, but not to cousins. A man may marry any women outside the prohibited degree, except one who is a non-Muslim,¹²⁾ disabled, and so on. This permissibility outside restrictions is the basic principle of Muslim law understood by peasants in general. With this in mind, I shall examine the pattern of mate-selection in BP.

Distributions of age of first marriage are given in Tables 2 and 3. Because of the importance of chastity before marriage among the Malays, the age at a first marriage is rather low for females. In Melaka, the average age at first marriage is later, however, than in Kedah and Kelantan.

Table 2 shows quite a variation in the ages at first marriage of males over forty years old.¹³⁾ This could be explained in terms of individual situations. Those who married late did so because of emigrant labor or of religious education. However, if they had wanted to marry early, they could have done so. This situation seems to have changed since the middle 1950's. The age at first marriage of males below forty years old has converged toward the middle twenties, and marriages in the late teens and in

Table 2 Age of First Marriage (Male)

Present Age	Age of Marriage																		Total
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	36	
20-24					1														1
25-29								3	3	4									10
30-34								2		2	1		1		1				7
35-39								1		2	1	2							6
40-44						1	4				1			1	1				8
45-49			2	1		2	1		1	1	1		1		1				11
50-54					1		1	1	1	1		1			1				7
55-59									1	1					2		1	1	6
60-64			1	1	1					1	1				1	1			7
65-69	1							1	1			1							4
70-74															2				2
75-79																			
80-84																			
85-89							1												1
Total	1		3	2	3	3	7	8	7	12	5	4	2	1	9	1	1	1	70

12) *Kafir musyrik*. When I asked a young man whether he can marry a Christian (the people of *al-Kitab*), he answered no. So I showed him a passage of the Quran which apparently permits such a marriage. He then turned to his *Imam* and came back with an answer that the sacred books Christians hold are not sacred any more because they had been considerably corrupted from the original, and hence Muslims cannot admit the present non-Muslims as people of the sacred books.

13) As usual in this kind of census, I do not deny that the errors would increase in accordance with the age. Older people tend to lack accuracy in figures.

Table 3 Age of First Marriage (Female)

Present Age	Age of Marriage																							Total
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
-19							1	1															2	
20-24							2	1	1	1	3	1	1	1									11	
25-29							1	2	2	2		1			1								9	
30-34							1		1	3		1											6	
35-39							4	3		5		1	1										14	
40-44							3	1	1			2	1										8	
45-49							2	1		4		2		1			1				1		12	
50-54								1													2		3	
55-59	1			1				1				2					1	1		1			8	
60-64						1	2	1		2		1											7	
65-69						1	1	1		1													4	
70-74						1	1																2	
Total	1			1		3	18	13	5	18	3	11	3	2	1		2	1		1		3	86	

the early twenties have almost disappeared. The percentage of unmarried males between the ages of 20 and 24 is 95%; among those 25 to 29 years old it is only 16.7%. All males over thirty years old have been married at least once.

The disappearance of earlier marriage is caused by the delay of the economic independence of the bridegrooms in terms of their prospects for earning a livelihood after marriage and of their ability to meet, even partly, the marriage-expenses.

The age-difference between husbands and wives, which is on the average six to seven years, is wider than in Kedah and Kelantan. Education cannot be denied as a possible agent in delaying an earlier marriage, but most youths give economic uncertainty as a reason for late marriages. In the case of women, there is a norm for marriageable age — from age fourteen through the early twenties. There could be a certain stigma attached to late marriages. Especially in the case of women, it cannot be said that the longer period of education delays their marriage.¹⁴⁾ Although there is a slight trend toward later marriages even among women, Table 3 by and large shows more convergence in the age of marriage than Table 2. This trend is seen from the marriage-rates in each age-group; 5.6% from 15-19; 50% from 20 to 24; and 75% from 25 to 29. That is, if those who are not married get married in the future, the average age of first marriage will be increased. Moreover, owing to the decreasing number of males in rural areas mentioned earlier, an increasing number of females cannot find a mate even in their late twenties. Since the women in rural areas are not very mobile yet, the situation in the future does not look so bright. However, this observation is simply that of an outsider's. A woman who is not married in her late twenties may feel some

14) There are six females in school (in contrast with thirteen males) in the age-group of 15 to 19 years. This is only 16.7% of the whole age-group. Within this age-group the marriage rate is 5.9%. There is one exceptional girl who entered the university in 1972. She apparently sacrificed her marriage for the pursuit of higher education; her younger sister was married at the age of sixteen.

embarrassment, but not to the extent that she will suffer or become nuerotic. It is not her fault but that of her parents who should marry her off. She is not allowed to look for her mate by herself in Muslim law or in the customary tradition.

Although the consent of the woman to be married is considered desirable, or indispensable for ordinary peasants, a father or grandfather can give in marriage a minor girl or an adult woman who is virgin with or without her consent. In order to select a suitable mate for their children, Malay fathers were provided with elaborate rituals in the tradition, e.g., to approach the relatives of a desirable girl, to accept a preliminary negotiation, or to reject it without giving offense. Also, in Islam, according to Nawawi who is said to be among the highest authorities in Malaysia, some considerations should be made in order to determine whether the suitor is a good match or not. Among them similarity of status (Ar. *kufu*) is important in terms of absence of physical defects, birth, character and profession, difference of fortune constituting no cause of misalliance (cited in Ahmad, 1965: 179-180).

Turning to the villagers' viewpoint, they positively look for a mate who is *jodoh* (lit., matching or fit) and who has some relationship, and of course complies with the negative constriction in Muslim law, i.e., who is not within the prohibited degree of marriage. *Jodoh* is a Malay term which designates fitness, balance, equilibrium and harmony, especially as applied to a match between a man and woman. It is part of fate. According to a religiously oriented ordinary villager,

we cannot know five things in this world: the first is *jodoh pertemuan* (marriage match, *temu* meaning 'meeting each other'); the second is *perceraian* (divorce); the third is *rezeki* (livelihood or luck); the fourth is *umur* (length of life); and the last is *tanah kubor* (graveyard). These are in the hand of God (*Tuhan*).

The appropriateness which *jodoh* implies is not formulated in a definite statement such as by Nawawi mentioned above. A match, they say, could be between the rich and the poor or between a villager and an outsider, and so on. One might say that the notion of what is orderly, fit, suitable or right is somewhat after the fact. In other words, the people just do not know if a match is right or not until they see what happens after the marriage. So they can say a marriage is successful because the match was *jodoh* or that it was broken because the match was not really *jodoh*.

The other determining factor of a relationship also works in positive and negative directions. The relationship is that of *saudara*, i.e., relatives. On one side they strengthen their kinship ties through kin-marriages so that kinship relationships become condensed or constricted. On the other hand, they extend their kinship ties through non-kin marriage so that kinship networks expand. The former device was often used in order to protect properties from dispersion when new lands were settled or cultivated. However, along with the fragmentation of land, the emphasis was shifted from the

protection of small landholdings to the possibility of making a livelihood outside the village. Thus, more such chances through alliances were to be had by marrying away from former kinship ties and extending the network of alliance. The latter trend is sanctioned by the fact of who chooses a mate. Since parents, especially mothers, have a strong voice in marriage negotiations, they choose a mate within the field of eligible mates known to them. Hence, children of the richer and more social parents have a better chance than those of ordinary peasant parents whose lives are much more restricted.¹⁵⁾

The ideas of fitness and of the ties of relatives in mate-selection may work as either positive or negative principles. Behind these principles lies the idea of reinforcing dyadic equilibrium relationships¹⁶⁾ which serve to minimize fears of the unknown and to secure the identity through ties with relatives and through assortative matings. I shall now turn to the statistical pattern of mate selection in BP.

