MATRILINY *and* MIGRATION

Evolving Minangkabau Traditions in Indonesia

TSUYOSHI KATO

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To Ofukuro

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Preface

In the mountainous region of western central Sumatra lies the cultural heartland of the Minangkabau, a people noted in Indonesia for their business acumen and their intellectual accomplishments. They are distinguished by three well-known social features: devotion to Islam, adherence to a matrilineal family system, and inclination to *merantau,* or migration. The Minangkabau have for a long time remained an enigma, a tangle of paradoxes to the outsider: ardent believers in patrilineally-oriented Islam yet tenacious followers of matriliny, well educated and enterprising yet upholding a seemingly archaic tradition, highly mobile and centrifugal in habit yet maintaining a strong sense of ethnic identity rooted in their homeland.

At the center of these paradoxes is the perseverance of matriliny. The Minangkabau matrilineal system, however, has been the subject of conflicting testimonies. Beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century, some outside observers diagnosed or predicted the disintegration of matriliny in West Sumatra: matrilineal extended families were being replaced by nuclear conjugal families; property, mainly land, was becoming individually owned rather than communally owned; inheritance was tending to be bilateral or patrilineal instead of matrilineal. Yet there are many accounts to the contrary.

In this book I will describe how, in comparison to the past, the matrilineal system is practiced in contemporary Minangkabau society and then explain how Minangkabau matriliny has been able to adapt to changing times and circumstances. The Minangkabau's strong tendency to migration is an important factor in the mat-

rilineal system's adaptability. The key to understanding it is to grasp Minangkabau societal processes historically. Static analyses can capture only a part—or seemingly contradictory parts—of a dynamic and changing reality. Only by placing the interplay between matriliny and migration in a proper historical perspective can we comprehend how the Minangkabau have managed to maintain their matrilineal system. Unlike some other studies of social change, this is essentially a story of the resilience of tradition.

If I were to choose the single most important lesson I have learned from conducting field research and writing, it would probably be the realization of how much I owe others—for their work, advice, material and moral support, kindness, and generosity—in my efforts to carry out these tasks. I must first express my gratitude to three of my professors at Cornell University, Robin M. Williams, Jr., Bernard C. Rosen, and Lawrence K. Williams, who trained, influenced, and supported me in more ways than they themselves might realize. Whatever competence I have acquired in the fields of sociology and social psychology is a result of their guidance.

Special thanks are due to Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, who, as teacher and friend, taught me the importance of appreciating Indonesian society for itself rather than merely using it as a sample to theorize about. It is primarily because of his influence that I have written a book that is, in the terms of contemporary sociology, rather unconventional. He also spent countless hours carefully reading, editing, and commenting on the manuscript at various stages of preparation. Many of the ideas I have attempted to work out arose from suggestions he made or in the many stimulating discussions I had with him.

My field research in Indonesia (from January 1972 to July 1973) was carried out under the auspices of the Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia (the Indonesian Council of Sciences) and financed jointly by a Humanities and Social Sciences Program Fellowship of Cornell University and by the National Science Foundation. The Cornell Southeast Asia Program and the Cornell Sociology Department supported the computerization of my field data. The assistance of these various institutions is gratefully acknowledged.

Some recent historical works on Minangkabau society have proved indispensable. Among them, the writings of Taufik Abdullah, Christine Dobbin, Elizabeth Graves, P. E. de Josselin de Jong

(who kindly read my work and gave me some valuable comments), J. Kathirithamby-Wells, and Akira Oki have been especially useful.

A number of friends helped, encouraged, influenced, and sometimes (pleasantly) annoyed me in the course of writing. I particularly welcome the opportunity to express my appreciation to Taufik Abdullah, Alison Davis, Judith Ecklund, William O'Malley, and Mildred Wagemann. Their aid and assistance went far beyond the simple yet tedious tasks of helping me understand Dutch material and editing my English. I thank them indeed, for everything.

