

WOMEN IN THE MATRILINEAL ADAT PERPATIH SOCIETY IN MALAYSIA: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

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Introduction

The Adat Perpatih society in Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia is one of the few matrilineal societies found in South East Asia, and the only one of its kind in the country. It traces its descent to the early Minangkabau immigrants who are believed to have arrived in West Malaysia in the late sixteenth century. The society is a relatively small one, confined largely to the Malays indigenous to five of the seven districts in the state, i.e. Kuala Pilah, Jelebu, Jempul, Tampin, and Rembau. Estimates of the number of people in the Adat Perpatih society are not available as no attempt has been made to enumerate them. Such an exercise would be problematical because of the constant flow of population from and into these districts.

Adherents of the Adat Perpatih may be limited in numerical strength and spatial distribution, but their somewhat unique kinship system has attracted much interest among early colonial administrators, scholars, and others. Such interest which has persisted until today has resulted in many published works on the society as evidenced by the publication list compiled by Tunku Noraidah (1984). However, a close look at these studies reveals that little attention has been given to the position of women in the matrilineal society. It is only in the last two decades i.e. since 1969 that objective studies on these women began. To date apart from the writer (Azizah Kassim, unpublished; 1974; 1986; 1988; 1989; and in press the only other researcher on the subject is Maila Stevens (1981; 1985; and unpublished [b]).

The availability of these works on the matrilineal women did not do much to clarify their status within the Adat Perpatih society. The general public in Malaysia, especially those outside the domain of the Adat, very often type-cast the matrilineal women as strident, domineering, and in control of their menfolk within the family and the household.¹ In this paper the writer sets out to test the validity of this stereotype. By examining the basic principles of the Adat I attempt to look at women's rights and obligations within the family and the community. Central to my analysis here is gender relation, between women and their menfolk, including husbands and kin. The basic questions being addressed here are: what was the position of women in the traditional context? How do socio-economic changes that have taken place in the last few decades affect women's position in the matrilineal society?

The approach adopted here is anthropological. The writer focuses her attention on a group of Adat Perpatih communities in the mukim of Seri Menanti, in the district of Kuala Pilah. Changes outlined here cover a period of about two decades i.e. from the time the writer began her earlier work on women in these communities in 1969. The earlier data are here used as a basis for comparison with those derived from later research.²

Basic principles of Adat Perpatih

The social organization of Adat Perpatih is founded on the following principles.

- (1) Descent is traced through the female line, i.e. the kinship system is matrilineal.
- (2) Based on the matrilineal principle, the society is divided into clans (*suku*) and lineages (*perut*). There are twelve clans, each with a distinct name of its own and headed by an elder known locally as the Lembaga. Each clan is further divided into lineages, each of which is headed by a Buapak. The position of clan elders is held by men.

- (3) Each clan is allocated a specific acreage of ancestral land which is registered in the name of its female members and transmitted through them. Male members of the clan have usufructory rights over the land.
- (4) Each clan and lineage practises exogamy, i.e. prohibition of intra-group marriage. However, what constitutes an exogamic unit varies, in some cases a clan, in others a lineage.
- (5) Transmission of titles and statuses is through the female line.
- (6) Residence is matrilocal or uxorilocal, i.e. the man leaves his natal place after marriage and resides in his wife's kampung.

Position of women in the traditional setting

The Adat Society was based on an agricultural economy. Until the introduction of rubber in the early twentieth century the economy was largely of the subsistence type depending largely on the cultivation of rice, fruits, and vegetables; and the collection of forest products. The introduction of rubber brought in a new source of cash income, and the dependence on the dual economy of rice for subsistence, and rubber for cash, persisted till the 1960s. It is this period before the 1960s which is considered the traditional setting in this paper.

The six basic principles of the Adat given above provide an outline of male-female spheres of activity in the traditional context. Supra-household activities, especially in the political arena, are the domain of the male; while economic activities which centred around the household are the female's. Of the six principles stated, only four can be said to influence the position of women viz. matrilineal descent, women's rights to customary land, their rights to transmit statuses, and matrilocality. I will now explain these principles and relate them to the position of women in the traditional setting.