It is noted from Table 5 ('Kin Category of Wives') that the rate of first- and second-cousin marriages is quite high, i.e., nearly 30% of all marriage experiences. The geographical distribution of mates is shown in Table 6 ('Origin of Spouses'). BM, PN, BK and TM are names of hamlets adjoining BP. Within this sphere, the rate of endogamous marriages is 73.9%. 91.6% of the married people got spouses in the surrounding area within ten kilometers. In BP, the rate of village endogamy is 49.6% out of which 35.6% are near-kin marriages. There are no social conditions to restrict the people of BP to marry within their community. Ecologically, the settlement is clustered on a rise of land without a continuous line of houses, a feature that makes it

- 15) Table 4 (*q. v.*) partly attests to this fact. The rate of near-kin (i.e., first- and second-cousin) marriages is in inverse proportion to the level of income. However, the rate of non-kin marriages is 45% to 67% irrespective of income. As for the importance of 'mothers', maternal relatives are more preferred to paternal relatives, i.e., in Table 5, 70% of males and 64.2% of females chose maternal relatives. Residence after marriage is more uxorilocal in near-kin marriages than in other marriages. The rate of uxorilocal residence in first-cousin marriage is 85%; that of second-cousin marriage 80%; that of other kin marriage 53.3%; and that of non-kin marriage 62%.

Table 4 Near-Kin Marriage and Cash Income

Spouse's Cash Income per Annum (M\$)	1st Cousin	2nd Cousin	Other Relative	Non- Kin	Un- Known	Total
$\alpha \leq 500$	9	5	2	23	1	40
$500 < \alpha \leq 1000$	4	5	3	19	2	33
$1000 < \alpha \leq 1500$	3	2	6	9	2	22
$1500 < \alpha \leq 2000$	2	1		6	1	10
$2000 < \alpha \leq 2500$	1		1	3	1	6
$2500 < \alpha \leq 3000$			1	2		3
$\alpha > 3000$	1		2	6		99
Total	20	13	15	68	7	123

- 16) That is the mechanism of balance between individual *vis-à-vis* individual.

rather unlike other ribbon-type settlements prevailing in Malaysia. This ecological factor may have accelerated daily contacts among the villagers, which work to make them more or less uniform. However, no explicit distinction between this village and others was elicited in terms of the standard of living, stratification, occupation, and so on.

Table 5 Kin Category of Wives

First-Cousin	MBD	8	
	MZD	9	
	MZHD	2	
	FBD	1	
	FZD	3	
	Total		23
Second-Cousin	MMZDD	1	
	MMBDD	1	
	MMBSD	1	
	MMZSD	1	
	MZDD	2	
	MFBDD	1	
	FFBSD	2	
	FMZDD	2	
	FFBD	1	
	Unknown	3	
	Total		15
Distantly Related			16
Non-Kin			73
Total			127

Note: All marriage experiences were counted.

Table 6 Origin of Spouses

		Wife								Total
		BP	BM	PN	BK	TM	Within 10 km	Melaka	Other	
Hus- band	BP	59 (21)	3 (3)	7	5 (1)	1	8	2	1	86 (25)
	BM	5 (1)	1							6 (1)
	PN	4 (4)								4 (4)
	BK	1 (1)								1 (1)
	TM	7 (1)				1 (1)			1 (1)	9 (3)
	Within 10 km	9								9
	Melaka	3								3
	Other	4				1			1	6
Total		92 (28)	4 (3)	7	5 (1)	3 (1)	8	2	3 (1)	124 (34)

Note: (): Number of first- and second-cousin marriage.

There is another trend in near-kin marriage: most kin-marriages occur in the case of first marriage. Out of fifty-three kin-marriages, only five cases (9.5%) are re-marriages.¹⁷⁾ In contrast with this, there are sixteen cases of re-marriage out of seventy-three non-kin marriages, i.e., 21.9%.¹⁸⁾

In terms of divorce and separation by death, kin-marriages less often end in divorce than non-kin marriages (see Table 7). There are no reported divorces in the cases of first-cousin marriages. Only one case of divorce is found in fifteen cases of second-cousin marriages. In marriages with distantly related kin and with non-kin, some 13.5% end in divorce. 54.5% of non-kin marriages end in divorce, while most near-kin marriages endure until the death of the spouses.

Table 7 Divorce and Near-Kin Marriage

Marriage-Partner	Living Together	Separated	Divorced	Widowed	Total
First-Cousin	11	1	0	11	23
Second-Cousin	8	1	1	5	15
Other Relative	12		2	2	16
Non-Kin	43		10	20	73

From these brief statistics, a correlation of near-kin marriage with the rate of divorce may be noted. This consideration is supported by a comparison of the two in several villages in Malaya. Furthermore, a similarity of mate-selection pattern with the Bugis, from whom the people of BP are descended, is observed (cf. Chabot, 1950; 1967). Another factor which contributes to the acceleration of a stronger endogamous pattern of mate-selection is related to the ecological pattern of settlement as mentioned above; geographical propinquity correlates with social, kinship and psychological propinquity because of the enclosure-like pattern of settlement. It is not inconceivable that, if the population groupings were small and the settlement was rather isolated at

17) These five cases break down thus:

(husband)	(wife)	(number of cases)
2nd marriage+1st marriage		2
1st marriage+2nd marriage		1
3rd marriage+1st marriage		1
3rd marriage+2nd marriage		1

18) Breakdown:

(husband)	(wife)	(number of cases)
2nd marriage+1st marriage		3
3rd marriage+1st marriage		1
2nd marriage+2nd marriage		6
3rd marriage+2nd marriage		4
2nd marriage+	?	1
?	+2nd marriage	1

the beginning of the village's history, a greater likelihood of previous kinship ties between married couples would prevail due to residential propinquity.

In spite of the fact that statistically the inhabitants of the village prefer near-kin marriage to non-kin marriage, opinions on preferable marriage are not so consistent with these statistics. Table 8 shows the answers to my question about what kind of categories of mate the villagers would prefer to marry.¹⁹⁾ Most of those who answered 'not answerable' claimed anybody can be a mate if she or he is *jodoh* ('matching'). Some of them, when questioned again if in every category there is *jodoh*, selected one of the categories. The more pious people insisted on the quality of *jodoh*, refusing to choose a mate by a category.²⁰⁾ They explain that even if a man wants to marry his son with a girl of near-kin, or of friends the match is, after all, in the hands of God.

Table 8 Opinions on Preferable Marriage

Categories of Mate	Age										Total		
	-19		20-29		30-39		40-49		50-				
	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m+f
<i>Saudara dekat</i> (close relative)	1		1	1		1	1		2		5	2	7
<i>Saudara jauh</i> (distant relative)					1	1			3		4	1	5
<i>Orang yang kenal</i> (acquaintance)	1		2	1							3	1	4
<i>Orang sekampung</i> (villager)			1	1		1	1		1		3	2	5
<i>Orang lain</i> (non-kin)	7	1	8	7	3	5	7		9	1	34	14	48
<i>Tak boleh jawab</i> (not answerable)		1	1						4		5	1	6
Total	9	2	13	10	4	8	9	0	19	1	54	21	75

Source: Based on an arbitrarily selected sample of 75.

The five categories which I posed are not mutually exclusive. Rather, I left the interviewee to distinguish among them and few were confused about the ambiguity among the categories. This table, thus, shows some direction of the villagers' elective affinity to a certain category of individual. Close relative and distant relative are opposing, or exclusive categories. The boundary between the two categories is quite fluid, although most villagers set the boundary at second-cousins. If there is a match

19) This opinion census was neither administered to all members of the community nor based on a random sampling. I do not discuss the ratio or statistical trends.