Above all, I owe deep gratitude to the Minangkabau people from every walk of life whom I met in West Sumatra and in Pekan Baru in the course of my fieldwork. I was greatly honored that many of them embraced me as a relative; they said that according to legend one of three sons of Alexander the Great, Maharaja Diraja, became the ancestor of the Minangkabau, while Maharaja Depang, another son, became the ancestor of the Japanese. Without the generous cooperation of countless Minangkabau people, in IV [Empat] Angkat and other villages, and village heads from all over West Sumatra—a few of whom even walked all night to accommodate me (I only wish I had known that I was causing such trouble)—local government officials, friends, and friends of friends, my field research would have been impossible. I can only hope that this book has done no injustice to their kindness and helpfulness. Although so many people aided my field research, I would like to mention especially Sjahruddin Ans, Burhanuddin Pakih Kayo, Halimoen, Hasbullah Zen, Imran Manan, Mansur Jasin, Muhammad Nazif, Musnida Munir, the late Ratna Sari, Rafii Sa'adi, the late Amilijoes Sa'danoer, and Noerani Sa'danoer. They helped me to adjust to life in West Sumatra, to carry out research and interviews, and to understand Minangkabau society. A Minangkabau aphorism says: "Fish in the ocean, lime in the mountain, if destined, will meet each other yet." Although we are separated by a great distance, I hope we will meet again.

The following institutions were particularly helpful in supplying relevant information and data: the provincial government of West Sumatra at all levels (under then Governor Harun Zain), branch offices of various departments of the central government all over West Sumatra, Fakultas Hukum dan Pengetahuan Masyarakat of Universitas Andalas, Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan in

Padang, Akademi Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri in Bukittinggi, and the West Sumatra Regional Planning Study of the Indonesian Ministry of Public Works and Power and the University of Bonn. The International College of Sophia University and the Center for Southeast Asian Studies of Kyoto University provided me with time and facilities to revise my work. The final version profited from the excellent editing of Lisa S. Turner.

TSUYOSHI KATO

Kyoto, Japan

Note on Spelling

There are two types of Indonesian spelling, the old spelling (*ejaan lama*) and the new (*ejaan baru*):

Old	*New*
oe	u
j	y
dj	j
tj	c (pronounced ch)
ch	kh
sj	sy

In general I follow the new spelling. In the case of quotations from literature published before 1973, however, the old form has been retained. The same rule applies to the citation of authors' names and titles of materials published before 1973. In accordance with the Indonesian custom, no distinction is made between singular and plural for Indonesian or Minangkabau words.

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The old adat, ancient heritage,
Neither rots in the rain,
Nor cracks in the sun
—Minangkabau proverb

5 / *Village and Rantau*

Historically and culturally, the rantau originated from the darek. Yet, their relation was never unidirectional. The darek did not simply dictate the shaping of the rantau. The rantau also exerted its influence on the darek. As suggested by an adat aphorism referring to "the deer with the golden horns [symbolizing a king] who came from the sea," kingship was presumably introduced to the darek via the rantau (Abdullah 1972a:185). Similarly, an aphorism mentioned earlier maintains that "Islam ascended [from the coast, that is, the rantau, to the darek], while adat descended [from Mount Merapi]." In this mutual interaction, the darek provided Minangkabau identity, while the rantau served as a gateway through which new ideas and practices were introduced to the Alam Minangkabau.

The basis of the rantau's dynamism was its inherent difference from the darek, irrespective of many shared characteristics. The rantau was not simply a geographical extension or replica of the darek. One clear sign of the difference is another adat aphorism which says: "Luhak [darek] has penghulu, rantau has raja" (*Luhak bapanghulu, rantau barajo*). In the cultural heartland of the darek, it was traditionally the penghulu, the lineage heads, who held the highest political and judicial power. But in the more heterogenous rantau bordering on the outside world where kinship proved to have little effect in controlling mixed population, it was the raja, the minor kings, who presided over villages (Datoek Madjolelo and Marzoeki 1951:25). Heterogeneity generated by the contact with the outside world was a major source of rantau's dynamism.

After the middle of the nineteenth century, that is, after the Dutch

established their political hegemony over West Sumatra, the locus of rantau began to change. The Alam Minangkabau itself was contained within the administrative boundary of Sumatra's West Coast. As the immediate rantau lost its capacity to expand, the idea of rantau became more and more identified with areas outside West Sumatra to which Minangkabau perantau migrated to earn a livelihood rather than to establish new permanent settlements. In addition, the development of transportation and communication systems allowed the darek and its people to have direct contacts with the outside world without the mediation of the local rantau in West Sumatra. Today, rantau is largely understood as synonymous with areas—particularly cities and towns—outside West Sumatra. Merantau is also increasingly understood in a similar fashion: to leave one's native province, not one's village or the darek.