Matrilineal descent

In the matrilineal kinship system women are important for the perpetuation of the kinship group, i.e. the lineage (*perut*) and clan (*suku*). Without female children the kinship group will perish (*pupus*). Thus it is necessary to have at least one female child in the family.

In the traditional context the lack of female children was seen as a catastrophe, and a woman without daughters was often pitied. Invariably, families faced with such a predicament overcame it by adopting a female child. Intra-clan or intra-lineage adoption was popular, while adoption of female babies from local Chinese families was not uncommon. The choice of Chinese children was both for pragmatic and cultural reasons. Female children were treasured in the Adat community and it was well-nigh impossible to persuade their parents to part with them. Chinese female children, on the other hand, were more easily available. The Chinese have a patrilineal kinship pattern which emphasizes the importance of males and with such a kinship ideology many Chinese families were inclined to give away female children, especially if they had many. Chinese children were also favoured for their fair complexion which is very much appreciated by the Malays.

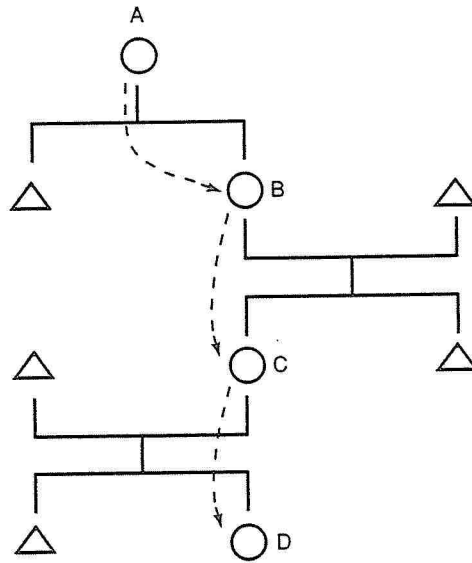
The incorporation of the adopted children into the adoptive parent's family and kinship would be formalized through a ritual ceremony called the *berkadim*. After the ceremony, the adopted female children were accorded all the rights and obligations normally enjoyed by a child born in the society.

Women, transmission of land, and political office

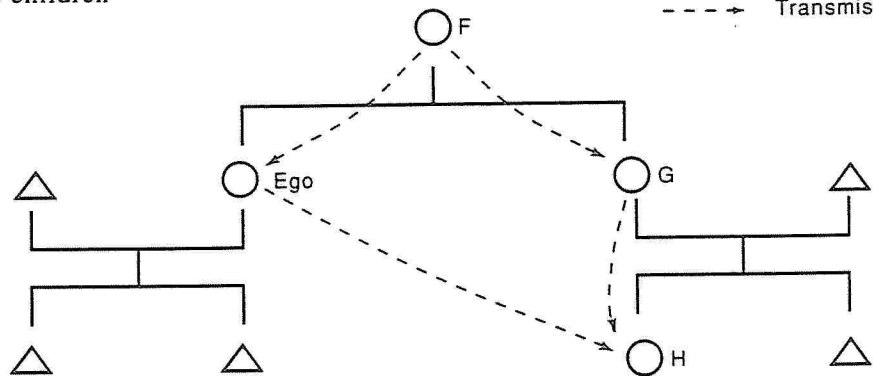
Women were also seen as the custodians of the Adat, and in accordance with this important status the ancestral land (known also as customary land or *Tanah adat dan pesaka*) is entrusted in their care. Such land is generally for subsistence agriculture and for homesteads. In Negeri Sembilan today, ancestral land of Adat Perpatih comprises kampung land and rice-fields and to a small extent fish ponds (*tebat*), orchards (*dusun*), and rubber plantations. The