20) Of course, every pious person does not necessarily choose *jodoh* as the answer.

among relatives, it is not good to choose a distant person because the near relatives may be angry (*kecil hati*). Some say that one should choose a relative neither too far nor too near as a mate. Those who chose the two categories explained their choice on the ground that relatives are important and should gather together.

The other three categories are in general opposition to the above categories. Among the three, *orang lain* (lit., 'other person') is most vague in the sense that its connotation changes according to situations: it is non-kin in contrast to relatives; a stranger as opposed to an acquaintance; a non-villager as opposed to a villager; other people than ego; a foreigner, and so on. In the interviews, the interviewees took *orang lain* as non-relative in general without specifying the geographical or social distribution. This inference is based on the reasons they gave me for choosing one of categories. Those who chose non-kin as a preferable mate base their reason on the same idea as those who chose kin — namely, that relatives are important. However, they were afraid that the breakdown of near-kin marriages would affect kinship ties badly. It is better, they opined, to marry a non-kin so that a possible disruption among relatives might be avoided in the case of divorce. They maintain that kin will be divided into two camps, if related spouses have a conflict, e.g., because of misunderstanding (*seliseh faham*). In other words, they can dispose of an unrelated spouse without any stigma if they do not like her. The majority of those who chose non-kin subscribed to this conflict-avoiding reasoning.

Another reason was also given to me. Some say the more they get offspring (*zuriat*), the happier they are. So they widen the range of relatives (*persaudaraan*) through marriage. Here the term 'relatives' is used in a vague way including the family circles of both groom and bride. This reasoning is also founded on the importance of relatives, but it is argued that it is a human being's duty to God to multiply his descendants and kinship networks.

All four persons who chose acquaintances as a preferable marriage category were more educated than the village standards. Actually two of them are primary school teachers. Although acquaintance (*kenal*) is one of the very important means for dealing with other persons, most of the villagers were not interested in this category. Presumably, this category did not come directly to the mind of villagers, because knowing each other (i.e., *kenal*) is too obvious in the village life and they find difficulty in identifying it with the new notion of *kenal*, i.e., friendship. Those youths who chose acquaintances wanted to deepen their friendship through marriage.

A few people think geographical propinquity is a first condition for marriage. However, geographical distance is not so different from kinship distance. For example, one female who chose a distant relative gave as a reason that she could travel far away to visit relatives. Another interviewee who chose a near-kin told me that she could cry for help easily if a relative is near, implying both geographical and kinship nearness.

There is some opinion that if both family circles are near, they do not have the difficulty of traveling to distant areas which causes trouble for poor households. One youth answered he wants a girl related distantly who lives near his place.

In summary: the principle of *similia similibus*²¹⁾ has been attained through the stress on fitness and kinship ties. Although Malay mate-selections are still based on the idea of fitness and the ties of relatives, the actual trend seems to be from near-kin marriage to non-kin marriage (see Table 9); my survey of opinion shows that the people keep the same ideas but apply them differently to adjust themselves to new situations. I could neither find any ideological forces acting against near-kin marriage nor elicit a villager's view based on biological assumptions about the dangers of near-kin marriages. Rather, I would suggest that the trend has been caused by the differentiation between and within family circles in the village. The difference in income is conspicuous within the village. The principle of *similia similibus* cannot be worked out within a village or within a few family circles only. The inhabitants have to look for assortative matings outside residential propinquity.

Table 9 Percentages of Marriages by Kin Categories and by Years

Years	Kin Category				
	1st Co.	2nd Co.	Distantly Related	Non-Kin	
1922-1941	22.2%	16.7%	16.7%	44.4%	N=36
1956-1971	12.2%	9.0%	21.3%	57.5%	N=33
All Marriages	18.1%	11.8%	12.6%	57.5%	N=127

Residence after Marriage

Marriage is a key to enlarging the family circles to which one belongs. In rural-life situations, residential propinquity is considered vital in the sense that the psychological propinquity reflects upon, and is secured through, spatial nearness. Since there is no definite, explicit rule on residence after marriage, it depends on a blend of attractions between the family circles of both sides. Except in those cases where a new couple moves to some other place to make a livelihood, three stages may be noted in determining the residence of newlyweds in BP.

The first stage is for one month to, say, one year after the wedding ceremonies. During this period the new couple alternately lives in both houses of their parents who provide them their own bedrooms. The spouses get acquainted with each other's family circle. After this 'honeymoon stage', the couple has to decide where they want to settle down even if they do not have their own house yet. The decision about this

21) By this term, I have in my mind specifically the tendency of homogamous mate selection which is epitomized in the notion of *jodoh*.

second stage of residence may be made on the basis of more practical considerations, such as convenience for work and available space, than in the former stage. In BP, a new couple find it very difficult to make a living on agriculture because of the low productivity per household of the land. The decision, therefore, is not so much affected by the parents' possession of land, which could be a decisive factor on residence as is the case in Kedah or Kelantan, where the tendency is more virilocal. Moreover, in BP many young husbands are absent most of the year due to their migratory work in distant places. The wives who remain at home find it more convenient to stay with their own parents. In the third stage, the new couple have their house built on the land of one of the parents if there is a space for it. Most of the money earned by a migratory wage worker may be spent on house building. Some have to buy a house lot because of the general shortage of land. A space of one quarter acre is needed in order to have enough space in between neighboring houses.

Taking all the stages into account, the census of October, 1971, shows some 67% of the couples in the village live with the wife's family circle. This uxorilocal trend statistically correlates with near-kin marriage: the rate of uxorilocal residence is 85% in first-cousin marriages, 80% in second-cousin marriages; 53.3% in marriages with distant relatives, and 62% in non-kin marriages.

II Family Relationships

Husband-Wife

Sex status is unequal in legal matters and complementary in social aspects of life. This sexual status is especially emphasized during the period from the time individuals begin to attain physical and social maturity until their marriage. Girls are strictly under the guardianship of their father and are segregated from the world of men, staying at home with their mothers most of the time. The boys are faced with a transitional crisis at this period, i.e., they are neither small boys anymore nor are they yet mature men, but enjoy the privilege of a 'mobile' male. In marital status (cf. Wilder, 1970), sexual status may be diluted and relative equality will prevail in a family circle. Sometimes a domesticated 'mobile' male may be dominated by a 'domestic' female. In a post-parental status, both males and females tend to be 'de-sexualized', thus being able to act as neutral beings.

Husbands and wives address each with other various forms at different stages of the family career. In the beginning, they call each other sibling terms: if husband is called *abang* (elder brother), wife is addressed as *adek* (younger sibling). Wives use the term *abang* to refer their own husbands. Husbands, when they want to refer their wives, use the euphemistic terms *orang rumah* or *perempuan* (lit., 'female') or other formal terms such as *isteri* or *bini* which means only 'wife'. The relationship symbolized in the use of sibling terms assumes or brings into the conjugal relation an ideally solid,

cooperative relationship such as exists between siblings. This practice seems to reduce tension especially for a girl by the sudden transition from strict segregation to close familiarity with a member of the opposite sex whom she may not have ever known before marriage. At the same time, a fragile state of the early marriage is strengthened by the assumed sibling relationship between the couple. In spite of the use of sibling terms, a couple does not identify itself with siblings: the two relationships are exactly opposed as regards sexual intercourse. The sibling terms only signify an outside character of a couple; the sexual relation is privately engaged in and the couple do not need to express it. The use of the sibling terms declares that a new family circle has been formed and that both of them belong by definition to each other's parents' family circle. If they are assumed to be siblings, a parent to one of them is also a 'parent' to the other; and the parents treat both of them as their own child (*anak*). There is no separation from one or the other of the natal family circles. In other words, the couple belong to three family circles. Another explanation of this can be made from the point of view of guardianship: a father has transferred the guardianship of his daughter to her 'elder brother' (*abang*). It is the responsibility of an elder brother to protect his younger siblings after the father's death. The term *abang* is used regardless of the relative age of the mates.