This shift, however, did not change the nature of interaction between the darek (now primarily West Sumatra as a whole) and the rantau (primarily areas outside West Sumatra).[1] The rantau is still conceived as a zone different from the darek which serves as a source of new ideas and practices. Yet the rantau-darek contrast at the present time has become overlaid to a great extent by the urban-rural or city-village distinction, as the urban orientation of the perantau has grown. Some characteristics of this urban-rural contrast are readily recognizable. By comparison to the West Sumatran villages from which most Minangkabau perantau originate, the urban rantau is crowded, multiethnic, culturally diverse, occupationally differentiated, steeply stratified economically, highly developed in terms of mass communication, abundant in entertainment, and so on.

Inspite of these obvious general differences between village and rantau, we have little understanding of the kind of life a perantau may actually come to lead in the rantau. How different is the perantau's life from that of his compatriots back in the village? How does the perantau organize his family life and household? How does he relate to his matrilineal relatives? Are people who tend to remain in the village systematically different from those who tend to stay in the rantau? Partly in order to answer these questions, a household

1. This is my own metaphorical usage of the terms. Even though rantau may be used to refer to areas outside West Sumatra in daily conversation nowadays, the darek still retains its traditional meaning of the cultural heartland in West Sumatra.

survey was conducted in IV Angkat and in Padang and Pekan Baru. In the survey, IV Angkat represents a microcosm of the village; Padang and Pekan Paru represent microcosms of the rantau.

The respondents in IV Angkat were drawn from four villages, while those in Padang and Pekan Baru were people originally coming from two of the same four villages. The sample size in IV Angkat was 395—a 10 percent random sample of male household heads (husbands) in the four villages. The size of the perantau sample in the two cities was seventy-five. These were male household heads whom I chose from members of the perantau associations of IV Angkat Candung in Padang and Pekan Baru.

Every study of perantau is bound to suffer from sampling problems. The present attempt is no exception. The sample size is very small. Respondents could not be randomly selected. People who become members of perantau associations are more likely to be successful perantau, however modest their success may be, rather than the near-destitute perantau who fail. Even among members of perantau associations, the difficulties encountered in locating and interviewing respondents in large cities necessitated the inclusion of all reachable respondents rather than a sampling of them. With a mean and median length of stay in the rantau of nineteen years, the respondents in the survey had been away from the village for an extremely long time.[2] They also came disproportionately from the highly educated white-collar sector. In no sense, then, are my samples from Padang and Pekan Baru representative of the perantau households found in these two cities, however the universe of perantau households might be defined. This rather dismal situation should not, however, discourage us from drawing some inferences from the survey results at this exploratory stage of our inquiry. There are a number of differences in the way family life is organized between the village (IV Angkat) and the rantau (Padang and Pekan Baru). Some of these differences may be attributed to the weaknesses and the bias of my sampling in the two cities. On the other hand, many of the differences are also intelligible in terms of the general contrast between urban rantau and village.

2. The distribution of lengths of stay in the rantau was as follows: less than 6 years, 4 percent; 6 to 10 years, 14 percent; 11 to 15 years, 27 percent; 16 to 20 years, 17 percent; 21 to 25 years, 17 percent; 26 to 30 years, 7 percent; 31 to 35 years, 7 percent; 36 to 40 years, 3 percent; more than 40 years, 4 percent.

Demographic Characteristics of Household Heads

In order to get acquainted with the characteristics of the people who supplied me with information in the village and the rantau, let us first examine some demographic traits of the two groups of respondents, namely, age, educational level, and main occupation. By comparison with respondents from the village, those in the rantau were on the average younger, better educated, and far less likely to be agricultural or manual in occupation (Table 5.1). These results may be exaggerated due to a sampling bias, but the basic differences, especially as far as educational level and occupation are concerned, are not likely to be factitious.[3] Table 5.2 shows the educational level and occupation of those who were covered in my survey on merantau history and who at the time of the survey were staying in the village or in the rantau. In this instance, both perantau and villagers were drawn from the same 132 sublineages studied in my survey on merantau history. Since information concerning perantau was obtained from their matrilineal kin who still resided in the village, there is little likelihood of a sampling bias caused by the differential accessibility of various perantau.[4] Another difference is that my sample in the household survey consisted of only household heads, while Table 5.2 covers non-household heads as well as household heads. In these respects, the perantau and the villagers involved in the survey on merantau history are more comparable to each other and more representative of those who currently stay in the village or in the rantau than my samples from the household survey.