FIGURE 1. PATTERNS OF INHERITANCE

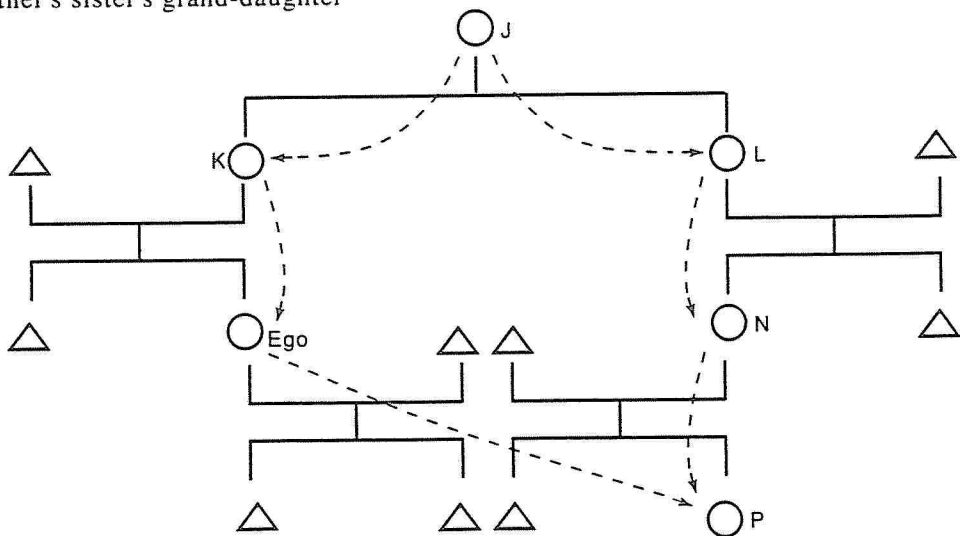
Mode 1
From mother to daughter



Mode 2
From Ego to sister's children



Mode 3
From Ego to mother's sister's grand-daughter



Legend
△ Male
○ Female
---> Transmission

Figure 1. Patterns of inheritance

total acreage of ancestral land in the state is small, i.e. only about 34,565 acres, accounting for less than one per cent of all agricultural land in the state (see Table 1). It is believed that the total size of Adat Perpatih customary land has not increased since its registration about a century ago. The acreage that can be utilized may have decreased in the post-independence era, due to land reclamation by the government for the purposes of physical development in the rural areas.

Table 1: Customary land in Negeri Sembilan

	<u>Jelevu</u>	<u>K. Pilah</u>	<u>Jempul</u>	<u>Rembau</u>	<u>Tampin</u>	<u>Total</u>
No. of lots	64	9,950	809	8,261	1,103	20,097
No. of titles	63	9,973	751	8,587	992	20,366
Total size	96	18,000	1,669	12,698	2,072	34,565 (acres)

Source: Adapted from Mohd Shah bin Hj. Lassim and Norhalim bin Hj. Ibrahim (unpublished: 9). The authors used figures from the Seremban Survey Department. No date was given. Because the size of customary land is fixed the absence of a date is irrelevant.

Ancestral land is transmitted through women, i.e. from mother to daughters with each one having an equal share. Where a family has no female heir, the land goes to the wife's nearest female kin, i.e. her sister's daughters. In the absence of maternal nieces, it goes to maternal grand-nieces, etc. (see Fig. 1). Men do not inherit ancestral land, but they have usufructory rights over them. These rights, however cannot be transmitted to their children.

In theory, ancestral land is held in trust by women for the clan. Ownership of such land is not absolute i.e. a woman cannot sell the land to anyone she pleases. If a woman is in dire need of money she can only sell her land to her female kin, offering the nearest first and then to other matrilineal kin. Only intra-clan sale is allowed. This limited market keeps the value of the land low; but in the days when land was not a commodity, such limitation was not a problem.

Besides ancestral land, adherents of the Adat also own rubber smallholdings which vary in size; i.e. between one and five acres. This category of land which is designated as Malay Reservation is not subject to Adat Perpatih rules of inheritance. It is transmitted according to Islamic rules, the Faraid, which favour the male, i.e. two-thirds to men and one-third to women. However, in practice transmission of Malay Reservation land was and still is very much influenced by the ideology of the Adat where men give up their share in favour of the women.

In addition to land, women also inherit the family house, household goods, and other forms of valuables such as jewellery; family heirloom such as the Malay traditional weapon, the keris; etc. But as the peasants were largely poor, such valuables were found only in a few households.

In the case of the family house, only one daughter is eligible to inherit it. Thus, where a family has more than one daughter, either the eldest or the last female child inherits the house. The right to inherit and use the ancestral land and family house comes with obligations to members of the family and lineage. Women, not men, are held responsible for taking care of their parents in their old age, a practice contrary to Islamic teaching. Men are not expected to care for their elderly parents as they leave their natal residence to live in the wife's kampung after getting married.