The solidarity of a conjugal relation is cemented by the complementarity of male and female in daily life. A wife should take care of infants and cook for her husband and children. A husband earns a livelihood (*nafkah*) for his wife and children. In padi-farming, women transplant seedlings; men cultivate land. I shall not depict the division of labor among the farmers further. The division is rather regulated by a Muslim idea of the men's guardianship of women and the segregation of women from men who behave improperly. In the above examples, men do not step into the spheres of women's activities and vice versa. They explain that they would be ashamed of themselves if they did. As far as they follow the Islamic division of labor, a couple is a basic unit to conduct daily work and social intercourse.

The solidarity of a couple is thus supported by the necessities of life and also by an affection which may be created after the marriage through daily interaction.

Outside institutions among Malay villagers, however, are not effective in preventing the dissolution of the union. The pressure from natal family circles may accelerate the maladjustment of young couples, and incidentally lead to a divorce.²²⁾ The divorce procedure is simple and inexpensive in Muslim law and sufficient alimony for the woman is not customarily paid. The natal family circle can easily absorb a disunited part who maintains membership in it. Moreover, little stigma can be found against re-marriage; rather, a divorcee is encouraged to re-marry.

22) A divorce may be caused by a selection of residence. In such a case, parental family circles see a strong interest on the residence because of economic advantage or affection.

Table 10 Number of Marriage and Divorce of the Malays in the State of Melaka

Year	A Marriage	B Divorce	C <i>Rajok</i> (C/A × 100)	B/A × 100
1930	1358	653	97	48.1
1931	1118	548	70	49.0
Sub-Total	2476	1201	167 (6.7)	48.5
1932	1233	537	69	43.6
1933	1369	551	66	40.2
1934	1640	526	66	32.1
1935	1549	519	57	33.5
1936	1466	545	74	37.2
1937	1771	595	53	33.6
1938	1576	461	46	29.3
1939	1452	514	57	35.4
1940	1690	629	64	37.2
1941	2063	587	75	28.5
Sub-Total	15809	5464	627 (3.9)	34.6
1942	1892	629	75	33.2
1943	3066	940	101	30.7
1944	3223	1344	166	41.7
1945	2793	1699	216	60.8
1946	1936	993	87	51.3
1947	1859	759	75	40.8
1948	1767	711	52	40.2
1949	1924	670	66	34.8
1950	2159	729	78	33.8
1951	2693	805	100	29.9
Sub-Total	23312	9279	1016 (4.3)	39.8
1952	2235	633	77	28.3
1953	1943	648	70	33.4
1954	1871	604	60	32.3
1955	1945	632	54	32.5
1956	2099	625	69	29.8
1957	1939	560	66	28.9
1958	1969	536	60	27.2
1959	1977	582	56	29.4
1960	2003	564	61	28.2
1961	1865	544	50	29.2
Sub-Total	19846	5928	623 (3.1)	29.9
1962	1441	213	18	14.8
1963	1687	315	9	18.7
1964	1633	263	26	16.1
1965	1773	260	18	14.7
1966	1672	170	13	10.2
1967	1813	225	11	12.4
1968	1772	225	12	12.7
1969	1860	204	13	11.0
1970	1908	240	6	12.6
1971	2025	210	4	10.4
Sub-Total	17584	2325	130 (0.7)	13.2
Total	79027	24197	2563 (3.2)	30.6

Source: By courtesy of Mr. Sheikh Said bin Sheikh Mohamed, Yang di-Pertua, Pejabat Ugama Islam, Melaka.

Table 11 Marriage and Divorce of the Malays in a Sub-District

Year	A Number of Marriage	B Number of Divorce	B/A × 100
1962	19	1	5.26
1963	15	1	6.67
1964	27	0	0
1965	13	4	30.77
1966	15	1	6.67
1967	25	0	0
1968	18	3	16.67
1969	21	2	9.52
1970	26	0	0
1971	22	3	13.64
Total	201	15	7.46

Source: The same as that of Table 10.

This general picture of Malay divorce which most of the literature on the Malays depict is not quite true in Melaka and especially in BP as Tables 10 and 11 (*q.v.*) will show. Before 1961, the divorce rate of the Malays in the State of Melaka (see Table 10) varied from 30% to 50%, being once as high as 60% (in 1945). After 1962, the rate has been less than half that of the preceding decade. The latter is 29.9%, while the former 13.2%. This sudden decrease of divorces after 1962 has been explained by an official of the religious department of Melaka as the effect of strict divorce regulations²³⁾ issued by the department which was established on the basis of a 1959 enactment and which started its activities around 1960 or 1961. In PN Sub-district, to which BP belongs, the divorce rate was 7.46% during the years 1962 to 1971 (see Table 11).

In BP, in terms of the total number of marriage experiences, the divorce rate is 10.2%. In terms of persons, irrespective of the frequency of divorce, 7.2% of all those who married experienced divorce.²⁴⁾ The villagers know that in BP divorces are less frequent than in other parts of Malaysia, such as Kelantan, and allege the reason to be the efforts of religious leaders in the village. They teach the villagers that a divorce is not forbidden (*halal*) in Muslim law, but that God hates to see a divorce (*tetapi dibenci oleh Allah*). The religious leaders, if consulted about a divorce, persuade the couple not to separate. This religious factor very likely contributes strongly to the low divorce rate, but, particularly in BP, the effect of the near-kin marriages and of the village-endogamous pattern of marriage cannot be neglected. As pointed out above, a statistical

23) A man who wants a divorce has to give a judge (*Kadhi*) legitimate reasons and the judge tries to reconcile the case as far as he can. Only by this measure, many of thoughtless *talak* divorces will be saved. The decrease in *rojok* (a re-marriage with a divorced wife) after 1962 verifies this statement.

24) Because of the small population and the uncertainty of dates, I cannot give the definite rate of divorce against marriage in a certain period.

correlation between near-kin marriage and divorce is apparent. One reason is that the two partners have known each other before the marriage because they are closely related or neighbors, and hence the risk of misunderstanding is less. The other reason is the pressure from natal family circles. The natal family circles are very careful not to break kinship ties between them through petty misunderstandings between the couple. The pressure works to weld the union together in a crisis.

Parent and Child

The relationship of parent and child may well be described in terms of the family career. In this paper, I shall make brief mention of the parent and child in general, and of inheritance. First of all, the term 'parent' is not expressed in Malay. Parents could be translated as *ibu bapa*, *mak bapa*, or *ayah bonda*, all of which are a compound of mother (*ibu*, *mak*, and *bonda*) and father (*bapa*, or *ayah*). In contrast to parents, a child is referred to by the generic term *anak*, but, in order to say a daughter or a son, sexual designators are added to *anak* — *anak perempuan*, 'female child', and *anak laki-laki*, 'male child'. A father is said to protect, oversee, and guide children; a mother to nurse, and be affectionate to them. A Malay saying goes: (a person) loves his friend when there is no difficulty; he loves a spouse while young; he loves his father before he goes wrong; and he loves mother as long as he lives.²⁵⁾ There are many variations of the paternal attitude according to household composition, occupation, and personality. For example, a religious teacher disciplines his children sternly up to the point where he shaves their heads often if they are stubborn. An emigrant worker who has stayed only for a while in the village is indulgent. A factory laborer is always scolding his children and often physically punishes them. Every father, however, is seen as an authoritarian figure whom children fear (*takut*). As a symbol of authority, he is not necessarily required to stay with his family circle. He may be mentioned to children as a potential punisher even when he is not at home, just as God is to human beings. The image of the mobile male is doubled with that of the father. Since a father is, in a sense, an instrument of authority, an uncle, grandfather, or religious teacher can be substituted for him. As far as the latter figures are available, a mother is able to dispense with fatherhood in the household if she gets a livelihood from her husband.