A comparison of Tables 5.1 and 5.2 shows that my rantau re-

3. Nobody in the rantau was engaged in agriculture as their main occupation; the 3 percent in "agricultural or manual" were manual laborers. The disparity with regard to agricultural occupations widens if we take supplementary occupations into consideration. About 75 percent of respondents in the village were engaged in agriculture either as their main or supplementary occupation. Only one percent of those in the rantau were so engaged. The survey of the Sumatra Regional Planning Study in southern Sumatra also seems to indicate that Minangkabau perantau are younger than those who stay in West Sumatra. The age distribution of their 239 Minangkabau male household heads in cities and towns of southern Sumatra was as follows: 20 to 35 years old, 30 percent; 36 to 45 years old, 36 percent; 46 to 55 years old, 23 percent; more than 55 years old, 11 percent. The mean age was 43 years.

4. Even in this case, people whose close matrilineal kin have all left the village cannot be tapped in the survey. As mentioned before, a male respondent was asked about his children (non-matrilineal kin) instead of his kemanakan.

spondents in the household survey overrepresent the share of college graduates and white-collar workers among the perantau. Nevertheless, a general divergence between perantau and villagers is unmistakable, showing in both tables: in other words, perantau are better educated and far less agricultural or manual in occupation than villagers. (This is also true for female villagers and perantau as seen in Table 5.2.) The seemingly rather simple observation is not without significance for characterizing a specifically Minangkabau migratory pattern. Different from the people who flock in from Bekasi, Cirebon, Indramayu, and other places relatively near to Jakarta, who often become manual laborers (for example, *becak* or tricycle drivers), the Minangkabau perantau in the capital, by comparison with their former fellow villagers, are in general selected people in terms of their educational level and occupational orientation.

Table 5.1. Age, education, and occupation of household heads in village and rantau

	Village (N = 395)	Rantau (N = 75)
Age		
20 to 35	11%	28%
36 to 45	25%	28%
46 to 55	36%	31%
56 and older	28%	13%
Mean age	49	43
Educational level		
No schooling	3%	0%
Grade school	63%	32%
Junior high	21%	26%
Senior high	11%	14%
College	2%	28%
Main occupation		
Agricultural/Manual	43%	3%
Commercial	21%	29%
Artisanry	16%	11%
White-collar	18%	54%
Other	2%	3%

SOURCE: Household survey in IV Angkat and in Padang and Pekan Baru. Unless otherwise specified, the subsequent tables are all based on the household survey.

Table 5.2. Education and occupation of villagers and perantau

	Males		Females	
	Villagers (N = 157)	Perantau (N = 166)	Villagers (N = 322)	Perantau (N = 90)
Education				
No schooling	15%	4%	27%	10%
Grade school	63%	45%	52%	40%
Junior high	12%	22%	13%	22%
Senior high	8%	17%	5%	15%
College	2%	12%	3%	13%
Main occupation				
Agricultural/Manual	38%	4%	39%	0%
Commercial	18%	46%	4%	12%
Artisanry	22%	16%	24%	10%
White-collar	13%	25%	6%	9%
Housewife	0%	0%	24%	59%
Other	9%	9%	3%	10%

SOURCE: Survey on merantau history.

Household Composition and Management

The question of housing is essential in the Minangkabau society, for the legal status of a house of domicile according to adat determines to a great extent who may live there. In terms of legal status the houses in the villages are more or less evenly divided between ancestral and individually earned properties. By contrast, houses which are ancestral property are very rare in the rantau, as it accounts for only 4 percent; houses in the rantau are overwhelmingly rented (over 50 percent) or individually earned (36 percent).[5] This difference is significant, for the proportion of rented or individually earned houses in the rantau suggests that the occupants have great discretion as to who will stay there with them. In this respect, the term "individually earned house" in the village is a bit misleading.