In addition women are also expected to provide accommodation and assistance to close matrilineal kin in their times of need, especially to their male siblings and to their mother's brothers, referred to as the *buapak kadim*. Situations in which such relatives require assistance are many. For instance, a man may have a tiff with his wife and feeling peeved decide to leave

FIGURE 2. TRANSMISSION OF POLITICAL OFFICE
(IN ROTATION BETWEEN THREE HYPOTHETICAL LINEAGES)

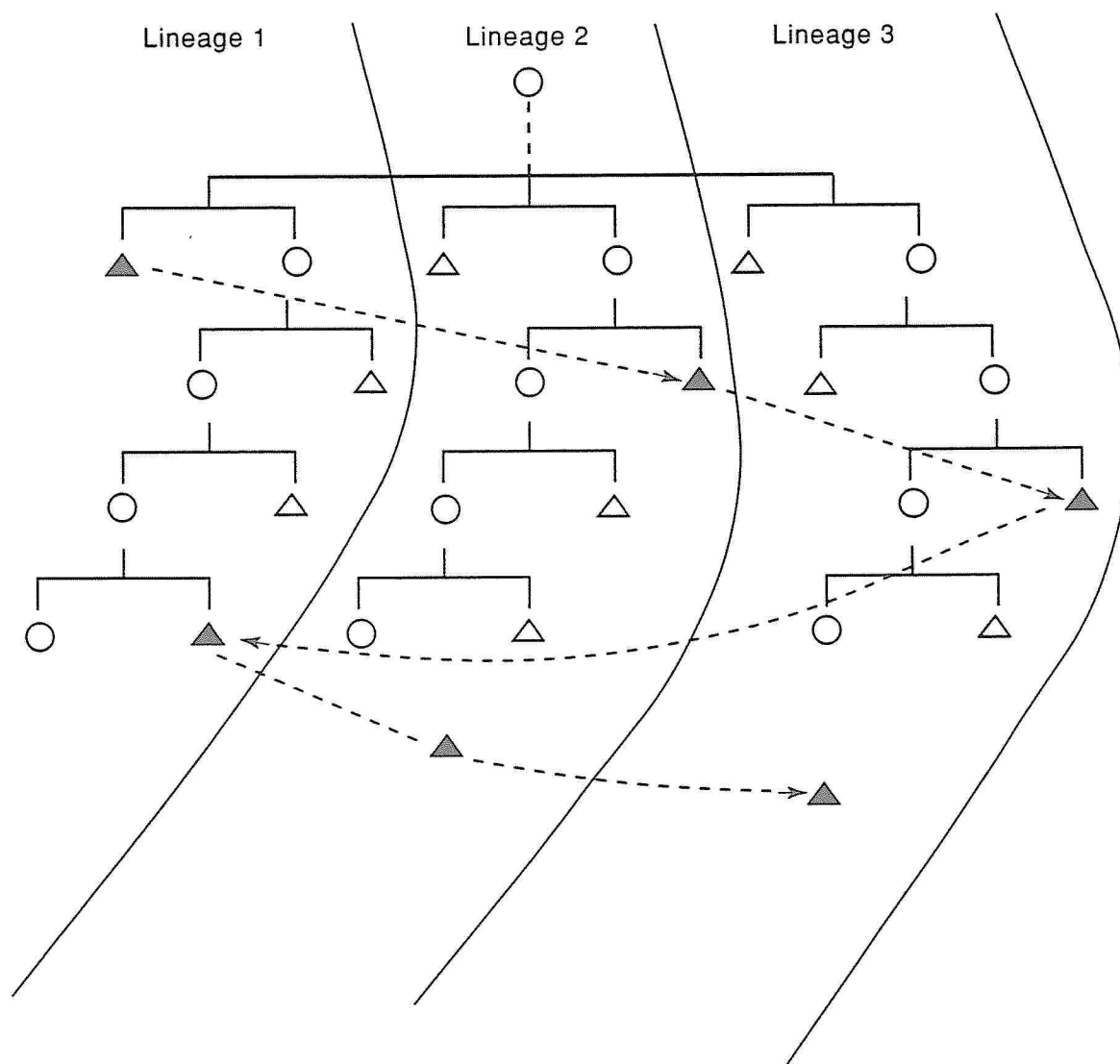


Figure 2. Transmission of political office (in rotation between three hypothetical lineages)

his marital home for a while. He may divorce his wife; or his wife may have died. Under such circumstances he has to leave his wife's place and return to his natal village, to the house of his close matrilineal kin, i.e. his mother's, if she is still alive; if his sisters or of his sisters' daughters; of his maternal female cousins; etc.