Reflecting this image of the father, households comprise a mother-children set but not necessarily a father. Except for one case of a disabled man who lives alone, there are no motherless father-children households in BP.²⁶⁾ There are forty-three households which lack a central male figure, including seventeen households in which husbands

25) *Sayang sahabat semasa senang, sayang suami isteri sementara muda, sayang bapa sebelum membuat salah, sayang ibu sampai kemati.*

26) In January, 1972, a religious teacher lost his wife. Since my first census was done in 1971, most of figures cited are based on the figures as of October, 1971.

are temporarily absent from the village. Those households comprise 48.3% of the total. Of course, there are other reasons for such a trend in a household composition — the age-difference of a couple and the different life-expectancy of the male and the female, etc. However, even if the households of elder ladies are excluded, there are a substantial number of households left. The easy substitutability of a father figure is one reason that women do not feel uneasy without a father for their children; the tie with the natal family circle is another reason. A married girl outside the parental household maintains membership in her natal family circle and can find a substitute for what is lacking in her own household.

Inheritance is an institution which relates a child economically to his parent. *Waris* are heirs who have a right to inherit an estate of a deceased Muslim.²⁷⁾ According to Muslim law, they say, the paternal side has more right than the maternal side: for example, patrilineal cousins (FBS or FFBSS) are legally stronger than other cousins (FZS, MBS, MZS); matrilineal parallel cousins (MZS), however, are emotionally stronger than the (legal) *waris*: thus there is no preference for one side over the other practically. It is also true that an estate is distributed equally among sons and daughters according to *adat*, special consideration being given the widow. In BP, if the problem of inheritance becomes complex, it will be referred to Muslim law and the rate of distribution and names of beneficiaries will be registered in the Mukim Land Registry. This procedure will be followed also when the *waris* are minor. Otherwise, an estate is distributed according to circumstances. The following are a few examples.

i) One of the heirs pays to the others their share of the monetary value of the estate. He will be a sole beneficiary. This case will happen either when the estate is too small to be divided among many heirs or when some heirs prefer cash.

ii) If the expenses for a funeral of the deceased were borne by one of heirs, he claims a sole right on the estate of the deceased.

iii) If the estate is small, heirs may sharecrop it among themselves without dividing it. One way is by a rotation system: each heir cultivates the estate every year in turn. The yield for the year goes to the person who cultivates that year. Another way is that a representative of the heirs is held responsible for the operation of the estate and he divides the net income from the yield among the heirs.

iv) When a widow is entitled to a small portion of an estate but is unable to cultivate it, her son may cultivate it for her and they commonly consume the crop until it is finished. If the widow has a large estate herself, she may have it sharecropped by one of her children.

v) A widow's share is well protected both practically and legally. Her legal right to a share of the deceased husband's estate is observed among the villagers; also, if the children are earning their own livelihood, they leave the mother to operate all the

27) Legal arguments on inheritance will be found in Ahmad, 1965, or more generally in Coulson, 1971.

estate and do not claim any share, although they retain their right to it. A prevailing practice is to register an acquired piece of land under the wife's name so that she can live on it after the husband's death.

vi) If some heirs are absent from the village, the remaining heirs cultivate and share the crop unless the former claim their share. This will even happen among siblings.

vii) All children, except adopted ones are entitled to inherit their father's property equally. If the father wishes to give a portion to a legally dubious heir such as an adoptee or step-child or grandchild, he must give it before his death, i.e., he registers such an heir's name in the Land Office.

Whether one adopts an *adat* or Muslim way of distributing an estate, the property of the ascending generation will be equally dispersed among the members of the descending generation. Inheritance emphasizes that no particular person is responsible to maintain a parent. In consequence, the obligation of an individual child to maintain an old parent is diffused. A child who lives near a parent's house will take care of her or him. Those who are well off may pay for the parent's expenses or give them food or clothes. Moreover, siblings do not take any responsibility as a corporate group for the maintenance of their parents. It is each one's obligation, if he could afford it, in addition to his duty to maintain his wife and children.

Sibling

As mentioned earlier, an elder brother (*abang*) is a substitute for a father and he is expected to protect minor younger siblings. Before the independence of siblings, an elder sibling will help the younger ones' education without consideration for the future. The guardianship of an elder brother will be terminated at the marriage of his younger siblings. Each sibling forms his own family circle which does not overlap directly with other siblings' family circles but only through the natal family circle. The relationship between sisters, however, endures after their marriage if they are living nearby.

Terms of reference for siblings distinguish the relative age as well as the sex of elder siblings. Informally, sibling rank terms may be used to designate a birth order like *long*, *anjang*, *ngah*, *cik*, and *bosu*: *Anjang Dali* means a Dali who is the second elder in his sibling set.

Siblings treated as a set can be divided into three categories: (1) a sibling set with both parents living; (2) one with one parent only; and (3) one whose parents are dead. Statistics indicate that the proportion of siblings living in the village decreases from categories one to two, and from two to three. Even in category one (60.3% of the total sibling sets) a third of the siblings in the set are living apart from the rest. The number of remaining siblings is regulated mainly by economic assets such as land in the village. In category three many siblings settle down somewhere else (see Table

12).²⁸⁾

In summary: in sibling relationships the formation of one's own family circle is a turning point. Before the independence of younger siblings, the elder one who is married still exercises some degree of guardianship since the former do not have any family circle other than their parents', to which the latter also belongs. The balance between sibling relationships and conjugal ties will be an apparent source of conflict at this stage. After the independence of siblings, the sibling tie is usually considered last, the conjugal and parental ties being favored. In spite of this, there are mutual obligations among siblings during the life-crises. Also, there is a great deal of sibling hatred *vis-à-vis* the problem of inheritance.²⁹⁾

Table 12 Parentless Sibling Set and Living Place

Age of One Who Lives in BP	Age of the Youngest	Number of Sets	Number of Living Siblings									A Total Number of Siblings	B Siblings Living in BP	B/A
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9			
I Below 50	(a) 20's	4		1	2	1						12	5	41.7%
	(b) 30's	15	1	3	3	3	4				1	57	22	38.6%
	(c) 40's	5			3	2						14	5	35.7%
II Over 51	(a) Below 50	7		2	3	1						26	10	38.5%
	(b) Over 51	35	16	9	3	4	2					69	43	62.3%

The term *saudara* means sibling, although a compound word *adek-beradek* is colloquially used. Both of them, at the same time mean a wider circle of relatives, emphasizing synchronically the same generation. Then, the term *saudara* is used to indicate friends and those who are of the same social type. In a sense, the idea of occasional solidarity among siblings is extended to a circle of relatives whose boundary is not clearly fixed. Among kinship terms, *ibu*, *anak* and *saudara* are most widely applied to various spheres other than kinship. Other elements in the family relationship such as father-child and husband-wife are mainly supported by Muslim law.

III Stages in the Family Career

I started this paper with the distinction between a family circle and a household.

- 28) Of sixty-six cases, twenty-nine persons (13 males and 16 females) married into the village. Their siblings live apart without exception. Among the rest of the thirty-seven sets, 58.6% of the siblings are living in BP. Out of the total set, sixteen sets consist of only one person, the other siblings having died. In eight sets, all siblings of a set which consists of more than two are living in BP. The number of remaining siblings varies from one to three — three siblings in five sets; two siblings in twelve sets; and one sibling in forty-nine sets.
- 29) For example, BP 11, BP 85 and BP 9 are siblings, but the latter one rarely interacts with the former two, due to a trouble of dividing their father's estate (Figure after BP indicates a household number). BP 66 says that he hates BP 74 because the latter did not allow him to take a share in his adoptive father's estate. In this case BP 66, an adoptee, does not legally have a right to inherit.