5. Individually earned properties are the properties acquired entirely by one's own efforts. This tendency was already noted in colonial times. According to the Dutch census (*Volkstelling 1930*, 4:66), the legal status of houses in the municipality of Padang was as follows: ancestral property, 11 percent; individually earned property, 46 percent; other (mainly rented), 43 percent. This recalculation of the census results does not include houses of unknown legal classification.

It is still relatively rare that ground for building a house has the status of individually earned property even if the house on that ground is classified as such. In such cases, the discretion of any use attributed above to individually earned property does not apply. Suppose that a husband builds a house on the ancestral property of his wife's lineage. Even if the house itself is his individually earned property, there is no way for him to accommodate his parents in the house so long as the house stands on the land of his wife's lineage.

There is little difference in household size between village and rantau: on the average 6.7 and 7.4 persons per house respectively. However, there is considerable divergence in household composition between village and rantau (Table 5.3).[6] The major difference concerns the inclusion or exclusion of either the wife's kin or the husband's. From the table, it is apparent that inclusion of husband's kin seldom happens in the village. Beyond the nuclear family, the household in the village almost exclusively incorporates the wife's relatives. This is not the case in the rantau. There households often include the husband's kin and his wife's. Of twenty-one households in the rantau that included husband's kin, seven actually incorporated both the husband's and his wife's. Thus, among nonnuclear households in the rantau, the inclusion of these two types of kin was relatively balanced: 17 percent had wife's kin, 19 percent husband's, and 10 percent both wife's and husband's. The results show that the matrilineal principle plays an important role in household formation in the village, but household formation in the rantau is more variable.[7]

In terms of generational depth, about 35 percent of the households sampled incorporated parents, both in the village and in the rantau. The only difference between the two spheres is that, as pointed out above, the parents in the village are those of the wife,

6. The meanings of the categories in the table are as follows: stem—a nuclear family with the wife's parent(s) (and her unmarried siblings, usually sisters); joint—household of two married sisters or more (and their parents and unmarried siblings); husband's kin included—all households which include the husband's kin, such as parents and siblings; other—a nuclear family and non-immediate kin of the wife (e.g., wife's sister's child).

7. Although the household survey did not specifically ask this question, another significant difference in household composition between village and rantau is the sleeping arrangement of boys. Boys in the rantau sleep in their parents' house, while those in the village still commonly sleep in the surau or else in coffee shops or empty houses.

Table 5.3. Household composition in village and rantau

	Nuclear	Stem	Joint	Husband's kin included	Other
Village (N = 393)	53%	27%	13%	1%	6%
Rantau (N = 72)	54%	12%	2%	29%	3%

while in the rantau they are equally divided between the parents of the wife and those of her husband. Only in one household in rantau were the parents of both wife and husband found living together.

Aside from household composition, the management of family affairs also reveals differences between village and rantau. Both in terms of consulting about problems connected with the nuclear family and in making decisions about the children's education, occupation, and so on, wives' participation was more frequently mentioned in the rantau than in the village. This tendency is particularly noticeable in decision-making about the children: 54 percent of the perantau versus 35 percent of the villagers mentioned such participation. Another important observation is that the mamak in the rantau seems to play a less important role in the management of family affairs than he does in the village. The difference is especially pronounced in consultation about nuclear-family problems. Only 14 percent of the respondents in the rantau mentioned the mamak as a primary consultant about such problems, while 38 percent did so in the village.

Perhaps these findings mean that once separated from extensive kin networks in the villages, husbands and wives in the rantau are much more dependent upon each other in the management of family affairs than their counterparts back home. Stronger conjugal ties and mutual dependency in the rantau are also suggested by the lower rates of divorce and polygamy experiences there than in the villages. This is particularly true for the older generations (respondents older than 45 years) among whom both practices are more common than among their juniors.[8]

8. Figures for divorce and polygamy experiences were as follows: in the village (N=390), 24 percent and 38 percent; in the rantau (N=74), 14 percent and 11 percent. Even if the age is controlled (20 to 45 years old versus 46 years or older), the difference essentially persists, although it widens for the older generations.