Titles and political office may be held by men but are also passed through the female line. Among these are offices in the traditional political system which are retained until today. Examples are the posts of Undang, Penghulu Luak, Lembaga, and Buapak. These posts are held by men, and in the old days they were important statuses which commanded power and respect and from which the incumbents derived an income. Today, these posts are given official recognition by the state government and the incumbents are given allowances of varying amounts. At the lowest level of the hierarchy, a minor chief may get a stipend of a few hundred dollars a year, and at the top rung, the Undang receives a four-figure monthly salary in addition to other privileges. These posts which are transmitted matrilineally are held in rotation by a select number of lineage groups. Thus an Undang, for example, will not transmit the post he holds to his son but to his matrilineal heir, i.e. a son of one of his classificatory sisters from any one of the select group of "ruling families" (see Fig. 2).

Women and matrilocality

Matrilocal rule of residence compels a man to move from his natal home to that of his wife's mother at marriage. At the wife's place the husband is an "outsider" referred to locally as the *orang semenda* who must adapt himself to the ways of his wife's family. His position is subordinate to his wife's male kin, i.e. the *orang tempat semenda* and he must abide by their words.

In the traditional peasant society, the husband's presence was a gain in terms of extra labour to his bride's family and lineage. It was for this reason that in the Adat Perpatih society in the past, a man was not required at marriage to pay bridewealth for his wife. All he needed to do was to pay the token sum as required by Islam, the Mahr, which varied in amount from time to time and from one locality to another. In the 1960s it was \$28; now the amount has risen in many areas of the Adat territory.

Immediately after marriage, the man lived with his wife's family, in the house of her mother. If the wife was not in line to inherit the family house, then her family would provide her a house of her own later on, usually after she had children. The new house would be built in the family compound; thus the new household unit remained within close geographical proximity to the wife's parents and to others within the compound. This enabled the wife to enlist the help and assistance of her kith and kin in her times of crisis and need.

Implications of female transmission and matrilocality on gender relations in the traditional setting

The pattern of land inheritance and residence as well as the mode of economic organization in the traditional Adat Perpatih society enabled the woman to have an edge in her relationship with the men - her husband and her male kin. The dynamics of such a relationship can only be understood in relation to the peasant economy.

As alluded to earlier, the traditional economy of the Adat Perpatih society was dependent mainly on rice cultivation for subsistence and rubber tapping for cash. Women controlled the means of production, i.e. land for agriculture (for rice cultivation and to some extent rubber), land for homestead, and housing. Matrilocality removes men from their natal residence, thus making it difficult for them to work the land of their family orientation. Thus men were compelled to work on land belonging to their wife or wife's kin. The farther the men were from their natal residence, the more dependent they were on the wife and her family for their livelihood.

In the peasant economy, there was also gender differentiation in economic activities. Rubber tapping was considered a man's job while rice growing and processing was the woman's. A man might help his wife in the fields if he was not otherwise engaged, and vice versa. None the less, it was considered the duty of the wife to provide rice, the staple food of the family, and the duty of the husband to acquire cash to purchase all other family necessities. Thus the wife and husband contributed equally to the household economy. Given such a context the status of the husband and wife was deemed to be equal, as reflected by the term to refer to a spouse which is *kawan* (lit. "friend").