In this section, I shall examine the relationship between the two. Often authorities remark upon the life cycle of the family or the developmental cycle of the domestic group. In order to avoid the impression of a static, recurring, circular sequence, I would like to use the term family career, emphasizing a course or passage seen from the point of view of an individual's life span (see Rodgers, 1973).

If one's life-career among the Malays, the period when a complete set of husband-wife, parents-children, and siblings live together in one house is not so long as one would expect it to be, because of adoption, migrant work, marriage, divorce, and death. A household is a domestic group centered around a house in a way that is in accord with the situation at a particular moment. According to the circumstances, household members will vary. In this sense, a household is a conventional realization of the 'definition of the situation'. The party that defines the situation is not a household as a group but an individual. In other words, each individual, by and large, is entitled to define the situation, i.e., to live in the house or not.³⁰⁾

Only in a particular time when a couple and children under the age of about fourteen years live in a house, a household may function as a corporate group in which the father-husband fully exercises his authority as the guardian of the household. In Tables 13 to 15, I show the conventional typologies of the household based on the 'nuclear family' concept. In Table 13 the types of the household are expressed in terms of 'family', the fallacy of which has already been pointed out at the beginning of this paper. 48.3% of the total households are of the nuclear-family type. However, a full, complete nuclear family set in the above sense is only 39.5% of the 'nuclear-family type' households (i.e., 17 households). In Table 14 household composition is described again in terms of the nuclear family. In both tables the family career stages are not considered. Household composition by generation (Table 15) show, to some extent, the 'age' of a household, although the treatment of a grandmother-grandchildren type of household remains ambiguous.

Table 13 Household Compositions by Number of Members

Types of Household	Number of Members													Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
Single	11													11 (12.4%)
Couple														0 (0)
Denuded Family		6	3	1	4		2							16 (18.0%)
Nuclear Family			9	6	2	5	5	6	7	2	1			43 (48.3%)
Inclusive Family				1	5	2	4	1		2	3		1	19 (21.3%)
Total	11	6	12	8	11	7	11	7	7	4	4		1	89 (100.0%)

Note: Modal number of members 4.72

Average number of members 5.40

30) Thus, a small child may stay with another relative if he likes to. Even a wife, who should be obedient to her husband, may leave the house and return to her natal home.

Table 14 Descriptive Household Compositions

Types of Household	Descriptive Compositions	Total	%
Single	Male single	1	
	Female single	10	
	Total	11	(12.4%)
Couple		0	(0)
Denuded Family	Female single+unmar. ch.	5	
	Female single+mar. D+unmar. ch.	1	
	Female single+grandchildren	6	
	Female single+D+DD/SD	3	
	Female single+Z+D+D's NF	1	
	Total	16	(18.0%)
Nuclear Family	Temporary female single+unmar. ch.	13	
	Nuclear family	30	
	Total	43	(48.3%)
Inclusive Family	NF+D's NF	6	
	NF+DD/DS/SD	5	
	NF+D's NF+DS/SS/DDS	1	
	NF+SD+MFW	1	
	NF+WM	4	
	NF+HM	1	
	NF+WM+WZ+WBD	1	
	Total	19	(21.3%)
Total		89	(100.0%)

Table 15 Household Compositions by Generation

One-Generation Household	Single: male female	20 yrs old 1	Above 60 yrs 1 9	Total 1 10	% 11 (12.4%)
Two-Generation Household		+ Unmarried Ch/GrCh	+ Married Da		
	Nuclear family	28	2	30	
	Marrying-out N.F.	18	2	20	
	Denuded N.F.	4		4	
	GrMo+GrCh	6 (GrSo 1) (GrDa 3) (GrSo+GrDa 2)		6	
				60	(67.4%)
Three-Generation Household	Couple+unmar. Ch+ChCh			5	
	Couple+D's NF+unmar. Ch+DaCh			2	
	Widow+D's NF+unmar. Ch			1	
	Widow+D's NF (Without marrying-out)			4	
	Widow+D's NF (With marrying-out)			1	
	Widow+Z+D+GrCh			1	
	Widow+D+GrCh			2	
				16	(18.0%)
Four-Generation Household	Couple centered			1	
	Matrifocal			1	
				2	(2.2%)
Total				89	(100.0%)

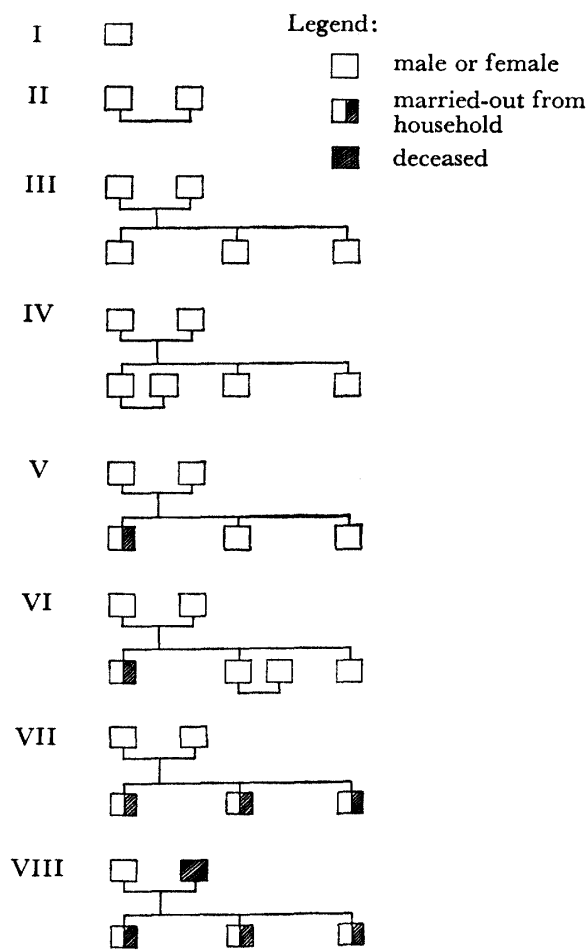


Fig. 1 Stages of Family Career

To deal with the Malay situation more properly as well as to complement the tables above, I have set up the stages of family career in terms of a couple (*kelamin*), loosely leaving aside the notion of *keluarga*³¹ (see Fig. 1). Since we are dealing with the family on the ground, the criteria of residence and marriage of children is crucial in distinguishing the stages from one another. Stage one may well be unacceptable as a stage in the family career; it is controversial as to whether or not a single person can form a family alone. The same argument may be applied to stage eight. I propose these two stages, for the sake of convenience, include all households to emphasize the existence of aged singles.

The first stage is for a premarital single person who does not live in a family circle. One case in this stage is exceptional: her parents died leaving four children; her elder sister was married in Singapore, an elder brother in a

nearby village, and another elder brother was married to a girl from Rembau, Negri Sembilan and worked on Christmas Island; she has a stepmother and step-siblings in the village, but, the stepmother says, the girl hates her and stays in a small house alone; her step-siblings, unrelated to the stepmother, stay with their grandmother. The girl sometimes spends her time visiting her sister in Singapore and sometimes stays with her maternal parallel cousin (MZD or MFZSD) who lives nearby.