Matrilineal Kinship Relations

Knowledge of the identities of one's older kin reflects one's genealogical consciousness. Although knowledge of their identities does not necessarily mean intimacy between a person and his or her older kin, we may still assume that it does often reflect a certain psychological proximity. In the survey, respondents were asked to identify the names and adat titles of three male figures two generations above them, namely, mother's father, (any of) the mamak of the mother (if there is more than one mamak), and father's father.[9] The results show that people in the village are slightly better acquainted with the identities of these older kin than those in the rantau; the difference is mainly due to the fact that the former group has a better knowledge of adat titles than the latter. Three observations can be made concerning the respondents' genealogical knowledge. First, many of these male respondents (about 50 percent on the average) could not identify either the name or adat title of people from their grandparents' generation.[10] Second, adat titles were likely to be better known than personal names, especially among people in the village. This conforms to the traditional custom that in the village adult males are addressed by adat titles rather than by personal names. Third, respondents were better acquainted with the identities of older kin from their mother's side than from their father's, signifying better familiarity with matrilineal kin.

As far as financial assistance is concerned, there is hardly any difference between village and rantau concerning the respondents' relationship to their mamak during childhood; in about 20 percent of the cases, mamak provided part of daily expenses, and in about 57 percent of the cases, they offered financial assistance for respondents' education. Differences between village and rantau emerge mainly with regard to marriage. Mamak tended to be less frequently involved in the marriage arrangement of respondents in the

9. Traditionally, every man was given an adat title upon marriage or assumption of an adat position.

10. The women seemed to have better genealogical knowledge than the men. According to interviews conducted in one of the four villages in IV Angkat, only about 25 percent of 85 women interviewed did not know either the name or adat title of their mother's father and mother's mamak. There was no difference, however, concerning father's father: 61 percent did not know either.

rantau (45 percent versus 58 percent) and in providing financial assistance for the wedding ceremony (23 percent versus 48 percent). The first difference, however, is mainly found among those perantau who had already left the village before they were married. Considering the fact that more and more people leave for merantau prior to marriage, future trends seem to be that mamak will be decreasingly involved in the marriage arrangement of perantau.

If there is little difference between village and rantau in terms of the financial assistance received from the mamak, there is a slight difference concerning the financial assistance that respondents in their roles as mamak have rendered to their kemanakan. More respondents in the rantau have given financial assistance to their kemanakan than have those in the village. The difference is slight but consistent over the various fields of education, daily living, merantau, and marriage. On the average, 73 percent of the respondents in the rantau and 62 percent in the village have the experience of giving financial assistance in these fields. In spite of this, however, the mamak in the rantau seem to have more tenuous and remote relationships with their kemanakan than do their village counterparts. The former have, for example, been less frequently involved in the marriage arrangements of their kemanakan (55 percent versus 85 percent, among the respondents whose kemanakan are married). Perantau's idea of their role toward their kemanakan is the rather passive one of "be informed of their well-being" (60 percent), instead of "give advice" (38 percent) or "be their guardian" (2 percent); the same set of figures for the villagers are 39 percent, 42 percent, and 19 percent. Even though mamak in the rantau do give material assistance to their kemanakan more frequently than their village counterparts, their involvement in their kemanakan's lives remains more formal, partly because of their physical remoteness. It seems as if they are possibly paying off their traditional complex moral responsibilities to their kemanakan simply by means of enlarged financial help.

The Two Worlds of the Village and the Rantau

As already noted, an estimated 30 percent of all Minangkabau may currently be found outside West Sumatra. Most Minangkabau who stay in the villages are therefore likely to know some

people—matrilineal kin, affinal kin, childhood friends, school friends, former colleagues, and so on who reside in the rantau. According to my survey on merantau history, 86 percent of the 132 houses studied have some members of their sublineages (paruik) now staying in the rantau.

In spite of this closeness of merantau to the everyday lives of most Minangkabau, some people obviously do tend to remain in the village and others to stay in the rantau. The characteristics of these two groups of people are diverse. Some villagers are young, well-educated, and nonagricultural in occupation. Some perantau are old, poorly educated, and manual in occupation. The classification of people as villagers and perantau is not always fixed or permanent. Some villagers will become perantau someday, while some perantau eventually will come back to live in the village. Nevertheless, results from my household survey and my survey on merantau history indicate that perantau and villagers as a group do present somewhat different demographic characteristics: in comparison to those who remain in the village, people who stay in the rantau are on the average better educated, far less agricultural or manual in occupation, and most probably younger.