The rule of matrilocality, in conjunction with women's control over the means of production, made it difficult for a man to exercise control over his wife. He was a "lodger" in the house of his wife. In such a setting it would be almost impossible for the husband to maltreat or abuse his wife or wife's mother, surrounded by the kith and kin of his wife. If he dared to do so, he risked incurring the wrath of his wife's kin and in the event of a marital breakdown it was he who had to leave the marital home. A marital break-up was most inconvenient for a man as he tended to lose all the social and economic investments he had made at his wife's place. He also faced an uncertain future as far as accommodation was concerned. Depending on the nature of his relationship with his close matrilineal kin after his marriage, his kin group might or might not want to accommodate him. If he was rejected by his kin he had no choice but to spend the rest of his life in the village mosque or *surau*. Indeed, in many villages in the Adat territory, such cases are not unknown.

In view of the above, I contend that in the traditional context, a woman had an edge in her relationship with her husband. She was in a relatively powerful position and such power increased with age. For the longer the marriage lasted, the more removed a man was from his matrilineal kin, the harder it was for him to return to his natal home and be welcome and accepted by his matrilineal kin.

It is my impression that a woman also occupied a dominant position in her relationship with her male kin, i.e. her brothers, mother's brother, etc. By virtue of her right of inheritance to land and housing, she could determine who could or could not reside in the ancestral home, who could be allowed to share the use of the rice-fields, or who could collect produce (such as fruits, palm leaves for attap roofing, fish, sago, etc.) from the ancestral farm land. She had what some anthropologists call relative autonomy. Such were the privileges of the matrilineal women which those in non-matrilineal societies did not enjoy.

It must be stressed that women's dominant position in the matrilineal society is not conspicuous. Their religion, Islam, which emphasizes patriliney and patriarchy tends either to neutralize female power or to conceal it from the public. But female power was there to be utilized by the women as and when it suited them.

Socio-economic changes in the Adat Perpatih society

I maintain that the "special" position of the matrilineal women is attributable mainly to four basic principles of the Adat of which the most important are the inheritance pattern and matrilocality, which allowed women in the peasant economy to control the means of production and living space. Adat principles remain the same today, but they are no longer observed strictly. This change in attitude towards the Adat is attributable to several socio-economic developments which have taken place in the mukim in the years after independence.

In the last three decades the mukim under study has been recipient of many development projects. Most of the villages in the mukim are now accessible by motorized transport; almost 90 per cent of the households have electricity supply and piped water; and the number of schools, health centres, community halls, and prayer houses have increased manifold. In the economic sphere several schemes have been formulated and implemented to help improve agriculture in the traditional villages. These changes, along with developments extraneous to the mukim, particularly the opening up of new agricultural schemes for

resettlement and the expansion of industrialization since the 1970s, have left a profound impact on the social organization of Adat Perpatih.

In the post-independence period, especially after the implementation of the New Economic Policy in 1971, the mukim suffered huge population losses due to out-migration. The spread of education has given way to a new attitude towards jobs; few of those who benefited from formal education, even up to the secondary three level (Form Three), are keen on agricultural jobs in the peasant economy. Such jobs are now considered dirty, demeaning, and physically demanding. To escape working in the paddy fields and in the rubber small-holdings, most of the young (in their late teens or early twenties) migrated to the urban areas soon after leaving school, in search of paid employment especially in the manufacturing sector and the public service. Others, too old to qualify for jobs in the urban areas, moved to land resettlement schemes which offer better economic opportunities. Such a population drift left many traditional villages in the mukim without sufficient labour for agriculture.

Agricultural activities, especially rice growing began to decline in spite of the availability of agricultural development strategies to combat it. The rate of decline accelerated due to the lack of water supply and silting of the rice fields caused by indiscriminate and extensive logging on surrounding hillsides. Most of the rice-fields in the mukim, and elsewhere in the district of Kuala Pilah, have remained idle in the last fifteen years.

In many areas in the mukim today the presence of idle rice land is very conspicuous; in some cases rice-fields have dried up and turned into secondary jungle. In some areas too, land for homesteads is left neglected as the owners have left for the towns or resettlement schemes. Rubber small-holdings too suffer from labour shortages, but non-utilization or under-utilization of rubber small-holdings is not easily seen as rubber holdings are largely situated away from village settlements.