Stage eight is the period after someone in stage seven has lost a spouse. In number and in composition of members, stage eight has a different character than stage seven. No household of stage two is found in BP. This may be attributed to the pattern of residence after marriage. I did not include in stage two those newer couples of stages four and six, because the couples in the latter stages are largely dependent on their parents. One problem of this kind of classification is how to judge a household head

31) One informant explained me the difference as follows: *keluarga* includes all descendants issued from grandparents; *kelamin* is a fragment of such a *keluarga* and consists of a husband and wife. He took the term *keluarga* as relatives in general (*saudara mara*) in his explanation, and, upon being questioned further, he confessed he was not sure.

in a domestic group. Senior members, insofar as they are not suffering from a loss of mental faculties associated with old age, are respected in the village social life, mostly representing the household in settling village affairs. Thus, these social factors were taken into consideration for the classification of households in addition to the economic factors. I do not argue that every household passes through stages three to six. Melaka farmers maintain that their passage is ideally three to five to seven, marrying out their children. Co-residence with married children is considered a rather transitional measure to cope with situational exigencies. Moreover, stages four to six may not be sequential in a family career. Stages four and six, thus, are transitional in both the actual and the ideal sense.

Table 16 shows my classification of households in BP according to family career stages. Intact households are those whose members in each stage live together without any loss or addition of members. Other households, the number of which can be known by deducting the number of intact households from the total in the right column, either lack members who are supposed to stay together or take in extra members who are not supposed to be there at that stage. For example, in stage three are included thirty-four households. Among them, a couple and all of their children live together in seventeen households. The remaining seventeen households may lack the couple's unmarried children (5 cases), step-children (1), or a spouse (3); or they may take in such members as foster children (5), an old parent (4), or a collateral relative (1). Since some households are doubtly counted in the loss or addition of members, the total addition of cases will not coincide with the total households. Households in stage eight (i.e., widowhood or widowerhood) are not by definition counted with those lacking spouses.³²⁾

Table 16 Family Career Stages and Household Composition

Family Career Stages	Intact Composition	Lacking Members			Additional Members						Total
		Couple's Unm. Ch.	Spouse's Unm. Ch.	Spouse	Spouse's Unm. Ch.	Foster Ch.	Parent	Divorced Da.	Grand-Ch.	Collateral Relatives	
I	1										1
II	0										0
III	17	5	1	3		5	4			1	34
IV	1	1		1					1	1	3
V	10	4	1	2	2	1	2	1	6	2	22
VI	2	2		1					2		6
VII	0		1		1	3					4
VIII	10							3	9		19
Total	41	12	3	7	3	9	6	4	18	4	89

32) Originally Tsubouchi devised a similar table to explain the life cycle of family in Kelantan and to compare it with the data from other areas (Tsubouchi, 1972: 407). Table 16 here is my revised interpretation of his original scheme to make the comparison more tenable.

Among the additional household members, grandchildren are taken into the households at stage eight. Grandchildren partly help their grandparents in their daily needs, and so children partially fulfill their duty to maintain their aged parents through their children's service. Since divorces are not much found in BP, taking-in of divorced daughters is not frequent here. The spouse's unmarried children are of an ambiguous status as they may or may not be included in the new household. Thus, in this category, appear both departed and additional members. Collateral relatives and parents as additional members are restricted in stages three, four and five, and are few in number. These parents live in their own houses, because their daughters are married in the house. Four cases of collateral relatives are sisters, a sister's daughter and a distantly related kin (WMFW). The latter was taken in the household (BP 84) because of the problem of inheritance. One case of a sister living together is due to her divorce (BP 63). In the case of BP 52, the household head married into the house and the sisters' mother is still living. The sister's daughter (BP 81) was taken in because of the sister's divorce, i.e., her brother is acting for the deceased parents. Except for parents and collateral relatives, the household composition is not affected by adding extra members, for they will be assimilated among the original members: step-children, foster children and divorced daughters present no problem; grandchildren are often taken as substitutes for children.

The point which I would like to make from the observations above is that household composition is strongly centered around a couple, although it varies superficially. "There should not be many people under one roof, especially women (or house-wives). The more there are, the noisier, like the crockery," says a villager. In one case (BP 20), an annex was attached for a young couple, because the house structure permits only one couple to live in it, unless another couple dispenses with a bedroom. In every case, the kitchen is used commonly.

Thus, a domestic group in BP is always centered around a couple, and tends to separate even after a temporal merging. The couple who live with the parents feel inferior in view of the villagers' expectation that each couple should have a house. Moreover, there is no rule for organizing a wider group of kin such as a rule of residence to determine membership or ancestor worship among the Ibans. In addition, there has been no economic impetus for a large mobilization of labor. A small household centered around a couple is enough for economic activities.

To summarize: the basic unit of the village social structure is a family circle. Beyond it, there is only a loose, occasional grouping of kindred. This family circle, as well as its residential, economic expression, the household, is not a fixed and definite, boundary-maintaining group but in fact a very fluid one in terms of its membership, as with other Southeast Asian bilateral kinship systems. From the experience of their family career in family circles, villagers apprehend the world as based on a dyadic

equilibrium relationship, i.e., the mechanism of balance or harmony between individual *vis-à-vis* individual. The important point is that the equilibrium is not relevant to a system of group, but to dyads. The actor's motivation is not for maintenance of the group but the management of individual relationships. Lacking an intrinsic mechanism to hold a group together, villagers expect each to get along with others without hurting them, i.e., without directly pointing out their faults in face-to-face relationships. This, in turn, is conceived of as the core of what is called Malay courtesy, e.g., decorum, equivocality, a compromising attitude, and so on.

To put it differently, the dyadic equilibrium requires conformism so that a family circle or a community continues to exist. Conformity for the villagers is to be similar to, or fit with, one's fellows, i.e., to follow what the majority do and to be sensitive to the sanctioning eyes of other fellows. The homogamous pattern of marriage and the emphasis on propinquity in social intercourse are related to this attitude. Further, cooperation and consensus are highly regarded in a family circle as well as in a community.

On the other hand, the dyadic equilibrium presupposes the existence of individualism, because this notion of equilibrium does not primarily involve a system, but, rather, the balanced relationships between individual elements. This individualistic attitude is well observed in family relationships and in household economies. In order to cope with the paradox of individualism and conformism, villagers expect from each other the same outward manifestations which give a feeling of belongingness to the community, but with an attitude of tolerance toward others as pointed out above.

These attitudes are closely related to the fact that there is no perpetual need, arising from economic, or even political, considerations to cooperate permanently for the purpose of controlling nature. Thus an individualistic pursuit of one's living is taken for granted. The community, in its primordial sense, is acephalous with only a *primus inter pares*. It is not a unit of economic productivity in any sense of the concept. It is either a gathering of certain settlers or, as seen from outside, a mere framework for administration, both religious and political. This situation is, in a sense, a reflection of the fluid or amorphous character of the family circle. The looseness of whatever structure exists originates in both the lack of need for cooperation and the fact that the family circle or any other basic organization presently lacks a model after which a community or association could organize itself. The family or kinship system does not aid the people to organize a definite, relatively large social group beyond the networks of dyadic equilibrium relations.

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Comments

by MOHD. DAHLAN Hj. Aman*

This paper attempts to make the distinction between a family circle and a household (p. 40) and, continuing from there, it then examines the relationship between the Malay family circle and the Malay household. It, therefore, holds some promise of excitement for anyone tutored in anthropology. I find it even more interesting because of at least three things: (1) it deals with a Melaka Malay community and I am a Malay from that State; (2) as a student of anthropology, I therefore find it an interesting case study of what anthropologists have raised in methodological polemics, that is, the level of an anthropological model in relation to that of the native model of the society in question (In this matter, I am here both a native and an anthropologist.); and (3) it is involved in making a grand generalization of what constitutes the Malay family and the Malay household based on a village study. In this matter, I find it necessary to question the tools of enquiry and analysis that the present anthropologist uses in carrying out such an enterprise.