Just as different types of people leave the village, the consequences of merantau vary among the perantau. Although there are numerous success stories, merantau is essentially a gamble; some succeed, but others fail. Rantau does not always bring good luck, even though there is a popular saying to the contrary (*rantau bertuah,* or rantau abounds with luck). An adat aphorism recognizes these mixed outcomes:

> *Karatau* was expected to be *madang,*
> It turns out that it destroys the rice plants,
> Merantau was expected to make one happy,
> It turns out that it saddens one's heart.[11]

Despite all this, the cities and towns where most of the perantau congregate envelop them with atmosphere, life style, and environment peculiar to the modern rantau. My household survey, albeit

11. In Minangkabau, *Karatau disangko madang,/Kironyo maluluah padi,/ Marantau disangko sanang,/Kironyo merusuah hati. Karatau* and *madang* are certain species of trees.

concerned with the quite narrow scope of family life, shows some differences between village and rantau in the way people organize their lives. Household organization in the villages is still governed by the matrilineal principle, while that in the rantau is more variable, allowing easier inclusion of the husband's matrilineal kin. Separated from their respective matrilineal kin networks in the village, the husband and wife in the rantau seem to be more dependent upon each other in the management of family affairs. In terms of matrilineal kinship, their relationships with their mamak in later life, that is, after childhood, seem more remote than for those who stay in the village. Even with regard to their kemanakan, the perantau's involvement is expressed mainly in financial terms; such traditional moral obligations as finding a spouse for the kemanakan are more perfunctorily performed.

These results may well have been influenced by the particular sets of respondents I questioned in IV Angkat and in Padang and Pekan Baru. Yet, many of these findings are also intelligible in the context of difference between urban rantau and village. Whether perantau are successful or unsuccessful, educated or not educated, white-collar workers or manual laborers, young or old, they live in a city or town far away from their village. In the rantau, ties to matrilineal kin and affinal kin diminish in their immediacy in everyday life. Traditional rights and obligations associated with the matrilineal system cease to be as binding in the rantau as in the village. Physically separated from the village, perantau are more susceptible to an urban culture which is in no way Minangkabau. Whether perantau like it or not, the simple fact that they live in the rantau forces some sort of readjustment in the way their lives are organized.

That life style differs between the village and the rantau is clearly perceived by the perantau themselves. There is a popular theory among perantau, especially among males, that it is the adat which prompts Minangkabau men to merantau. In a matrilineal society, there is no room for individual male initiative. Minangkabau go merantau in order to seek self-respect and to be free from adat.[12] Whether this theory is true or not, it reflects an awareness among the perantau that the rantau life is quite different from that in the village.

12. "Karatau Madang Dihulu," *Aneka Minang,* no. 14 (n.d.), pp. 7–10.

A subdistrict head in the darek once told me a story of a Javanese woman who stayed in one of the villages under his jurisdiction near Bukittinggi. She was on a volunteer aid program for rural development and was supposed to stay in the village for a couple of years, helping the village government in its development efforts. Raised in a city and a college graduate, she had worn only Western clothes all her life. She appeared in the village in Western clothes of the type often worn by civil servants—light brown two-piece suits. However, she was strongly advised by the village head to dress like a village woman if she wanted to be accepted by the villagers. In fact, except for schoolgirls, practically no woman, married or unmarried, above the age of about fifteen wears Western clothes in rural areas. Thus, this Javanese woman had to wear indigenous clothes for the first time in her life—not indigenous Javanese female attire, but Minangkabau *baju kurung* or knee-length overall-like garments.