The presence of under-utilized or non-utilized agricultural land is not the only evidence of agricultural decline in the Adat Perpatih territory. In my survey of ten communities in the mukim between 1986 and 1988, I note that only a very small proportion of the respondents under study i.e. 14 per cent were dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. Their main sources of cash income were rubber tapping, animal husbandry, i.e. the rearing of cows, and the sale of fruits. The others had non-agricultural sources of income; from pensions, remittances from children who are in paid employment in the urban areas, and in the case of those still economically active, from wages or salaries of heads of households (see Azizah Kassim, 1988:132-49). The Adat Perpatih economy has undergone considerable transformations; it is no longer dependent on agriculture and on Adat land but on income from paid employment.

Impact of change on Adat Perpatih society

The process of depeasantization taking place in the Adat Perpatih society, among other factors, reduces the relevance of the Adat. As I explained in an earlier paper (Azizah Kassim, in press) kinship groupings now play a minimal role in village socio-economic organizations, their role being replaced by new forms of social alignments based on a number of factors, such as religion, common economic interests, and political party affiliations.

Few of the young now know the name of their respective clan or who their clan elders are. To many, the Adat Perpatih is relevant only for symbolic reasons and for limited economic purposes such as to determine their clan and lineage for purposes of transmission of property and statuses. Interactions with clan elders are minimal. Very often the clan elders are sought only when necessary, for example when their approval and signatures are needed in cases of transmission of ancestral land. The few who may show keen interest in the Adat are those who hope to benefit directly from it, for example by holding office in the traditional but relatively defunct Adat political structure.

A move towards gender egalitarianism

With the declining importance of clan lineage and of the Adat as a whole in the life of the villagers, there seems to be a move towards gender egalitarianism. Little emphasis is now placed on having female children. Daughters were required to take care of ancestral land and the family house, to take care of elderly parents and other close matrilineal kin in their time of need. Now few daughters can be relied on to perform these functions.

Many women leave the village; they marry out and live elsewhere, thus making it difficult for them to carry out the traditional obligations imposed on them. Similarly, those who remain behind, as will be explained later, very often cannot do so because they lack economic resources. Thus it is irrelevant now whether or not a family has daughters. Many families without daughters no longer bother to adopt female children. Adoption of children is done only by those without children and boys too are now adopted.

Women and men: an insight into husband-wife relationships

The changing basis of the village economy affects gender relationships in the society. To begin with, since the 1970s very few parents would give their daughter away in marriage without a bridewealth (*hantaran*) from the husband. The *hantaran* varies in amount with the academic and economic status of the future wife and the social status of her family, from M\$1,000 to M\$4,000. And a close look at the marriage records at the Kadhi's office in 1989 reveals that the amount given as *hantaran* has been increased in the last five years or so. The adoption of this new practice helped to increase a man's position vis-à-vis his wife. Having "paid" for her, he now has more claim on her than her kin, and he can, if he chooses, take her away from her lineage group and her natal place.

For married couples residing in the village, women's power in relation to their husband has in the majority of cases been eroded. Ownership of customary land, in many cases, is no longer functional to women's position; the land is now of little economic value. Ancestral land, which is now kept mainly for symbolic reasons and as a form of security, is largely utilized for housing. However, the size of individual share of ancestral land is negligible, in the majority of cases between a quarter and one acre. Most of the holdings are jointly owned, thus making their development and maintenance problematical (see Azizah Kassim, 1989:317-38).

As mentioned earlier, in most households now the main sources of cash income are the husband's pension or income from paid employment, or remittances from children which are often channelled through the father. Few women are actively involved in economic activities. Less than 10 per cent of the women interviewed in the survey said they work (*kerja*) and of those who do many are working in a supplementary capacity to their husband. They help in the retail store run by the husband, assist him to tap rubber or make sugar from the sap of the palm trees, etc. In such jobs they have no access to income of their own. A very small number are in paid employment, working mainly in the public sector as teachers or clerks. The majority of women describe themselves as housewives (*suri-rumah*) whose main occupation revolved around household maintenance - cooking, cleaning the house and compound, doing the laundry, taking care of the children or grandchildren.