May I offer my comments on the first aspect. This paper only mentions a certain place in Melaka, by the name BP. Then onward, our whole attention is brought to bear upon the ethnographic account of the place. Even here, we are not informed about the present situation of the place nor of its antecedent environment for on-going existence. We are only told, here and there, that BP is a peasant community. I therefore must conclude that BP is a rice-peasant community in Melaka, a conclusion I have to make on the basis of the Seminar's theme.

This deficiency in background data is most regretted because most students of Malay society and culture will not commit the mistake of not recognizing that (a) the Peninsular Malay family structure is not of one type; (b) the integral position of Islam in the Malay value system and its influence on its family structure; (c) where Melaka

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is concerned, about 23 *mukim* in the districts of Alor Gajah [22] and Jasin [3] practice *Adat Naning* or generally referred to as *Adat Perpatih*. The rest are commonly regarded as practicing *Adat Temenggong*.

On page 67 of this paper, Dr. Maeda braves a generalization that “the basic unit of the village social structure is a family circle. Beyond it, there is only a loose, occasional grouping of kindred. This family circle, as well as its residential, economic expression, the household, is not a fixed and definite, boundary-maintaining group but in fact a very fluid one in terms of its membership, as with other Southeast Asian bilateral kinship systems”.

This is the only major indication in this paper that the Malay community in BP operates on a bilateral family organization. I therefore arrive at the conclusion that BP exists outside the *Adat Perpatih/Adat Naning* cultural territory. It therefore falls within the *Adat Temenggong* sphere of influence. I would have thought this paper should have fathomed the kinship mythologies that legitimize the present family form as practiced by the Malays at BP, as it attempts to examine “the concept of a family as a social circle” (p. 40). It is an anthropological truism that family as a concept to any community could only be conceived in the social mind of the community. It is therefore, in a Maussian sense, a total social fact that exists in the community. Dr. Maeda has, in fact, emphasized this point when he says (p. 40) that “(The family circle) is a social network which exists in the consciousness of a particular individual and is confirmed by direct or indirect social transactions”.

For all there is in the paper to expose the Malay model of a family circle as illustrated by the study of BP Malays, there is no evidence whatsoever that efforts were made to participate in Malay thinking processes insofar as it relates to the idea of family. Of course, Dr. Maeda brings to our attention some Malay words that have, as a common denominator, reference to the Malay social order centered on *keluarga*. But, most disappointingly, these words are examined out of social context, and therefore, do not bring out the structural realities that is the constant, unchanging realities behind the symbols or signs that these words purport to represent.

Just like the early study of Malay languages, formalist linguists have committed the cardinal error of sorting our foreign elements from Malay language, and worse still, tried to impose foreign forms in the thought categories entrenched in the language (Winstedt). This formalist approach failed to bring out the cryptic structures indigenous to the Malay language. In the like matter, the study of Malay kinship systems must begin by locating or identifying the cryptic structures that exist in the consciousness of the Malay community. This appraisal would require an anthropologist studying Malay society and culture to participate in the unconscious model (Lévi-Strauss) of the community. A comprehensive understanding of Malay language and the Malay use of personal and social space is therefore very necessary. Only through understanding

the cryptic structures embodied in their thought processes, related as they are to the Malay concept of family, can we begin to appreciate the constant principles that regulate kinship behavior and activities as we see them through social practice or social usages in the Malay community.

To my mind, this paper is found wanting in giving the following information. (1) The location of BP in relation to surrounding centers of change, especially when we are told that BP is a peasant community. (2) Sufficient ethnographic data that could explain the family structure. Deficiency in this renders any generalization on the Malay family as a social circle as methodologically and empirically indefensible. It is methodologically indefensible because one field study (1971–1972) in one Malay village cannot justify any generalizations made to cover the universal Malay social order. It is empirically indefensible because in Peninsular Malaysia, there are, among the Malays, generally known, two family structures namely the matrilineal family structure and the bilateral family structure with an emphasis on the male line. (3) Lack of adequate reference to local work on the subject. The anthropologists' excuse for not knowing enough about the local language and the local sources of information cannot be seriously accepted because it is very much the craft of the social anthropologist to get into the community before he begins his job. This, to my mind, makes the difference between good ethnography and an impressive field report.

Let me now proceed to the next aspect of my comments, that is, the anthropologist's enterprise of constructing models aimed at explaining the social system or phenomenon under study. Dr. Maeda should be congratulated for attempting to introduce a concept in the study of Malay society and culture. That concept is family as the social circle. He calls the family circle (p. 40), "...if an individual regards all members within the circle as persons with whom the individual has social intercourse as a family, or has a change of such intercourse even if it is not presently actualized." He further adds (p. 40), "The family circle is actually regulated by, or formulated on the basis of, mutual interests, supports, participation, sociability, influence, and so on." And the formation of such a social circle (p. 41), "...is conditioned by marriage, procreation, adoption, fosterage, by place of residence, separation, or death. From such factors arise various kinds of relationships — conjugal, cognatic, maternal, paternal, sibling, adoptive." The family is not confined to physical space or territory. This is, of course, very true. But, no anthropologists have ever quarreled over the fact that family as a kinship institution is based on two strands of relationships, i.e., consanguinal and affinal/marriage; and family is the foundation unit in the extended family structure. Membership in the family is through procreation or marriage. This being the case, I am yet not convinced Dr. Maeda's concept of family circle would contribute any addition to the existing analytical tools in kinship studies. If we put the extended family grouping in place of family circle, nothing much is altered.

Then we come to the final question: what purpose does Dr. Maeda's concept of family circle hope to achieve? Dr. Maeda constructs a concept, then he goes to the field and with available field data, confined to one village study, he further attempts to extrapolate in order to generalize about the Malay family circle.

There are two assertions that disturb my mind. Firstly, he makes a reference to Southeast Asian bilateral kinship systems (p. 67) which, he says, are very fluid. This reminds me of John Embree's notion of loosely structured social systems as against tightly structured social systems: the former is said to characterize the Thai family structure and the latter, the Japanese family structure. Secondly, Dr. Maeda claims that the actor's motivation is not for maintenance of the group (i.e., his kinship group), but the management of individual relationships. This assertion supports the earlier claim. In summary, Dr. Maeda tries to convince us that in the Malay community he has studied, (or is it the representative of the Malay world?), there is a social pressure for conformity yet the system allows for individual deviation through the expression of individualism. In short, we are therefore told that the Malay social system is loosely structured, as Dr. Maeda puts it: "...a reflection of the fluid or amorphous character of the family circle" (p. 68).

Having thus concluded, Dr. Maeda must necessarily put the blame on the community (therefore, the Malays) for the lack of a model that could put it on the road of development as he dramatically sums up in his analysis: "the looseness of whatever structure exists originates in both the lack of need for cooperation and the fact that the family circle or any other basic organization presently lacks a model after which a community or association could organize itself" (p. 68).

I must once again say that I am not convinced with the ethnographic account put up by Dr. Maeda nor am I convinced that the Malay social system is loosely structured as implied. Unless a thorough structural analysis of the Malay thinking process regarding his kinship world is made, it is very difficult for anyone to fully comprehend the Malay family structure. Yet here, I am not contesting the possibility, in fact, of the reality of change in village communities where situations of economic compulsion make it appear that people are relatively free to break social norms for group solidarity or to assert individualism, in the wake of greater stress and strain for economic and political survival. This must be seen in the light of history which has brought the village communities into the national mainstreams of economic political and cultural development. I suspect Dr. Maeda's BP is such a community in distress and its present plight is not due to the family structure of the Malays there.