In a nice contrast to that story, there is a recent Minangkabau popular song from the rantau called "Poncho" (*Baju Ponco*):

> This present age,
> This is the age of all kinds of fashions,
> Already known is the fashion of funny clothes,
> Which many young people like.
> Cut square, with lace around the edges,
> It looks like a table cloth,
> With flower patterns, it also looks like a Jango blouse,
> The famous fashion, the fashion of the poncho blouse.
> I want one like that too,
> Afraid of being left behind by the age,
> I don't care how funny it looks, it's the poncho blouse that I like.
> Mother, please buy me one,
> I want to wear a poncho blouse,
> Let other people say I am crazy rather than being out of fashion.[13]

The Javanese woman who had to wear a *baju kurung* and a Minangkabau girl singer who craves a funny, crazy poncho blouse are symbolic of the distance between the two worlds of the village and the rantau. Whether this difference will be a source of change

13. Jango is the hero of some spaghetti western movies. The song is in *Aneka Minang*, no. 12 (n.d.), p. 35, and is translated here by permission of the composer, Chilung Ramali.

and innovation in contemporary Minangkabau society is contingent on the relations maintained between village and rantau. While the dominant pattern of merantau was circulatory, the rantau was still closely tied to the village. But, as Chinese merantau has gained in importance, village and rantau tend to grow apart.

Glossary

Adat	Custom and tradition.
Alam Minangkabau	The Minangkabau World.
Alim ulama	Religious teacher or expert.
Balai	Council hall.
Bilik	Sleeping compartment in an adat house.
Bodi-Caniago	One of the two Minangkabau political traditions which is supposedly "democratic," for example, stressing the equal status among penghulu.
Darek	The cultural heartland of the Alam Minangkabau, specifically, Luhak Tanah Datar, Luhak Agam, and Luhak 50 [Limapuluh] Kota.
Demang	A subdistrict head in the Dutch administrative hierarchy in West Sumatra after 1914.
Dijemput	A traditional custom in some parts of West Sumatra in which a man is invited or sometimes paid to marry.
Ganggam bauntuak	Usage right to ancestral agricultural land or sometimes sharing right to the product from ancestral land.
Haji	A title given to a person who has completed the pilgrimage to Mecca.
Harta pencarian	Individually earned property, which is entirely derived from one's own efforts.
Harta pusaka	Ancestral property.
Kaki lima	Roadside vendor or peddler.
Kaum Muda	Young Group, which instigated an Islamic reformist movement in West Sumatra in the early twentieth century.
Kemanakan	A man's sister's children.
Koto-Piliang	One of the two Minangkabau political traditions which is supposed to be "autocratic," for instance, recognizing the hierarchical ranking among penghulu.

Luhak nan Tigo	Three central areas in the Minangkabau heartland, namely, Tanah Datar, Agam, and 50 [Limapuluh] Kota.
Mamak	One's mother's brother(s) or the classificatory kin of the same order.
Merantau	To leave one's village (in search of wealth, knowledge, and fame).
Merantau Cino	Chinese merantau, a pattern of merantau popular after 1950s in which men migrate with wives and children to faraway cities and stay there more or less permanently.
Nagari	Village in West Sumatra.
Paruik	A group of matrilineally related people generally living in one adat house.
Payung	A group of matrilineally related people under the supervision of a lineage head (penghulu).
Penghulu	Matrilineage head.
Perantau	Out-migrant.
Raja	King or minor king.
Rantau	Originally areas outside the darek in the Alam Minangkabau, and sometimes the non-Minangkabau world in general.
Rantau Hilir	Downstream rantau or areas to the east of Luhak 50 Kota and beyond.
Rantau Pasisir	Coastal rantau or areas along the west coast of West Sumatra.
Rumah adat or rumah gadang	Traditional Minangkabau house with its characteristic horned roofs.
Samandai	People of one mother or a group consisting of a mother and her children.
Sawah	Wet-rice field.
Sawah kagadangan	Wet-rice field for greatness or ancestral field which is set aside specifically for the position of penghulu.
Suku	Matrilineal clan or a group of people who share the same unknown ancestress in a nagari.
Sumando	See Urang sumando.
Surau	Prayer house-cum-religious school.
Syarak	Islamic law.
Tambo	Traditional Minangkabau historiography.
Tuanku	Part of title often used by famous Islamic teachers.
Tuanku laras	Adat and administrative head of a nagari federation under the Dutch administration in the nineteenth century.
Tungganai or tungganai rumah	House elder.
Urang asa	Descendants of original settlers in a village.
Urang datang	Descendants of latecomers in a village.
Urang sumando	In-marrying husband.

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