Compared to the women in my earlier survey in the 1960s, few women are engaged in agricultural activities except for small-scale vegetable farming for subsistence, which is often taken on like a hobby. They no longer plant or process rice; go fishing in the river; forage for vegetables, fungus, or other edibles in the forest as women used to do two or three decades ago. Most of the daily necessities are now bought. Few women need to collect firewood as many are now using alternative fuel such as kerosene, gas, or electricity. Similarly, few now need to sew clothes for the family or weave *mengkuang* for mats. And in carrying out their daily chores in the kitchen, many women have electric gadgets such as the blender, mixer, and coconut scraper which make their work much simpler. Indeed, as women today admit, their

life is now more comfortable and this new-found ease is made possible by men's (in most cases the husband's) earning from sources outside the Adat territory.

As men increase their economic standing and become the main breadwinners in the family, women find theirs declining. Most women are now dependents of their husband and they make a minimal contribution to household income. The house a family lives in may be built on land belonging to the wife, but very frequently the house was constructed and is repaired or rebuilt with the income of the husband. Without the husband many women may find themselves in financial difficulty. This dependency has eroded the power women in the peasant economy used to have.

When a wife is dependent on the husband for her livelihood, it is easy for the husband to exercise control over her. Her position vis-à-vis her husband is worsened by the disintegration of the lineage group at the village level as a result of out-migration. A woman used to have an adequate emotional support system (and in some cases extra-economic support as well) from close matrilineal kin who lived close by. Now that support is, in many cases, missing as people move out of their native village. Today if a wife has a quarrel with her husband, or is deserted by him, she may not have many people in the village to whom she can turn for help. She must therefore exercise caution in her relationship with her spouse. It is my impression that the husband-wife relationship is now tilted in favour of the man. There is now a growing emphasis on male dominance which seems to be gaining acceptance among the villagers in the light of the renewed interest in Islam which is taking place.

In the few cases where women are able to secure stable jobs and steady income, their position vis-à-vis the husband remains similar to that of women in the traditional context. In some cases, their position is further strengthened.

Women and men: matrilineal women and their kin

As the kin groups, the *perut* (lineage), and *suku* (clan) cease to be the main basis for social organization in the village, and as out-migration continues, the relationship between a woman and her kin outside the family/household is given decreasing emphasis. The stress now is on the nuclear family and most women without economic resources of their own find it difficult or impossible to carry out their duty towards their matrilineal kin as required by the Adat. In the early days for example, it was incumbent on women to accommodate a widowed or divorced brother or mother's brother; such obligations cannot easily be discharged now that the household is financially supported by the husband.

With the expansion of the money economy in village life, there is also a growing sense of individualism among the villagers and the spirit of communalism as espoused by the Adat is often ignored. This sense of individualism and the lack of understanding of Adat Perpatih have caused a number of misunderstandings among lineage members. One of the most common causes of conflict is the ancestral land. Many women now regard such land as private property and deny their male kin their right to use the land or share its products.

It is clear that under the present socio-economic structure, it is difficult to sustain lineage unity and co-operation and women, in particular, cannot perform their obligations towards their kin effectively.

Conclusion

The socio-economic changes taking place in Seri Menanti are also experienced by other Adat Perpatih communities elsewhere in the state. The impact of these changes on the position of women can be assumed to be similar. The matrilineal kinship system survives and women retain their rights within the system, i.e. they continue to perpetuate the lineage and clan, they inherit the ancestral land, and some the family house, and through them the political offices are transmitted. These rights which in the traditional context put women in a special position and vested in them relative autonomy, have little significance today. Women have lost their special

position and relative autonomy as a result of socio-economic changes taking place within and outside the Adat Perpatih territory which undermine the economic basis that used to sustain Adat.

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NOTES

1. The negative images of the Negeri Sembilan women are expressed in many forms. Perhaps the most popular is the tag "Benson and Hedges" often used to describe them as mercenary beings. The tag is an acronym for the phrase *Bilo eden nikah samo orang negeri, harto eden dan gaji eden solosai* (lit. "When I marry a Negeri woman all my property and pay will be gone).
2. This paper is based on research carried out by the writer between 1986 and 1988 under the auspices of the JSPS-VCC (Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science and Vice-Chancellors' Council of Malaysia). The research was funded by the Hitachi Foundation of Japan.

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Functional and Decorative
Items for the home:
Woodcarvings, Masks, Textiles,
Shadow Puppets, etc.

A wide selection of Terracotta
Pottery from Lombok

Music cassettes from Bali, Central Java, Sunda

And a variety of similar items from elsewhere in South East Asia